



CA Homeless Youth Project
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A TOOL KIT FOR COUNTING HOMELESS YOUTH

*By The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and
The California Homeless Youth Project*

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Researchers, policymakers and advocates agree that there is no good statewide estimate of the number of youth living on the streets, “couch surfing”, living in cars or in other unstable living conditions.¹

This is significant because in order to make good program and policy decisions, we need to be able to:

- ✓ Establish benchmarks
- ✓ Measure change over time
- ✓ Size and scope the population in order to make critical funding decisions about the services and supports needed to address the problem

There is a need for a more accurate estimate—and also, better information about the characteristics of homeless youth in California. Without this, there is no way of knowing whether current services are sufficient, whether they are addressing the most pressing needs of this vulnerable population, and whether programs are successful in reducing the number of youth who are living on the street. For these reasons, better data collection is essential.

Bolstering the efforts of local Continuums of Care (CoCs) to better count and survey homeless youth is the best way to achieve this goal. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has discussed having CoCs to include a homeless youth count in their PIT. This is an important first step in developing better data across the state on homeless youth, and we think that CoCs in California should be ahead of the game.

How does a community actually *do* an effective homeless youth count?

This toolkit aims to help communities count homeless youth through several resources including:

- 1) Definition of Homeless Youth
- 2) Principles and Practices for Finding and Counting Homeless Youth
- 3) The Nuts & Bolts of Conducting a Successful Homeless Youth Count, by Mark Silverbush
- 4) Youth Count Tally Sheet
- 5) Sample Participation Agreement for Collaborating Agencies
- 6) “Street Youth Count” Volunteer Training
- 7) Team Van Leader’s Tracking Sheet

Definition of homeless youth

For purposes of consistency in integrating homeless youth into the CoC surveys, we recommend defining homeless youth as “unaccompanied youth ages 24 and under who are currently unsheltered or lack stable housing.” This definition is consistent with existing California state statute. We further recommend defining a sub-category of homeless youth ages 17 and under,



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keeping consistent with the HUD definition of unaccompanied homeless youth and because funding, policy and program requirements differ for youth below the age of 18 and those 18 to 24.

□ **Principles and best practices for finding and counting homeless youth**

Experience from Los Angeles, Santa Clara and Sonoma counties suggests that the methodology used to count homeless adults will not be effective in identifying and counting homeless youth. Instead, here are some known strategies for finding and counting homeless youth:

- Identify and recruit youth workers to conduct the count with adult support ~ youth who have experienced unstable housing and know the community are most effective in finding other homeless youth
 - ✓ Be sure to count your homeless youth workers
 - ✓ Provide reimbursement for youth who participate as peer surveyors
- Engage local youth service providers, schools, community organizations, clinics, and housing providers in the effort ~ the more local support you have, the more likely the count will be accurate and comprehensive
 - ✓ Mobilize support up-front ~ planning is key
 - ✓ Leverage existing CoC homeless count efforts
 - ✓ Invite key stakeholders to facilitate the process and create buy-in
- Consult with service providers and homeless youth surveyors on the best time to conduct the count ~ homeless youth tend to be more visible after school (around 3pm), on weekends during the day, and late at night (between 10pm and midnight)
 - ✓ Do field tests to determine the best time(s) to send out teams to count
 - ✓ Discuss timing with local experts

Author's Note:

For additional information, please also see The National Alliance to End Homelessness' *Counting Homeless Youth: a Proposed Planning Strategy for Local Communities* for other specific steps communities can take to prepare for and implement an effective homeless youth count located here: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/issues/youth/youthcount>

If you have any questions about the Toolkit for Surveying Homeless Youth, please contact:

Mark Silverbush, LA Homeless Services Authority, msilverbush@lahsa.org or

Shahera Hyatt, CA Homeless Youth Project, shyatt@library.ca.gov

¹ L. Foster, *Estimating California's Homeless Youth Population*, October 2010, at <http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/HomelessYouthPopEstimateReport.pdf> (accessed April 2, 2012).

Mark Silverbush
Policy & Planning
Analyst, LAHSA

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The Nuts & Bolts of Conducting a Successful Point-in-Time Youth Count

Lessons from the
Los Angeles Continuum of Care's Approach

Southern California Round Table Collaborative, June 13, 2012

Contents

1. What is a Youth Count?
2. Context: NAEH, USICH, and Statewide Youth Count Needs
3. The Los Angeles CoC's experience with Homeless Youth Counting & Statistics
4. Principles for Successful Youth Counting
5. Mobilizing Support
6. Planning a Youth Count
7. Deployment Logistics

NAEH Pushing HUD on Youth Counts



Nan Roman (6/12/2012): The Alliance concurs that better data is essential to size and address the problem to scale. ...For all of these reasons, the need for better data is critical. The Alliance recommends:

1. Merging RHYMIS and HMIS in 2012 and beginning to create the tools by which the increasing volume of youth data can be analyzed.
- 2. Requiring youth providers and local Continuums of Care to include youth in the HUD mandated point in time counts in 2013. Any inclusion of youth will be an improvement.**
3. Prioritizing research and evaluation of different intervention models for different subpopulations of youth to better inform resource allocation and targeting.

<http://blog.endhomelessness.org/moving-forward-on-a-framework-to-end-youth-homelessness/>

The above are remarks from the Alliance's President and CEO, Nan Roman, regarding the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' new framework to advance the goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020, as announced at a live webcast of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness meeting.

11 Youth Counts featured by the National Alliance to End Homelessness

- 5 in California
- 2 in Southern California (Los Angeles CoC & Riverside CoC)



Where are the Youth Counts?

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/issues/youth/youthcount>

The Los Angeles CoC's experience with Homeless Youth Counting

Why was Los Angeles interested?

When did Youth Count start in Los Angeles?

Who do we Count?

What are the basic elements to the Greater Los Angeles Youth Count?

What are the key challenges that our Youth Count project seeks to overcome?

Key Homeless Count Statistics for Greater Los Angeles

2011 Count: **3,959 homeless youth**

3,593 were ages 18-24

366 were under 18 &

unaccompanied

3,593 were ages 18-24

58% sheltered, 42% unsheltered

366 were <18 & unaccompanied

24% sheltered, 76% unsheltered

Oklahoma: **4,625 homeless persons in entire state**

New Mexico: **3,601 homeless persons in entire state**

2011 Stats

- **52% (790)** of unsheltered youth 18-24 found in youth count
- **25% (69)** of unsheltered youth under 18 found in youth count

Youth 18-24 yo

Daytime youth count: 790

Nighttime street count: 725

Shelter count: 2,078

Total unaccompanied youth 18-24 yo: 3,593

Youth Under 18

Daytime youth count: 69

Nighttime street count: 210

Shelter count: 87

Total unaccompanied youth under 18: 366

What are the potential costs of not doing a youth count?

Principles for Successful Homeless Youth Counting

I. Engage and enroll local homeless youth service and housing providers in the effort – the earlier, the better

II. Build in measures to reduce & eliminate duplication

III. Establish role clarity for all partners (the CoC, Youth Providers and Youth Workers, etc.)

IV. Utilize the strengths of each partner

V. Identify and recruit youth workers to conduct the surveys with adult support

✓ Geography and compensation are key elements.

VI. Review and Customize training and counting materials to fit your youth count effort

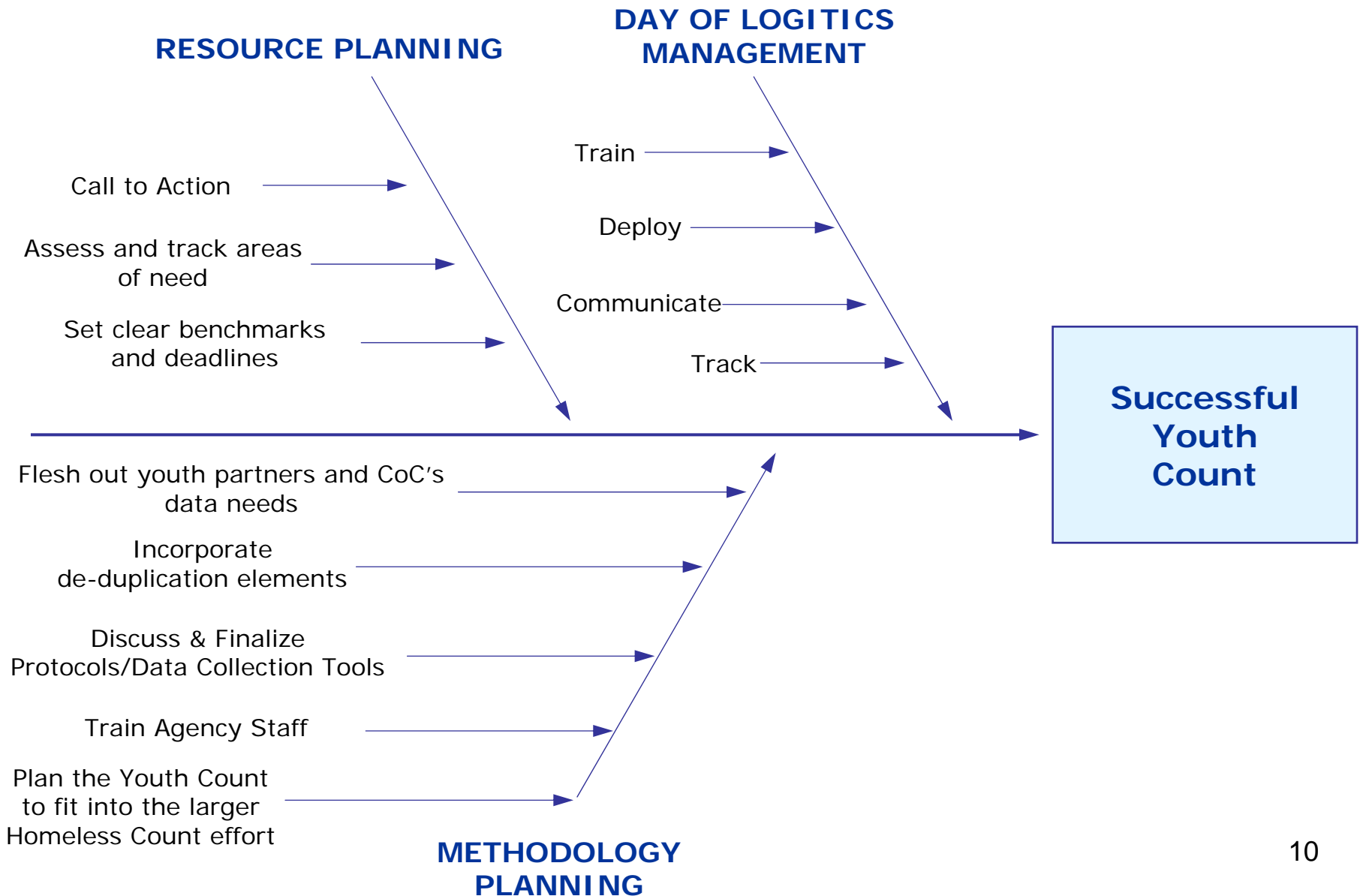
Mobilizing Support

I. Leverage regular Continuum of Care homeless count efforts

II. Invite key stakeholders to facilitate need & buy-in

- a) Identify homeless youth housing & service providers
- b) Local outreach teams
- c) Regional homeless coalitions
- d) Community groups
- e) Schools

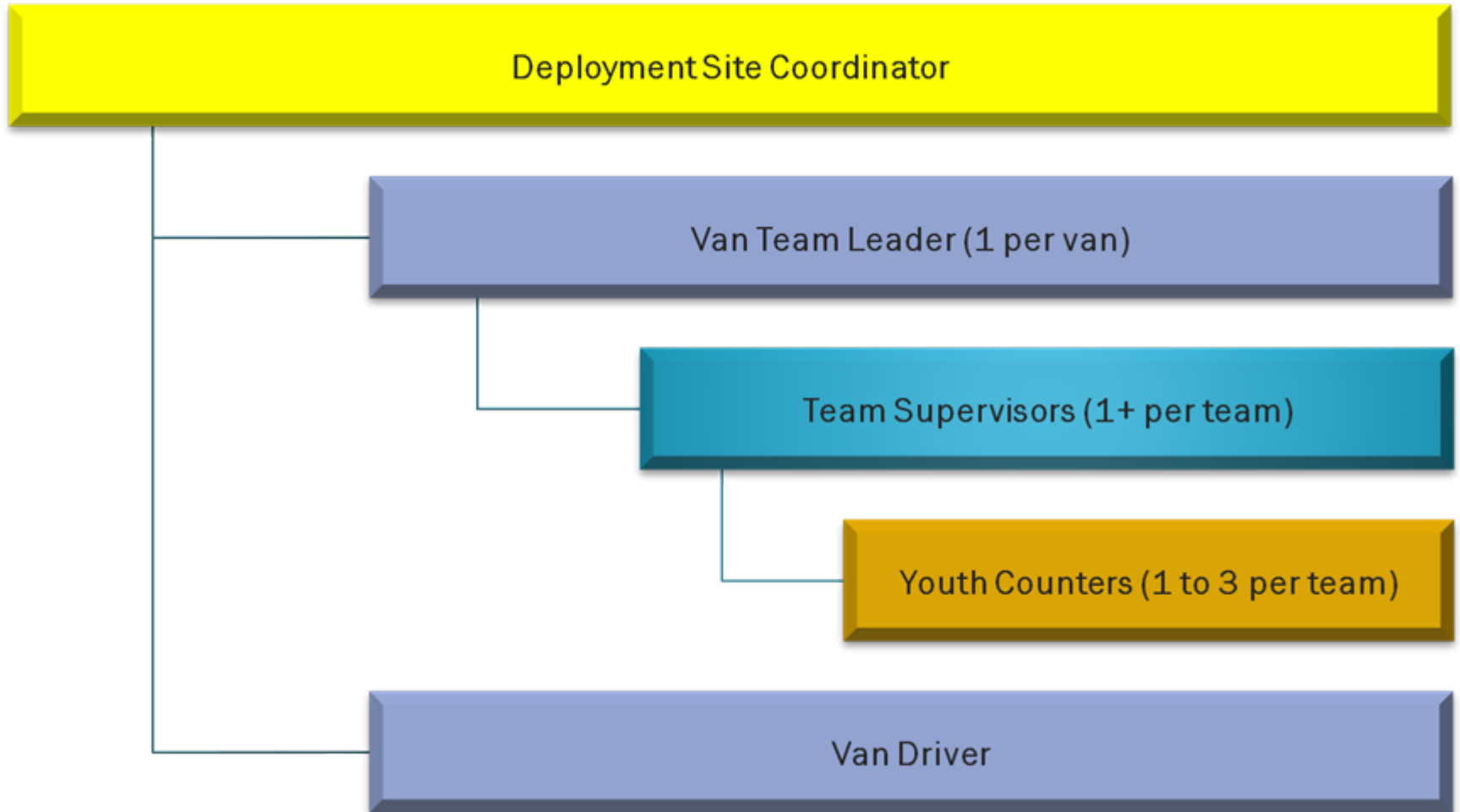
Youth Count Planning Elements



Deployment Logistics

1. Use log of youth workers at check in.
2. Train youth count workers prior to deployment.
3. Deploy youth teams by van/vehicle –keep provider together, when possible
4. Provide transportation to and from the deployment sites for their team members;
5. Identify one staff member to supervise a team of 1-3 youth workers out in the field;
6. Leave enough time for Q&As
7. Once teams are deployed, use your time at the deployment center to prepare for their return, and to check on teams status.

Managing Field Operations



**Have any questions, comments
or suggestions?**

✓ Feel free to contact me directly at
msilverbush@lahsa.org

**LAHSA 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count
Agreement for Participation
Youth Count Worker Program**

This Agreement is made and entered into this _____, 2011 by and between _____ hereinafter called "Contractor" and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, a joint powers authority of the City AND County of Los Angeles hereinafter, called "LAHSA".

Contract Provisions

1.0 LAWS GOVERNING AGREEMENT

The Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

2.0 STATEMENT OF WORK:

Contractor agrees to perform the work as detailed in Exhibit A – Statement of Work, attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

3.0 STIPENDS

In consideration of worker services rendered in the Homeless Count 2011 (HC11) Youth Count ("Count"), LAHSA will provide stipends in the form of restaurant/other gift cards to the Contractor for completed and verified youth worker services provided by homeless clients according to the stipend schedule specified in Exhibit A. LAHSA will provide the stipend gift cards, in an amount not less than \$60.00, to the Contractor at the Deployment Center on the day of the Count for distribution to the Youth workers upon the completion of the Count shift. Contractor must obtain and maintain in their records a client signature verifying the stipend gift card received by each youth worker.

4.0 BENEFITS

Contractor will not be eligible for any paid benefits for federal, social security, state workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, professional insurance, medical/dental, or fringe benefits offered by LAHSA.

5.0 TERM

This Agreement shall commence as of January 7, 2011 and shall remain in effect until February 28, 2011. This contract may be extended by written amendment agreed to and signed by both Parties.

6.0 AUDIT OR EXAMINATION

Contractor shall keep all records of gift cards received from LAHSA and make them accessible for audit or examination for a period of five years after final payments are issued and other pending matters are closed.

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Contractor agrees that any conflict or potential conflict of interest shall be fully disclosed prior to execution of contract and contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state and county laws and regulations governing conflict of interest, in accordance with OMB Circular A-110.

8.0 POLITICAL ACTIVITY/LOBBYING CERTIFICATION

Contractor may not conduct any activity, including any payment to any person, officer, or employee of any agency or member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, grant, loan, intended to influence legislation, administrative rule-making or the election of candidates for public office during time compensated for under the contract or under representation that such activity is being performed as a part of the contract responsibility.

9.0 NON-DISCRIMINATION

Executive Order 11246 requires that during the performance of this Contract the Contractor and any sub-contractor must not discriminate against any person or deny benefits on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, or on the basis of age or with respect to an otherwise qualified handicap. (*Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI and Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Section 109 as Amended, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*).

10.0 INDEMNIFICATION

Except for the active negligence or willful misconduct of LAHSA, or any of its Boards, Officers, Agents, Employees, Assigns and Successors in Interest, Contractor undertakes and agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless LAHSA and any of its Boards, Officers, Agents, Employees, Assigns, and Successors in Interest from and against all suits and causes of action, claims, losses, demands and expenses, including, but not limited to, attorney's fees and costs of litigation, damage or liability of any nature whatsoever, for death or injury to any person, including Contractor employees and agents, or damage or destruction of any property of either party hereto or of third parties, arising in any manner by reason of the negligent acts, errors, omissions or willful misconduct incident to the performance of this Agreement by the Contractor its subcontractors of any tier. The provisions of this paragraph survive expiration or termination of this Agreement.

11.0 INSURANCE

Contractor warrants that it has adequate general liability insurance to cover the activities to be performed under this Agreement.

12.0 TERMINATION

This agreement may be terminated by mutual consent of both parties or by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice and delivered by certified mail or in person.

By: _____
G. Michael Arnold, Executive Director
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

811 Wilshire Blvd., 6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Date: _____

By: _____
Contractor:

Federal Tax ID#
12228 Venice Blvd., Suite 499
Los Angeles, CA 90006

Date: _____

**EXHIBIT A
STATEMENT OF WORK**

LEGAL NAME:

CONTRACT NUMBER:

Youth Volunteer Stipend Program

Overview: LAHSA has created the Youth Count Worker Stipend Program to compensate youth workers who participate in the Youth Count. Instead of paying homeless individuals directly, LAHSA will provide local homeless social service agencies within the Los Angeles Continuum of Care with stipends in the form of restaurant gift cards for volunteering and participating in the LAHSA 2011 Homeless Youth Count. LAHSA will coordinate with homeless agencies that provide housing and services to youth to cover all the Service Planning Areas (SPAs) in Los Angeles County which need to be enumerated. LAHSA has allotted a finite amount of funding for this program and will implement the Youth Worker Stipend Program on a first come, first serve basis should demand exceed resources.

Enrolling and Tracking Stipend Workers: Each participating agency will assign a point staff person that will track their agency's participation in the Homeless Youth Worker Stipend Program. Before the count, this person will complete a Professional Service Agreement with LAHSA that details the maximum number of homeless youth they will enroll. This will determine the maximum amount of gift cards LAHSA will provide participating agencies. In order to determine this amount, the agency point person will complete a Youth Stipend Worker Program Roster that tracks the number of workers enrolled and which Service Planning Area they will be counting. The agency point person should not enroll Youth Stipend Volunteers on the LAHSA website. Youth Stipend volunteers will be enrolled by submission of the Stipend Volunteer Program Roster to LAHSA (contact below).

Assignment of Agencies / Youth Workers to Deployment Centers: LAHSA will work with homeless youth providers to determine which agencies will complete the youth count in each SPA. The goal of this collaborative effort is to have up to 2 to 3 agencies per SPA whose staff and youth workers know the area, perform the homeless youth enumeration. Each homeless youth team will be accompanied by an agency staff member or an adult volunteer affiliated with the provider during their street count activities. Each youth worker and Agency staff member participating in the Youth Count will complete training on the day of the Youth Count at their assigned Deployment Center. Agency staff members and youth workers may not participate in the Youth Count without completing this training.

Minimum / Maximum Number of Stipend Workers: In order to effectively support the 2011 Homeless Youth Count activities, an agency must recruit, provide to LAHSA, and commit to lead _____ youth workers. The specific number of teams deployed by your agency and the number of workers participating will be decided between LAHSA and your agency prior to the Count.

Payment of Stipend Gift Cards to Youth Workers: LAHSA will provide the restaurant gift cards to each participating agency at the Deployment Center on the day of the Count. Agencies will be responsible for providing the gift cards to their homeless youth workers upon completion of the days street count activities.

Area of Street Count Work: Participating agencies and their Youth Stipend Workers will be assigned to deployment centers in the SPA that they have agreed to responsible to enumerate. During the Youth Street Count activities, each team of youth workers must be accompanied by an Agency staff member. Each Agency assigned to a particular SPA will coordinate with LAHSA and each other to ensure that the geographic areas to be counted are completely covered and not duplicated.

Transportation of Stipend Workers: Agencies participating in the Youth Count will be solely responsible for transporting the youth workers to the Deployment Center, and to provide transportation for each Youth Count team to the area of the SPA that they are assigned to count.

Agency Point Person: Steps to Participation:

- 1) Coordinate your agency's participation with LAHSA staff designated below.
- 2) Set recruiting targets and create a roster to track youth stipend worker participation.
- 3) Enroll participants of your programs in your agency's Youth Worker Stipend Program.
- 4) Before the count, sign a Professional Services Agreement with LAHSA that includes a maximum enrollment number of homeless youth stipend workers. Provide LAHSA with a signed Professional Services Agreement by January 7, 2011. Contact information is below.
- 5) Work with LAHSA's Policy and Planning staff (contact below) to coordinate where your youth stipend workers and Agency lead staff members will be working (the deployment center where they will be assigned).
- 6) When the count is completed, distribute the restaurant gifts cards to each youth worker that completed a youth count shift. Provide LAHSA with a roster of youth stipend workers who completed a Homeless Youth Count shift and received a gift card.

Contact Information:

To coordinate your agency's participation and to ask questions:

Lisa Snyder
(213) 689-4096
lsnyder@lahsa.org
Fax: (213) 892.0093

To complete a Youth Count Professional Services Agreement

Gina Mercer, LAHSA Contracts Unit Manager
(213) 689-4094
gmercerc@lahsa.org
Fax: (213) 892.0093

2011 GREATER LOS ANGELES
HOMELESS COUNT

They Count. Will You?

2011 Youth Street Count Volunteer Training

Monday, January 31, 2011



Welcome!

- Introductions
 - Meet your trainer
 - Your name, organization
 - Why are you counting?

Why do we count?

- Everyone counts, especially the most vulnerable.
- Counting helps bring federal, state, and local funding to homeless service and housing providers.
- Understanding the scope of homelessness in our community helps us address it.
- Allows us to see progress from previous years, measure success, and tailor programs to meet the needs of the homeless in LA.

Where and when do we count?

- **All of LA County**, except Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena (they do their own counts)

- **Every two years**
 - Street Count – January 25- 27, 2011
 - Shelter & Institution Count – January 25- 27, 2011
 - Youth Count – January 31, 2011
 - Demographic and Telephone Survey – February 2011

2011 GREATER LOS ANGELES
HOMELESS COUNT
They Count. Will You?

Today's Schedule:

- 9:15am – Check In
- 9:30am – Train and Review Count Materials
- 10:30am-2:30 – Team Up and Count!
 - Each team will be given a map of the area they will count and materials to tally. Teams will be dropped off near youth hot spots. Walk and count. Conduct 2nd round if there is still time.
- 12:30pm – Lunch
- 3:00pm-4:00pm – Return to the Deployment Site.
 - All teams need to check in with their Van Team Leader when they have covered their entire area and determine time and location of pick-up.

How to Count

1. In teams of 2-3.
2. Your team will be assigned to a VAN.
3. Your team will be given tally sheets to complete.
4. Count the number of homeless youth you see.
5. Tally the number on your TALLY SHEET
6. Use your best judgment

Who to Count

1. You will be counting youth who are homeless on the streets.
2. Homeless for this enumeration means living in a place not meant for human living – street, alley, auto, overpass, etc.
3. Homeless youth are broken into two age groups – under 18 and 18 - 24.
4. If you are uncertain whether a youth is homeless, ask.
5. Use your best judgment

Youth Count Roles

- Team Supervisor
- Van Driver/Team Van Leader
- Youth Counter

Avoiding Duplication

Teams will divide hot spot areas:

- Main Streets
- Parks
- Arcades
- Internet cafes
- Metro stations

Tally Sheet

Goal: Count total number of homeless youth

- We are not collecting demographic data, i.e. race, drug use or mental illness

Counting Guidelines

- Observe and tally only.
- Remember this is not a survey.
- Keep conversations to a minimum.
- We will provide you with 211 referral cards to give to anyone who requests assistance.

Be Safe!

- Stick together! Never be on your own.
- Avoid any situation in which you are uncomfortable. Don't take risks.
- Call your Team Supervisor if you have a problem; call 911 if you have a true emergency.

Keep in Mind

- Use your common sense.
- Accuracy counts - Zero is a valid number.
- Manage your time – if you need help covering your area or feel you need more time, call your Team Van Leader.

2011 GREATER LOS ANGELES
HOMELESS COUNT

They Count. Will You?

Q&A

**2011 GREATER LOS ANGELES
HOMELESS COUNT**

They Count. Will You? **YOUTH COUNT – Team Van Leader’s Tracking Sheet**

Deployment Center Coordinator Name: _____ Deployment Center Coordinator Phone #: _____

Team Van Leader Name: _____ Organization: _____ SPA: _____

#	Team Supervisor Name	Team Supervisor Cell Number	Drop off Location	Pick up Location	Team Member 1 (Name & #)	Team Member 2 (Name & #)	Team Member 3 (Name & #)
1			A. B. C. D. E.	A. B. C. D. E.			
2			A. B. C. D. E.	A. B. C. D. E.			
3			A. B. C. D. E.	A. B. C. D. E.			
4			A. B. C. D. E.	A. B. C. D. E.			
5			A. B. C. D. E.	A. B. C. D. E.			