

## Point in Time Count Team Lead Description

### Point in Time Count Overview

The Point in Time (PIT) Count is a survey of the unhoused population in Austin and Travis County that happens every other year at the end of January. Hundreds of volunteers head out early in the morning to find as many people experiencing unsheltered homelessness as possible. Point in Time Counts matter most because they are the primary way the federal government tracks the overall number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S.

### Team Lead Role

**Team Leads play a vital role in ensuring a successful PIT Count.** Team Leads coordinate a team of general volunteers, serve as the liaison between their team and ECHO staff, lead the scouting of their section to identify where people are sleeping outside, and lead their team in surveying people experiencing homelessness on the night of the PIT Count.

### Time Commitment

- Count preparation: 5-10 hours per month from December through January
- Day of Count: Approximately 5 hours

### Key Responsibilities

- **Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement**
  - **Recruit as many of your friends, colleagues, and family members as you can**
    - Teams tend to have better volunteer retention when the members know each other
  - Keep your team engaged by communicating regularly leading up to the PIT Count
  - Meet with your team of general volunteers prior to the count to build rapport and strategize
- **Coordination**
  - Serve as the point of contact for your team of general volunteers and respond to general questions
  - Serve as the point of contact between your volunteer team and ECHO
  - Ensure everyone on your team has completed General Volunteer Training
- **Planning and Scouting**
  - Gain familiarity with your assigned section
  - Contact local area experts who can inform your scouting
  - Introduce yourself to people experiencing homelessness in your section
  - Scout your section to determine where people may be sleeping unsheltered
    - We encourage Team Leads to speak with the Leads in the surround sections, local businesses, and emergency responders about where to find people sleeping unsheltered
    - ECHO will provide Team Leads with information on known hotspots and try to connect leads to emergency responders who are familiar with your area
  - Create a Count Day Plan for your team that describes how you will approach surveying your section
  - Pick up all materials (surveys, clipboards, etc.) from ECHO prior to the Count
- **Day of the Count**
  - Review the survey and procedures with your team
  - Ensure the PIT Count occurs within your section
  - Ensure the PIT Count is conducted safely and everyone surveyed is treated with respect and dignity
  - Collect and return all completed survey forms to ECHO on the morning of the Count (paper survey forms are available as backups to the survey app volunteers will use)
- **Training**
  - Attend a Team Lead meetup
    - Team Lead meetups are **required** for first time Team Leads and highly encouraged for experienced Team Leads



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- Complete the General Volunteer training

### Skills

- Friendly, positive attitude
- Ability to recruit, organize, and lead a team of volunteers
- Comfortable talking to strangers, including strangers experiencing homelessness
- Ability to ensure respectful treatment and safety for volunteers and anyone surveyed
- Ability to use the volunteer management system (instructions will be provided)
- Ability to walk several miles
- Ability to use the online survey system on your phone (training provided, smart phone required, paper back-up surveys available)

### Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **Do I need to recruit all the volunteers for my team?** You are strongly encouraged to recruit volunteers for your team. Volunteers with a personal connection to their Team Leads are much more likely to follow through on their commitment. ECHO will also recruit volunteers to supplement your recruitment efforts.
2. **Do I need prior experience in homeless services, or with the PIT Count?** Previous experience volunteering with the PIT Count **is required for Team Leads**. No experience is required to sign up as a General Volunteer
3. **Do I need to supply any materials on the morning of the Count?** Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own flashlights. ECHO will ensure each team has the materials they need for the PIT Count.
4. **Should we bring things to hand out to people (socks, blankets, etc.)?** No. Please coordinate all donations with ECHO beforehand so we can ensure donations are appropriate and all teams have equal resources.
5. **How many volunteers are involved in the PIT Count?** ECHO aims to recruit 800 volunteers this year.
6. **When will I know who the volunteers on my team are?** ECHO will assign volunteers to your team as they register for the PIT Count. General Volunteer registration begins in late November and continues until the day of the Count. Due to the flow of volunteer registration, ECHO may sometimes move volunteers from one team to another to ensure all sections are covered.
7. **Will there be someone I can reach out to if I have questions about being a Team Lead?** Absolutely. If you have any questions at all, contact ECHO at [pitcount@austinecho.org](mailto:pitcount@austinecho.org).
8. **Will someone remind me about the timeline and my responsibilities?** Yes. ECHO will send out Team Lead newsletters with tips and best practices to help you stay on track.
9. **Is there a bad weather plan?** Yes. In the case of dangerous weather conditions ECHO will notify all Team Leads of a back-up Count date.

### About ECHO:

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is a coalition of stakeholders that plans, develops, prioritizes, and implements systemic, community-wide strategies to end homelessness in Austin and Travis County, Texas. Its work is grounded on collaborative partnerships, strategic and data-driven decision making, and innovation, bold thinking, and creativity.