

# 2013 Santa Clara County Homeless Census

## Street Count Training Guidelines

Thank you for your interest and participation in the 2013 Santa Clara County Homeless Census. The goal of the street count is to accurately count the number of homeless persons in assigned census tract areas of Santa Clara County on our census dates: **January 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2013**. Please read the following guidelines before beginning the street count.

For the purposes of this study, we use the federal government's official definition of homelessness from the Hearth Act:

### Homelessness, as Defined by the Hearth Act:

1. An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and
2. An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Both 1 and 2 must be true for a person to be considered homeless by the federal government.

## How We Count

Street Count Workers will typically work in teams of two, in one vehicle, and with at least one cell phone. The teams ideally consist of one homeless worker who is familiar with the area and one volunteer who has a car and a cell phone. The team will drive to their assigned region and walk and/or drive through their assigned area inspecting all places as needed to determine if homeless persons are present.

- » Please cover your entire area. Walk or drive down every street, alley, or pathway where you might locate homeless persons, being mindful of safety considerations at all times. Cross/check off streets you have inspected on the maps issued to you.
- » Observe only. Do not to approach or engage in conversation of any sort. This is primarily due to our need to quickly cover our assigned map areas.
- » Count every person you directly observe on the streets, in vehicles, or in makeshift shelters (such as tents or tarps) and record the information on the Tally Sheet. Please be as accurate as possible.
- » Do your best to observe age and gender of the persons if possible.
- » If you cannot determine the number, age, or gender of persons in a vehicle, encampment, or other obstructed location, use the area at the bottom of the Tally Sheet to record your observations.
- » Try not to recount. Be aware of what people are wearing and what they look like.

- » *It can be difficult to determine if an individual should be counted under the Hearth Act definition of homeless. **Please use your knowledge of the area, the homeless community, and basic common sense while scanning the area for homeless persons. Anyone who you know to be homeless, or who is very likely to be homeless, can be counted.***
- » *When you are not sure if someone is homeless, the team should consult one another and **make their best judgment**. Communicate your decision to the Deployment Team Captain when you return to the Deployment Center when you have doubts.*

It is impossible for us to count every person who is homeless as defined above. There is no way, through this count, for us to know of people sleeping on private property, in garages or sheds, etc. We will use the numbers that are actually observed to make an estimation of the number of people that are homeless at a given point in time and throughout the year.

## Payment for Street Count Workers

Only those recruited as Homeless Guides will be compensated for their time all other participants are volunteering their time and resources. Homeless Street Count Guide Workers who received a certificate of training and who show up on time at a Deployment Site on Census Day will be paid \$10 for training if they participate in the census. Workers will be paid \$10 per hour for working the census. Workers who attended the training but did not participate in the census will NOT be paid for training. All payments are made in cash, when the street count is complete. The homeless Street Count Workers are also reimbursed for their mileage if they use their vehicle to do the count.

## “Safety Street Smarts” for Participating in the Street Count

- » *Safety ALWAYS comes first. Avoid any situation in which you are uncomfortable.*
- » *Be aware of your surroundings.*
- » *Do **not** approach individuals to ask them if they are homeless. Observe and tally only.*
- » ***Stay with your teammates.** Never venture out on your own unless it is safer to do so.*
- » *Call your Team Captain if you have a problem. Call 911 if you have a true emergency.*

## Day of the Street Count

### Check In

- » *Arrive at your deployment site on time for the scheduled start of the census.*
- » *If you are a homeless worker, bring your training card. If you have lost it, we will have your name on a list.*
- » *Look at the large area map and tell the Team Captain which deployment areas you are most familiar with, if map assignments were not made in advance. Your knowledge of the community is very important in getting an accurate count of the homeless population.*
- » *The Team Captain creates the two-person teams, makes deployment area assignments, and gives workers any additional instructions.*

## Training Review

- » *The Team Captain leads a review of the training and the forms that are to be used.*
- » *The Team Captain hands out the materials you will need to do the street count.*
- » *The Team Captain and Street Count Workers briefly discuss an approach to covering their assigned areas, planning to cover the entire area on foot, by car, or a combination of both.*
- » *Before leaving to do the census, all Street Count Workers are required to sign the Hold Harmless Statement.*

## Street Count

- » *During the street count, walk or drive all the streets and alleys in your census area.*
- » *If you are eligible for reimbursement, keep track of your auto mileage.*
- » *When you see people who appear to be homeless, mark your Tally Sheet in the appropriate section.*
- » *Remember that a Family is defined as one or more minors (under 18 years) accompanied by one adult male and/or one adult female.*
- » *Be sure to mark the Tally Sheet clearly, and erase any mistakes completely, so that your findings will be clear to the Team Captain.*
- » *Use the "Note:" section of the Tally Sheet to record any uncertain information, such as "undetermined number of people sleeping in small two door vehicle."*
- » *Please remember to observe only, and not to approach the people you see.*
- » *Call the Team Captain at the number listed on your Tally Sheet if you have any difficulties during the street count.*
- » *You are expected to complete your assignment in the allotted time. If it appears you are unable to do so, call your Team Captain right away.*

## Check Out

- » *Please return to the deployment site when you have thoroughly surveyed your assigned area.*
- » *The Team Captain reviews the paperwork with you, including any special notations you have made, and makes sure that all of the deployment area was covered.*
- » *If you are a homeless worker, the Team Captain will endorse your Training Certificate Card. If your name is on the sign-in sheet, you are entitled to \$10 for attending the training and \$10 per hour for the hours worked during the Street Count.*
- » *If you drive your own vehicle during the Street Count, you can submit the total number of miles driven and be paid for your mileage.*

## Thank you for your participation!

**We look forward to working with you on January 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.  
The results of the census will be available to all in the spring of 2013.**

For more information, please call Applied Survey Research 877.728.4545.