



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Our target date is Monday, January 29, 2007. If we do a one-day count, are we actually conducting the count on the 29th, or Tuesday, January 30th?

A1: Some agencies, such as emergency shelters where people are spending the night, can conduct the survey on Monday, January 29th. Agencies who do not provide night services will conduct the survey on Tuesday, January 30th.

Q2: Will volunteers need to conduct the count for folks under bridges, in parks, in hotels, abandoned buildings, etc.? How will we approach/organize around this issue?

A2: In the Metro Denver point-in-time homeless count, agency staff familiar with homeless individuals and families, approached known motels where people were staying; agency staff also conducted most of the street outreach, for example, Urban Peak where staff knew many of the youth. Ideally, agency staff in other parts of the state would also be familiar with some of the homeless people in their area. Otherwise, interviewers, whether they are agency staff or not, need to exercise common sense with regard to safety when approaching people under bridges, in parks, in motels, abandoned buildings, etc. In cases where interviewers (agency staff, sheriff departments, other volunteers) know there are homeless people but have determined there are safety issues, interviewers need to document their best estimate of the number of people using the provided Tracking Form For Counts/Estimates of Unsheltered Homeless Persons.

Q3: How do we eliminate duplication within our busy agency, when many homeless people are coming and going? How do we eliminate duplication in other busy places like food lines and food pantries?

A3: The surest method to avoid duplication is through interviewer training. In addition, we have included several identifying questions and will create a unique personal identification number (PIN) for each respondent. Clearly, this is not a "perfect" method; however, at some point the methodology has to depend on the responses of the respondents. In past studies, even when using identifiers, the process for de-duplication was far from exact.

Q4: What if a place frequented by homeless people is only open on one day of the week? When should I conduct the survey? If I survey them on Wednesday or Thursday when everyone else has already surveyed, won't there be duplication?

A4: Agencies which are NOT open on Monday or Tuesday should conduct their survey on the first day they are open AFTER January 29th. It has been determined that for those agencies that, for example, are only open on a Wednesday, will conduct their surveys on that day (rather than on Monday night

or Tuesday day). In this situation, interviewers will ask respondents whether they have already completed a survey earlier that week.

Q5: Do I need any special skills to be a regional or county coordinator, an Enumerator? A Survey Taker? What is the difference between these two?

A5: An Enumerator is someone who “counts” something. A “Survey Taker” will have the interest and ability to interview potentially homeless respondents, based on the survey questions. Interviewers will be trained to ask the questions as written in the survey, explaining questions to respondents when necessary. Interviewers should be comfortable with issues that often surround homelessness and at ease when asking survey questions.

Q6: What is expected of a Homeless Survey Interviewer?

A6: Survey Interviewers for the State Homeless Point-In-Time count are expected to: a) attend a training(s); b) carefully follow instructions received in the training and use the training materials as necessary; c) know where to get answers to questions; d) be committed to obtaining as many surveys as possible; d) use tracking and cover sheets to document counts/estimates of unsheltered homeless, to record number of surveys and other types of information.

Q7: I am not able to be an interviewer. Are there other ways I can volunteer to help with the Count?

A7: **YES!** Please do one of the following:

Log onto the State Point-In-Time website for volunteer opportunities:

<http://www.colorado.gov/cich/pit.htm> OR find out on the website who your county coordinators are and call them. County coordinators may need help, such as making copies of surveys, helping to recruit additional interviewers, attending trainings and help coordinator(s) provide trainings, distribute and/or pick up surveys at the request of the local/county coordinators, reminder phone calls to agencies, etc.

Q8: How long will the Count take?

A8: The State Point-In-Time homeless count will take place on Monday night, January 29, 2007 and for those agencies that do not provide night services, Tuesday day, January 30, 2007.

Q9: What about safety during the Count? Do volunteers have to go out at night?

A9: Interviewers are expected to only participate in situations that are safe and comfortable.

Q10: How many people are needed to help conduct the count?

A10: As many as possible.

Q11: What if the weather is really bad on the day of the count and people are not available to help count, or if homeless people can't be found?

A11: We can't control it, so we will hope for the best.

Q12: How soon should each County conduct training?

A12: A schedule is being developed for training county coordinators – these trainings will occur in January. County coordinators will train local agency staff and volunteer interviewers. Ideally, the interviewer trainings should occur in January so that the information received in the training is fresh, while still reserving a sufficient amount of time to answer questions.

Q13: How do we count homeless people that are being assisted through privacy-seeking faith-based operations?

A13: Coordinators will recruit participation of faith-based organizations, who will recruit interviewers to complete surveys with the homeless people they serve.

Q14: What should we do if we know there's a significant population in our county, but it is in either difficult terrain or we can't find someone who can or will count homeless people at those places?

A14: The Tracking Form for Counts/Estimates of Unsheltered Homeless Persons will be used to document the number of people (probably an estimate) who are known to be homeless but who are unapproachable.

Q15: Why do we ask personal questions such as the “conditions” people have?

A15: There are demographic questions that are asked because it helps in program planning and funders, both public and private, want to know this information. The questions addressing the serious “conditions” respondents may have are asked, in part, because HUD requires this information. Service providers are also interested in this question as it helps plan programs and services.

Q16: How do I approach a homeless person?

A16: You may review the “Interviewer Script” in the training packet or on the statewide homeless survey website. Generally, you introduce yourself, briefly describe what you are doing, ask if they would please complete a survey with you, explain that their answers are strictly confidential, and make it clear that their participation is NOT mandatory, especially if they are at an agency where they are receiving services.

Q17: Who are the “unsheltered” homeless?

A17: The “unsheltered” homeless are persons who are sleeping in places that were not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned or condemned buildings, on the street, under a bridge, etc. This group does NOT include persons who are seen at, e.g., the Stout Street clinic or who are sleeping in an emergency shelter.

Q18: How do I record the first three initials of the last name for persons with a hyphenated last name or with multiple last names?

A18: Record the first three letters of the respondent's FIRST last name. For example, if someone's last name is Jones-Rhodes, then record "j, o, n."

Q19: How do I generate the personal identification number (PIN)?

A19: You don't have to generate the PIN. It will be done during the data analysis. However, you do need to try to get accurate identifying information, including the first three letters of the respondent's last name, their first and middle initials, their birth month, and their age and gender so the researchers can create the PIN.

Q20: Who should be included in questions 11-13?

Question 11: "How many family members are/were with you on Monday night, January 29th, who ALSO are WITHOUT A PERMANENT PLACE TO LIVE? Do NOT include family members who you may have stayed with who HAVE a permanent place to live.

Questions 12-13: Please complete the following table for FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WERE WITH YOU AND ALSO WITHOUT A PERMANENT PLACE TO LIVE.

A20: Only include family members (and same or opposite sex partners) who are homeless and staying with the respondent. The respondent may include children who are usually with them but are temporarily staying somewhere else.

Q21: How is "permanent" place to live defined?

Q21: There is no easy answer to this question. A permanent place to live is a place that is intended for human habitation and that is not time-limited. Interviewers should take the response of the homeless person, even if you think they are not giving an accurate answer. When data are analyzed, other questions will be considered in determining whether or not an individual is homeless.

Q22: When is the HIPAA release necessary?

A22: In most cases, the HIPAA release form is NOT necessary. However, it is available for those agencies which feel they need a HIPAA release.

Q23: If an agency is NOT open on Monday, January 29th or Tuesday, January 30th, when should it conduct the survey?

A23: Agencies which are NOT open on January 29th or 30th should survey the first day they are open AFTER January 29th.

Q24: Can the survey be printed on two pages?

*A24: **NO!** In order to ensure that the survey remains intact and no information is lost, please print the survey on one sheet of paper, front and back.*

Q25: For question 10, "Where will you/did you spend the night on Monday, January 29th?" if someone's response is not listed, what do I do?

A25: If someone's response is NOT listed, please check "somewhere else" (response 16) and write a detailed description of their location.

Q26: I'm a 211 operator, can I survey individuals over the phone?

A26: If someone calls in on January 29th or 30th and the issue of the call is about homelessness, yes you may survey the individual over the phone. Be sure to ask and document all questions that make up the PIN. Other agencies that handle incoming calls related to homelessness can also survey clients over the phone on January 29th or 30th.

Q27: Our agency serves about 200 clients each week. What if I don't see everyone on January 29th? Can I submit a tracking form for the individuals I don't see on January 29th?

A27: No! The stated purpose of this project is to identify and describe the state's homeless population for one 24-hour period. In addition to producing an accurate "one day count," we will use each agency's best estimate of the total number of unduplicated clients served in a typical week in January to estimate the total number of homeless persons in Colorado. It is vitally important for people to complete and submit the tracking (Counts/Estimates) form. The cover sheet used by agencies to submit their surveys asks for the number of surveys submitted by the particular agency, program, group or individual, but also asks, "How many unduplicated HOMELESS clients do you serve at this location in a typical week in January 2007? Please give your best estimate."

Q28: Can I conduct my surveys over a week instead of just one day?

A28: No! Although some programs serve more unduplicated individuals over a week's time than they do in a 24 hour time period, the stated purpose of this project is to identify and describe the state's homeless population for one 24 hour period. The ONLY exception to this methodology is for agencies that are not open on Monday night or Tuesday. Agencies not open may survey clients on the first day of the week they are open. If the methodology is dramatically different from one area of the state to another, the amount of justification and explanation that will be necessary in reporting the results will only serve to dilute the result.

Q29: On the Cover Sheet, it asks, "How many unduplicated HOMELESS clients do you serve at this location in a typical week in January 2007? Please give your best estimate." What is an unduplicated weekly count?

A29: In an unduplicated count each individual is only counted once. For example, if you work for an emergency shelter you will need to consider the number of individuals served over the course of a week instead of totaling the number of beds occupied during the course of the week.

Q30: Do I interview everyone in jail on January 29th or just those released from jail on January 29th?

A30: Please interview only those individuals being released from jail on January 29th who are believed to be homeless.

Q31: My local BLM and Forest service employees said they are not allowed to work after dark. Can BLM and Forest surveys work with me to survey late afternoon?

A31: Yes, survey question 10 asks, "Where will you/where did you spend the night of Monday January 29th? Surveying before the evening of January 29th should be reserved only for circumstances where you will not be able to survey if you wait until dark.

Q32: If I interview an adult traveling with his or her children over 18 do I interview the adult children too?

A32: No! The respondent should include their adult children in questions 11-13.

Q33: Should I interview unrelated adults traveling with a homeless respondent I survey?

A33: Yes. If the respondent mentions they are traveling with an unrelated friend you should interview their friend too unless this friend is a same or opposite sex partner.

Q34: Why does question 14 focus on eviction within the next week and not the next month. Don't most people receive 30 days notice of eviction?

A34: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) only includes individuals being evicted within the next week as homeless.

Q35: Question 10, "Where will you/where did you spend the night of Monday January 29th?" has a lot of possible answers. Do I need to read all the options?

A35: No! Ask question 10 and then pause and wait for the respondent to tell you where they stayed. If the respondent has difficulty identifying a location then you should you read the list of possible locations.

Q36: Our day agency will not see all clients we serve on January 29th. Is it OK for us to go through our case files and complete a survey for the clients we don't see on January 29th?

A36: No! The stated purpose of this project is to identify and describe the state's homeless population for one 24-hour period. Survey only January 29th clients. This is the only way we can generate an accurate "one day count." You will have a chance to tell us more about the homeless clients you serve on other days via the Cover Sheet Form. On the Cover Sheet Form, you will not only document the number of surveys you are submitting, but will give the total number of unduplicated clients served in a typical week in January. Both counts – the "one day" and the "typical week" – are vital pieces of information.

Q37. I work for an emergency shelter. Should I use the Domestic Violence version of the survey with my Domestic Violence clients?

A37. No. The Domestic Violence version of the survey is only to be used by staff of Domestic Violence shelters and programs. The only exception is for programs serving a mix of Domestic Violence clients and non- Domestic Violence clients. In these agencies the interviewers will be using both the Domestic Violence survey and the standard survey depending on the respondent.

Q38. What should the interviewer do if during the process of conducting the interview the interviewer learns that the respondent is a victim of Domestic Violence?

A38. It is vitally important that the respondent's confidentiality be protected. The interviewer should offer to erase or cross out any personally identifying information including: respondent initials, month of birth, Questions 1-7, 12, 13 and 21. All survey responses are voluntary and all respondents can choose to answer or not answer any survey questions.

Q39. I work for a shelter with a mix of Domestic Violence clients and non-Domestic Violence clients. Who do I give my surveys too?

A39. Completed Domestic Violence surveys need to be delivered to Jennifer Lynch, Information & Technology Director, Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 900, Denver CO 80203. Please hand deliver or mail Jennifer the **original** completed surveys and cover sheet and email the Excel spreadsheet with your clients' aggregate demographic data to jlynch@ccadv.org by February 2nd. If you need to mail the surveys to Jennifer rather than hand deliver them, make a copy of each completed survey first, then mail the originals and keep the survey copies. Once you know Jennifer has received your surveys please destroy all copies on file.

All other surveys need to be delivered to your county coordinator by February 2nd. Again, if surveys are mailed, please mail the original surveys and keep photocopies on hand in the event surveys are lost in the mail.

Q40. If I work for an agency that serves a mix of Domestic Violence clients and non-Domestic Violence clients, should I conduct client surveys and complete the Excel spreadsheet?

A40. Yes! Domestic Violence Agency staff must complete an Excel spreadsheet containing demographics of their domestic violence clients in aggregate **AND** administer the Domestic Violence version of the Homeless survey to their DV clients. Please **do not** include demographic information on your non-Domestic Violence clients in the Excel spreadsheet.

Q41: Do I need to survey all temporary resort workers/migrant farm workers?

A41: No! Please prioritize your survey efforts and focus on locations where resort/migrant workers may stay that are not intended for habitation. If a resort/migrant worker lacks a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence the resort/migrant worker should be interviewed. Resort/migrant workers who have a permanent place to stay in another State or Mexico probably will not be identified as homeless by this survey.

Collaboration with local resort/migrant worker coalitions is recommended. Enlist the help of your local coalitions in educating resort/migrant workers about the count and in identifying locations where resort/migrant workers access services in your community.

Q42: Should I survey people in permanent supportive housing?

A42: No! Individuals and families living in permanent supportive housing will not be counted as homeless through this survey. Permanent supportive housing programs include programs that do not have a time limit. Some examples of permanent supportive housing programs are: Shelter Plus Care (S + C); Subsidized Housing programs.

Q43: If a respondent lives in a transitional housing program, how should the respondent answer question 16, "How long have you been without a permanent place to live this time?" Should the respondent include the time spent in the transitional housing program?

A43: Yes, the respondent should include the time living in the transitional housing program. However if the respondent is unsure of the length of time, the interviewer should ask about when the homeless episode began and count from the start of the most recent homeless episode until now. For all questions, record the answer provided by the respondent.

Q44: How do I answer question 10, “Where will you/where did you spend the night of Monday, January 29th?” if the respondent spent the night in more than one location?

A44: If the respondent spent the night in more than one location, for example, the respondent started the night in jail and was transferred to the detoxification center then the interviewer should mark the first location.

Q45: I know of individuals “doubled up” and “couch surfing” in my community. Can I call these individuals on the phone on Tuesday, January 30th to conduct the survey?

Q45: No, interviewers should not call people to conduct surveys. Many communities are advertising survey locations where the count will be conducted. Providing education, publicity and information on the count is recommended. Recruiting individuals over the phone to participate in the survey is not acceptable.

Q46: If a grandmother is caring for her grandchild, what option should I select on question 8, “Are you?”

A46: If a single grandmother is caring for her grandchild under 18, please select “in another situation” and write in “single grandmother caring for grandchild under 18.”

Q47: Should an agency turn in a Cover Sheet even if they do not serve any homeless individuals on the night of January 29th?

Q47: Yes. This additional information may be helpful during the analysis.