



POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS

2015

Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey  
January 23, 2015

APPLIED SURVEY RESEARCH

# TOPICS TO BE REVIEWED

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- ▶ What exactly is a Point-in-Time (PIT) count?
- ▶ Why do Point-in-Time counts matter?
- ▶ Point-in-Time count logistics
  - Definitions
  - Expectations on the day of the count
  - Tally Sheet review
  - Safety
  - Preparing for the PIT Count

# WHAT IS A PIT COUNT?

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- ▶ The Gov't requires a Point-in-Time (PIT) count during the last 10 days of January nationwide every 2 years
- ▶ Each count results in a “snapshot” of the number of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a given night
- ▶ Counts are organized to minimize double counting (shelter, street, and movement)
- ▶ Guides are recruited by service providers & trained to help locate unsheltered persons

# WHY DO PIT COUNTS MATTER?

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PIT Counts help:

- ▶ Increase community understanding of homelessness
- ▶ Retain and improve funding for homeless services and meet federal data reporting requirements
- ▶ Generate valid, accurate data regarding homeless individuals and families
- ▶ Link homeless data collection efforts to strategic, program, and policy planning

# DEFINITION OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

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Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

Individuals and families with a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

- ▶ HEARTH Act Definition (Category I)

# UNSHELTERED STREET COUNT

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- ▶ The Street Count is a **visual** count of people residing on the street, in parks/river beds/open spaces, in vehicles, in abandoned/foreclosed buildings, and in make-shift shelters.
- ▶ Street count is planned while people are still in shelters (usually early mornings) or before they start to move around. Areas around shelters are counted first. Timing is important to avoid duplication. The Count is planned for January 23, 2015.
- ▶ We will visually observe and tally. **No interviews or surveys.** Privacy is respected.
- ▶ Homeless guides provide local knowledge and identification skills critical for safety and successful enumeration.

# LOCATIONS TO BE CANVASSED

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## ▶ Included Locations:

- ▶ Make shift shelters
- ▶ Unsheltered
- ▶ Vehicles
- ▶ Parks/open spaces
- ▶ Abandoned buildings
- ▶ Bus or train stations
- ▶ Airports
- ▶ Camping grounds

## ▶ Not included Locations:

- ▶ Couch surfers
- ▶ 'Double-ups'
- ▶ Rehabilitation or mental health facilities
- ▶ Jail or prisons

# WHAT HAPPENS ON CENSUS DAY?

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1. Guides and volunteers assemble at a pre-assigned deployment location you will be assigned to prior to daybreak on Census day
2. Complete paper work
  - a) Sign-in and Hold Harmless Agreement
  - b) Review of safety protocols, forms and data quality
3. Volunteer-Guide Teams are created- (Couples OK, <18 no)
4. Street count packets distributed
  - a) Maps and data collection forms
  - b) Clipboard & pencils
  - c) Training guidelines
  - d) Contact phone numbers
  - e) Stickers to be worn on jackets
5. Teams go out into the field
6. Teams return before 10:00 am or as soon as map areas are covered



# OBSERVATION TALLY SHEET REPORTING

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During your route with your guide-volunteer partnership, you will report on a provided tally sheet the following observations seen in your assigned map areas:

- ▶ Individuals (<18 years old, 18-24, >24 years old)
- ▶ Families (<18 years old, 18-24, >24 years old)
- ▶ Tents – actual or estimate of persons
- ▶ Vehicles - actual or estimate of persons
- ▶ Abandoned Buildings - actual or estimate of persons
- ▶ Encampments - actual or estimate of persons
- ▶ Parks - actual or estimate of persons

# SAFETY FIRST

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- ▶ Be Safe
- ▶ Do not take risks when walking in rural or park areas
- ▶ Do NOT approach individuals and ask them if they are homeless. Observe and tally only.
- ▶ Stay with your teammate. Never venture out on your own unless it makes more sense for the guide to check out the situation.
- ▶ Do not take any risks. Be respectful and low impact.
- ▶ Call your Deployment Center Captain if you have a problem – call 911 if you have a true emergency.

# PREPARING FOR COUNT DAY

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- ▶ Wear comfortable shoes and clothes
- ▶ Dress warmly – wear a jacket/sweatshirt/ raincoat, gloves, hat, etc.
- ▶ Bring a car (if possible). If driving, have gas & paperwork
- ▶ Bring a cell phone
- ▶ Bring a flash light
- ▶ We will go rain or shine so bring an umbrella if it rains
- ▶ Get plenty of rest the night before

# THANK YOU

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- ▶ You will be updated via email with any new information and more specific details about Count day
- ▶ In person trainings will be available at TBD locations in your area and will be posted and/or mailed to volunteers
- ▶ Please contact the Homeless Census Hotline if you have any questions: (877)728-4545
- ▶ Applied Survey Research  
[connery@appliedsurveyresearch.org](mailto:connery@appliedsurveyresearch.org)  
(877)728-4545