

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

GUELPH-WELLINGTON 2018 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

1. What is the 2018 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count?

As part of efforts to measure progress towards reducing homelessness, Ontario's Ministry of Housing and the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy are encouraging communities to conduct a local count of people experiencing homelessness. Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts will take place across Canada between March 1 and April 30, 2018.

The purpose of a PiT Count is to identify how many people in a community experience homelessness at a given time and to collect information on demographics and service needs. This information can be used to target resources and track movement toward reducing homelessness.

2. What is a Combined PiT Count and Registry Week?

Communities participating in the 20,000 Homes Campaign led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness may choose to combine their PiT Count with a Registry Week. A Registry Week shares a lot of the features of a PiT count in that volunteers conduct surveys with people experiencing homelessness; however, the purpose of a Registry Week is to begin to assess the needs of people experiencing homelessness and develop a By-Name List to prioritize people for housing interventions. A Registry Week is typically carried out over a few days.

3. So, what's happening in Guelph-Wellington?

Guelph-Wellington will be conducting a Combined PiT Count and Registry Week. In Guelph, this will occur from April 23rd to April 25th, 2018. In Wellington County, this will occur from April 23rd to April 29th, 2018.

Since a PiT Count always references a single day, the reference date for the PiT Count will be April 23rd in both Guelph and Wellington County.

4. Wait – didn't we just do this in 2016?

We did! In 2016, Guelph-Wellington did its first ever Combined PiT Count and Registry Week. During three days in April, we identified 295 people experiencing homelessness. We used this information to inform a By-Name List and track progress toward reducing homelessness. In November 2017, it was reported that our community had reduced homelessness by 37% since Registry Week!

Doing another Combine PiT Count and Registry Week in 2018 allows us to create another snapshot of homelessness in our community. Think of it as spring cleaning for our By-Name List! This is an opportunity to identify new individuals and update information for those we already know. This is also a chance for us to contribute to a national understanding of homelessness and to help measure progress on a broader level.

5. Are we doing anything differently this time around?

Absolutely! We learned a lot in 2016 and have been working hard to improve some of our approaches in 2018 to provide an even better understanding of homelessness.

First, we've been working with partners in Wellington County to improve our approach in small and rural communities. We've built new partnerships, identified new survey locations, and have worked through addressing barriers, such as transportation. We've also extended Registry Week to be a full 7 days, with hopes of connecting with people over a larger geographical area.

Second, we've built a bigger PiT Count team. This includes additional staff from the Poverty Task Force and County of Wellington, but also a team member to focus specifically on fostering connections with the Indigenous community.

Third, we've hired Peer Leaders to join the PiT Count team! Peer Leaders have lived experience of homelessness and bring a unique perspective and expertise to the process of planning and implementing the count.

6. Ok – so what does this look like? How will information be collected?

Information will be collected by trained volunteers and community partners (e.g. shelter staff) who physically locate, count, and collect survey data from people experiencing homelessness. Surveys will be carried out at emergency shelters, violence against women shelters, service organizations, and events.

Information will be collected using two tools:

- 2018 Ontario Enumeration Tool – This survey collects anonymous information about demographics and service needs.
- Common Assessment Tool (CAT) – A CAT uses a standardized scoring system to assist communities in determining the appropriate level of intervention for the homeless individual or family.

7. Wait a minute – who's organizing this?

The 2018 Combined PiT Count and Registry Week is being co-led by the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and the County of Wellington Social Services. We also happen to be the co-lead's on the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign – a local campaign focused on ending chronic homelessness for the most vulnerable.

Two committees (one in Guelph, one in Wellington County) have also been convened and have been supporting the planning of the Combined PiT Count and Registry Week over the past few months. Partners include: City of Guelph, Community Resource Centre of Centre and North Wellington, County of Wellington, East Wellington Community Services, Family & Children's Services of Guelph & Wellington County, Guelph Community Health Centre, Guelph Police Service, Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination, Rural Wellington Community Team, Upper Grand District School Board, Welcome In Drop In Centre, Women in Crisis, and Wyndham House.