



2020 K-Count Local Planning Guide

Point-in-Time Count of Kentucky's Homeless

What is the K-Count?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires an annual count as a condition of funding for its homeless service programs. The K-Count allows Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) and other interested parties to better understand homelessness in Kentucky by monitoring trends and tracking progress, to make informed decisions for resource allocation.

The Count is not meant to capture every person who will experience homelessness throughout the year in Kentucky. Rather, it is a “snapshot” of homelessness on any given night across the state.

Who is Counted?

Only persons who meet HUD’s definition of literally homeless, as defined in paragraphs (1)(i) and (1)(ii) of the homeless definition in 24 CFR 578.3, are included. To be considered literally homeless for purposes of the K-Count, an individual or family must have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation (i.e, unsheltered); or is living in a publicly- or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements, which includes congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels or motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs (i.e., sheltered).

Planning Your Community’s Unsheltered Count

The KY Balance of State Continuum of Care (KY BoS CoC) and the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) have assembled this guide to assist communities as they plan their Sheltered and Unsheltered Counts locally. Successful K-Count strategies may vary from community to community in our 118 county CoC, however in order for K-Count efforts to be successful communities must employ these foundational common practices: planning in advance, creating community partnerships and gaining community buy-in.

This guide will highlight

- ✓ Unsheltered Count Methodology Tips
- ✓ Possible places within your community to conduct your Unsheltered Count
- ✓ Possible community organizations to partner with
- ✓ Volunteer recruitment strategies
- ✓ Tips on care packages items for those experiencing homelessness in your community
- ✓ Best practices for volunteers conducting the count
- ✓ State and Federal Point In Time Count links and resources

Unsheltered Count Methodology Tips:

- Conduct the Unsheltered Count on the designated night of the K-Count
 - 2020 K-Count is on the night of Wednesday January 29th
- Work with local partners to identify **known locations** in your community where people live unsheltered
- Recruit volunteers to assist/participate with the count
 - Gather donations/assemble care packages
 - Complete K-Count surveys with non-HUD funded shelters/programs
 - Complete K-Count surveys during the Unsheltered Count
- County Coordinators create maps/routes of known locations and assign volunteer teams to specific routes
- Volunteer teams have diverse experience in working with those who are homeless
 - Aim to have at least one homeless service provider/shelter provider per team of volunteers.
 - Recruit local law enforcement to assist- stress plain-clothes officers vs. officers in uniform.
 - Avoid having a volunteer team where no one has experience in serving those experiencing homelessness.
- Unsheltered Count routes and volunteer teams assembled prior to the night of the count
 - Provide volunteer teams with map/route of the locations they will be canvassing prior to the night of so they can see the locations in the light of day first.
- Hold a local training for volunteers prior to the count
 - Training for specific groups, (i.e. law enforcement vs. community volunteers).
 - Provide an overview or count briefing prior to conducting the Unsheltered Count on the night of the K-Count.
- Have a local emergency/crisis plans in place
 - Who can volunteers contact if they encounter someone having a mental health crisis or safety concerns due to DV?
 - Who can assist in transporting interested people to shelter?
 - Will local EMTs be partnering with the count and ready to assist?
 - Ensure volunteers have all relevant contact information should an emergency/crisis arise and clearly communicate your community's plan.
 - County Coordinators consider giving out contact information as the point person of contact throughout the night.
- Provide all volunteers with community resource information
 - Any Door KY access information
 - Local shelter information
- Provide all volunteers with care packages for those they encounter living unsheltered

Tip: Work with ERs, First Responders and Law Enforcement – third shift staff may be able to conduct Unsheltered surveys with people they encounter throughout the night after the coordinated Unsheltered Count has ended.

Places to Canvass for People Living Unsheltered:

- Parks
- Alleys/downtown streets

- Under overpasses and bridges
- Railroad tracks
- Waterfront areas (such as lakes/rivers)
- Parking lots
- Parking garages
- Church grounds
- Libraries
- Post Offices
- Highway rest stops
- Food banks
- Marinas
- Bus stops and at transit centers
- Campgrounds
- Locally known encampments/ tent cities
- Emergency rooms (if the persons are not being admitted or seeking overnight care)
- All towns within the county
- Abandoned buildings
- Large retail stores and malls
- Gas stations and mini marts
- 24-hour commercial establishments (i.e. Laundromats, convenience stores, coffee shops)

Tip: Talk with current or formerly homeless people to identify other places to count. Also talk with current or formerly homeless youth about places to count homeless youth in your community.

Organizations to Partner with for Your Count

- Homeless Service Providers (HUD funded and non-HUD funded)
- Emergency Shelter Providers (HUD funded and non-HUD funded)
- Food banks
- Community action agencies
- Family Support offices
- Outreach workers
- 211 operators
- Community Mental health agencies
- Chemical dependency organizations
- Domestic violence shelters/Victim Service Providers
- Local Housing Authorities
- Employment agencies
- Agencies that serve youth
- Re-entry and parole programs
- Therapeutic justice programs (i.e. drug court, mental health court)
- Libraries
- Churches and other faith-based organizations
- Schools, including community colleges
- Hospitals
- Local Emergency Management offices
- Public transportation
- Veteran organizations
- Local law enforcement, including KSP

- Jails
- Code enforcement
- Day labor sites
- Agencies that canvass the town (Post Office, FedEx, public utilities, railroad companies etc.)
- Stores and restaurants
- Local YMCAs

Volunteer Recruitment

Consider the following outlets and organizations when recruiting volunteers for your local Unsheltered Count.

- Newspaper coverage leading up to the count
 - Press Release templates are located on the KHC website.
- Agency newsletters
- Flyers put up around town
 - Information Flyer can be found on KHC's website:
<http://www.kyhousing.org/Specialized-Housing/Pages/K-Count.aspx>
- Agency website/Social Media
- Those with lived experience of homelessness in your community
- Local government agencies
- College campuses
- Television/radio
- Volunteers from previous K-Counts or agency events
- Emails to other local agencies
- Churches and faith-based coalitions
- Local homeless coalition or task force
- Ask current volunteers to recruit their friends and co-workers

Items to Consider for Care Packages

- Food packs (nonperishables, water, and additional information about food banks)
- Hygiene packs + information on local day shelters/programs
- Bus passes
- Laundry tokens
- Meal gift cards
- Winter coats
- Hats
- Gloves
- Scarves
- Socks
- Tents
- Sleeping bags
- Blankets
- Backpacks
- Hand/Boot warmers
- Tarps
- Batteries
- Gift cards from retailers

Best Practices with Volunteers

- Try to recruit currently or formerly homeless individuals. They have the most knowledge about the best places to count.
- Train the volunteers 1-2 weeks before the K-Count so the information is still fresh. KHC will be hosting a [webinar](#) at 2 p.m. ET on January 22, 2020 to discuss the survey tools for the K-Count. We highly recommend all recruited volunteers to participate in addition to any local training.
- Provide volunteers with materials ahead of time (their team's route, what to wear/bring, etc...).
- Provide a volunteer briefing directly prior to the Unsheltered Count to go over the logistics of the night.
- Assign volunteers to specific areas – Do this ahead of time so they can look over their areas before the Unsheltered Count.
- Put volunteers into teams of two or more
 - When possible, put a volunteer on each team with previous PIT experience or previous experience serving people who are homeless
- Have volunteers role play the survey process- it is key to be comfortable with the survey before administering it in the field.
- Remind volunteers to be respectful of the spaces they will be entering during the Unsheltered Count
 - What we may see as a public space is a home to those who are living unsheltered and sleeping rough.
- Provide volunteers with a clear mission/purpose of the K-Count and communicate community expectations.
 - Treat all individuals with respect and dignity
 - Provide care packages and connections to permanent housing solutions in your community.
 - Allow people to tell their story if they choose to.
 - Treat the survey as more of a conversation. It is ok to reword some of the questions as needed.
 - Value the privilege of serving our most vulnerable community members.

K-Count and HUD Point In Time Count Resources:

- Kentucky Housing Corporation K-Count page <http://www.kyhousing.org/Specialized-Housing/Pages/K-Count.aspx>
- HUD Exchange Point In Time Count page <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/guides/pit-hic/#general-pit-guides-and-tools>