



The Way Home



# Who we are

---

- The Way Home is the **homeless response system** for Houston and Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties in Texas. It's a public-private partnership — a **network of over 100** homeless service providers and other government, philanthropic, and business partners.
- It's a **collective force working together** toward a shared vision of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. How? Through **housing paired with stability services**.
- CFTH, a nonprofit, is the designated coordinator of The Way Home.



# Who we are

---

- **We're rooted in data.** We focus on the system-level view, tracking trends and identifying needs in Houston and surrounding areas.
- **We're pragmatic problem solvers.** We champion housing with stability services as the solution to homelessness — because it works.
- **We're strategic.** We focus on building relationships, leveraging available resources, and optimizing funding for maximum impact.
- **We're collaborative.** We coordinate one of the nation's most effective homeless response systems, The Way Home, with over 100 partners.



# CoC Program

The CoC Program aims to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services for long-term stability. It also aims to:

- Promote a community commitment to ending homelessness;
- Improve access to mainstream programs;
- Support self-sufficiency; and
- Provide funding to quickly rehouse people while reducing trauma.





**2026**

**HOMELESS**

**COUNT & SURVEY**



# 2026 Annual Point-in- Time (PIT) Count

---

 February 23 – 27, 2026

# What is the Point-in-Time Count?



The annual Point-in-Time Count (“PIT Count”) is a survey of those experiencing homelessness within our CoC.



Our unsheltered homeless count typically takes place during the daytime over a three-day period at the end of January. (Note: Dates changed due to NOFO)



The PIT Count covers those living unsheltered (i.e., sleeping in places not meant for human habitation) and those experiencing homelessness but in sheltered conditions (e.g., emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens).



# Why do we count?

To capture information that will help us understand:

Key trends and factors contributing to homelessness and housing instability;

Where people go to try and stay safe while experiencing homelessness;

The number of people needing housing assistance (and the type and extent of that need); and

Data to support advocacy for increased funding, resources, and support.

The data is reported to the HUD to:

Monitor progress/success (are the numbers decreasing?)

Determine the amount of federal, state, & local funding that will come into our community

Identify areas with a dense homeless presence (e.g., encampments, etc.)

Improve services & housing

Determine what additional services are needed



# 2026 PIT Count Overview

## Where:

- Throughout the entire CoC geographic area (i.e., Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery county)

## When:

- Official Day of Count: Monday, February 23, 2026
- Day 1: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, from 7 AM – 4 PM
- Day 2: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, from 7 AM – 4 PM
- Day 3: Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 7 AM – 4 PM
- (HOLD) Bad Weather Day: Friday, February 27, 2026, from 7 AM – 4 PM

## How:

- Walk & drive throughout the assigned region to conduct surveys
- Survey with the Counting Us mobile app



# Agency Requirements

## System Outreach Agencies:

- Required to assign at least two (2) volunteers each day of the count (3 days).

## CoC/YHDP NOFO-funded Agencies:

- Required to assign two (2) volunteers for at least two (2) days of the count.

## Agencies not funded by the CoC/YHDP NOFO:

- Required to allocate at least two (2) volunteers for at least one (1) day of the count.

# Daily Check-ins

- Volunteers are required to participate in daily check-ins
- Volunteers must join/arrive to their check-in no later than 5min after the scheduled time
- There will be a total of 3 daily check-ins
  - Morning check-in: 7:00 AM
  - Lunch check-in: Your CFTH Captain will provide a time to check in as you break for lunch
  - Afternoon check-out: As you complete your assigned region, you must check out w/your assigned CFTH Captain each day
- During the check-in:
  - Captains will account for attendance
  - Captains will provide an overview/update of the plan for the day
  - Captains will ensure all participants have the app downloaded, location services enabled, the correct count registered, and the correct region(s) are assigned to their team(s)
- Volunteer check-out:
  - All participants must check-out with their assigned CFTH captain before leaving/ending their day
  - All participants must ensure their group has thoroughly canvased their area/region at least twice before checking out
  - All participants must ensure that their team is aligned and that everyone knows when they are checking out. Note: Teams should check out together.



# In-Person Staging Areas

## Day 1 Staging Areas:

Avenue 360: 2150 W 18<sup>th</sup> St, Houston, TX, 77008  
Covenant House Texas: 1111 Lovett Blvd, Houston, TX 77006  
The Beacon: 1212 Prairie St. Houston, TX 77002  
TLC Health & Wellness: 2626 South Loop West Fwy, Suite 360, Houston, TX 77054

## Day 2 Staging Areas:

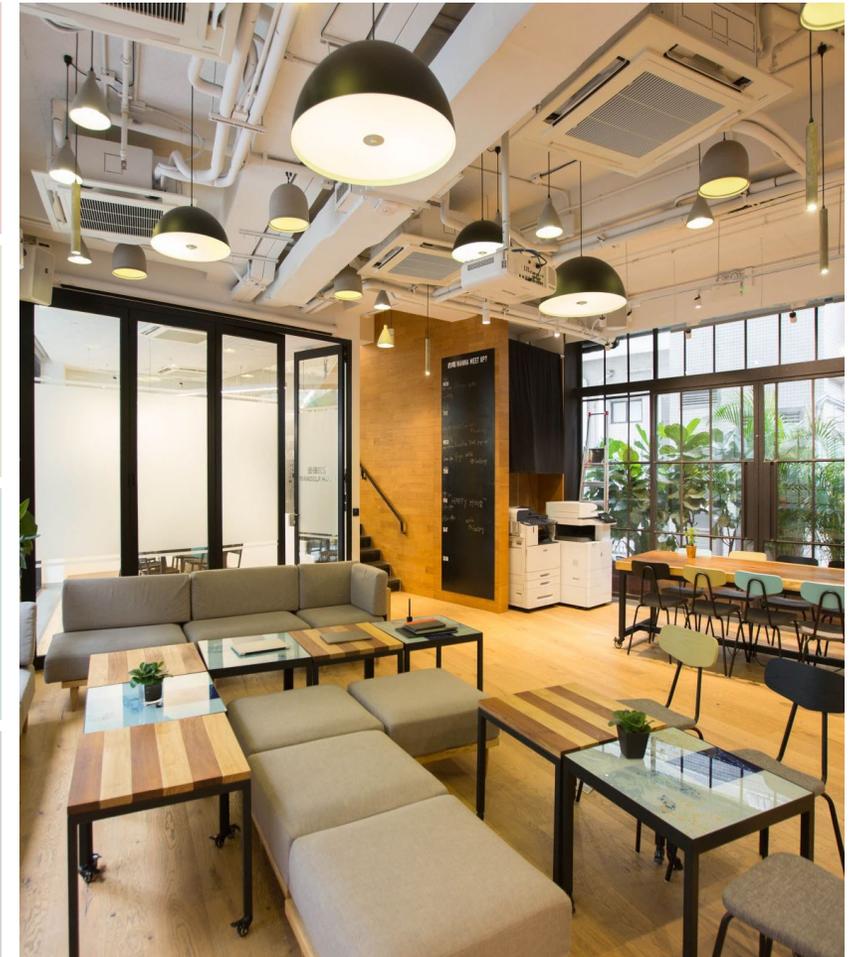
Catholic Charities- Fort Bend Location: 1111 Collins Rd, Richmond, TX 77469  
Christ The Redeemer Catholic Church: 11507 Huffmeister Rd. Houston, TX 77065  
El Tabernaculo Assembly of God: 10020 Bauman Rd, Houston, TX 77076  
Northwest Assistance Ministries: 15555 Kuykendahl Rd

## Day 3 Staging Areas:

Compassion United: 350 Foster Dr., Conroe, TX 77301  
Humble Area Assistance Ministries (HAAM): 1302 1st St. E, Humble, TX 77338

## Staging Area Captains and Locations Updates

CFTH will have a designated captain for each in-person staging location. More information regarding locations and staging will be shared as it becomes available.  
Morning check-in at a designated staging area is required.





# Volunteer Registration Overview



Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Volunteer Registration Overview

Step 1: Visit the 2026 PIT Count volunteer registration webpage (<https://thewayhome.pointintime.info/>)

Step 2: Complete the signup fields as instructed (i.e., contact information, demographic info, and notes for your profile)

Step 3: Select your region preferences (only applicable to non-CoC-funded agencies)

Step 4: Complete the remaining fields (i.e., emergency contact information and forms requiring your signature)

Step 5: Submit

# Selecting Region Preferences



The regions listed on the volunteer registration webpage are separated by which day of the count and which area will be covered.



Please select the day and area where you would prefer to volunteer.



If you are volunteering for all three days, please select regions on all three days, if only registering for one day, please only select 1 day of the 3.



Choices for maps are dependent on availability and may be subject to change.\*



# Mobile App Walkthrough & Guidance

How to ensure you're ready for the PIT Count!

# Counting Us App

- The Counting Us mobile app is the software used to efficiently collect data for the Point-in-Time Count
- Download the Counting Us Mobile App: Scan the QR Code to the right, visit the direct links below, or search for Counting Us in your device's App Store.
  - Google Play: [https://bit.ly/Counting\\_Us\\_Google](https://bit.ly/Counting_Us_Google)
  - Apple Store: [https://bit.ly/Counting\\_Us\\_Apple](https://bit.ly/Counting_Us_Apple)



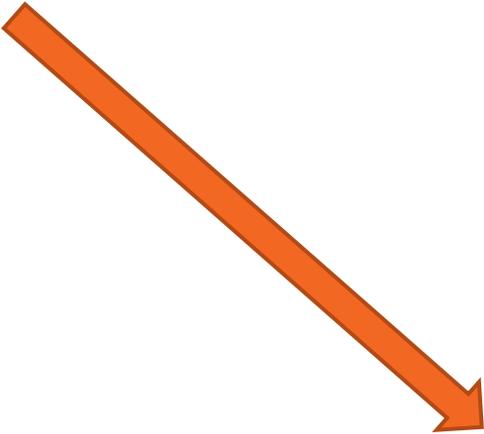
Mobile App  
Download  
QR Code

# Registering for the Count

AS/AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION:  
Select "Update Registration" or "Register"



Select "Change/Select Count"



Input "TWH2026" as the key requested

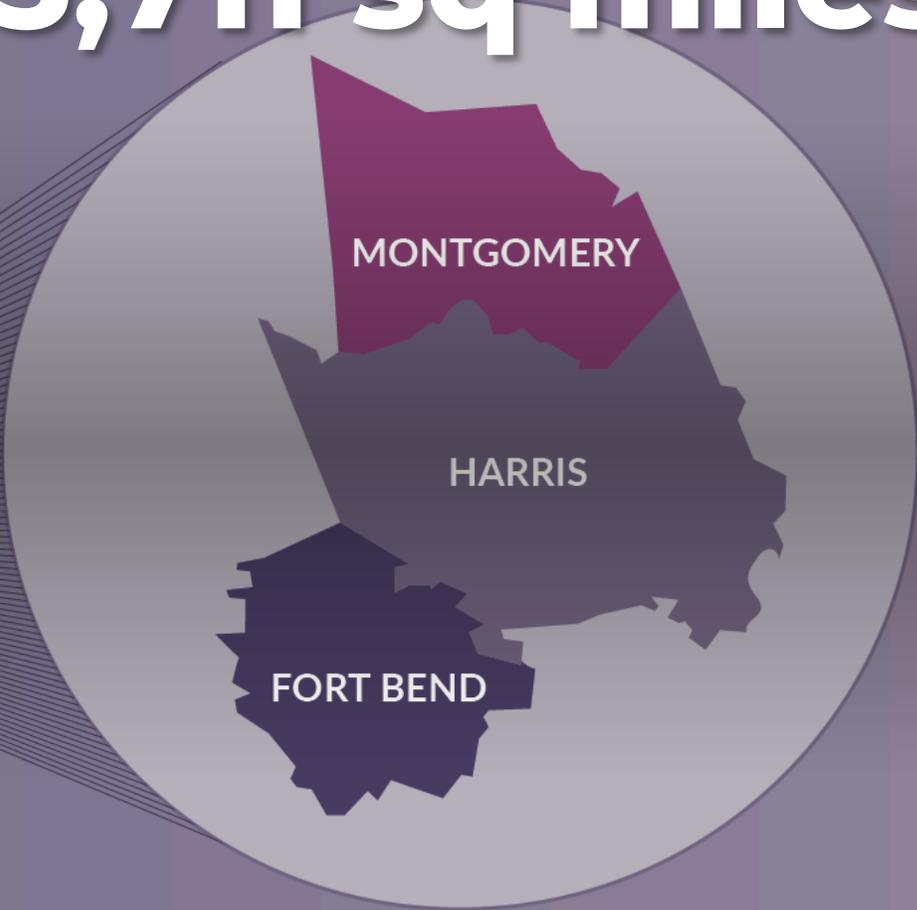
Select the region or one of the new options available:  
Outreach, Elected Official, or No Preference.





# Conducting the Count

# Geographic Area – 3,711 sq miles



# Regions

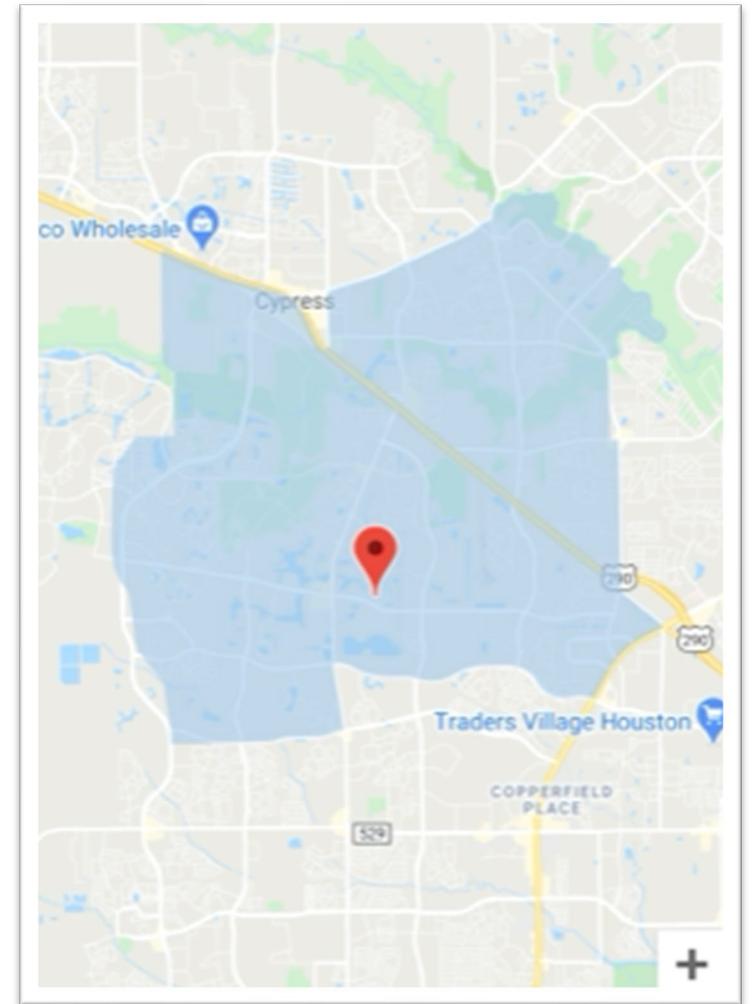
Regions are your location assignments

Regions can be identified as the area shaded in blue

You may need to zoom in or out to view your assigned region

## NOTE:

- Please stay within your assigned region!
- Should you need to adjust your region, please contact your PIT Count captain.



# Conducting the survey

## Interviews:

- Allow us to capture the information asked within the survey and provide more data about the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness
- Strive for 100% interviews

## Observations:

- Observations should only be used for dangerous situations, those you're unable to reach, and/or if someone refuses
- Strive for 0% observations

## What is not an observation:

- Empty tent with items inside
- Sleeping bag
- Panhandling
- Riding a bike
- Pushing a shopping basket
- Not homeless (e.g., residing in a hotel)



# Getting Started with a Survey

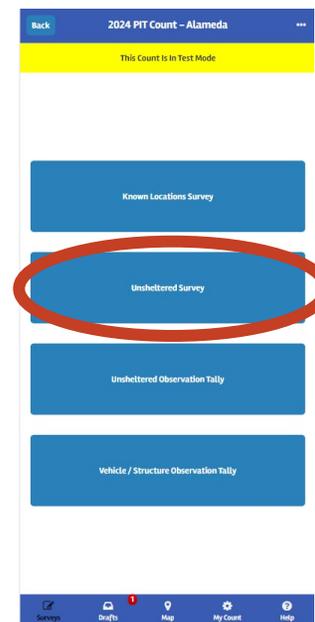
Step 1:  
Login to  
Counting Us  
app



Step 2:  
Tap "Get  
Started"



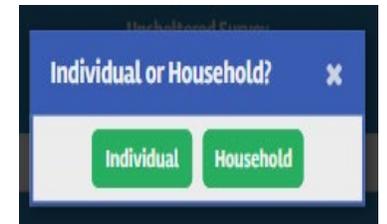
Step 3:  
Tap  
"Unsheltered  
Survey"



Step 4:  
Select  
Language



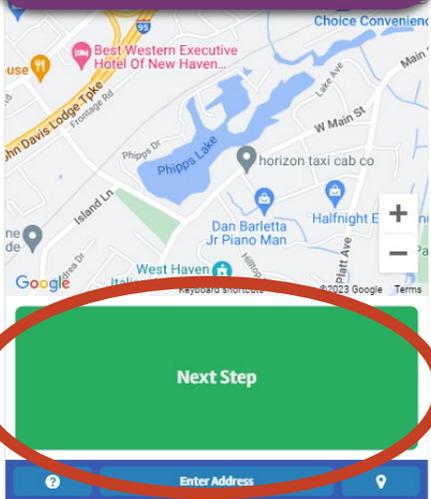
Step 5:  
Select  
Individual or  
Household



# Conducting a Survey

Ensure your location is correct and tap "Next Step"

If manually entering an address, be sure to include the entire address, including city and state.



Introduce yourself and ask for permission to interview the person.

If they've already been interviewed, the survey will finish, and you will not need to continue.

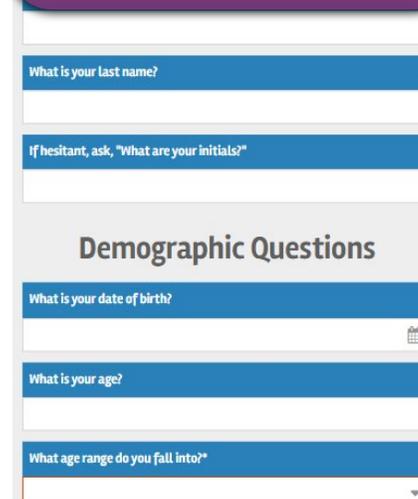
can skip any question, and your answers will not affect your eligibility for compensation or services. The information will not be shared with anyone outside of our team. I need to read each question all the way through. Can I have about 10 minutes of your time?

Have you already been interviewed today for the Point in Time Count?\*

Submit Survey

Ask the questions that appear on the screen and tap on the answers available.

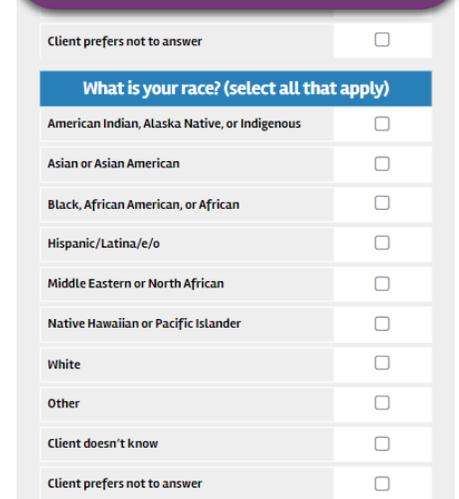
If an answer is not listed, select "other" and then manually enter their response.



Do Not Assume!

All responses entered must be what the individual reports.

People can also choose not to answer.



# Introduction Script & Screening

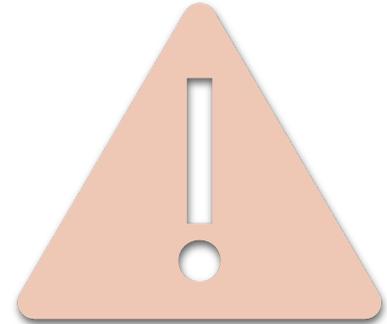


## SCRIPT:

- *“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m volunteering with the local homeless count today. We’re helping gather information to better understand homelessness in our community and improve services.*

*Your answers help the community plan for funding and support, but you can skip any question or stop at any time. We’re just trying to get an accurate count of people experiencing homelessness. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions?”*

(Pause and wait for consent. If they say yes, begin the survey)



## QUESTIONS:

- *Have you already been interviewed for this year’s PIT Count?*
- *Where did you sleep on the night of Monday, February 23, 2026?*

# Part 2: Demographics

---

Name  
(or Initials)

Gender

DOB or Age

Race

Have you ever  
served in the U.S.  
military (including  
National Guard or  
Reserves)?

# Part 2.5

# HMIS

# Client

# Look

# Up

- SCRIPT: *"Thanks. Before I ask more questions, we can check our system to see if you're already in there. This helps us avoid asking things twice and makes sure we have the right info. It's just to help speed things up, is that okay?"*



# Part 3: Homeless History

*Is this your first time experiencing homelessness?*

*How long have you been without stable housing this time?*

*In the past 3 years, how many total months have you been without housing?*

*How many separate times have you been without housing in the past 3 years?*

*What area were you living in before becoming homeless?*

*Are you currently homeless because of a natural disaster?*

---

# Part 4: Domestic Violence & Safety

---

## SCRIPT:

*"The next question is about personal safety. You can skip it if you'd prefer not to answer, I just want to make sure we ask it in case it helps connect someone with services or support"*

---

## Questions:

*Are you currently homeless because you are fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking?*

---

*Would you like help connecting to a support service (confidential and free)?*

---

# Part 5: Disabling Conditions

## SCRIPT:

- *“The next few questions are about health or disability. These help us understand what kinds of services people might need. Please only answer what you feel comfortable sharing, you can skip anything you’d rather not respond to.”*

## QUESTIONS:

- *Do you currently have any of the following (e.g., physical disability, developmental disability, chronic health condition, mental health disorder, etc. [examples of each are provided in the survey itself])?*
- *Do you receive disability benefits?*



## Part 6: (OPTIONAL) Local Data



### SCRIPT:

- *“Those were the main questions we’re required to ask for the national count. If you're comfortable, we have just a few more optional questions that help our local community better understand what people need. You can skip any of them.”*

### QUESTIONS:

- *What were the main causes of your current housing situation?*
- *What is your current employment status?*

# Part 7: Closing & Voluntary Follow Up

## SCRIPT:

- *"Thank you for your time. That's everything we needed. I really appreciate you talking with me, this helps our community get more resources and improve services."*

*"If you'd like someone from the homeless response team to follow up with you for help or services, we can try to connect you. Would you be interested in that?"*

## Questions:

- *If yes, can you share your contact information?*
- *If no phone/text: "We can still try to have the outreach team find you. Is there a place you usually stay or a general area where they could look for you?"*



# PLEASE NOTE:



---

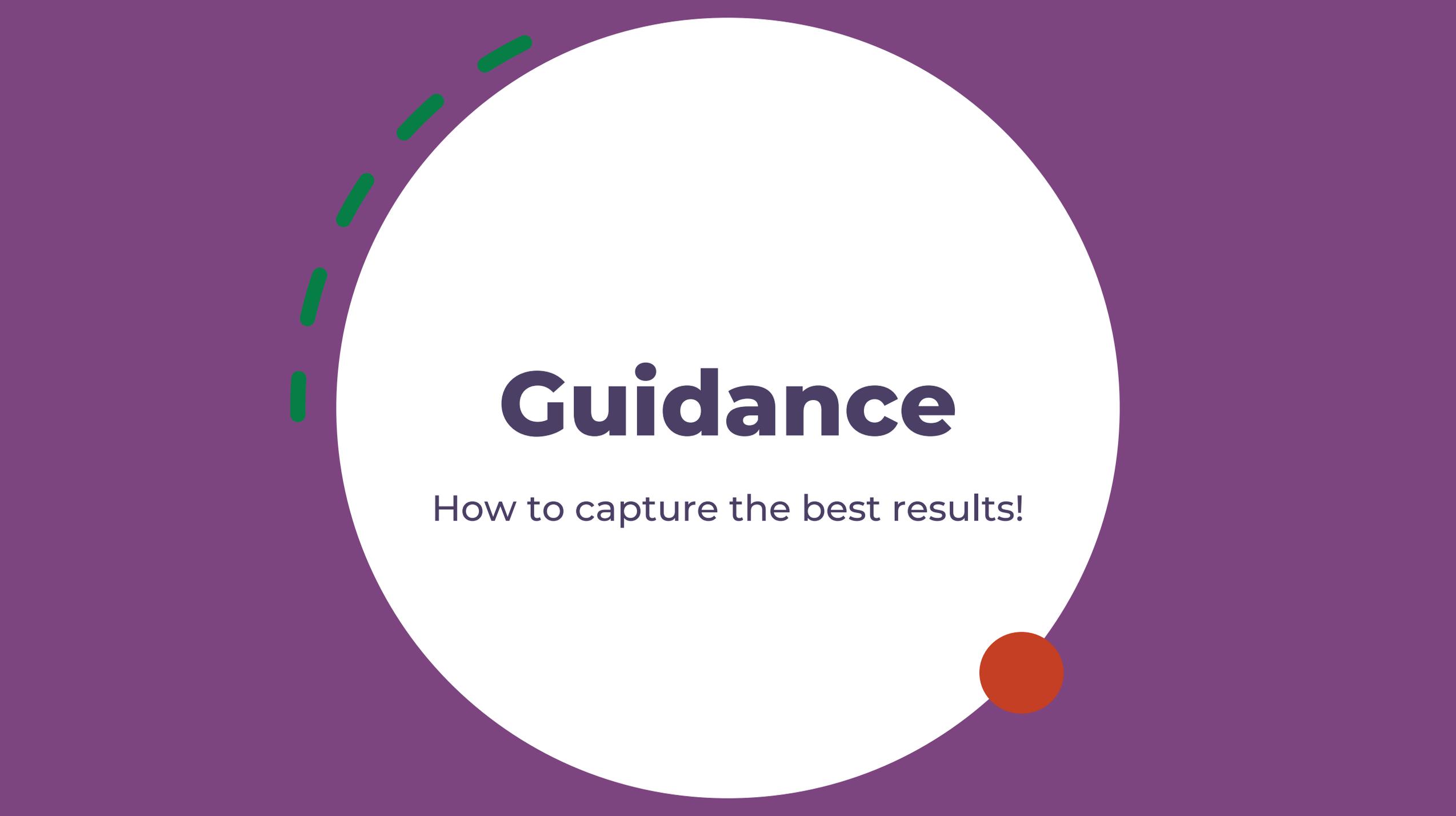
People DO NOT have to give us their information and complete the survey.

---

It is a privilege for them to share their information.

---

Please consider how you would feel with a stranger asking you personal information when conducting the survey.



# Guidance

How to capture the best results!



# Please be sure to:



Turn on/enable your location



Hit "submit" to complete the survey



Review and practice conducting the survey with peers before the actual count.

- Practice will allow you to familiarize yourself with the survey and help you prepare for how best to capture/communicate the information we're trying to capture.



Do your best to capture all the information.

- See the conversation guidance slides for suggestions.





# Do – Survey Guidance:

Always be courteous and respectful – Be mindful of your volume and tone of voice.

Always clearly introduce yourself and/or your group when approaching someone

Always position yourself at the person's eye level (e.g., sit or stand to meet them)

Always be mindful of their personal space and items

Always explain why you're out and what we're trying to capture

Always ask if they know of anyone experiencing homelessness within the area – Never assume!

---

# Do Not – Survey Guidance:

---

Do not make assumptions – You may ask if information is correct or attempt various ways to capture the information requested; however, never make assumptions!

---

Do not select “other” unless absolutely necessary. Take time to ensure the response is not listed before selecting “other”.

---

If “other” is selected, please manually enter the response provided.

---

Do not offer services or housing – You may share/inform them of resources but do not promise anything.

---

Do not double-count! After you’ve introduced yourself, ask if they’ve already participated in the count.

---

Do not leave your assigned region without assistance from your PIT Count captain.

# Do – Safety Guidance:

Determine clear roles within your group

Study your assigned region and establish the plan of action prior to conducting the count

Stay within your assigned region! If you see someone that you believe is experiencing homelessness outside of your exact region:

- Call your PIT Count captain for assistance/guidance
- Call a peer you know is within that region
- If it's safe to do so, try to call the person over

Use your best judgement

Keep safety as your top priority

Should an emergency occur, call 9-1-1 and ask another team member to notify your team captain once everyone is safe!

# Do Not – Safety Guidance:

---

Do not touch anyone – Keep your hands to yourself (If you come across an emergency, call 9-1-1)

---

Do not talk inappropriately– Should an altercation/confrontation occur, safely and immediately remove yourself and your group from the area and then quickly report the incident to your PIT Count captain

---

Do not venture outside of your map boundaries – Call your team captain to request a change to your map. Please note: A request is not guaranteed or may take several minutes to complete.

---

Do not venture away from your group – always stay together

---

Do not venture too far from your group meeting point(s), vehicle, or safety (aka do not take risks)

---

Do not give money or rides.

---

Do not go into an encampment alone.

---

Do not overestimate how many people may be in an encampment.

# Conversation Guidance: “Questioning” or “Don’t Know” responses

While being  
respectful, do your  
best to:

Ask the question another way

Provide an example or description

If you’re comfortable, share your response  
to open up the dialog and share the  
vulnerability

Return back to the question before  
submitting the survey





**Questions?**



# Public Communication Guidelines

e.g., taking photos, talking to media, etc.

# Public Communication Guidelines

## Photography:

- Please do not take or share photos of people experiencing homelessness or their items.
- Please do take photos of yourself and your group conducting the count! We may post them on our social channels, share them with media, or include them in the final report.
- Afterwards, please send photos to Catherine at [catherine.villarreal@cfthouston.org](mailto:catherine.villarreal@cfthouston.org).

## Media:

- If you see any news cameras and/or journalists out in the field, please do not give interviews.
- You can say “I am not an authorized spokesperson for the Homeless Count. If you’re interested in an interview, please contact Catherine Villarreal.” You may give her contact info out to reporters.
- Please notify Catherine Villarreal, Vice President of Public Affairs, at [catherine.villarreal@cfthouston.org](mailto:catherine.villarreal@cfthouston.org)

## Social Media:

- We encourage you and your organizations to post about how you’re participating in the Count!
- Again, please remember to practice sensitivity while taking photos of your surroundings to ensure no people experiencing homelessness are visible.
- Please use hashtag #TheWayHomeHOU when posting on social media!

# Resources

---

## Adult Resources (those 25+):

- Visit The Way Home's Help Card for a variety of resources: <https://www.cfthhouston.org/gethelp>
- For information about local social services or assistance programs: please **call 2-1-1**, the 24/7 information and referral service provided by the United Way of Greater Houston, or visit their website: <https://referral.unitedwayhouston.org/>

## YYA Intake Resources:

- For those under the age of 25 who are at risk or experiencing homelessness, please email [youthprograms@cfthhouston.org](mailto:youthprograms@cfthhouston.org) or call TLC Health & Wellness at 713-703-8244



# Resources: Drop-in Centers

---

## **Ambassadors for Christ:**

- [www.afcyouth.org](http://www.afcyouth.org)
- 940-647-7090
- 5120 Woodway Dr Ste 915, Houston, TX 77056

## **Covenant House Texas:**

- <https://www.covenanthousetx.org/>
- 713-523-2231
- 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston, TX 77004

## **Houston ReVision:**

- <https://www.houstonrevision.org/>
- 281-656-6615
- 6856 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77004

## **Montrose Grace Place:**

- [www.montrosegaceplace.org](http://www.montrosegaceplace.org)
- 832-239-0824
- 2515 Waugh Dr., Houston, TX 77006

## **The Salvation Army - Young Adult Resource Center (YARC):**

- <https://salvationarmyhouston.org/>
- 713-223-4513
- 1603 McGowen Street, Houston, TX 77004

## **Tony's Place**

- <https://tonysplace.org/>
- 713-678-0733
- 1621 McGowen, Houston, TX 77004



# Safety Contacts

---

**Call 911 for any immediate emergency**

**Email your designated CFTH PIT Count Captain**

**HPD Homeless Outreach team # for non-emergency assistance: (281) 460-2680**

**Harris County Sheriff's Office non-emergency assistance: (713) 755-5300**

**Fort Bend Sheriff's Office non-emergency assistance: (281) 341-4700**

**Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, non-emergency assistance: (936) 760-5800**

**Child Protective Services: For unaccompanied minors encountered during the count  
(800) 252-5400**



# Emergency Numbers

---

**Medical Emergency:** 9-1-1

---

**Houston Police Department Non-Emergency Number:** 713-884-3131

---

**United Way of Greater Houston 24/7 Helpline:** 2-1-1

---

**Addiction No More Hotline:** 1-800-819-9973

---

**Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc. (Adults):** 832-416-1177

---

**Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc. (Teens):** 832-416-1199 (call) or 281-201-4430 (text)

---

**Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Domestic Violence Hotline:** 713-528-2121

---

**Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Sexual Assault Hotline:** 713-528-7273

---

**National Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888

---

**National Suicide Hotline:** 1-800-273-8255

---

**Texas Youth Helpline:** 1-800-989-6884

---

**Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline:** 1-800-622-4357

---

**The Harris Center Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT):** 713-970-7000, option 1

---

**Veterans Crisis Hotline:** 1-800-273-8255

---





**Questions?**

# Prior to Day 1

---

Complete the 2026 PIT Count training

---

Register as a volunteer for the Count

---

Complete/Update registration on the Counting Us app

---

Inform your supervisor of your registration and put a hold on your (work) calendar for each day you volunteer

---

Pick up your 2026 PIT Count t-shirt

---

Be on the lookout for your team/region assignment(s)

---

Plan to dress accordingly!



**Thank you!**

---