Point-in-Time Count
Toolkit **module**

Canadian
Observatory on
Homelessness
homelesshub.ca

Youth Readiness Assessment

We recommend that all communities incorporate strategies to improve the representation of youth in their PiT Counts. At minimum, communities should consult with youth with lived experience to seek input on methodological decisions such as: mapping for the unsheltered count, as well as survey design and count promotion. Communities with a priority on youth homelessness or those with ample resources and expertise should consider additional strategies to enumerate and survey youth.

As you develop your youth count strategy, use this Youth Count Readiness Assessment as a guide. For each item, select the column that best describes your local context. Each recommendation will help you to determine whether to include strategies for counting and surveying youth, in addition to the sheltered and unsheltered count. Keep in mind that these are only suggestions; consult your PiT Count committee and other key stakeholders to determine which strategies best suit your community.

This resource is part of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' Point-in-Time Count Toolkit

Acknowledgements

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[1] The Youth Leadership Council (YLC) is an advocacy group that is youth-driven, youth-focused and youth-run. The purpose of the YLC is to break down barriers for youth through the lived experiences of others.

[2] Choices for Youth (CFY) is a non-profit, charitable organization that operates in the St. John's (NL) metro area. CFY provides programming and support services to homeless and vulnerable youth (aged 16-29) by focusing on five key life factors – housing, employment, education, mental/physical health and family stability.

[3] End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) is a community-led, 'collective impact' board that brings together all sectors to implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in St. John's.

EXPERIENCE WITH PIT COUNTS		
Our community has never conducted a PiT Count	Our community has conducted one or two PiT Counts	Our community has conducted several PiT Counts
Stakeholder engagement and partnership building takes time. If you are considering youth-focused elements, allow ample time and resources for planning and implementing the count.	Expand the scope of the count to include a youth magnet event.	In addition to magnet events and service counts, explore additional enumeration and surveying strategies such as: partnering with schools, colleges and universities or enumerating in juvenile correction facilities.

PRIORITIZATION OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS		
Youth homelessness is not a priority in our community	Youth homelessness is an emerging priority in our community	Youth homelessness is major priority in our community
Consider whether there is enough community support to successfully implement youth-focused elements. If youth homelessness is not a priority due to a lack of data, focusing on youth during the count may increase community support.	Improving the representation of youth through your PiT Count will provide better data and further encourage support for the issue.	Consult with community stakeholders to determine how the PiT Count can fill data gaps and support efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

NUMBER OF YOUTH SHELTER BEDS		
We have very few youth shelter beds	We have some youth shelter beds	We have many youth shelter beds
Expand the scope of your count to include hidden homelessness. Use magnet events and service counts to collect data.	Expand the scope of your count to include hidden homelessness. Use magnet events and service counts to collect data.	Your sheltered count may provide you with enough data on youth homelessness. Consult with community stakeholders to determine whether additional data on the experiences of youth is required.

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVING YOUTH		
There are very few organizations serving youth in our community	There are some organizations serving youth in our community	There are many organizations serving youth in our community
A service count will be difficult to implement without partnering organizations. Instead, focus your efforts on implementing a magnet event, either targeted at youth or at the general population.	You can conduct service counts and/or magnet events. If you are conducting a magnet event, think creatively about how to spread the word to youth. Use social media and word of mouth.	A youth-focused service count may be a better use of resources than a magnet event. However, if you have sufficient planning time and resources, you may consider both.

COLLABORATION		
Organizations serving youth rarely collaborate in our community	Organizations serving youth sometimes collaborate in our community	Organizations serving youth often collaborate in our community
Consider whether there is enough community support to successfully implement magnet events or service counts. If youth homelessness is not a priority due to a lack of data, focusing on youth during the count may increase community support.	The youth-serving sector may welcome the PiT Count as an opportunity to improve collaboration and partnership.	Engage the youth-serving sector more deeply by asking how the PiT Count can support their work. Work with them to develop a strategy to engage youth in the planning and implementation of the count.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT		
There are no formalized youth leadership groups (with lived experience) in our community, and there is little interest or resources to develop one	There are no formalized youth leadership groups (with lived experience) in our community, but there is interest and resources to develop one	There is at least one formalized youth leadership group (with lived experience) in our community
Ask local youth-serving agencies to recommend youth with lived experience to serve as advisors to the count. Share Youth Leadership, which highlights the importance of youth engagement, with the youth-serving agencies.	Share Youth Leadership with interested agencies and youth. Determine whether the PiT Count is an opportunity to formalize a local youth leadership group.	Share Youth Leadership with the youth leadership group(s) in your community. Consult with them to determine what role, if any, they would like to play in the count.

COMMUNITY DENSITY		
Our community is rural	Our community is a mix of rural, urban and suburban	Our community is urban
Determine whether there are any services in your community that are commonly used by youth. If so, partner to conduct a service count. Magnet events may also be effective, but traveling to the event may be a barrier for some youth.	Conduct service counts in areas across the community, not just those in the urban center. Consult with stakeholders to develop a list of organizations that serve youth in less densely populated areas.	Service counts and magnet events are both effective strategies in urban communities.