

*Durham Region  
Joint Point in Time Count and Registry Week  
April 16 - 20, 2018*

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**



Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) and the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) are partnering with the United Way Durham and the Region of Durham to conduct Durham Region's 2018 Homelessness Point in Time Count on **April 16** and a region-wide Registry Week during the week of April 16 to 20. The purposes of these two co-ordinated activities is to first count and understand the people who are homeless in Durham Region, and then identify those who wish to be included on a prioritized list for housing outreach services. We are looking for volunteers to assist with both of these activities. Our end goal is to end homelessness in Durham Region.



The Point in Time Count on **April 16** will take place late at night during an approximate three to four hour time period. It will be throughout Durham Region at predetermined locations, some of which will be inside; and some of which will be outdoors. The Registry Week will consist of various activities at different times of day, and in different places, that have been determined as most likely to reach the most people who are affected by a lack of housing. It may involve street surveys in the early morning in some communities.

Everyone involved in these two activities will be volunteering their time. There are multiple volunteer positions available based on your skills and interests, some of which are still to be determined. They will most likely include:



**Advance Volunteer Teams** will help to distribute information about the Registry Week, so people are aware of when and where registry events will take place, and are informed in advance of what "registering" would mean for them.

**Survey and Magnet Event Volunteers** will survey individuals on the street, in shelters and at service locations. Survey Volunteers are required to commit to a four-hour shift. Survey Volunteers will work in assigned teams under the leadership of someone with experience in the field. Volunteers surveying on the street need to be able to stand and walk for up to three hours. Accommodations can be made for volunteers who are unable to meet this criterion.

**Team Leaders:** Team Leaders take on additional responsibilities regarding the safety and co-ordination of a team of volunteers. Ideally, Team Leaders should have experience working with individuals that are homeless and/or vulnerable populations.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:

Doreen Hume McKenna

[dhumemckenna@dmhs.ca](mailto:dhumemckenna@dmhs.ca)

905-444-3245



**Durham Region**  
**Joint Point in Time Count and Registry Week**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**



**What is the Point in Time Count?**

The Point-in-Time (PiT) Count will provide an estimated snapshot of the extent and nature of homelessness in Durham Region. It will gather information on both the number of persons/families experiencing homelessness, as well as their demographic characteristics and service needs.

The methodology of the PiT Count has been used in many communities across Canada, making it possible to compare results across the country. It is done during 24 hours to reduce duplication, and to make it as cost and resource effective as possible. There will be an approximate three-hour timespan surrounding midnight when the actual count will take place. It is scheduled for when most people will be off the street if they have somewhere else to go, and people will be more likely to be settled down where they are planning to spend the night.

**Why is the PiT Count important?**

The PiT Count is funded by the Government of Canada, through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The goal of this strategy is to reduce homelessness by helping to move people who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters into permanent housing.

This is the second PiT Count in Durham Region. It will provide reliable estimates on how many persons/families are homeless. By comparing our results over time we will be able to gauge if homelessness is increasing, decreasing or staying the same, and if our community is making any progress towards addressing homelessness.

Findings from the PiT Count will demonstrate housing and service needs specific to Durham Region. It will also provide information to aid organizations, funders, and all levels of government plan for the funding and service needs of homeless persons/families in Durham Region.

**What is the Registry Week?**

The Registry Week is a comprehensive check-in across our communities to not only count, but to identify as many people as possible who are experiencing homelessness. A short health and housing survey will be completed with all people experiencing homelessness who are willing to participate (including those who are staying in emergency shelters or on the street).

The community will then work to support those identified as most vulnerable to access housing outreach services as quickly as possible.

### **Why are we doing both the PiT Count and the Registry Week?**

The PiT Count provides a snapshot of homelessness (unsheltered, in shelters and in transitional programs) in a 24-hour time period. The Registry Week is important to conduct in addition to the PiT Count because it is a way to reach those who are provisionally housed (the hidden homeless or “couch surfers”) who are not included in the PiT Count. Service agencies estimate that this group is the larger group of homeless people/families in Durham Region. We need more specific information about both groups to begin solving the problem of homelessness. Collecting person-specific data is the key to ending homelessness for our most vulnerable (and often anonymous) homeless neighbours. A Registry Week will allow us to know every homeless individual by name and understand their specific needs. A co-ordinated outreach and triage assessment process will allow us to act on the community-wide information that the two approaches provide.

Not everyone will want to participate in the Registry Week. We still want to be able to count these people because this helps us to measure the need for shelter and services in Durham Region. Where individuals consent, the PiT Count and Registry Week surveys will be administered together. By conducting both surveys we hope to be able to reach and include as many people as possible who need housing.

### **What kind of information will be gathered?**

Through a voluntary survey, participants in the PiT Count are asked questions on their age, gender identity, aboriginal status, military status, immigration status, income sources, how long/how many times they have been homeless, whether they have accessed an emergency shelter recently, whether they have migrated to Durham Region recently, and what happened that caused them to lose their housing most recently.

Participants in the Registry Week survey will also be asked their names and more personal information that will enable housing outreach workers to better find and match available housing to meet their needs. Survey tools are designed to collect information about individuals, families and youth.

### **Who will count?**

Surveys will be conducted by approximately 150 volunteers, including people who have experienced homelessness, service provider staff, outreach workers, and those who work for public institutions that help people. No matter what your day job is, everyone is a volunteer on the night of the PiT Count survey. Volunteers must be over 18 years of age to participate.

### **Where will they count?**

Teams of volunteers will go to assigned outdoor or indoor locations. Street teams will count in outdoor locations where it has been assessed, through a pre-count process, that homeless people are likely to be. Additional locations will be designated for Registry Week surveys. The methods for both surveys may include:

- Street Surveys – the street surveys will reach people living in public/outdoor places that are not suitable for human habitation.
- Sheltered Surveys – the sheltered surveys include all emergency/domestic shelters and transitional housing in Durham Region.
- Service Counts – these surveys will be in local public institutions (e.g. libraries, civic recreational centres, etc.) and non-profit service providers (e.g. drop-in centres, food banks, meal programs, etc.).

- Data from agencies/government – includes those residing in institutions (e.g. hospitals, holding cells, detox clinics) who do not have a permanent address.
- Magnet Events – people who need housing will be invited to attend these events, so that they can register.

#### How will volunteers know what to do?

Volunteers will be trained in safety considerations, interviewing, consistent survey administration processes, confidentiality, and obtaining consent. All survey teams will include, at minimum, one experienced professional in the social services sector or individuals with lived experience. An opportunity for debriefing will be provided to all volunteers.

#### How is 'homelessness' defined?

People are considered homeless if they are:

1. Unsheltered – this includes people living in public or private spaces without consent or contract and people living in places not intended for permanent human habitation.
2. Emergency Sheltered – this includes people using emergency shelter programs (including emergency motel accommodations) and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters.
3. Provisionally Accommodated – this includes people who are using interim housing, such as short-term transitional housing or who are staying in temporary accommodation or whose housing lacks tenure i.e. those commonly referred to as “hidden homeless” or “couch surfing”.

Please find a copy of the 2017 report here: [Durham 2017 PiT Report](#).

For more information, please contact:

Doreen Hume McKenna

[dhmemckenna@dmhs.ca](mailto:dhmemckenna@dmhs.ca)

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**For information about Community Development Council Durham and Durham Mental Health Services, please visit**

[www.cdcd.org](http://www.cdcd.org) and [www.dmhs.ca](http://www.dmhs.ca).