

There are two approaches to unsheltered counts: night-of counts and service-based counts.

When CoCs count unsheltered people on the night of the PIT count, people staying in unsheltered locations on the night designated for the count should be included using one of the following methodologies: In a complete-coverage count approach, enumerators systematically canvass every part of the CoC's geographic area searching for unsheltered homeless people.

In a known-locations count approach, enumerators look for people in areas such as encampments, under bridges, or in bus stations where homeless people are known to be located.

In a random-sample-of-areas count approach, a CoC's geographic area is broken down into smaller areas, such as blocks or census tracts that are randomly selected for enumerators to visit.

A service-based count approach is used to identify people who were unsheltered on the night of the PIT count, but were neither counted nor interviewed on the night of the count. A service-based count can occur for up to 7 days after the night designated for the PIT count.

CoCs must weigh these considerations when developing the best approach for conducting their unsheltered count.

When deciding which PIT count approach to use, there are many factors a CoC should consider. How will your CoC's geography impact your ability to locate all unsheltered people on the night of the count? Does your CoC have the resources to interview all unsheltered people on the night of the count? Sections 4 and 5 will cover these considerations in more depth.