SimtechSolutions,inc.

Counting Us and Regional Command Center
Tips for Point-in-Time Count Administrators
Next Steps

<u>The Command Center:</u>
Once you have signed your agreement with Simtech Solutions, we will work quickly to set up your data store in the Command Center. We set up the geography of the region, add the surveys, and establish at least Count Administrator. The Admin can log in using the same credentials that are used for the app. From here you can manage users, change the set-up key, change the status of the activity, update the list of projects, watch data come in and more. These videos and these FAQs provide a good overview but you can also submit a ticket to helpdesk@simtechsolutions.com if you have additional questions.

<u>Training</u>: You are probably getting ready for training and meetings about the PIT. We encourage you to send out the Getting Started Information (step-by-step instructions) found on this support page, completed with your set up key, to all of those that you will be training. Nothing helps team leads and volunteers get ready more than downloading the app, registering an account, and entering surveys. Ideally, this happens in a test version of your actual count. If your surveys are finalized, and your datastore set up in the Command Center is ready to go, you will be able to see which people have entered surveys. When folks arrive for training, they are already familiar with the process, but you can highlight a few key items:

<u>The Surveys</u>:
The surveys are designed with a couple of key goals related to helping communities with the PIT. Whether or not your community has added additional questions, or changed some of the labels of question, the survey is designed to collect the information that is required for a HUD- compliant PIT report and to address some of the common concerns that we have heard among a majority of our customers.

Required questions and conditional logic: Simtech added the ability to make fields required and to add conditional logic, where a response is dependent on responses to other questions. Together these features help streamline data collection and minimize data error as described in this FAQ.

***Who Counts*?** The survey opens with a question about location during the designated Count period. This response determines who is included in the official Count, according to HUD definitions. The survey is set to only display for those who meet the criteria for unsheltered homeless.

***Age range matters*!** HUD does not require a date of birth, nor an exact age but each record must be associated as either a child (<18), youth (18-24), or adult (25+), so the age range question is now required. The additional questions regarding date of birth and exact age allow regions to have more precise data.

Demographics: HUD is also interested in responses to **gender, race, and ethnicity** so try and answer these.

Chronic homelessness: The app collects all the required information to determine the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness, as well as all the subpopulations so the more complete the survey, the better the data and the more you will know. A family is considered chronically homeless if any of the adults, or a youth head-of-household meets the criteria.

Observation tallies: These forms contain minimal information and should be used on a limited basis

Important Information

Plan what day and time you are going to change the activity from “testing” to “active.” Consider starting the count at the same time for all components. If someone still needs to test surveys after they have been made “active,” just include “test” in the notes so it can be easily archived.

Work with the team leads to ensure that the following is conveyed to all volunteers:

1. **Planning:**

   Be ready to go! The app should be downloaded, accounts should be registered, phones should be fully charged, and location services should be turned on.

2. **During the Count:**

   Mistakes can be fixed! Volunteers should know that if they have submitted a survey that has incomplete or incorrect information, they should have a phone number for the team leader, regional coordinator, etc. and this person should contact the Count Manager or Administrator, so the record can be updated in the Command Center. The closer to real time that this can occur, the more accurate the final data will be.

   This goes two ways! The Administrator may contact a user. For example, if a survey comes in outside of a count area, they can see who submitted it and call the volunteer.

   Surveys should be entered in the app: Volunteers who are not using the app should be paired with someone who is!

3. **After the Count:**

   Count all the surveys! At the end of the Count, confirm that there are *no remaining drafts* on any devices, and if they happened to be used, ensure that all paper surveys have been entered into the app, or web version of Counting Us.

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