

Fulton County Continuum of Care – 2025 Point in Time Count Volunteer Training



Department of Community Development
Homeless Division

JANUARY 17, 2025

Welcome

- We will start at five past the hour while we wait for others to join
- During the wait, please review the call's housekeeping instructions:
 - ✓ For attendance purposes, please type the names of everyone participating in the training in the chat box
 - ✓ Everyone will be muted during the presentation
 - ✓ During the presentation, please use the chat functionality to ask any questions
 - ✓ Email homelessinfo@fultoncounty.gov during the call if you experience issues with submitting your questions via chat

What is the Point in Time (PIT) Count?

- A literal count of all the people experiencing homelessness in our community on a single night (i.e., at a point in time)
- Required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Conducted by every community nationwide in the last 10 days of January at least every other year.
- The PIT count is a “snap shot” in time and is not designed to estimate how many people experience homelessness throughout the year or a total number of homeless in the Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Measures and monitors trends and changes in homelessness on local and national levels
- Helps our community understand what resources we need and strategize the best ways to use them to end homelessness
- Organized and conducted by the Fulton CoC and the Fulton County Department of Community Development

Who is Counted in the PIT Count?

HUD's [definition of "homeless,"](#) for the purpose of the PIT count, includes two main types of homelessness:

- **Unsheltered:** Individuals or families whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not meant for human habitation
- **Sheltered:** Individuals or families residing in a place dedicated to providing temporary living arrangements for those who would otherwise be unsheltered

Who is Counted in the PIT Count?



SHELTERED PIT COUNT

- **Emergency shelters** (including those using hotel and motel vouchers)
- **Transitional housing**
- **Safe Havens**



UNSHELTERED PIT COUNT

- **Car**
- **Park**
- **Abandoned building**
- **Bus or train station**
- **Airport**
- **Camping ground**
- **Parking Lot**

Who is NOT Counted in the PIT Count?

HUD's [definition of "homeless,"](#) is specific and does not include groups that we typically would consider to be "homeless".

The PIT Count does not include people who are:

- Couch surfing
- Living with friends or family / doubled-up
- Living in a hotel and the cost of the hotel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or a publicly funded program. **If the household is self paying or a family or friend is paying for the hotel on the night of the count then they are not counted during the HUD PIT Count.*

Fulton County CoC PIT Count Methodology

- PIT Count Night – January 22, 2025
 - Homeless service staff, outreach workers, and volunteers from the public will canvas, identify, and survey starting on January 22nd through January 29th
- Unsheltered Homeless Count
 - Canvassing and predetermined known locations
 - January 22nd - South Fulton
 - January 23rd - North Fulton
 - Service based counts (23rd - 29th) – soup kitchens, libraries, and other community service locations. Volunteers may be needed; we will contact you ahead of time to determine your availability.

Fulton County CoC PIT Count Methodology

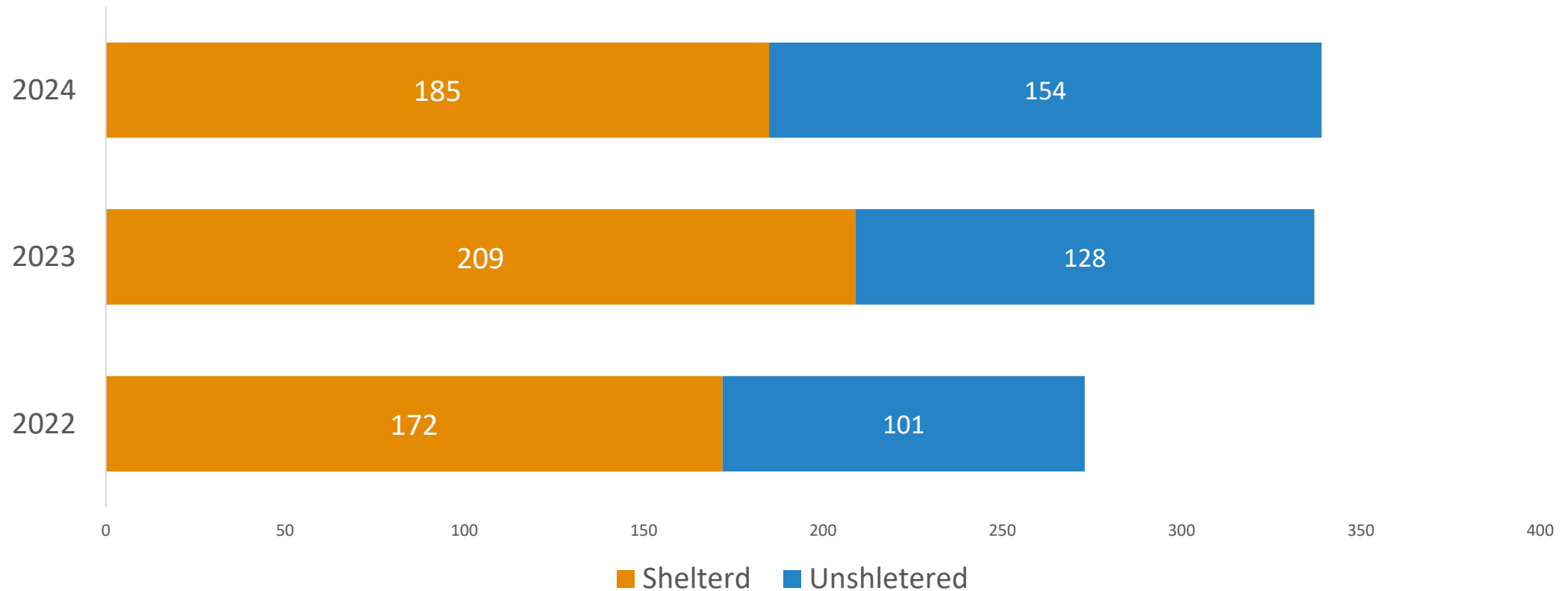
- Sheltered Count – January 22, 2025
 - Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data from night of the count and surveys completed on “Counting Us” app at non-participating HMIS emergency shelters (including hotels/ motels paid for by charitable organization or publicly funded program), transitional housing programs, and safe havens.

Partnerships

The Continuum of Care and Fulton County Department of Community Development have been working with providers through the Point in Time Count planning committee to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive count, including but not limited to:

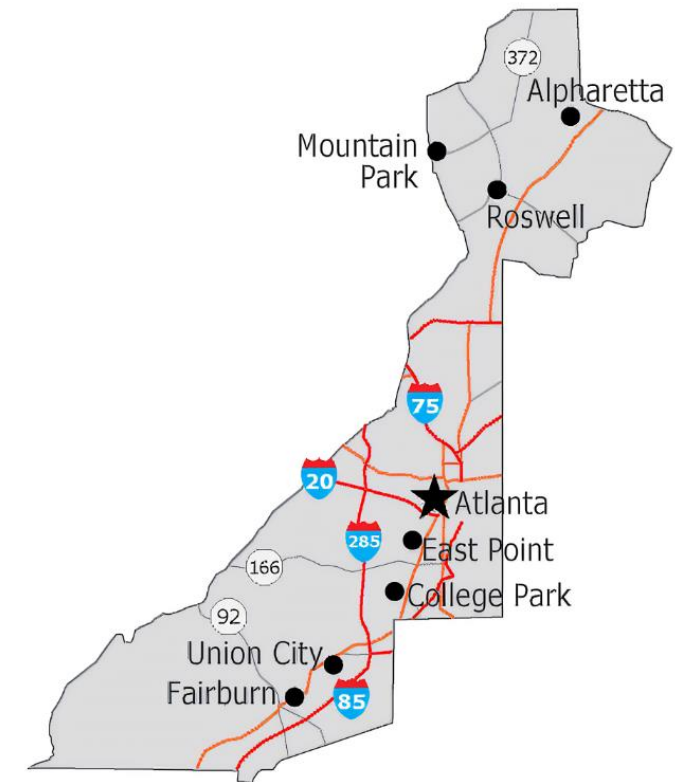
- Homeless Service Providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Fulton County School liaisons
- Library System
- Community Service Providers
- Veterans Administration

Fulton County CoC PIT Count Trends: 2022-2024



Locations

- We will be counting the Fulton County CoC region (all of Fulton County, except for metro Atlanta)
- Prior to the night of the Count, you will receive notification of the location(s) you are assigned, location of the command center to report to, and when to meet.
- Volunteers will be assigned locations such as:
 - Parks where persons experiencing homelessness are known to sleep
 - Bus stations
 - Known Encampments
 - General areas to canvas





Conducting Interviews

What to Bring

You will be provided:

Flashlight and safety vest

Identification card, pen, list of locations,
and clipboard

Face masks & gloves will be available

PIT Count cheat sheet

Hygiene kits for survey respondents

You should bring:

Weather-appropriate clothing:

- Warm, dry clothing that is comfortable
- Light or bright colored / reflective clothing
- Shoes: warm, comfortable, waterproof

Small Backpack or purse

Cell phone (fully charged); remote
charger or backup battery.

Who to Interview

- It is not always possible to determine if someone is experiencing homelessness based solely on how they look.
- Consider:
 - Where do you see the person?
 - What is the person doing?
 - What time is it?
- Pitfall: Making assumptions about who to interview using stereotypes of what homelessness looks like.
- Best practice: Approach everyone you see in known unsheltered locations. You can use a soft, non-confrontational introduction that's easy to reverse course if the person is not experiencing homelessness.

Step 1: Approach & Introduction

- Approach the person, introduce yourself and ask if they have a few minutes to answer some questions
- Identify a private, safe space to ask survey questions
- Keep in mind:
 - Individuals sleeping outside may be dealing with active addiction, mental health concerns, and significant trauma histories. Do not sneak up on or startle people. Never shine flashlights in people's faces.
 - Maintain eye contact (if possible) and an open stance with your hands visible. Use a tone of voice that's approachable. Speak slowly, be polite, and don't shout.



Hi, my name is [name] and I'm a volunteer for local outreach. We're out here trying to talk to folks who might not have a safe place to sleep. Do you have a safe place to sleep tonight? Do you know where I might find some people around here who don't?

Step 2: Explain What You're Doing & Get Verbal Consent

- Explain why you're there
- Let them know that you're offering hygiene kits to people that participate in the survey.
- Inform participants about the nature of the survey questions, how data is collected and how their information is used/protected.
- Engage with someone at their level- if someone is sitting, it is better to sit with them during the interview than stand over them.
- If they consent to answering the survey questions, continue with the interview. If they don't, thank them for their time, and complete the observation form in the Counting Us app.



We're conducting a survey to better understand homelessness in our community and improve programs. Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. You can choose to skip any question and your answers will not affect your eligibility for any incentives or services, and the information will not be shared with anyone outside of our team. I will need to read each question all the way through. Can I have about 10 or so minutes of your time?

Step 3: Conduct the Interview Using the Survey App

- Go through each question in the survey
 - Clarify any questions where there is confusion.
- Remember: people have the right not to answer any question!
 - Individuals and families are free to refuse to answer any question on the survey, but typically do so because they do not understand what the surveyor is asking.
- Familiarize yourself with the questions to explain the reason for the question and how it helps to have each survey to be answered completely.

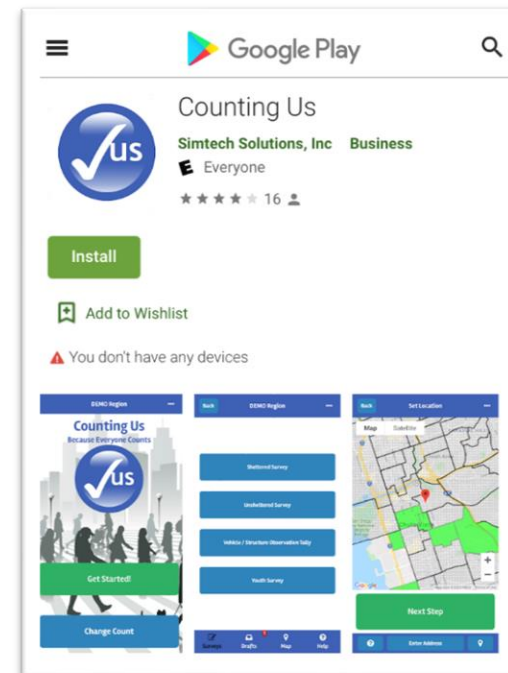
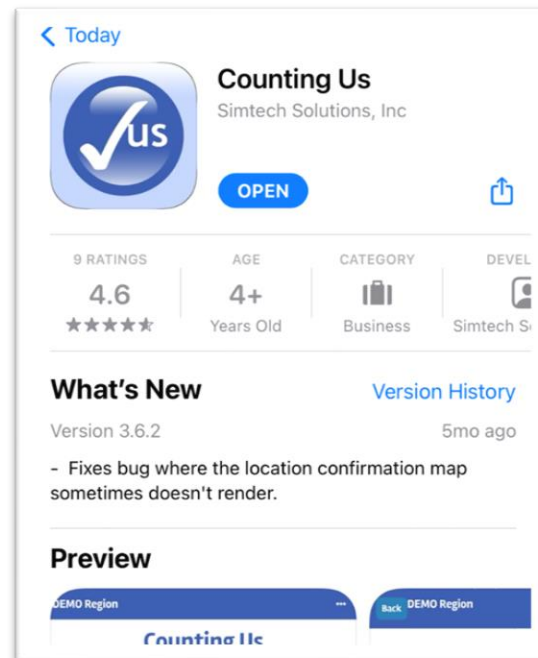
Counting Us Application

- The “Counting Us” application is an online survey program provided by Simtech Solutions.
- Easy to use platform that can be used whether or not the user is connected to the internet.
- All information is stored on a secure server
- Fulfills HUD’s reporting requirements



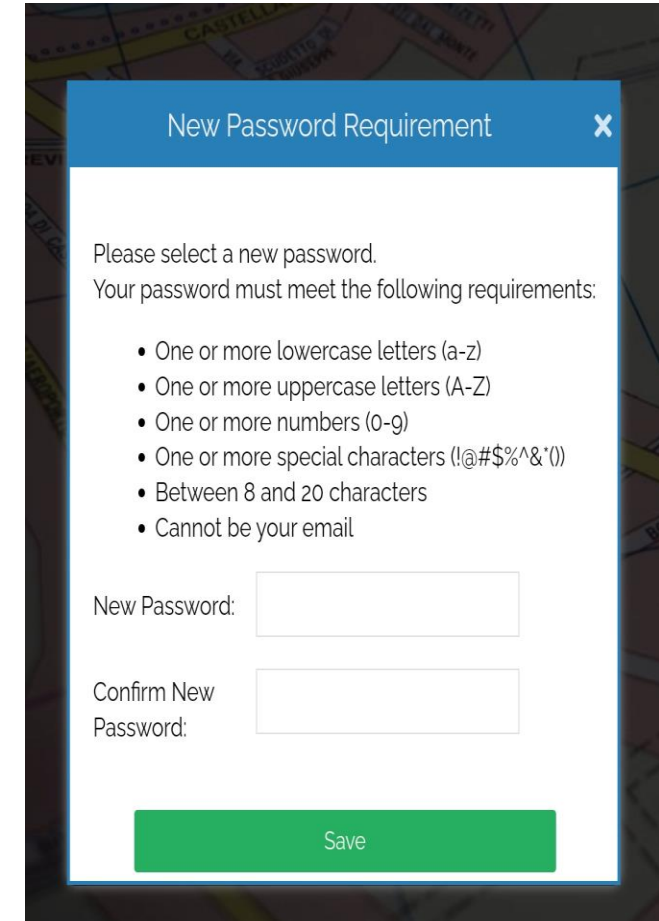
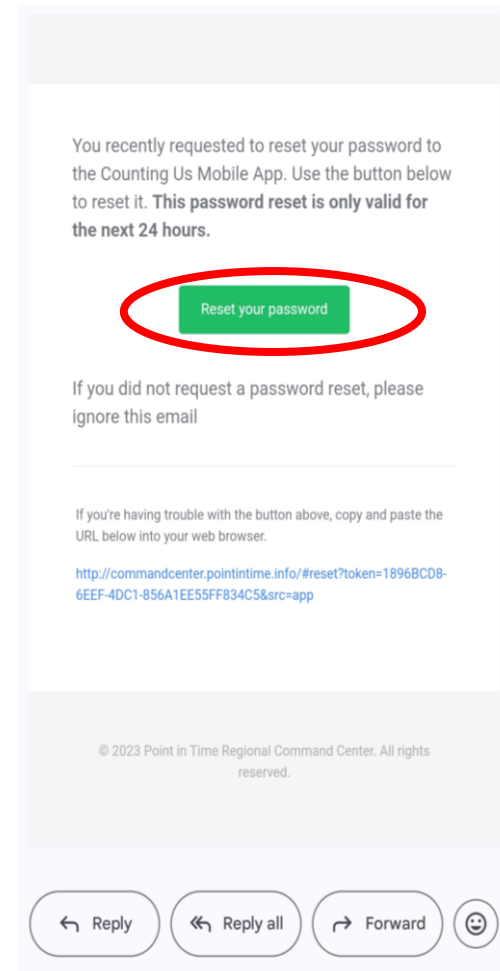
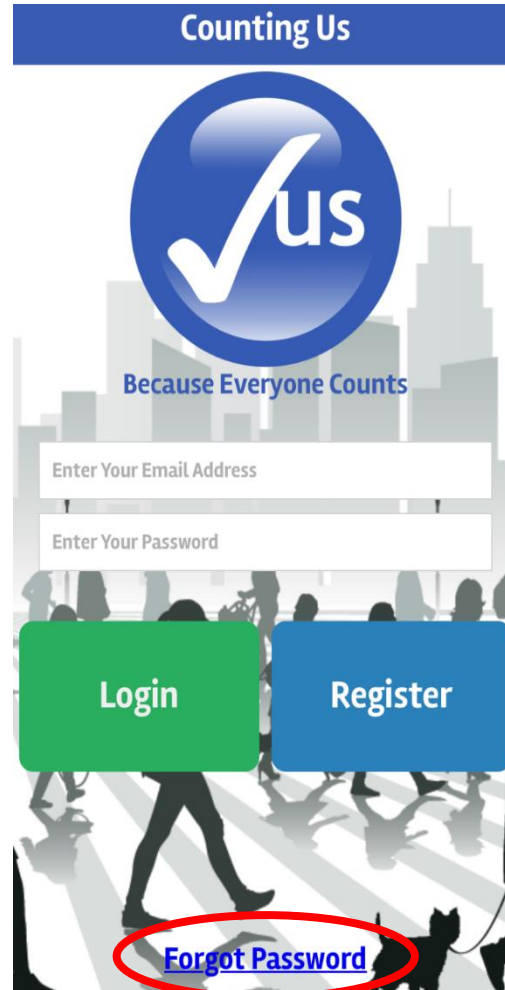
Downloading the Counting Us App

- The Counting Us App can be downloaded for free on the:
 - Apple App Store
 - Google Play Store
- Can also be accessed online from any internet capable device at <https://counting.us/>



Logging into the Counting Us App

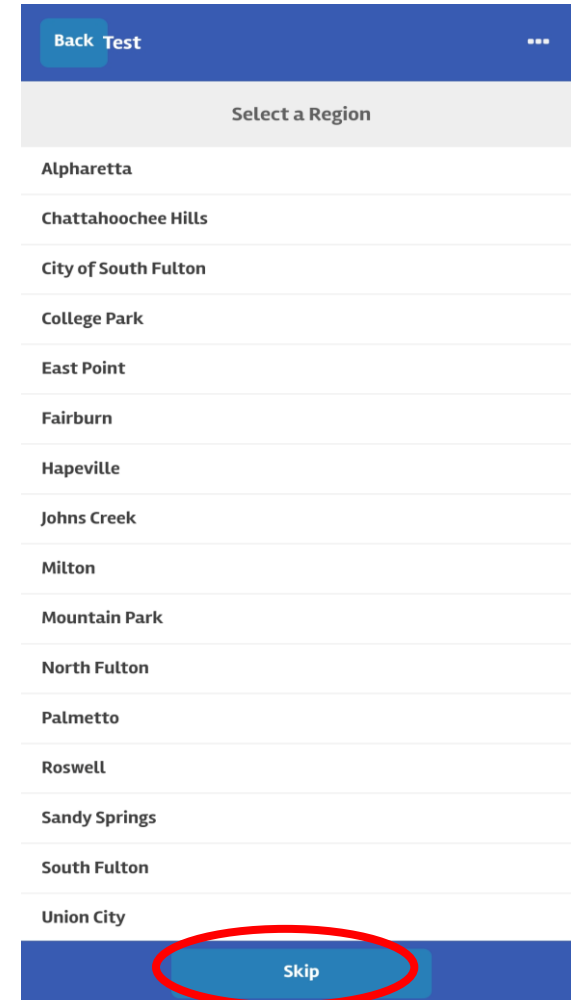
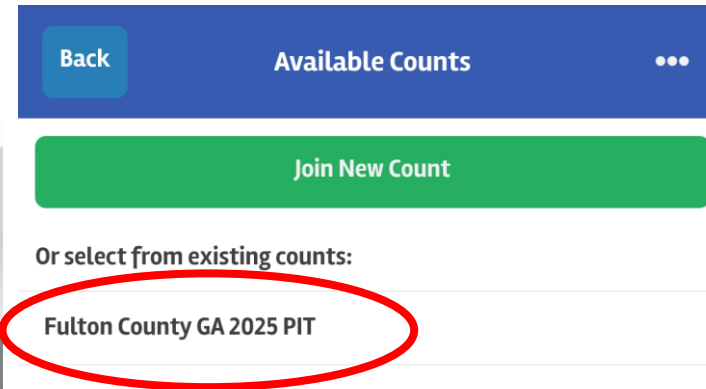
- Open the Counting Us App on your mobile device or go to <https://counting.us/> on your computer.
- Select “Forgot Password” and enter the email that was used when signing up on the volunteer registration portal.
- You will receive an email with a password reset link.
- Once the password has been reset go back to the Counting Us App and login.



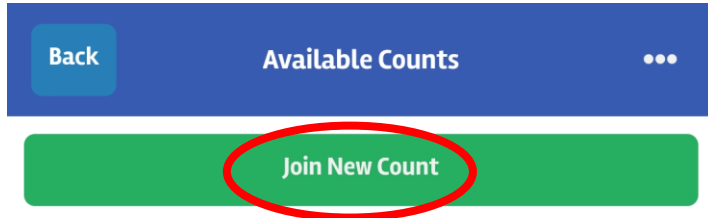
Logging into the Counting Us App



OR



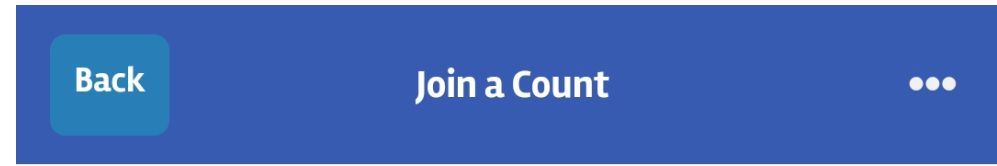
Once you have selected “Choose Count” if you are presented with the following screen, select “Join New Count”.



Or select from existing counts:

No Counts Available

Please tap 'Join New Count' above to join to a new count



Enter in the Setup Key provided by your regional count administrator.

Fulton2025

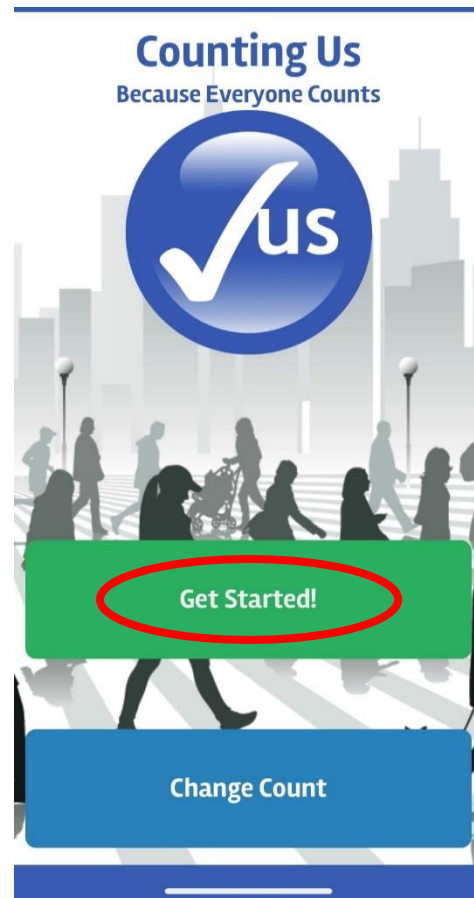


Join Count

You will then be prompted to enter the Setup Key. Enter Fulton2025 and select “Join Count”.

Starting a Survey

1. Login to the Counting Us App
2. Select “Get Started!”

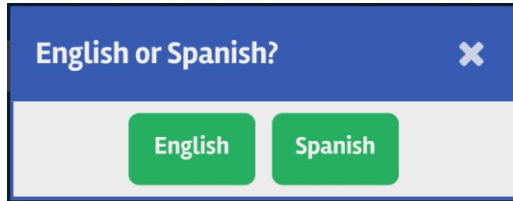


- Unsheltered Survey:
 - Persons sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation that is willing to take a survey
- Unsheltered Observation:
 - Persons sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation that isn't willing or can't complete the survey (use sparingly)
- Reunification Survey:
 - Completed in addition to the unsheltered survey if the respondent would like to try and reconnect with family or friends



Starting a Survey

3. Select English or Spanish



4. Select Individual or Household

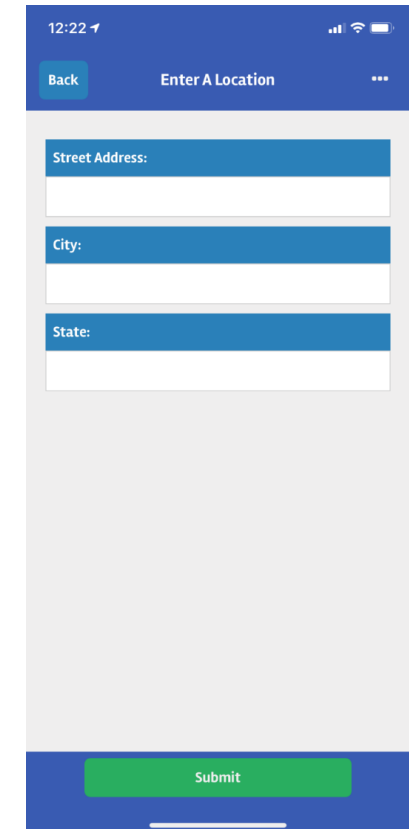
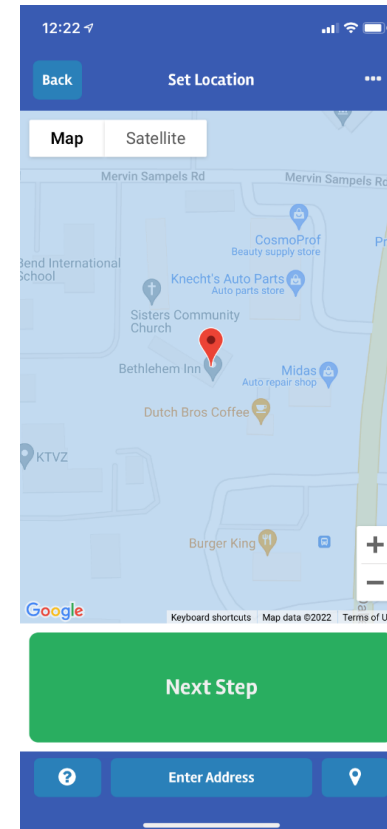
- If household, enter total # of Adults and Children



5. Record your location:

- Using your GPS Location (Must allow “Counting Us” permissions to use your location); OR
- Manually Entering the location

*Note: The address is recorded at the time of submission. If you do not submit the survey once you have completed the questions, the GPS location will not be tracked properly.



Completing a Survey

6. Begin the unsheltered survey

First question: If “Yes” the survey will end. Click “Back” in the top left corner to go back to the main menu.

Sleeping Location: If the person is not sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation the survey will end. Click “Back” in the top left corner to go back to the main menu.

Name: If person is not comfortable, you should collect the first three letters of their first and last name or their initials.

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

No ✕ ▾

Sleeping Location

Where are you sleeping on the night of the Count?*

Street or Sidewalk ✕ ▾

What is your first name?

What is your last name?

If hesitant, ask, "What are your initials?"

Completing a Survey



Gender: Select all responses that apply. More than one choice can be selected. If “Different Identity” Please indicate in box below.

What is your gender? (select all that apply)	
Woman (Girl, if child)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Man (Boy, if child)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culturally Specific Identity (e.g., Two-Spirit)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Binary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different Identity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Client doesn't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Client prefers not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

If different gender identity, please indicate

Race/ Ethnicity: Select all responses that apply. More than one choice can be selected. If “Other” Please indicate in box below.

What is your race? (select all that apply)	
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian American	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black, African American, or African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle Eastern or North African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Client doesn't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Client prefers not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other race, please indicate

Completing a Survey



Ask and Answer **Every** Question

- Don't skip questions on the survey or leave blanks
- Select, "Don't Know" or "Refused"

Yes

No

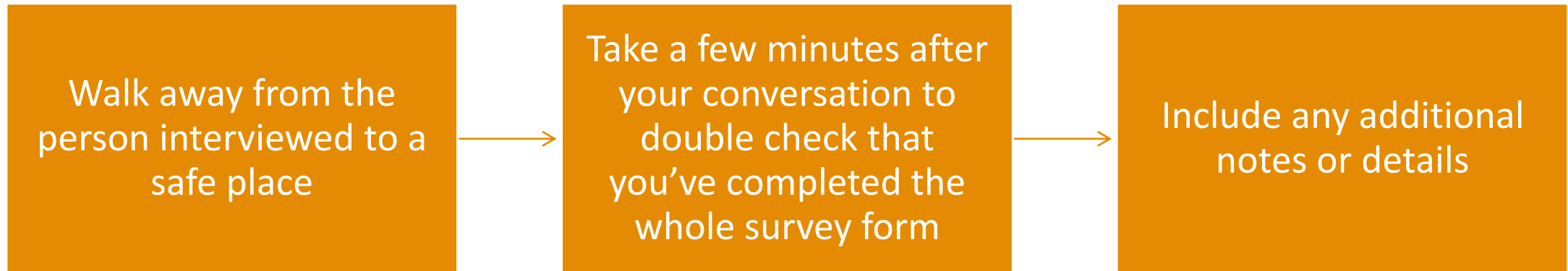
Don't Know

Refused

Step 4: Closing the Interview

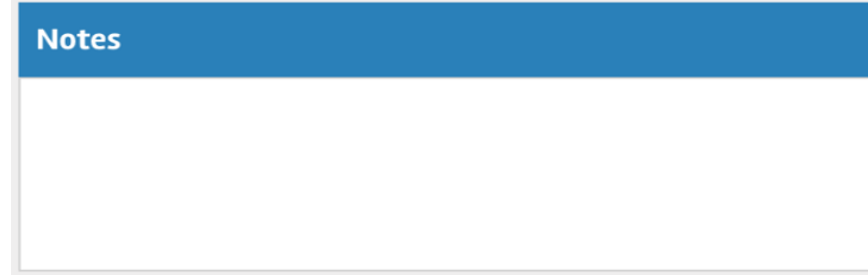
- Thank the person for their time
- Refer them to any services or resources they may have asked about or may need. Offer everyone a resource sheet / contact card.
- Give them a hygiene kit as a thank you gift.
 - You can offer the hygiene kits to people even if they refuse to participate in the survey

Step 5: Finalizing the Survey



Submitting a Survey in Counting Us App

- Record any notes that you feel will be useful for PIT Count administrators to know

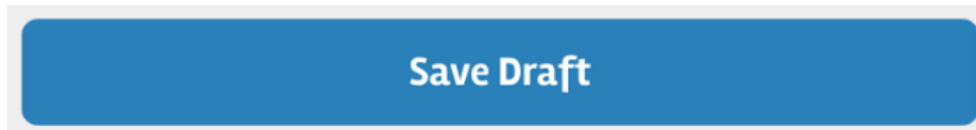


Notes

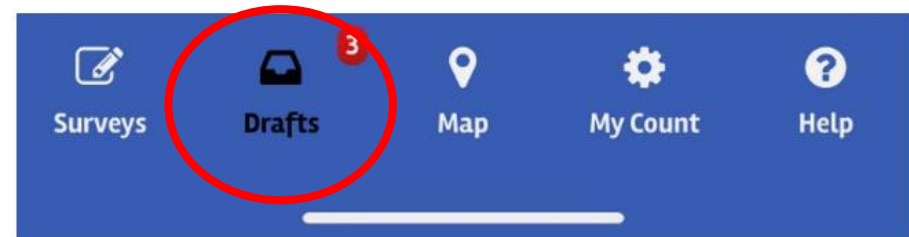
- If you ARE connected to the internet, select



- If you are NOT connected to the internet, select



- Once connected to the internet, select the Drafts Icon
- Open each Draft and select “Submit”



Surveying Quick Tips

- Remember that you are interviewing highly vulnerable people and asking some sensitive questions. Always lead with respect and dignity for the person you're speaking with.
- Ask all questions, unless the person has already volunteered the answer to the question over the course of your conversation.
- Always ask questions as they are written; do not embed assumptions into how you ask, even if you think you already know the answer.
- Example: Ask: "How do you identify your gender?" Do not ask: "You're male, right?"



Safety

Your Safety is Priority

- You should **ALWAYS** be with at least one other person.
- Keep an appropriate conversational distance from those you are interviewing.
- Maintain awareness of the space around you – where other people are, ways to get in or out of the space you're in, etc.
- Stay in places that are lit, including alleyways. If you use a flashlight, do so respectfully (i.e., don't shine it in anyone's face).
- If you don't feel safe approaching someone or going somewhere, don't go.
- Do not wake people that are sleeping. Use the observation-based form to fill out as much information about the person as you can observe.

Safety of Those You Interview

- Health & safety concerns (especially if it's cold outside)
- Notice if:
 - They have layers under and on them to keep them warm enough
 - They are dry or not (hypothermia concerns)
 - You can see the rise and fall of their breathing
- If someone is in distress and/or seeking immediate shelter, contact your region's PIT Count lead.
- ALWAYS call 9-1-1- if you are or someone else is at risk of danger

PIT Count Dos



DO get consent before asking PIT count survey questions



DO remember that you may be entering into someone's personal or private space



DO have a conversation with the people you interview

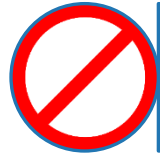


DO respect peoples' time

PIT Count Don'ts



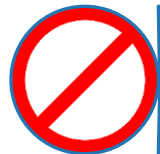
DON'T take personal photos of or with the people you survey



DON'T ask questions in a way that assumes you know the answer



DON'T insert yourself into the person's story



DON'T force people to answer questions they don't want to answer



DON'T make promises you can't deliver

Additional Tips from Volunteers Who have Previously Participated



**SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND
EXPERIENCES!**



WHAT SURPRISED YOU?



WHAT DID YOU LEARN?



**WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU
HAD KNOWN BEFORE GOING
OUT TO SURVEY PEOPLE?**

Questions



homelessinfo@fultoncountyga.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

- English: <https://fultoncountyga.gov/-/media/Departments/Community-Development/Homeless-Services/Continuum-of-Care/2025/PITC-FAQ-2025-Final.pdf>
- Spanish: <https://fultoncountyga.gov/-/media/Departments/Community-Development/Homeless-Services/Continuum-of-Care/2025/PITC-FAQ-2025-FinalSpanish.pdf>