

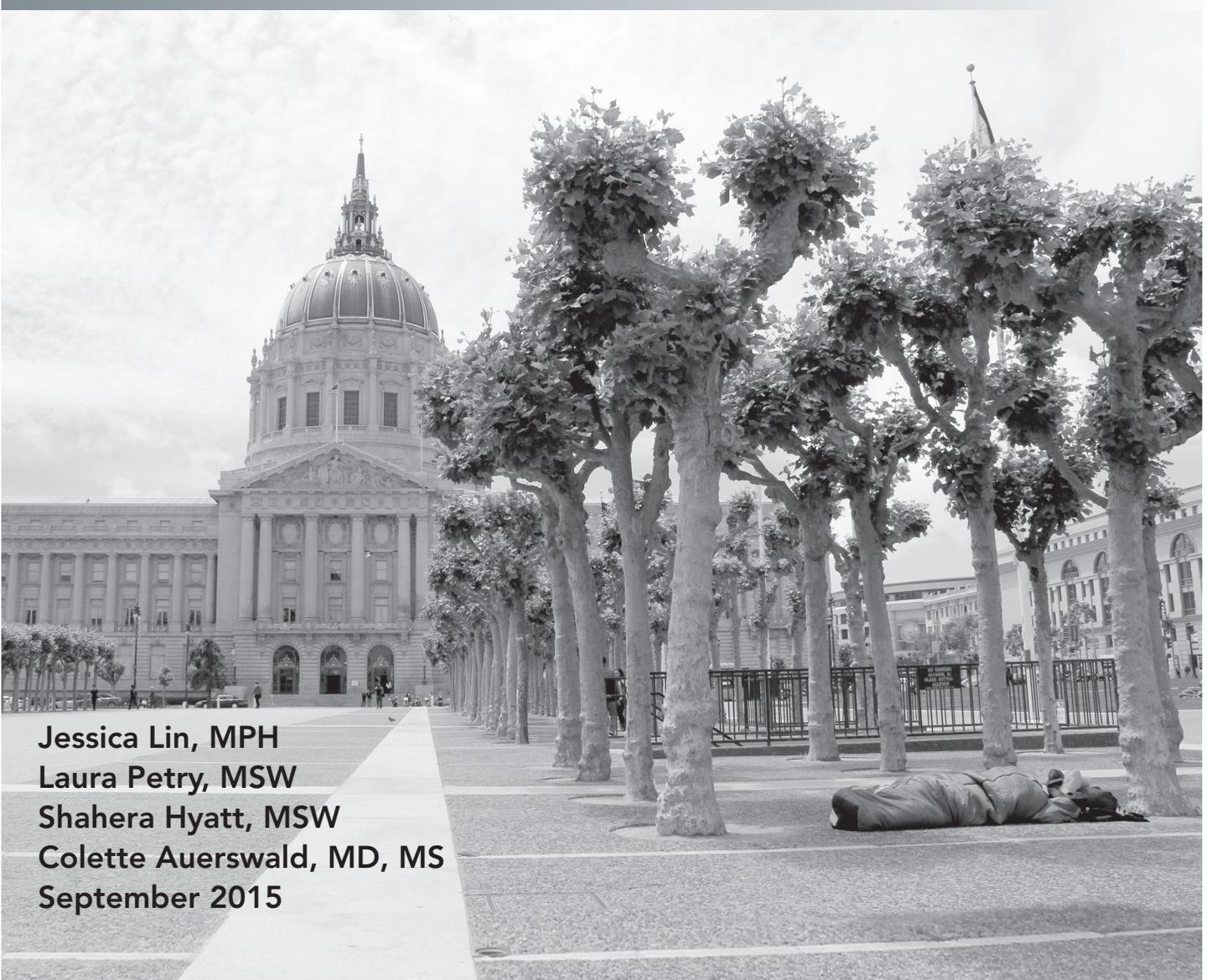
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*voices from the street*

**SPECIAL TOPICS**



## **We Count, California!: Lessons Learned from Efforts to Improve Youth Inclusion in California's 2015 Point-in-Time Counts**



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### About the CHYP

The California Homeless Youth Project (CHYP) is a research and policy initiative of the California Research Bureau and the California State Library. The CHYP highlights issues and solutions for youth ages twelve to twenty-four who are living "on the edge" of homelessness or are currently homeless in California. In particular, the CHYP engages these youth directly in research and policy discussions, giving voice to their experiences and recommendations, as well as to those of researchers, practitioners and policy experts. The CHYP is supported by funding from The California Wellness Foundation. Reports are available at <http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov>.

### About I4Y

[I4Y \(Innovations for Youth\)](#) based in the University of California Berkeley School of Public Health is focused on real-time, rigorous, multidisciplinary research regarding interventions to address the social and structural determinants of health for our most vulnerable youth. The I4Y Group has tested street-based STI testing and treatment interventions for homeless and unstably housed youth in San Francisco, respondent-driven sampling and HIV testing of street youth in Western Kenya, evaluated the effectiveness of youth participatory action research in San Francisco public schools, and influenced policymakers to adopt medical abortion methods in low-resource settings such as Ethiopia.

## Acknowledgements

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## “How Many Young People are Homeless in California?”

This question propelled the *We Count, California!* team to conduct a two-year technical assistance project to help communities across California obtain a better estimate of how many children and young adults experience homelessness at a single point-in-time in California. We know from previous counts that California has the second highest rate of unsheltered youth in the country.<sup>1</sup> This rate is particularly concerning given the lack of state-level funding for runaway and homeless youth programs. Two-thirds of California counties have no shelters for homeless youth, leaving young people with few options but to sleep outside if they find themselves without a stable place to call home.

Federal funding for programs that serve homeless youth has remained virtually flat for nearly a decade, out of step with the growing reality of homelessness on the streets. An argument for this lack of funding is the lack of data to demonstrate the scope of the problem or to justify the need for increased funding. That’s why the California Homeless Youth Project is proud to announce our new report, *We Count, California!: Lessons Learned from Efforts to Improve Youth Inclusion in California’s 2015 Point-in-Time counts*.<sup>2</sup> Here, we highlight promising practices for counting unaccompanied minors and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness and report the latest figures<sup>3</sup> from communities’ 2015 Point-in-Time counts across the state.

In the 2015 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, 11,365 unsheltered, unaccompanied children and youth were counted, i.e., found to be residing in a place not meant for human habitation on the night of the count (e.g., in a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or on the street). Transitional age youth (TAY), from the ages of 18 to 24, comprise the vast majority of unsheltered homeless youth counted across communities. A total of 10,531 unsheltered homeless TAY were identified in 2015, 8% more than in 2013, and 87% more than in 2011 (the year before communities were required by HUD to count TAY). In 2015, 834 unaccompanied unsheltered minors were counted across California, half the number counted in 2013 (1,668) and fewer than in the 2011 count (1,217).

While we know that communities still have a long way to go to obtain a truly confident estimate of youth homelessness, particularly for minors, youth who may be couch surfing or sleeping indoors in precarious or substandard situations, and unstably housed youth in rural areas, our findings suggest that communities participating in *We Count, California!* increased their technical knowledge regarding counting youth and building the collaborations necessary to successfully meet this challenge.

We applaud the strides that communities have made, while recognizing the challenges that lie ahead. *We Count, California!* identifies many of these challenges at the local, state, and federal level and offers solutions based on input from youth, service providers, education liaisons, and Continuums of Care across the state. To ensure a successful count, communities must involve youth at every stage of planning and conducting the count, begin planning early, and engage multiple sectors and opinion leaders in the process. At the state level, California could opt to take a coordinated statewide approach to counting youth that would support planning, coordination of activities, and accessing federal funds to better serve homeless youth. Federal partners must continue to underscore the urgency and importance of ending youth homelessness, and invest in the capacity to fully realize the

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report. Department of Housing and Urban Development, October 31, 2013. <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/2013-annual-homeless-assessment-report-ahar-resources/>

<sup>2</sup> Programs Serving California’s Homeless Youth: Results of a Point-in-Time Survey. California homeless youth Project, January 2011. <http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/SUMMARY-Inventory.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For 2011, 2013, and 2015, local and statewide numbers of both unaccompanied minors and transition age youth as captured by the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Point-in-Time count are available at [kidsdata.org/topic/1839/homeless-youth-pit/table](http://kidsdata.org/topic/1839/homeless-youth-pit/table).

data strategy outlined in the youth framework of the federal strategic plan to end homelessness.<sup>4</sup> It is only through working together that we can achieve the goal of ending youth homelessness in California.

### About the *We Count, California!* Initiative

“Tremendous work is going on at the State and local level—where States, local governments, nonprofits, faith based and community organizations, and the private and philanthropic sectors are responsible for some of the best thinking, innovation, and evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness. These State and local stakeholders must be active partners with the Federal Government, and their work will inform and guide our efforts at the national level.”

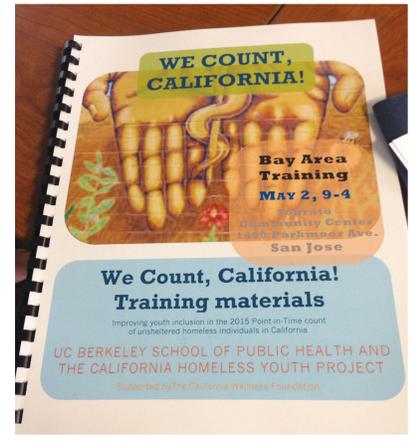
– Barack Obama, *Opening Doors 2015*

*We Count, California!* is a collaboration between the California Homeless Youth Project of the California State Library and the Innovations for Youth (I4Y) Group at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. Funded by The California Wellness Foundation, the aim of *We Count, California!* was to support communities in improving youth inclusion in 2015 Point-in-Time homeless counts across California. The Point-in-Time count of unsheltered persons is conducted every two years per federal mandate by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is required for communities to receive federal funding for homeless services. The count is an important effort to ensure sound program and policy decisions are made when determining appropriate services tailored to each community. It also helps communities develop more effective plans and measure progress towards ending homelessness.



The 2013 federal Point-in-Time count was the first homeless count for which youth inclusion was a specific national aim, and for which communities were required to enumerate and report their transitional age youth (young adults from the ages of 18 to 24) separately from their general adult homeless populations. Our group’s report of youth inclusion in California’s 2013 counts, *Hidden in Plain Sight: An Assessment of Youth Inclusion in Point-in-Time Counts of California’s Unsheltered Homeless Population*, highlighted a number of promising practices and continuing challenges at the local and federal level. Among the recommendations of our report was the development of community-level supports, including provision of technical assistance regarding youth-appropriate counting methods, shared sample materials such as training and data collection tools, and funding to support the inclusion of youth providers and youth themselves at the table during count planning and implementation activities. *We Count, California!* developed as a response to the gaps identified across California communities in 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Opening Doors. United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, as amended in 2015. [http://usich.gov/opening\\_doors/](http://usich.gov/opening_doors/)



Our project goals were to support California’s communities in improving youth inclusion in their 2015 and subsequent Point-in-Time counts; to develop pilot models for communities for which tools for counting youth were most underdeveloped, including rural, suburban, and low-resource areas; and to raise awareness of issues surrounding better data collection regarding the size and scope of youth homelessness. We implemented this project in three phases:

1. Statewide technical assistance activities, to support as many California communities as possible in moving incrementally toward improved youth inclusion. To achieve this, we conducted regional trainings across the state; granted seed monies to support 23 communities piloting youth-inclusive or youth-specific activities in their 2015 homeless counts; and developed and shared resources, including a youth survey template, with communities via an open access Google Group.
2. In-depth, one-on-one technical assistance and funding to two non-urban, low-resource communities, the Yolo County and Kings/Tulare Continuums of Care. In collaboration with these two communities, we expanded existing promising practices to rural areas and piloted new count activities, including using technology for survey administration and social media platforms for youth outreach.
3. Interwoven throughout our project were efforts to promote structural changes on the local, state, and federal levels to support improved data collection regarding the size and characteristics of youth experiencing homelessness and unstable housing.

The USICH has called for **“improving the accuracy of counting youth in PIT counts of homelessness by publishing youth-specific methodology based on promising practices identified and tested in some communities”** as one of the key strategies for preventing and ending homelessness among youth. This report documents some of the promising approaches, continuing challenges, and local, state, and federal considerations regarding improving data on youth homelessness in California and nationwide.

A lexicon of common terms and acronyms employed when discussing homeless counts or youth homelessness is included as Appendix 1.

## ***We Count, California! Activities***

### **Statewide Technical Assistance**

As part of our statewide technical assistance effort, the *We Count, California!* team developed and conducted a set of seven day-long regional convenings across the state. All California Continuums of Care were invited to participate. Continuums of Care (or CoCs) are a regional or planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals in a specific region. Our goal was to increase awareness about the importance of and potential methods for identifying youth in the PIT count, and to provide a platform for CoCs to share their experiences and strategize for more youth-inclusive 2015 counts.

Trainings lasted one day and included modules on:

- PIT count overview;
- Promising approaches to youth-inclusive counting;
- Youth engagement;
- Surveys and data collection;
- Communicating effectively with media and local policymakers;
- Collaborating with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to include homeless students in the PIT count (a module developed by our partners at Applied Survey Research);
- Specific guidance regarding issues that frequently came up during our 2013 statewide assessment, such as the legality of surveying minors, the potential fiscal benefit of identifying homeless youth in the PIT count, and guidance on working with youth and community partners; and,
- Counting youth in large, rural or mixed density communities (a module developed by the Southern Nevada Continuum of Care).

Each training also included facilitated group exercises designed to help communities:

- Identify the sub-groups of homeless youth in their communities, the potential partners who interact with specific sub-groups, and the places where sub-groups can be found and counted;
- Identify local strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for youth-inclusive counts; and
- Begin to plan activities for the 2015 count, such as picking specific goals for the 2015 count, identifying potential youth-focused partners, determining locally appropriate count methods, and developing a preliminary timeline of activities leading up to the count.

Participants received a training manual that included regional PIT count and LEA (student homelessness) numbers, as well as copies of the training slides and exercises.

We collaborated with seven California CoCs who hosted the regional convenings. Host agencies assisted in securing training space, inviting local partners, and reaching out to neighboring communities to encourage participation. We extended invitations to the lead for each CoC, to all youth providers we were able to locate in each community, and to local educational liaisons working with homeless students. McKinney-Vento liaisons are tasked with identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness and ensuring they receive equal access to education. Liaisons provide referrals to health care, dental, mental health and other appropriate services; inform parents/guardians of the educational rights and opportunities available to their children; provide parents/guardians with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education; assist families and youth in accessing transportation services.

In an effort to encourage collaborative relationships for youth-inclusive PIT counts, we incentivized the participation of youth service providers with travel stipends and encouraged liaisons from each

community to participate. Additional invitations were extended to stakeholders via listservs, personal communication, and brief presentations to the NorCal CoC Roundtable and Southern California CoC Leaders Meeting, the state's two primary regular gatherings of CoC representatives.

The seven day-long regional trainings were held between April and July of 2014. Our **trainings reached a total of 118 participants representing 32 of the 39 CoCs** funded by HUD in 2014. For most CoCs, these trainings represented the first time they had ever received training and technical assistance specifically regarding counting youth.

Table 1. *We Count, California!* Convening Participants (Spring/Summer 2014)

Host City	Participating Communities	Participants			
		CoC Members	Youth Providers	Local Education Agency (LEA) Representatives	Total Participants*
Fresno	Fresno/Madera, Kern, Kings/Tulare, Merced	7	8	2	12
Los Angeles	Los Angeles, Pasadena, Ventura	6	11	2	17
Orange County	Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo	14	14	3	30
Sacramento	Butte, El Dorado, Placer-Nevada, Redding/Shasta, Sacramento, San Mateo, Stanislaus, Yuba-Sutter, Yolo	8	10	2	15
San Jose	San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz	4	1	1	4
Richmond	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Sacramento, San Francisco, Solano, Sonoma	9	13	1	21
Ukiah	Humboldt, Mendocino	10	13	2	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>CoCs</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>118</b>

\*Total attendance numbers are lower than the sum of participant types, as some participants identified themselves as being both a CoC member and youth service provider, CoC member and LEA representative, or youth service provider and LEA representative.

### Impact

Evaluations of the convenings were overwhelmingly positive. Eighty nine percent (89%) of respondents to our evaluation reported that it was "Almost Certain" or "Likely" that they would apply information learned from the training to their 2015 PIT count. In particular, participants reported that it was helpful for them to:

- **Start planning for the PIT count early** (at least 6 months prior to the count date): *"Appreciated having the training at this time of year - to reinforce early planning."*
- **Be at the table with their partnering agencies:** *"It was a good beginning to building a team."*

- **Network with and learn from neighboring communities:** *“It was also good meeting people from different places and learning about their experiences with working with youth.”*
- **Learn about the full spectrum of youth-inclusive counting options:** *“Appreciated the practical tools your team provided for those who are simply looking to increase their knowledge about and accuracy of the numbers for a youth population as well as tools for those who decide to go the route of a separate youth survey. We felt encouraged to move forward with at least including a youth voice to our methods and including youth volunteers to help our numbers.”*
- **Feel reinvigorated about the count process:** *“[We] felt frustrated and limited by previous PIT attempts [and] left empowered and energized to improve methods and processes.”* *“The training was well thought out and actually made myself (and I believe others) excited to conduct the upcoming count again.”*
- **See potential survey tools that can be incorporated into the count:** *“Appreciated tools for those who decide to go the route of a separate youth survey.”* *“We are definitely looking at incorporating a separate tool on the day of the Count, similar to the one shown.”*

**Two additional achievements of the training series were:**

- **Making space for dialogue:** The convenings were a space where providers who have not historically worked can learn about how collaborations might improve the PIT count, and how data sources that have traditionally been pitted against each other could be integrated.
- **Addressing misinformation regarding the PIT count:** We found that misinformation regarding the PIT count and its mandates is widespread. Clarifying the HUD guidelines (as well as complementary options available to communities seeking to expand their counts) was an important first step to informing CoCs.

**Challenges**

- **Ensuring stakeholder attendance:** Garnering interest and scheduling trainings was difficult in several regions. We learned that having a strong local point of contact/advocate to help foster interest in the training, reaching out well in advance to CoC contacts and youth providers to introduce the training, and reaching out in person to invite individuals to the training was crucial to ensuring strong participation at convenings. In seeking to increase attendance, we found that just as in youth populations, peer outreach from CoC to CoC or provider to provider can be extremely effective in getting people on board and gives the trainers credibility in the community. Although the vast majority of communities were interested in attending a training, several were understaffed, in transition, or overwhelmed and unable to extend the time or staffing to attend. It was important to be adaptive and responsive in reaching out to communities and scheduling trainings, and to offer compensation for providers’ travel and time.
- **Training decision-makers:** It was at times difficult to determine whether or not we were reaching the individuals with decision-making power in each community. In several communities, responsibility for count coordination shifted to another person as the count neared, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge or change in count decisions. Several communities commented that it was helpful to receive a training manual during the convenings to pass on to the incoming count coordinator or to review themselves as plans solidified.
- **Information overload:** The amount and character of information provided during the trainings was sometimes overwhelming for participants, particularly those with less experience in PIT counts. Given the amount of information provided, a number of participants suggested that this training be offered as a two-day training in the future, in order to decrease the level of information overload experienced by some participants. We adapted the order and timing of training modules as was possible as the trainings progressed.

- **Mediating community relationships:** One unintended consequence of bringing youth providers and CoC members to the table together to plan for youth counts is that it can provide a stage on which historical grievances are played out. In rare instances, longstanding conflicts and mutual distrust led to arguments between youth providers and CoC members regarding count methods and plans. Though this was an unfortunate occurrence, it is our hope that the dialogue fostered during the training reinforced stakeholders' shared interests in youth and that airing these issues far in advance of the count allowed them to move toward better collaboration as the count neared. Having a neutral party like the *We Count, California!* team present to facilitate these difficult conversations and clarify HUD's requirements about the PIT count may help to clear up misunderstandings between parties regarding PIT data and its uses.

## Google Group

Following the statewide trainings, we launched a [Google Group](#) to serve as a platform for disseminating messages and tools to California communities. All training participants were invited to join the site. The Google Group site was intended to host training slides from the statewide trainings and tools, and to provide a forum for communication amongst CoCs regarding the count. For example, prior to the PIT count, we used the Google Group as a platform to share messages about grant opportunities, tips for counting from the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and a youth survey template.

## Challenges

Despite having engaged a broad swath of the California homeless youth provider community into the Google Group, we were unable to cultivate the kind of participatory membership on the forum that we had originally envisioned. Our intent had been for the Google Group to serve as an online platform for communities to share questions and ideas with each other, as a virtual analog to the kinds of networking that we saw happen during the regional convenings. However, this sort of dialogue proved difficult to foster. Group membership continues to grow, and the site will remain an active platform which retains the shared materials and resources developed during the *We Count, California!* project.

## Youth survey templates

In December 2014, we released a set of survey templates via the *We Count, California!* Google Group and in emails to the CoC lead and HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) contacts for each of California's Continuums of Care. These templates were designed to incorporate the required data elements from HUD, to capture multiple definitions of youth homelessness, and to include youth-appropriate questions about topics including sexual orientation, systems involvement, and community challenges. Historically, some youth providers have been reluctant to participate in the count, fearing that the young people they most frequently come into contact with (i.e. couch surfers), would be systematically excluded. In an effort to promote improved partnerships and data collection that addresses the needs of both youth providers and CoCs, *We Count, California!* encouraged communities to use this opportunity not only to count the unsheltered population defined by HUD, but also to formulate local definitions of youth homelessness and count these youth for community planning purposes. This helped many youth providers to see the PIT count as an opportunity to raise awareness about homeless youth, rather than an exercise required for funding that they do not receive. Three survey templates were developed, all of which included a broader suggested definition of youth homelessness:

1. A youth-specific survey including all the standard PIT items required by HUD.
2. A supplemental youth survey to be appended to the standard PIT items required by HUD.
3. A prioritized items list for communities interested in adding a limited number of youth-friendly items to their standard PIT survey.

Survey templates were intended to serve as a starting point for communities interested in gathering data that was youth-friendly, developmentally appropriate, and locally relevant. The aim was to give communities the option to tailor existing templates to fit their local data needs, rather than having to start the survey design process from scratch in each Continuum of Care.

*Impact*

Our team’s focus on collecting locally relevant data empowered communities to employ multiple definitions of youth homelessness in order to develop a more nuanced picture to inform their local planning processes. In some communities, this allowed for improved collaboration amongst local stakeholders. As one count lead said, **“I think for our youth providers and McKinney-Vento liaisons, they often think, ‘Our homeless definition doesn’t mesh with yours. Our worlds don’t mesh when it comes to PIT.’ When we opened it up to look at a broader definition, it’s given us reason to collaborate.”** In addition, collecting information from youth beyond the scope of HUD’s data standards provided information that will support local planning and advocacy. As another count coordinator noted, **“The last question was about what you would like to see in your community, and the majority of responses were, ‘We just need safe places to stay.’ Taking that back and saying there isn’t any youth shelter in [the CoC] may create opportunities to have something especially for youth.”**

*Challenges*

- **Timing of survey release:** Despite our best efforts to solicit input and refine the survey template prior to dissemination, additional feedback from HUD and other stakeholders resulted in multiple iterations of the survey being shared with communities. The first template was shared with communities in mid-December, and the final survey tools were released on January 12, too late for most communities to incorporate into their 2015 counts.
- **Survey length:** In an effort to capture multiple definitions of homelessness and provide youth-relevant items that went beyond HUD’s already lengthy set of required data standards, the final full youth survey template was four pages long, and the stand-alone youth survey template was two pages. Many communities felt this was too long. In future iterations, we would encourage communities to adjust the survey internally to focus on their own data priorities; to provide incentives to youth surveyors and youth participants for their time; to adequately train youth surveyors such that any interviewer-level delay in survey administration is minimized; and to use technology such as phone- or tablet-based survey tools to speed survey administration and data entry.

Table 2. Definitions of Youth Homelessness

Source	Definition
HUD (Point-in-Time Count eligibility)	An individual who “has a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public space not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground”
HUD (assistance programs eligibility criteria for transitional age youth)	Is under the age of 25; meets another existing federal statute definition of homelessness; has not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in the past 60 days; has moved two or more times in the past 60 days; and is expected to continue in this state due to disability, substance use, abuse history, chronic physical or mental conditions, or having 2 or more barriers to employment

<b>McKinney-Vento Act</b> (education definition)	“Individuals who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence,” including “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason” or “are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations”
<b>Runaway and Homeless Youth Act</b>	Unaccompanied youth “for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement”
<b>Homeless Children and Youth Act</b> (proposed 2015 amendment)	Would have amended HUD’s definition of homelessness to include children and youth who were verified as homeless through HUD’s assistance programs and through other federal programs such as Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs or by public school district homeless liaisons.
<b>Local definitions</b>	Communities may have differing local definitions of youth homelessness that they choose to include in their PIT count or to determine eligibility for local programming.

**Seed grants**

Seed grant applications were disseminated to communities who attended trainings in their training manual and by email to all CoCs in California. In August 2014, seed grants in the amount of \$2,000 were disbursed to 23 communities.

Table 3. *We Count, California!* Seed Grant Grantees

Region	Seed Grantees
Bay Area	Marin, Napa, Solano
Central Coast	San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz
Far North	Butte, Mendocino, Nevada*, Redding/Shasta, Yuba/Sutter
Inland Empire	Riverside, San Bernardino
San Joaquin Valley	Fresno/Madera, Kern, Kings/Tulare, Stanislaus
Sacramento Metro	El Dorado, Placer*, Sacramento, Yolo
San Diego	San Diego
South Coast	Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura/Oxnard

\*Placer/Nevada represents one Continuum of Care but covers counties in two regions.

Seed grantees used their pilot awards to conduct a wide range of youth-inclusive count activities. The most common uses included:

- **Providing youth stipends:** The majority of communities dedicated funds to compensate youth for time spent assisting in the count planning process, becoming trained to count or survey their peers, and/or working as enumerators or surveyors during the count.
- **Providing youth incentives:** Communities also frequently dedicated seed grant funds to reimbursing youth for participating in youth surveys or providing food and other incentives for youth to attend magnet events or other count-related events.
- **Conducting magnet events:** Several communities chose to host magnet events to draw youth to be counted and spent funds on activities and food for the events.
- **Materials development:** Some communities invested pilot funds in social media campaigns to advertise counts to youth or in printed outreach materials publicizing the count.

- **Community dissemination:** Several communities held feedback events to share data and elicit youth input about the count process and results; funds were dedicated to outreach to encourage attendance, and to food offered at these events.

Specific activities and lessons learned regarding the different count tactics undertaken by communities in their 2015 PIT counts are further described in the following sections of this report.



## 1:1 Technical Assistance

### *Grant process*

One-on-one technical assistance grant applications were disseminated via email to all communities who participated in a regional training. Our goal was to engage with two non-urban, traditionally under-resourced communities. After reviewing eleven applications from community organizations and CoCs and conducting in-depth interviews with four finalist communities, we awarded technical assistance grants to the Kings/Tulare and Yolo Continuums of Care. Each awardee was granted \$5,000 to support staff time and \$5,000 to implement youth-specific count activities, in addition to the \$2,000 seed grants that both grantees had already received.

### *Technical assistance activities*

Our team provided technical assistance to Kings/Tulare and Yolo Counties from the fall of 2014 through the spring of 2015. TA activities included:

- **Regularly communicating** through weekly **phone calls** with Kings/Tulare CoC and regularly scheduled **check-in calls and emails** with Yolo CoC;
- Providing **input on the count activities** throughout the planning process;
- Helping to **facilitate stakeholder planning meetings**;
- Developing a **focus group** guide and helping to facilitate focus groups with youth in Kings/Tulare;
- Working with the CoC leads to develop locally specific **youth surveys**;
- **Programming surveys** into a survey app (Qualtrics), educating CoC leads on how to use the app, and troubleshooting any data collection issues;
- Lending **computers and iPads** to Kings/Tulare CoC for use during their count;
- Developing a **volunteer training guide** and informational materials for volunteers;
- **Cleaning and exporting data** out of Qualtrics app for Yolo CoC; and,
- Providing on-the-ground assistance during the PIT counts in both Kings/Tulare and Yolo.

More limited technical assistance via phone, email, or in-person visit was also provided to several other communities upon the request of local count organizers.

Count activities

Kings/Tulare: Kings/Tulare CoC’s youth count was led by CoC Coordinator Machael Smith and a partner from Visalia Rescue Mission, Kristin Eichbauer, who focused primarily on helping to develop social media marketing tools for the count. Count activities included:

<b>October 2014</b>	<b>Stakeholder planning meeting</b> , in which 11 youth-serving partners (including TAY providers, school liaisons, health providers, and one young adult) representing a wide range of services were introduced to the PIT count and began planning the count.
<b>December 2014</b>	<b>Focus groups conducted</b> (LGBTQ-identified youth and migrant youth). Focus groups were designed to determine best marketing approaches for the target populations, where and when youth could be found during the count, and best ways to engage with youth prior to and during the count. <b>Social media</b> logos and profiles developed. <b>Youth survey</b> tailored and finalized.
<b>January 2015</b>	<b>Social media</b> platforms activated and used to promote count. <b>App-based survey</b> developed for use on iPhones, iPads, and library computers. Count activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>4 Project Homeless Connect</b> events with dedicated youth surveys</li> <li>• <b>4 Library Magnet Events</b> for youth</li> <li>• <b>Youth-specific street canvassing</b> in two regions of the community to survey youth</li> <li>• <b>Outreach</b> effort in a rural migrant town conducted by an education liaison connected with community members</li> <li>• <b>School-based count</b> of select McKinney-Vento students (unsheltered homeless and truant youth) in Lindsay Unified School District</li> </ul>

Yolo: Yolo County’s count was initially led by CoC coordinator Janice Critchlow and general count coordinator Tracey Dickinson. In November 2014, Kacey Dominguez, a Yolo County staff member, was appointed to take on the youth PIT count coordination role. Yolo’s count activities included:

<b>October 2014</b>	<b>Working Group meeting</b> , in which youth-serving partners (including TAY providers, school liaison) representing a wide range of services were introduced to the PIT count and began the count planning process.
<b>November 2014</b>	Kacey Dominguez appointed as <b>youth count coordinator</b> .
<b>December 2014</b>	<b>Working Group meeting</b> of youth serving partners present at the prior meeting and new stakeholders (including library representatives and one youth).
<b>January 2015</b>	<b>Working Group meeting</b> to finalize count logistics. <b>App-based survey</b> developed for use on iPhones, Android tablets, and service location computers. Count activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth-specific street canvassing</b> in all regions of the county</li> <li>• Count event in Woodland <b>school district</b></li> <li>• Count events held in each <b>library</b> in the county</li> <li>• Surveys of all <b>youth calling the 211 hotline</b> during the week of the count</li> <li>• <b>Magnet events</b> planned and implemented by local stakeholders, including surveys at the United Christian Center</li> <li>• Surveys of college <b>students accessing the UC Davis Food Closet</b> during the week of the count</li> </ul>
<b>April 2015</b>	<b>Working Group meeting</b> to share preliminary findings and elicit stakeholder feedback regarding the count process.

## Lessons Learned: Count Activities

All of the communities who received *We Count, California!* seed or one-on-one technical assistance grants shared experiences and lessons learned from their 2015 youth count activities in their final reports. Their findings inform this section's tips and cautions regarding count planning and implementation.

### Planning

**Collaboration:** Communities consistently described building relationships with youth providers and youth themselves in the planning process as critical to the success of their count. As one count organizer stated: **"I think so often youth agencies and homeless agencies run parallel tracks, and they don't get together all that often. They're systems that don't really know each other very well... A lot of what has been successful didn't really have anything to do with the [grant funds] - it was relationships."** Connecting with agencies and individuals who are not part of the homeless services network but already interact with homeless youth can help communities to widen their net of stakeholders. Communities described reaching previously inaccessible groups of youth through new relationships with stakeholders ranging from library representatives, health providers, and unofficial "Good Samaritans," to coffee shop employees, drum circle leaders, and workforce development organizations. Collaborations may be further cultivated through giving stakeholders a sense of ownership over the process (for example, one community began each planning meeting with a decision tree of count options and collectively branched through decisions together) and being flexible and creative about how to include stakeholders into the count (for example, by scheduling count meetings and the count itself around the timing and capacity needs of stakeholders and the youth they serve).

**Location mapping:** Communities underlined the importance of knowing the population well and being sure that knowledge is up-to-date when determining where and when to conduct a count.

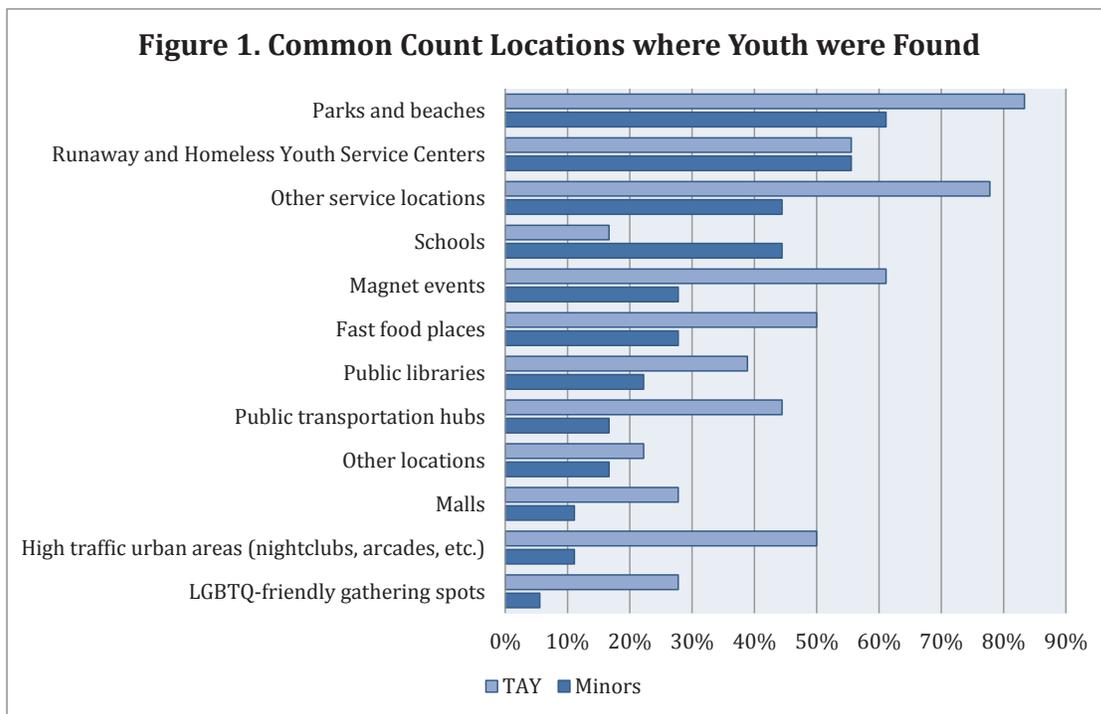
- **Street sites.** Street-based count activities need to be informed by youth and updated close to the date of the count, as the places that youth consider safe and comfortable may change rapidly. Some communities used pins on paper maps or web-based maps to keep track of potential count locations, then sent teams of outreach workers and/or youth advisors out one week or several days prior to the count date to assess the locations and outreach to youth about the upcoming count. Others mapped locations based on youth or provider input, then reviewed locations with youth enumerators immediately prior to the count and added to the list based on youths' up-to-date local knowledge. Outdoor locations varied greatly by community and subgroup of youth (for example, migrant youth may congregate in very different outdoor locations from youth traveling on the rail lines) and covered a wide range of locales, including public transit hubs, certain bus lines, casinos, shopping areas, rest stops, riverbanks, and skate parks.
- **Service sites.** Most communities conducted count activities in service locations as well as street sites. These services also varied widely by community and included places and providers such as food pantries, libraries, workforce development agencies, mental and physical health clinics, and government assistance or food stamp administrators. Several communities noted the importance of counting at organizations that interact with homeless youth, but which might not identify specifically as homeless services (for example, libraries, workforce development agencies, and gang intervention agencies).
- **Timing.** Just as important as knowing *where* youth will be during the count is *when* they will be there. It is critical to plan count activities around times when youth are likely to be found. For example, a youth advocate in one community informed count planners that youth who are seen on the streets during school hours are likely to get in trouble for truancy, so counting

on the street during school hours was unlikely to be successful. Though count times varied by community, the majority of youth-specific counts tended to take place during late afternoon and early evening hours.

- Confidentiality.** Many communities had concerns around revealing the sensitive locations of young people living on the streets, primarily to law enforcement officials who may return after the count to issue warnings or citations for sleeping outside. One community mitigated this concern by counting earlier in the evening and opting out of having a police escort in locations where young people were most likely to congregate. Instead, current and formerly homeless youth along with youth outreach workers accompanied volunteers to these sensitive locations.

Following the 2015 count, communities described most frequently finding youth in locations such as parks, service locations, commercial venues, and through magnet events (see Figure 1 for a chart of most common count locations). However, locales may differ widely by community and change over time, and it is important for all communities to develop youth-informed location maps and update them regularly and close to the count date.

Figure 1. Common Count Locations Where Youth Were Found



**Pre-count outreach:** A number of communities (particularly those conducting survey-based counts) conducted outreach prior to the PIT count to cultivate youth buy-in into the count. Overall, communities found that it was most effective and efficient to engage youth already engaged in planning for the count to serve as ambassadors for the count. Many communities posted flyers advertising the count in places like schools, service agencies, and local hangout spots. In several communities, including Fresno/Madera, a youth advisory group designed and distributed flyers advertising the count (see *“Promising Practice Spotlight: The Fresno Youth Advisory Board”* for more on lessons in youth engagement from Fresno).

**Social media outreach:** Several communities used social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to advertise upcoming count events. Communities advised that for best reach and accessibility, social media messages should be shared through count-specific, youth-friendly accounts or by youth ambassadors through their personal accounts, rather than using existing homeless provider agency accounts.

**Volunteer training:** Most communities recommended taking the time to conduct an intensive training of volunteer enumerators or surveyors prior to the count. For survey-based counts, communities suggested conducting volunteer trainings prior to the day of the count in order to give volunteers more time to absorb the materials and to build rapport with each other. Volunteer training is particularly important for educating adults about how to interact with youth, and for ensuring that volunteers are aware of and adhere to any youth-specific counting protocols that differ from the general count (for example, surveying PIT-ineligible couch surfing youth rather than ending the survey as one would for an adult). If youth have been engaged in the planning process, it may be helpful for volunteers and empowering for the youth themselves to engage them in leading parts of the volunteer training.

**Count methods**

In planning for a count, communities are faced with a series of decisions, including:

- Conducting a visual or survey-based count;
- If youth count efforts will be part of or separate from the general count;
- Whether or not to count in street sites, service locations, and/or through magnet events

Communities conducting visual counts need to determine count timing, how to target youth, and whether they will conduct a supplemental survey to the demographic characteristics of youth. Communities conducting survey-based counts will need to determine if they will count on one or multiple days, who will administer the survey, how the survey is delivered, and what the incentives for participation will be. In 2015, communities chose to engage in a range of count methodologies – of 28 communities who responded to a brief questionnaire regarding their 2015 counts, decisions were made as follows:

Figure 2a. Count Strategies

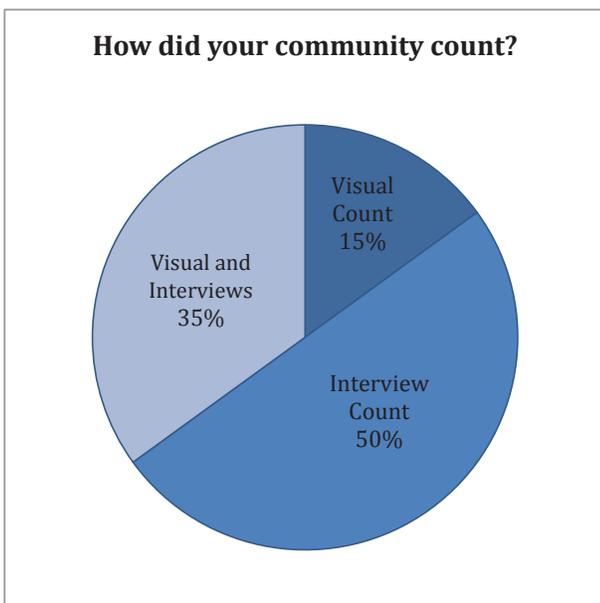


Figure 2b. Count Length

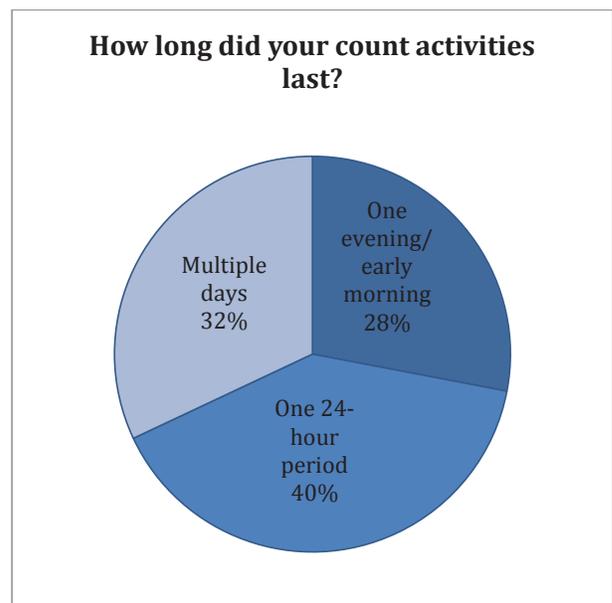
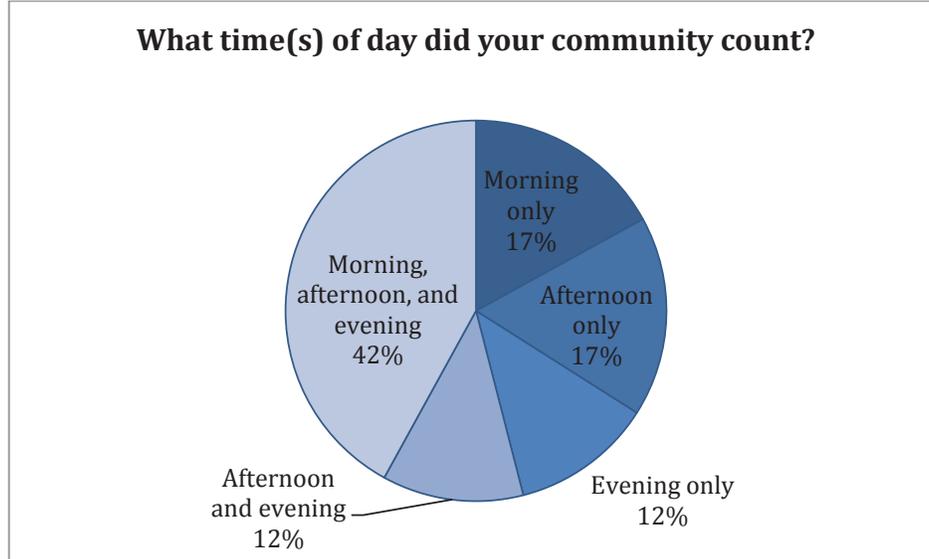


Figure 2c. Count Time(s) of Day



Most communities chose to conduct their youth count activities separately from the general count by engaging youth-specific count teams; counting at different, more youth-appropriate times from the general count; or holding youth magnet events. However, some communities elected to integrate their youth focus into the general count activities and timeline, for example by ensuring that a young person was present on each outreach team to provide a youth perspective during the count. The following are lessons learned regarding magnet events, survey-based counts, and collaborations with schools, three count activities that were piloted by a number of *We Count, California!* seed and technical assistance grantees.

**Magnet events:** Magnet events were identified following the 2013 PIT count as a promising practice for counting youth who are disconnected from shelters or are hard to reach via a street count. In our regional trainings, the idea of magnet events resonated strongly with many communities, who felt they might provide an easier way to reach more youth than traditional street outreach or service-based count efforts. However, **efforts to conduct magnet events in the 2015 PIT count led to mixed results across communities.**

- **Accessibility** is a large barrier in communities that cover a large geographic area or have poor transit infrastructure. If transportation or other accessibility issues are a concern (for example, because safety concerns like crossing gang boundaries impede travel), hosting small magnet events in several locations may be more effective than one centralized event.
- Magnet events seem to be most effective as an **efficient way to reach youth who are already connected to services.** Some of the most successful events appeared to capitalize upon existing, regular activities – for example, in one community, magnet events were conducted during the local libraries’ regular weekly youth meeting time. Communities hosting large one time only events with the goal of catching a wider net of youth often had trouble reaching youth if they did not have pre-existing, trusted community advocates to encourage participation. This method might require a longer-term investment by a community in order to see success as communities continue to build and expand their relationships and networks with service providers and youth, and destigmatize homelessness among young people.
- **Publicity** about events is critical to their success. Advertisements should make it clear who the target population is and what the incentives are for participation. Otherwise they may attract

homeless adults, youth who are not experiencing homelessness, or youth who are already accessing services and may be counted in other ways.

- Get **youth input about event activities and incentives**. Communities piloted many inventive events this year, such as a picnic with a taco truck, a party with a photo booth and DJ, a basketball game, and an open mic night.
- Several communities used events as an opportunity to **provide on-site services or referrals to care**, such as sexual health testing and care, linkages to mental health providers, and help with filling out Medi-Cal or housing applications. One community conducted **Project Homeless Connect** events as part of their general PIT count, which was highly successful in attracting adults and moderately successful in engaging youth. Another community conducted a successful **Project Youth Connect** event that was targeted specifically to youth and included opportunities to connect with services providers and receive services, giveaways, and food.
- As in all aspects of youth engagement in the count, **food and incentives are key**.

**Surveys:** Because surveys can ask youth to report on their housing status on a single reference night, survey-based counts can afford communities the opportunity to count over longer periods of time than one-day visual counts. Survey-based counts can also yield more information about youth, including their demographics, housing status and service needs.

- Communities are encouraged to **include a unique identifier code** or other identifying questions to de-duplicate surveys and address concerns about potential repeat survey-takers.
- **Survey-based counting may be helpful in communities with limited resources or large geographic coverage**, as it allows them to spread efforts over time and increase the likelihood of reaching youth from different subpopulations or living in widespread locations. As one count coordinator noted, “Organizing regionally and over the course of several days allowed for maximum utilization of limited resources, such as volunteers and tablets [for interviewing], and allowed for continuity in training and process.”
- It is critical when developing surveys to **be sure all HUD-mandated items are included** in the final instrument.
- Providing **youth-appropriate incentives**, such as cash or gift cards and food, is critical to ensuring the success of a survey-based count. Incentives encourage participation and offer a signal of respect to youth who are sharing their time and personal information. Appropriate incentives may vary widely by community and capacity. Many communities used gift cards for local fast food restaurants or grocery stores; in one community, gift bags filled with candy, a gift card, and a USB stick including a link to local resources were provided. Of the communities who received *We Count, California!* seed grants, all those who conducted surveys as part of their count reported using pilot funds to provide incentives to youth survey-takers.
- Several communities noted that **assessing multiple definitions of homelessness** through a survey allowed them to determine not only PIT eligibility, but also locally relevant data on service and housing needs. As one community leader noted, **“We were never quite sure if there were HUD-identified youth in our communities or if they were couch surfers. The data show clearly that there are [PIT-eligible] unaccompanied youth under 18 and many TAY youth.”** A number of communities noted that identifying couch surfing youth would help them to advocate and plan locally for youth housing, and that survey questions about service utilization were helpful for **identifying gaps in local services**.
- Communities considering youth-focused survey items had to choose whether to **integrate youth-appropriate questions into a general survey, add a set of supplemental youth questions to their general survey, or develop a youth-specific survey**. Communities that chose to add youth questions or conduct separate youth surveys noted that it was important to clearly differentiate between the general versus youth materials and to train surveyors well so it was clear who should be given the youth survey and which questions were to be asked of youth.

- **Survey length** was a concern for most communities. A survey containing HUD's required data elements is already lengthy. Adding youth-specific and locally relevant items to this questionnaire was judged to be burdensome by some communities. Strategies such as developing web or app-based survey tools, training interviewers well, being sure to explain the reason for the survey to participants, and providing meaningful incentives may all help to mitigate survey burden. Some communities worked with their youth advisors and HMIS coordinators to prioritize specific items and streamline the survey instrument. However, several communities noted that, as one wrote, "in retrospect, we found that we keep thinking of data we wish we had collected."
- Including **strengths-based, positive, and open-ended questions in a survey and seeking youth and youth provider input** will help to ensure that surveys are developmentally appropriate and collect data that are meaningful for the community. Several communities implemented the final question suggested in the *We Count, California!* survey template ("If you could change one thing for young people in your community, what would it be?") and noted that it elicited impactful and insightful responses that can be used to inform local planning around services.
- Most communities found that **youth peer surveyors** were well received – as one count coordinator noted, "Using youth surveyors seemed to be very effective and encouraged candid answers." However, it may be helpful to **offer choices in survey administration**, including providing options such as being surveyed by a peer, an adult service provider/volunteer, or self-administering the survey. Allowing youth to choose between paper and electronic surveys may also enhance trust, although for the most part youth chose electronic surveys in communities where this was an option.
- How the survey is administered will influence youth response, particularly to sensitive questions. For example, one community found that a significant percentage of respondents did not complete an item about their sexual orientation. Better signifying LGBT-friendliness, training surveyors on how to approach this question with youth, providing privacy during survey administration, and offering multiple survey administration methods may help to **address sensitivity regarding survey items** like sexual orientation or justice system involvement.
- **Data quality is a challenge** and an area for improvement, particularly when there is not a lot of time for surveyor training. Quality assurance may be improved through technology-based survey tools, more intensive surveyor training, and data checks while surveys are still in process.

### Schools: Key Allies in Counting Youth

One area of great potential for increased youth inclusion in the PIT count is collaboration with local education agencies, particularly in schools with McKinney-Vento funded homeless liaisons who are already actively engaged with their homeless students. Many communities described building partnerships with their local school liaisons, school superintendent, or County Office of Education representative in planning for their 2015 counts. **Of 25 communities who reported on partnerships built for the 2015 count, 64% engaged with McKinney-Vento school staff.** Schools actively participated in their communities' counts in a number of ways, including through engaging youth in the planning process; promoting count activities through outreach on school grounds; volunteering school district personnel to serve as count enumerators or surveyors; surveying students in the schools; and hosting local outreach or magnet events to engage and count students outside of the school setting. In Santa Cruz, the County Office of Education partnered creatively with the CoC to conduct a phone-based enumeration of homeless children and families (see "Promising Practice Spotlight: Counting with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education" and Appendix 5 for lessons and sample materials from their school-based count).



### Promising Practice Spotlight: Counting with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education

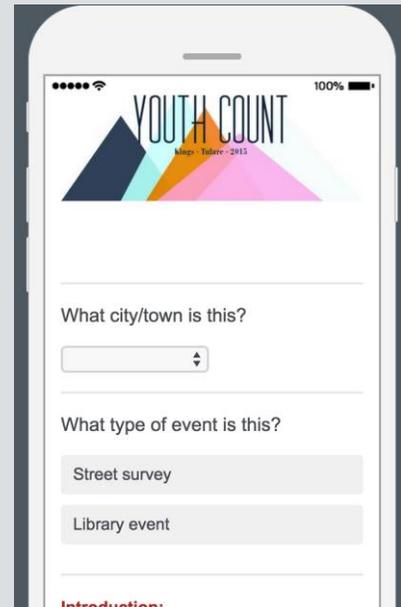
The Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) Students in Transition program staff played an active role in identifying and enumerating homeless students for the 2013 and 2015 Point-in-Time counts. In the 2015 PIT, the SCCOE used *We Count, California!* pilot funds to support an intern, the County Homeless Liaison, other district staff, and a group of volunteers in contacting all families who were identified as being unsheltered or living in a shelter or hotel/motel to confirm their nighttime residence on the night of the PIT.

As required by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, all school districts must identify homeless students. In Santa Cruz's school districts, all families are required to fill out a Student Residency Questionnaire that includes questions about nighttime residence during their school registration process. Volunteers were recruited and trained one month in advance to contact families by phone during the week of the PIT count. Trainings included providing volunteers with information about appropriate referrals, discussing confidentiality and signing a confidentiality agreement, and role-playing the survey with various scenarios. On the week of the Point-in-Time count, county and school district staff and volunteers contacted all of the students on their list of homeless families, either by phone with the family head, or in person with students on school campuses, to confirm their sleeping accommodation on the night of the PIT count. For a sample of the data entry form used by the SCCOE and a volunteer guide and phone script provided to their volunteers, please see Appendix 5.



### Promising Practice Spotlight: Incorporating Technology into the Point-in-Time Count

Communities conducting surveys as part of their count activities may want to consider incorporating online or app-based survey tools into their counts. *We Count, California!* worked with the two TA communities to develop app-based surveys that could be administered on iPhones, iPads, Android tablets, and online. Surveys were administered using Qualtrics software, a web-based survey platform with offline survey administration capability for counting in locations without web access. The app was extremely well received both by youth surveyors and youth being interviewed using the app. However, it did present several challenges on the administrative side. In future counts, we would highly recommend increasing the amount of time reserved for programming the surveys, testing them across all devices to ensure compatibility, and training surveyors. Cost may also present a barrier to communities in the future. Qualtrics software was made available to our TA sites free of charge for the 2015 count through UC Berkeley's software license, but may be difficult or costly to implement in future counts. Partnering with local universities may help communities to gain access to both survey software and students or professors with the time and capability to help with data programming and management. Free online survey platforms can also be used, but attention is necessary to protect confidential information and ensure the protection of participant identities. Despite technological challenges, both communities felt that using a survey app for their counts helped them to diversify the youth they were engaging. **"The app was one of the biggest successes of the count,"** said one count coordinator. Having technology in the count was attractive to youth, gave them a sense of privacy, and allowed count organizers to reduce the burden of data entry, cleaning, and analysis.



Communities may also wish to investigate phone survey options with relevant populations of interest for the count. In one community, the local 211 exchange was trained to conduct a youth survey with any young adult or minor calling in for human resources assistance during the PIT count. Another community gathered data from youth calling their runaway hotline during the PIT count to supplement the data for their local purposes.

### Lessons Learned: Youth Engagement in Point-in-Time Counts

The participation of young people with lived experience of homelessness is a crucial element to ensuring homeless youth are represented in local PIT counts. Homeless youth know that they are misperceived on the streets and are hungry to have their story told. They know better than anyone about the lack of services available to them, and as such are natural allies in this work. Homeless youth do not generally mingle with the homeless adult population, and often exhibit different patterns and behaviors from those stereotypically attributed to homeless individuals as a whole. Young people experiencing homelessness also tend to be highly mobile, largely hidden, and frequently transient. While these characteristics are part of a young person's efforts to avoid the stigma and dangers often associated with their housing situation, they also make homeless youth virtually invisible and unrecognizable to the volunteers who traditionally conduct local counts. Further, homeless youth represent a population with widely diverse experiences and identities. Effective methods of engagement vary across subgroups of youth.

During our regional convenings across the state, the *We Count, California!* team outlined several strategies for bolstering the participation of all eligible youth in both the PIT count and in the count activities before, during and after the count. One exercise we conducted during the training to stimulate participants' thinking about all types of unstably housed and homeless youth in their region was a social mapping exercise to list all the subgroups, map where members of subgroups of youth could be found, which persons or organizations come into regular contact with members of specific subgroups, and how each youth might be best engaged or identified during the count. We also reviewed strategies for incorporating youth into count activities, such as youth engagement in planning, advertising, counting, administering surveys, and in post-count activities, including debriefing on the count, analyzing count data, and disseminating count results. Engagement in planning might include ensuring youth representation on local count planning committees and holding youth focus groups. Youth advisory boards were proposed as a way to engage youth across the process.

### Youth engagement activities

Communities reported several ways in which youth were actively engaged in the 2015 count. The majority of seed grant recipients deployed multiple strategies to make their planning and counting practices more youth-inclusive. Ultimately, nearly all seed grant recipients engaged youth in planning, counting, and conducting surveys as part of PIT count activities. In one CoC, youth also participated in data analysis.

Table 4. Communities Engaging Youth in Count Activities

Number of CoCs Engaging Youth in Count Activities*			
Planning	Count	Surveys	Data Analysis
18	25	24	1

\*Of 28 communities sharing information about count activities

### Planning

Youth were engaged in providing support and feedback on various elements of the 2015 PIT count, including: identifying and mapping hot spots; determining characteristics for identifying homeless youth; assisting with survey instrument design; developing marketing materials; identifying outreach and engagement strategies; making recommendations for incentives; providing input on methodology; planning magnet events; and recruiting other youth to serve as enumerators or surveyors.

- **Youth Liaisons, Interns, and Coordinators:** Youth recruited by CoCs to ensure youth representation in decision-making and coordinating the count ranged from young people attending local count planning committees to youth given stipends or hired to assume leadership roles in coordinating youth components of their local PIT counts.
- **Youth Advisory Boards:** Several rural CoCs formed Youth Advisory Boards to convene currently and formerly runaway and homeless youth around PIT count planning. Youth Advisory Boards generally began meeting approximately 2-3 months before the count, and strove to retain a core group of youth participants. Several communities structured their incentives for youth based on consistent engagement in the count process, staggering gift cards or stipends based on attendance and participation, or implementing an hourly wage for youth participants.
- **Focus groups:** *“Engage your youth—they’re really the experts, they know where other youth are hanging out, they know how to engage with them. I think the focus groups were probably the best strategy to figure out what to do.”* Focus groups were largely utilized to engage youth from targeted subgroups (e.g. LGBT, undocumented, etc.) and from various regions within a CoC in order to efficiently elicit a diverse set of perspectives regarding a range of topics. At least one community held additional youth focus groups after the count to debrief on the count experience and generate feedback for improving future counts.

### Counting & Surveying

Youth were actively involved in counting and administering surveys during the PIT count, whether they were embedded in general count teams alongside volunteers from the general public; stationed at youth drop-in centers to conduct surveys; or part of dedicated Youth Count activities including street counts and magnet events.

### Data Analysis

One CoC reported engaging youth in data analysis during a community discussion on Youth Count results, and teaming up with one formerly homeless youth to compile, analyze and present their local Youth Count data as part of a community college course. However, the majority of CoCs reported that data analysis took place solely among CoC/HMIS staff and service providers.

### Impact

- **Youth empowerment:** *“It meant the world to me by helping plan this event because with my help I was able to make a difference.”* Participating in the count was an empowering experience for youth, who saw the count as an opportunity to potentially bring help to homeless youth in their community, and to bring greater awareness and visibility to the issue. As one count organizer stated, *“[The magnet event] served not only to attract youth to the center to be counted, but was a powerful experience allowing the often silenced voice of homeless youth to be heard.”* Youth who were being counted were also energized by the count, both during street counts and at magnet events. One formerly homeless youth, who counted youth in a rural community where street-based outreach was rare, commented, *“When we talked to [homeless youth] during the count and explained to them what we were doing, they felt like we were acknowledging them, like we were validating their experience.”*
- **Youth development:** Participation in the count signaled an opportunity for youth to develop their leadership skills, as well as obtain work-related experience. In one community, one youth found employment using the CoC as a reference following the count, and other youth began selling their artwork through the CoC after designing marketing materials for the count.
- **Relationship-building:** Several CoCs remarked on the relationships with currently and formerly homeless youth that developed and matured in the context of the count. One community representative declared, *“The greatest accomplishment [of this year’s count] was the beginning of relationships with the two formerly homeless youth who participated; the dialogue that took*

*place taught us a tremendous amount.*” Some youth continued to engage in local efforts of the CoC after the count, volunteering for other initiatives or joining local task forces.

- **Challenging assumptions:** Elevating youth voice in the planning process was integral to dispelling myths and assumptions (even those among local youth service providers) about the nature of local youth homelessness. Bringing together currently and formerly homeless youth across various regions also challenged assumptions youth had about homeless youth in communities outside their own.
- **Raising credibility of the data:** *“The outcome may not have been what was expected, but it is a lot better than having a homeless count in [my community] of one or zero.”* By recognizing homeless youth as the experts of their experience, and empowering them to leverage that expertise in order to bring greater visibility and help to their peers, communities were able to improve their data. One community reported seeing a marked increase in the number of individuals reporting substance abuse issues as a contributing factor to their homelessness, with further analysis suggesting that the use of youth surveyors led to more candid answers and ultimately more accurate data.

### *Challenges & Barriers*

Communities continued to encounter a number of challenges and barriers to engaging youth in the 2015 PIT count. These ranged from individual-level factors relating to the recruitment and consistent participation of youth, to environmental and structural factors including stigma, safety, and policy issues impacting homeless youth.

- **Stigma:** The stigma young people experience regarding their housing situation or their identity led some of them to deny the label of “homeless” thereby impeding communities’ efforts to outreach to homeless youth. *“Youth that staff may have identified as homeless did not see themselves that way; therefore, it was challenging to identify and recruit youth who were without a home or formerly homeless.”*
- **Safety:** *“It’s sad to know that there are several youth out there not receiving the help they need because they can’t be accounted for or they are too scared to be noticed.”* Some youth were wary of the purpose and intent of the count, making them reluctant to participate in count activities. In one community, youth expressed willingness to help count in certain areas, but declined to share specific locations in order to protect the youth living there. Youth belonging to certain subgroups such as LGBT and undocumented populations were particularly difficult to identify and engage, particularly in rural and conservative communities, where they are potentially hidden out of fear for their safety.
- **Myths and misconceptions:** *“We must educate the community—even youth—about the realities of homelessness culture.”* The presence and reinforcement of stereotypes about homeless youth during count activities can be hurtful to young people, and present barriers to engaging both youth and a broader range of stakeholders. Misconceptions of homeless youth as “lazy,” less needy than other subpopulations, or even non-existent can be prevalent even among local service providers with limited or no prior experience with homeless youth.
- **Criminalization of homelessness:** City ordinances banning sleeping in public spaces, panhandling, or other survival activities; law enforcement forcing homeless individuals to disperse from an area; and negative press and rising tensions in the community around homelessness can all hinder efforts to engage and identify young people during the PIT count.
- **Concern regarding mandated reporting of unaccompanied minors:** While the 2012 passage of AB 652, which clarified that a child’s homelessness or status as an unaccompanied minor is not, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for triggering a Child Protective Services report, some communities still avoid counting minors due to a belief that unaccompanied minors need to be reported.

- **Consistent engagement of youth:** *“It was difficult to find current/former homeless youth who were able to be committed, dependable, and responsible for attending meetings and assisting with the planning and outreach of [the count].”*
- **Finding and recruiting homeless youth:** Particularly in lower-resource communities, where very few to no services dedicated to runaway and homeless youth exist, finding youth to engage in PIT count activities continued to be a challenge. Some communities looked to local high schools and institutions of higher education in order to recruit young people to assist with planning and outreach, as well as to volunteer for the count and to conduct surveys. Communities utilizing non-homeless youth during the count reported some successes in bringing a broader youth perspective to the count process and in helping to engage youth encountered during the enumeration or survey. However, others reported that youth with the lived experience of homelessness are most effective in identifying hot spots or in finding homeless youth during street-based enumerations.

### Recommendations

- **Reduce barriers:** To facilitate consistent participation by youth in count activities, communities can provide incentives and food, coordinate transportation, meet youth in familiar and comfortable spaces, schedule meetings during youth-friendly hours, and leverage existing relationships youth have with trusted adults.
- **Build relationships with individual service providers and local “gatekeepers” to engage hard-to-reach youth:** As part of an ongoing effort to outreach to homeless youth, relationship-building with individuals and service providers who are already known to and trusted by these youth is critical to identifying and engaging members of particularly hard-to-reach and vulnerable sub-populations of youth.
- **Strategic use of focus groups:** Focus groups can be an effective approach to engaging specific subgroups of youth from different geographic regions within a CoC. Focus groups may also be a low-barrier method for engaging youth who might not be able to commit to joining committees or advisory boards.
- **Communicate safety:** *“We need...to do more to publicize to youth in advance the importance and safety of their participation.”* In advance of the count, efforts to educate youth of the purpose and intent of count activities and their safety in participating might include informational flyers, outreach presentations, and messaging through local service providers and community partners who interact with homeless youth.
- **Develop outreach and training materials in direct collaboration with youth** to ensure that language and material presented is youth-inclusive, culturally sensitive, and accurately representative of the experiences of homeless youth in the community.
- **Educate community members and collaborators:** PIT count planning is an opportunity to raise awareness of the issue of youth homelessness, and to create spaces within the community for youth advocates and allies to educate community members and collaborators on the unique realities of this population, to help dispel stereotypes, and to clarify any concerns in engaging homeless youth during PIT count activities.
- **Address stigma:** As identified by several communities, efforts to de-stigmatize homelessness and housing instability are needed. Working to actively dispel stigma within schools, youth development organizations, and other non-homeless-identified service agencies may help communities to better identify, enumerate, and help youth experiencing homelessness.



## Spotlight on Youth Recommendations for Youth Counts

### Points to Consider in a Youth Count

*Developed by the Youth Advisory Board of Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco*

Youth advisory board members from Larkin Street Youth Services participated as part of a diverse group of currently and formerly homeless youth recruited to conduct planning, count, and survey activities in San Francisco's 2015 Point-in-Time count. Based on their lived experiences, the Youth Advisory Board created this set of suggested principles for communities considering youth counts.

1. Please respect our humanity during this process.
2. Don't stereotype what a homeless youth looks like. When we were homeless you never would have guessed it.
3. Don't put us into a box of assumed experience; understand that we are a diverse community with a wide range of experiences.
4. Use the broad definition of homelessness under the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act that includes couch surfing and living in cars, because a lot of homeless youth will not be visible on the street.
5. Focus on increasing awareness and outreach among the homeless youth community, informing them about what the count is and why it's important.
6. Hold events that are appealing to young people to increase the number of the count or to share information about the count.
7. Provide information to police and places in the community that homeless youth frequent about the count and its importance.
8. Create a Youth Advisory Board so youth can be involved in the process and provide their expertise every step of the way.



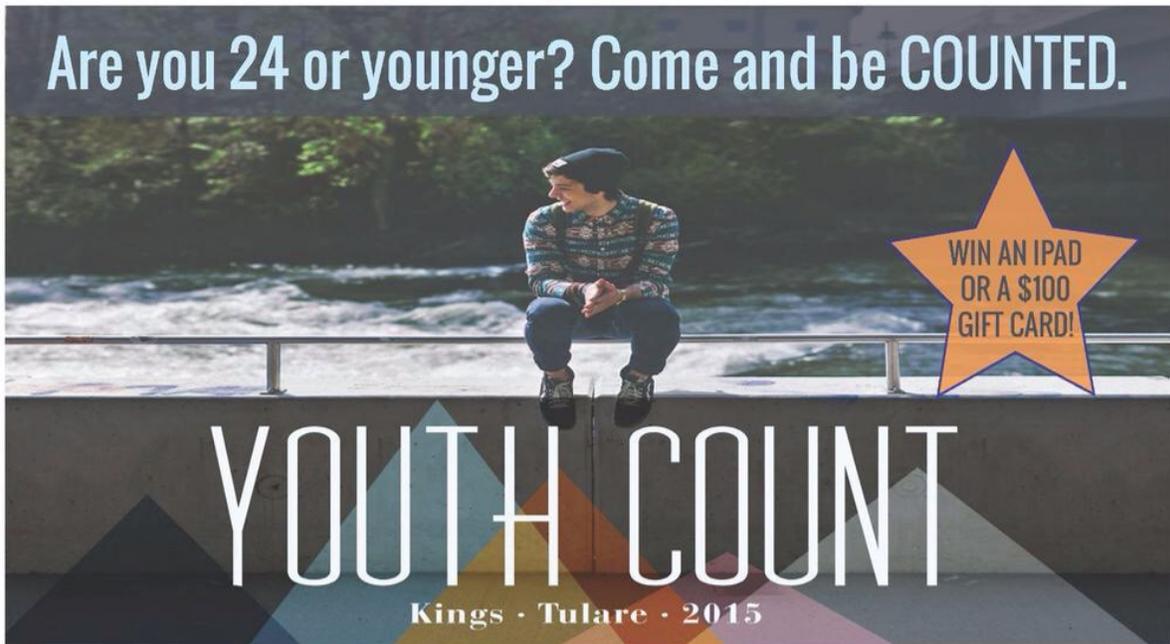
## Promising Practice Spotlight: The Fresno Youth Advisory Group

The Fresno/Madera Continuum of Care developed a youth advisory group to inform all aspects of the youth PIT count. Six youth ambassadors recruited from community organizations serving LGBTQ youth, youth involved in the child welfare system, and currently and formerly homeless youth were recruited to serve as PIT youth leaders on the Youth Advisory Board led by Fresno EOC Sanctuary and Youth Services. For two months prior to the PIT count, youth ambassadors met weekly to plan for the upcoming count by:

- Providing feedback on a youth survey;
- Managing the budget and selecting the location site, hours, and activities for a youth magnet event;
- Developing marketing materials and conducting outreach in person and via social media prior to the count;
- Helping to staff the magnet event on the day of the PIT count, including conducting surveys with their peers; and
- Providing input regarding the count in a debrief meeting following the count date.

The group identified the importance of having a close partnership with CoC members, particularly an HMIS coordinator who helped them to understand the PIT count's impact and requirements, and the critical importance of engaging youth early on in making substantive decisions about the count process. Since the count, several of the youth have continued to be engaged in youth leadership activities, including speaking to the Fresno City Council and Board of Supervisors about youth data and participating in panel discussions at local events. As the Fresno youth count coordinator stated, “[PIT count] numbers are important, but the six numbers that are most important to me are the six youth that stayed committed from beginning to end. To walk in their shoes and know their history, I am just amazed. This is what happens when you put youth in a leadership role, and support and engage them, and give them a meaningful purpose.”





The Kings/Tulare Youth Count invites you to take a quick & anonymous survey that will help inform our policymakers about housing and social services for youth!

All youth participants will get a free Youth Count bag with freebies and be entered in a drawing to win an iPad or a \$100 Visa Gift Card!

To participate, drop by your city's public library during these times, take our survey, & be entered to win!	LOCATIONS	DATE/TIME
	Tulare Library	Fri, Jan. 30 from 4-7pm
	Porterville Library	Sat, Jan. 31 from 2-5pm
	Hanford Library	Mon, Feb. 2 from 4-7pm
	Visalia Library	Tues, Feb. 3 from 4-7pm

For more info, like Kings/Tulare Youth Count on Facebook or follow @YouthCountCA on Twitter. Kings/Tulare Youth Count is a project funded by We Count, California!

**Lessons Learned: Partnerships**

*Key Partnerships*

In 2015, participating communities reported boosting their efforts to partner with more youth-serving organizations in order to improve their counts of homeless youth. The majority of seed grant recipients reported engaging with McKinney-Vento and other school staff, and an array of community-based programs focused on serving youth, including programs funded through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), street outreach teams, drop-in facilities, emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and LGBTQ service providers. County agencies intersecting with youth were also involved in a number of communities, including the Office of Education, Child Welfare, Probation, and Mental Health departments. Broader community partners also lent their support to count youth, including the faith community, food banks, health clinics, libraries, recreation centers, community colleges and universities, and other organizations.

Table 5. Partnering Organizations in 2015 PIT Counts

Service Providers	Education	Public Sector	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Runaway &amp; Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs</li> <li>• Youth shelters</li> <li>• Youth drop-in facilities</li> <li>• Street outreach teams</li> <li>• Youth employment programs</li> <li>• LGBTQ service providers</li> <li>• Veteran services</li> <li>• Substance use treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McKinney-Vento and other school staff</li> <li>• County office of education</li> <li>• Community colleges</li> <li>• Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child welfare</li> <li>• Probation</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Elected officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith-based organizations and youth groups</li> <li>• Local churches serving hot meals</li> <li>• Health clinics</li> <li>• Mental health clinics</li> <li>• Food banks</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Recreation centers</li> </ul>

Partnerships with youth stakeholders proved instrumental in identifying key strategies for counting youth, facilitating youth participation, supporting outreach and publicity efforts, and conducting the count. Rural and lower-resourced communities, where specific supports for homeless youth are often sparse, were often uniquely positioned to leverage strong relationships forged through existing collaborations. For others, a first-time focus on youth-inclusive count practices also meant first-time collaborations with youth service providers. Overall, relationships built and strengthened through the count ultimately contributed to creating long-term infrastructures for sustained collaboration with youth stakeholders; and **helping communities build both capacity and momentum to better understand and serve young people** experiencing homelessness.

*Partnering with Education*

Across the state, communities expressed the critical need to engage education partners in counting youth during the PIT count. Particular models for working with and coordinating data from school districts and County Offices of Education (COEs) were explored during regional training sessions. In their reports, communities reported multiple ways in which education partners were involved in the count. Similar to engagement with youth in planning and conducting the count, communities worked with schools in various capacities to leverage their unique perspective and experience into count activities. While McKinney-Vento Homeless & Foster Youth Liaisons were most frequently involved,

other school staff also lent their support to local PIT counts. During planning, school partners recruited youth to inform planning and assist in outreach; posted flyers in middle schools and high schools; and helped to organize and promote outreach or magnet events. On the day of the count, schools assembled students to complete surveys; followed up with homeless students on their rosters to verify their current housing status for the count; and had personnel serve as enumerators and surveyors. Many communities also partnered with local post-secondary institutions to help count homeless youth, including community colleges and universities, often tapping into specific campus spaces and resources, including campus food banks, programs for former foster youth, and social work departments.

### Impact

- **Strengthened existing relationships and forging new ones:** Partnerships developed through count planning had long-term implications for building capacity to organize around youth homelessness across communities. Relationships among youth-serving organizations as well as between these organizations and other stakeholders within the Continuum of Care often led to continued collaboration in local planning initiatives. *“The involvement of [our Homeless Youth Task Force]...increased the presence and voice of youth providers in additional community planning activities.”*
- **Raised the profile of youth homelessness:** Growing partnerships centered on youth during the PIT count helped to bring greater visibility and dialogue to the issue of youth homelessness in many communities. Involvement from elected officials was particularly beneficial in bringing other partners to the table, and in helping to build political will. *“One of our county supervisors decided to become involved with the count...His involvement brought in all of the key players and elevated the issue of youth homelessness throughout the community.”*
- **Increased energy around the overall count:** *“The activities of the youth count...provided much needed energy, coordination, and enthusiasm to the overall PIT Count process.”* Youth Count activities often signaled an opportunity to forge new relationships and to try new methods and strategies during the PIT count, which helped to bring renewed energy to the count.

### Challenges & Barriers

- **Community Focus on chronically homeless adults and veterans:** *“[Our] greatest challenge continued to be service providers with no prior youth focus having difficulty seeing past...focus on chronic and veteran homelessness.”* Emphasis on ending homelessness among chronically homeless adult and veteran populations sometimes competed with generating support for youth-focused components of local PIT counts. National deadlines for ending chronic and veteran homelessness are 2017 and 2016, respectively. These efforts have generated significant resources, energy, and progress across the country. Although the goal for ending homelessness among families, children, and youth is 2020, many communities continue to experience challenges in raising the profile of the issue to the level of other subpopulations.
- **Need for more flexibility of CoCs and/or count consultants in accommodating youth-specific count methods:** A number of communities noted challenges in securing buy-in from their lead CoC agency and/or count consultants in supporting efforts to count youth. This, in turn, sometimes hindered partnerships between youth service providers and the broader Continuum of Care. Challenges included obtaining commitments to involve particular partners, supporting the implementation of a youth-focused survey outside the existing demographic survey, and incorporating Youth Count numbers into final PIT count results.
- **Concurrent/separate planning efforts between Youth Counts and general PIT counts:** Planning for Youth Counts often warranted different processes and partners than traditional PIT count planning, such that coordinating resources and timelines with the overall PIT count could

be challenging and create some confusion. Youth Count planning was largely separate from general PIT count planning in many communities, while others reported initial integration of the two components before splintering off into separate efforts.

- **Lack of providers serving homeless youth:** Areas where few or no resources targeting homeless youth exist continued to pose a challenge, particularly when potential youth-serving partners did not identify as working with homeless or unstably housed youth, or did not understand the benefit of the count.

#### *Recommendations*

- **Providing options to potential partners:** Recognizing the limited capacities of potential partners, offering various ways in which stakeholders can get involved with supporting Youth Counts can help communities engage a greater diversity of partners whose involvement in both the count and other local initiatives can grow over time.
- **Establishing baseline knowledge for youth providers and everyone involved in planning:** Ensuring that youth service providers and others involved in planning understand the purpose, design, and benefit of the overall PIT count in addition to any youth count components is important to mitigate any confusion around count protocols and coordination.
- **Additional guidance on coordinating administrative data (e.g. education, child welfare, probation, etc.) with the PIT count:** While endeavors to partner with schools in particular often aided in expanding outreach, identifying and engaging homeless students, and building and strengthening relationships with the Continuum of Care, more guidance is needed to determine methods of coordinating or otherwise integrating administrative data into local PIT counts.





### Promising Practice Spotlight: Community-Oriented Data Analysis and Dissemination in Yolo

In April 2015, the Yolo CoC convened a final Youth Count Working Group meeting to debrief about the 2015 youth count effort and review and discuss preliminary findings. Stakeholders discussed challenges and recommendations for future count activities and reviewed a six-page preliminary document of youth-specific data, providing input on additional topics that should be covered, areas in which more or less detail was warranted, and on data that would help their local planning and advocacy purposes. Collectively reviewing their count data allowed for Yolo's stakeholders to provide guidance on communication about the count before it was presented to the county's Board of Supervisors, Continuum of Care, and local media. Much of what local stakeholders thought was most important to disseminate for their local purposes was supplemental to the required data elements that CoCs are mandated to collect and submit to HUD – as one of the count leads noted, **“All of the information we gathered about gender identity, education... it makes a really rich picture that we can look at, and to look at what the implications are with it will help with program planning. The last count in 2013, there were no unaccompanied minors counted at all. Just having these numbers will help us apply for grants from local organizations. The last survey question was about what youth would like to see in the community, and the majority of answers were, ‘We just need safe places to stay.’ Taking that back [to the community] and saying that there isn't any shelter in Yolo may create opportunities to have something specifically for youth.”**



Data

Count Data

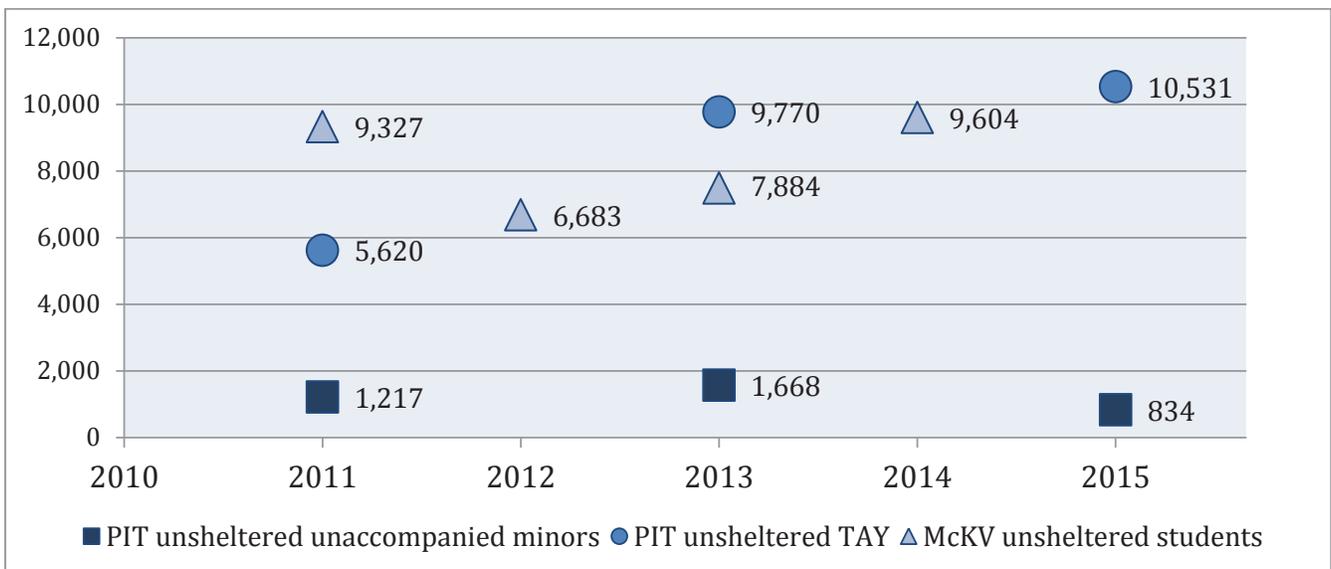
As part of the *We Count, California!* project, we requested 2015 Point-in-Time count data from all California Continuums of Care, as well as any locally relevant numbers collected during this year’s PIT count. Based on the data received from 39 California communities, **11,365 unsheltered, unaccompanied children and youth were counted during the 2015 PIT count in California**, i.e., found to be residing in a place not meant for human habitation on the night of the count (e.g., in a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or on the street). Transitional age youth (TAY), from the ages of 18 to 24, comprise the vast majority of unsheltered homeless youth counted across communities. 10,531 unsheltered homeless TAY were identified in 2015, slightly higher than the number counted in 2013 (9,770) and nearly double the number reported locally in 2011 (5,620). In 2015, 834 unaccompanied unsheltered minors were counted across California, half the number counted in 2013 (1,668) and smaller than the count in 2011 (1,217). [kidsdata.org/topic/1839/homeless-youth-pit/table](http://kidsdata.org/topic/1839/homeless-youth-pit/table)

Appendices 2 and 3 at the end of this report contain PIT count data from the CoC and aggregated for California. Appendix 2 includes tables of the numbers of unsheltered homeless unaccompanied minors and unsheltered TAY in 2011, 2013, and 2015 by California CoC, as well as for the state. Appendix 3 is a bar chart by CoC and on a state level of the total numbers of unsheltered homeless unaccompanied minors and unsheltered TAY for 2015 only.

PIT count and McKinney-Vento education data

Figure 4 below represents unsheltered children and youth counted through California’s Point-in-Time counts alongside unsheltered homeless students counted by the California public school system from 2011-2014. The education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act mandates an annual count of homeless public school students aged 21 and under. Unsheltered students are counted by public school districts in California and represent students living with or without parents or guardians, including unaccompanied/runaway children and those living with families in places not meant for regular nighttime habitation. McKinney-Vento education numbers for the 2015 school year were not yet released at the time of this report publication.

Figure 3. Statewide Unsheltered Point-in-Time Count (PIT) and Unsheltered Public School Student Counts (Department of Education/McKinney-Vento), 2011-2015



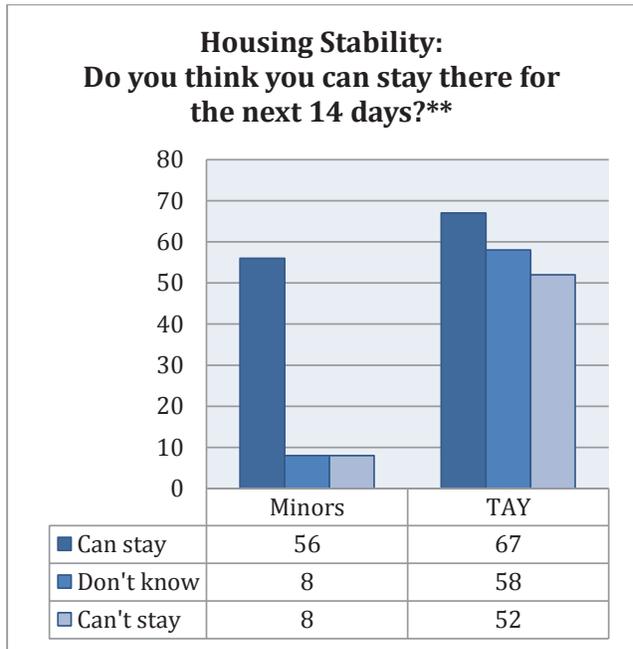
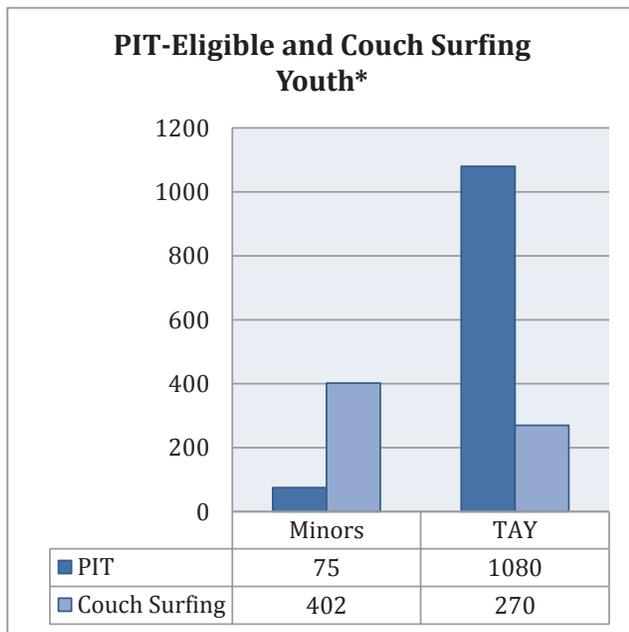
### Couch Surfing Youth

Thirteen communities in California collected data on the housing status of non-PIT eligible youth encountered during their 2015 Point-in-Time counts and reported these data to *We Count, California!*. These data are summarized in Figures 4a and 4b.

Although data regarding couch surfing youth (unstably housed youth who do not meet the HUD PIT definition) were collected and shared by only 13 counties, they suggest some interesting patterns. Among unaccompanied minors who were counted, minors who were couch surfing/PIT ineligible vastly outnumbered PIT eligible minors. In fact, only 15% of the total minors for whom data were collected in these counties were PIT eligible. Among TAY, the pattern is reversed. TAY who were PIT eligible represented 80% of the unstably housed TAY encountered by enumerators in these jurisdictions. In addition, in the 9 counties in which youth were asked if they thought they could stay in their current living situation for at least fourteen days, 78% of minors replied in the affirmative, versus 38% of TAY. There are several possible reasons for these patterns of data among couch surfing youth. One possibility is that minors are not reporting their age accurately, particularly if they do not have a relatively stable place to stay because of concerns about reporting. Another possibility is that options for staying with family or others may dry up as youth turn 18. Better understanding changes in temporary housing patterns and homelessness among minors and TAY could help communities to inform and improve their local programs to appropriately meet the needs of each age group.

Figure 4a. Couch Surfing Youth Counted in 2015

Figure 4b. Housing Stability of Couch Surfing Youth



\*Data from 13 communities collecting data on both PIT-eligible and couch surfing youth

\*\*Data from 9 communities collecting data on housing stability amongst couch surfing youth

## Limitations

There are several limitations to the data presented in this report:

- All 2015 count numbers provided here were reported to *We Count, California!* by local communities and may not reflect final numbers submitted to HUD, which have not been publicly released at the time of this report. In particular, some communities (including Los Angeles) conducted youth-specific counts that were included in our figures but which were excluded from reports to HUD due to concerns about differing count timing and methodology.
- 2015 count numbers reported here omit data from eight California counties which were not part of currently funded CoCs – some of these communities may have conducted local 2015 PIT counts. Our data also omit data from the Dos Rios (comprised in 2015 of Colusa, Glenn, and Trinity Counties) and Glendale CoCs, which were not reported to *We Count, California!*.
- The PIT count data shared here are for *unaccompanied* minors and youth and do not include unsheltered children living with a parent, whereas the McKinney-Vento education data do include both unaccompanied students and those living with family. In 2015, HUD required communities to report their youth household subpopulation data, including the number of minors living with a TAY parent; these counts of minors living with a TAY parent have not been included in the data shared in this report.
- The number of TAY enumerated in 2011 were collected from local count reports, as these numbers were not federally mandated or reported in 2011. These may not represent all of the communities which collected local data on TAY in that Point-in-Time count and are certainly not reflective of the total number of TAY actually experiencing homelessness in California at that time.

## Cautions regarding data interpretation

*Continuing undercount of homeless youth in the California PIT.* These data illustrate the persisting challenges to counting unsheltered minors and youth. In particular, the data reflect the difficulty of the task of counting unsheltered minors. Seventeen of the 39 CoCs sharing data with *We Count, California!* reported no unsheltered minors in 2015. The numbers also reflect continued lack of inclusion of TAY in the California PIT. Sixteen CoCs reported fewer than fifty TAY, an unlikely number in any CoC given both the persistently high numbers of homeless adults in urban areas and the high rates of homeless schoolchildren in rural areas (both indirect markers of youth homelessness as well). Indeed, California Homeless Youth Project analyses of the rates of school homelessness in California revealed that **three of the top five school districts with the highest rates of homelessness among schoolchildren were in rural counties** (Trinity, Sierra, and Lake). The count totals shared in this report are undoubtedly low, though it is not possible to judge to what degree.

*Numbers versus rates of homelessness.* The maps provided in this report represent the absolute numbers of homeless youth counted and not the rates of homelessness. In rural areas, this may lead to misleading interpretations – rates of homelessness in these areas of lower population density would be more reflective of the burden of homelessness on these communities.

*Need for caution in inferring trends or comparisons from youth PIT data.* Although it is tempting and common to infer trends from youth PIT data over time, this is difficult to justify. In areas where youth have been traditionally undercounted, changes in numbers may reflect changes in circumstances surrounding the count in a particular year (for example, inclement weather or local political forces) rather than a shift in actual numbers. In areas where new methods are being implemented to count youth, resulting counts likely reflect both a change in methods and actual changes in the number of youth, which likely cannot be disentangled. Similarly, comparisons across CoCs are inappropriate given vastly differing resources, capacity, support and commitment to, and capacity to count youth in one CoC versus another. Thus, numbers even in neighboring CoCs are often not comparable.

*Need for caution in comparing PIT to McKinney-Vento education data.* In an effort to produce a more comprehensive picture of youth homelessness, we have presented the PIT and McKinney-Vento education data together in Figure 4. However, it is important to be cautious in comparing these two data sources, which differ in critical ways. First, PIT data represent the count of homeless minors and youth who report being homeless on a single night in late January, whereas McKinney-Vento data generally represent a cumulative number of homeless minors and youth over the course of the full school year. Second, the definition of homelessness for the PIT includes only youth who are staying in locations not meant for human habitation and we have reported only on those youth who were unsheltered during the PIT count, whereas the McKinney-Vento education definition includes not only these youth, but also youth who are staying in temporary shelter, motels/hotels, or doubled-up. However, in Figure 4, we present only the statewide total of unsheltered homeless students, since this more closely reflects the homeless population identified in the PIT count. Third, the PIT count data shared here reflect counts of *unaccompanied* minors and youth and do not include unsheltered children living with a parent, whereas the McKinney-Vento education data do include children living with parents. Finally, McKinney-Vento data do not include youth who are not enrolled in school and so are not on the rosters for the McKinney-Vento liaisons.

*Need for caution in generalizing from youth PIT data.* It is generally accepted that youth homelessness is episodic, and research has shown that the majority of homeless youth return home. This makes it difficult both to count a representative youth population at a single point-in-time and to estimate an annualized number of homeless youth. The nature of a PIT count is that it will underrepresent the numbers of youth who are homeless for short periods of time and over-represent youth who are chronically homeless. In other words, a young person who is homeless for a short period of time is less likely to be counted in the PIT count than a young person who is homeless over that entire year. Annualized estimates take into account the amount of time an individual has been homeless to estimate the actual population of homeless youth over time. However, as no more than half of CoC's interview all the youth they count, many lack the information upon which such estimates could be based. Furthermore, the lack of inclusion of youth overall in the count would further contribute to an inaccurate annualized estimate of homeless youth.



## **Structural Change: Lessons from We Count, California!**

Understanding that systemic change is a key to sustainable impact, the *We Count, California!* team wove structural interventions into every phase of our initiative. We championed structural interventions to better address the needs of homeless youth at local, state, and federal levels.

### **Local Interventions**

At the local level, *We Count, California!* encouraged the development of community partnerships to better support counts, promote increased local visibility and awareness, buy-in, and engagement regarding youth homelessness. This included developing materials to assist in creating collaborations between local and federal government; schools and community based organizations; and CoCs and media outlets.

Given the historical lack of focus on youth in most communities and the tensions in some communities between youth providers and the local system of care, one of the *We Count, California!* team's key interventions was to serve as a neutral intermediate party helping to facilitate relationship development between parties and to stress the importance of youth inclusive count efforts. Several communities noted that our project's youth focus gave their youth counts a greater urgency and legitimacy than in the past. In some cases, our team's availability for brief phone or email-based communications with youth providers and CoCs helped communities to identify count tactics that were both realistic and youth-appropriate.

Increased focus on youth in the 2015 count brought youth providers into the process who have not historically been members of the Continuum of Care. This afforded youth providers the opportunity to educate other providers and administrators within their CoCs about the specific developmental needs of youth, and the ways in which homeless youth differ from the older homeless adult population. Many communities saw 2015 as a pilot for future counts, and indicated the intention to not only continue to specifically target youth in the count, but also amplify efforts in future years. Almost all communities reported that their **data will be used for capacity building, advocacy, program planning, fundraising, and communicating with local elected officials**. As communities continue to interpret and respond to their count efforts and resulting data, the full effects of the count as a structural intervention on the local level will continue to be realized.

Post-count, youth inclusion efforts raised visibility of the homeless youth population and fostered collaboration between youth service providers and local CoCs – in some cases for the first time – improving the likelihood that youth be explicitly considered in other community planning efforts around ending homelessness. As one community stated, **"The funds from We Count, California! did more than just provide stipends for youth, the seed grant opened up further opportunities to collaborate with youth serving agencies...Their involvement not only provided more credibility to our community's data, but also increased the presence and voice of youth providers in additional community planning activities, i.e. the Strategic Action Plan to End Homelessness."**

The importance of the relationship between media and policy cannot be overstated, as local news informs both the general public and elected officials. As part of our regional trainings, the *We Count, California!* team facilitated a session on media regarding the best ways to connect with and educate local media members by accurately describing the intention of the PIT count, its limitations, and what communities were doing to improve the count in 2015. In final reports, several communities shared examples of meaningful and supportive local coverage of their count efforts.

### State-Level Interventions

At the state level, one key component to structural change is encouraging an improved understanding amongst policymakers about youth homelessness and the various data sources available regarding this very diverse population. In particular, the *We Count, California!* team worked to educate policymakers about the nuances of the PIT count and its inherent gaps in capturing youth, such that they may better interpret PIT data and its applications to state and local policy decision-making. In this report and in state policy conversations and presentations, our team has talked explicitly about the multiple, varying definitions of youth homelessness, compared past years' PIT count numbers with numbers from the Department of Education and explained their differences. We have advocated for using these multiple data sources together to create a more comprehensive picture of youth homelessness and housing instability. We have partnered with the California Coalition for Youth, Housing California, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and KidsData.org to engage in the important work of statewide data interpretation and dissemination.

### Federal-Level Interventions

At the national level, *We Count, California!* continued to build on our relationships with federal partners at the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Our team conducted in-person meetings with every USICH Executive Director to date (Barbara Poppe, Laura Zeilinger, and Matthew Doherty) to discuss the need for ongoing visibility of youth homelessness by way of the PIT count and a definition that would be inclusive of the homelessness experience of most children and youth. Current USICH Executive Director Matthew Doherty has championed the *We Count, California!* project as a possible state model for gaining national visibility for a subpopulation of the homeless community that is often overlooked. We also met with representatives from the DOE to discuss the role that liaisons can play in ensuring a successful count, and the need to develop a protocol for integrating McKinney-Vento and PIT count data at the federal level, and integrating CoC and County office of education data at the local level.

Federal level relationships have allowed us to share information about California's efforts toward youth inclusion on multiple national platforms. USICH invited us to contribute two blog posts, one in November 2014 entitled "*Making a Difference for Youth Experiencing Homelessness – A National Perspective,*" and another in May of 2015 entitled "*Youth Counts COUNT!*" In these pieces, we discuss national strategies to better count youth and the role that our statewide project can play in disseminating promising practices. USICH also invited our team to present on including youth-specific counting strategies as a part of the 2015 PIT count on a conference call with HUD representatives from around the U.S. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has invited our team to present on the *We Count, California!* effort at three national conferences and on a national webinar regarding youth inclusive Point-in-Time counts.

Our team partnered with HUD staff at the regional and federal levels to encourage additional youth-specific guidance for the youth count based on the needs of communities across California. For example, many communities in California and across the nation expressed concerns that if they did a better job of counting youth in 2015, they could be penalized for reporting an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in their community. Our team shared this concern with federal partners at HUD and advocated for written assurances that would not dissuade communities from improving their count for fear of reprisals. We also requested official guidance regarding count timing, as some communities were concerned that youth may be better captured during afternoon or evening hours, but mistakenly believed that the count was required to take place at night. HUD's December 23, 2014 [webinar](#) regarding reporting requirements and data collection guidelines for the 2015 housing inventory and PIT counts emphasized the importance of accuracy over decreasing numbers

and clarified that counts may take place during daytime hours, as long as adequate de-duplication methods are used. This helped us to provide appropriate guidance to communities across the state and enabled them to devise youth-friendly methodology in alignment with federal requirements. Following the PIT count, HUD released [supportive messaging](#) to communities stressing the importance of accurate and sophisticated counts of homeless youth, stating that “HUD recognizes that as communities start incorporating a more sophisticated youth component to their counts that their data will likely show an increase,” and assuring communities that “increased efforts to improve PIT counts” would be carefully considered in scoring processes, with priority given “to CoCs who demonstrate high quality PIT counts.”

Federal definitions of youth homelessness have been and continue to be an issue of much debate and contention. In an effort to contribute productively to the ongoing national conversations regarding what federal definition or definitions should be used in the Point-in-Time count, our team thought carefully about how the suggested *We Count, California!* survey template could operationalize the definition of homelessness during the count to capture multiple and inclusive experiences of youth homelessness. We carefully considered the meaning of a place “not meant for human habitation.” Although in the United States, it is not typical or appropriate to sleep in places like kitchens, bathrooms, closets, or sheds, many children, youth and families who are living doubled-up due to economic hardship find themselves living in such substandard situations. Under the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, these children are considered “doubled-up.” Under the HEARTH Act that governs PIT eligibility, could these places be interpreted to be accommodations “not meant for regular sleeping,” and thus PIT-eligible? Asking these hard questions of ourselves and our federal partners is a critical component of this work. It has been our team’s opinion that while these questions are being considered and addressed on a national level, it is beneficial for communities to gather data that captures multiple pictures of youth homelessness. A brief PIT count survey can include a limited number of items that are granular enough to identify homelessness status according to the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as well as the HUD eligibility criteria for programs such as emergency shelter and transitional housing.



The following is an example from the *We Count, California!* survey template which includes items that can be analyzed to determine eligibility according to multiple federal and local definitions simultaneously:

<b>1. Where did you stay last night [Where are you staying tonight / Where did you stay on the night of 01/XX/2015]? Please select one of the following options.</b>	
a. Home of my parent, guardian, or foster parent, or group home	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. My own home or apartment	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Someone else's home (choose one):	
c(1). Indoors, on a couch or in a place meant for regular sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>
c(2). Indoors, in a place not meant for regular sleeping (kitchen, bathroom, closet, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
c(3). Outdoors, in a yard, or garage or shed without heat/plumbing	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Shelter or transitional living program	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Hotel/motel (choose one):	
e(1). Paid for by a program or agency with a voucher	<input type="checkbox"/>
e(2). Paid for some other way	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Outdoors or in a public place (park, the street, an encampment, a train or bus station, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Car, RV without hookups, abandoned building, or squat	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Hospital, psychiatric facility, or drug/alcohol treatment center	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Juvenile detention, jail, or prison	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Somewhere else (please specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

As discussed in the previous section, communities asking youth about a broader set of housing experiences found substantial numbers of couch-surfing youth. Of these young people in the 9 communities where such data were collected, 62% of TAY and 22% of unaccompanied minors reported that they could not or did not know if they could stay in that location for the next two weeks, meeting one marker for youth homelessness under other federal definitions of homelessness such as the education definition, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and programmatic eligibility criteria for non-PIT services provided by HUD.

Though the *We Count, California!* team and communities across California have recognized that youth who have a place to stay for the night may still be experiencing homelessness, HUD's position has been that a person in housing on the night of the PIT count, no matter how substandard, dangerous, temporary, or uncommon the living situation, is ineligible to be counted in the PIT. For local planning purposes, however, as well as in order to document a more nuanced picture of youth homelessness for national advocacy and education, *We Count, California!* continues to encourage communities and federal partners to consider using the Point-in-Time count as an opportunity to collect data that reflect a broader range of youths' experiences of homelessness.

**Non-Federal Funding**

In *Hidden in Plain Sight*, CoCs identified the lack of funding as one of the primary structural factors that limits communities' ability to conduct an adequate youth count. Seed grants provided by *We Count, California!* helped to alleviate that barrier and gave communities a sample grant application template that would allow them to seek other funding in subsequent years. We also focused on outreach to foundations to support PIT count efforts that focus on youth inclusion. We reached

out to state and local United Way chapters to engage in the topic of counting youth and provided guidance on how they can get involved in their local communities. Some CoCs used their seed grants to leverage outside funding from local philanthropic foundations or from their county, cultivating relationships that could be tapped again in future years. Funders Together to End Homelessness, a national network of grantmakers working to end and prevent homelessness, invited us to co-write a blog post with our funder, The California Wellness Foundation, entitled "[So Just How Many Homeless Youth Are There?](#)," to discuss the need for data on youth homelessness and how philanthropy can play a role. It is our hope that these efforts will encourage the philanthropic community to step in where government may fall short of providing the adequate funding necessary to conduct youth-inclusive counts.

### Impact and Continuing Challenges

#### Impact

In final reports received from communities who received seed grants or one-on-one TA support, communities noted several ways in which this initiative helped to support counts, foster a sense of enthusiasm and relevance around the count, and lay the groundwork for future efforts to end youth homelessness in addition to the impacts noted above under lessons learned.

- **Fiscal support:** As became exceedingly clear in our 2013 assessment, it is extremely hard to fund an underfunded mandate to count homeless populations, and harder still to dedicate funds and energy to counting the youth subgroup. Seed grantees overwhelmingly noted that the fiscal support from their pilot grants provided critical support for their youth-focused count activities.
- **Examples from other communities:** Increased access to examples from and connections to other communities through the *We Count, California!* team helped communities to gain a wider perspective on count activities and think creatively about how to tailor a count to be locally feasible, relevant, and effective.
- **A wheel that doesn't have to get reinvented:** In addition to shared knowledge from the regional trainings and other communities, shared materials such as the youth survey template allowed communities to jumpstart their count process, rather than each having to separately develop the same baseline knowledge and infrastructure.
- **Demonstrated national commitment to youth:** Efforts by the *We Count, California!* project and communications from federal partners including HUD, USICH, and NAEH regarding the importance of youth data made it clear that there is a growing national commitment to youth. The evidence that youth and better youth data on homelessness are of increasing statewide and national interest, rather than a bureaucratic box to check, helped to energize local efforts around this year's Point-in-Time count.
- **Infrastructure for future efforts:** Many communities felt that the work done this year by their local youth, youth providers, and CoC have laid a foundation for future efforts, including but not limited to the 2017 PIT count. The count activities piloted and lessons learned from this year's count have increased capacity and will serve as a blueprint for future count activities. Perhaps most impactful has been the strengthening of relationships within communities. A number of communities pointed to new relationships developed with school liaisons, non-HUD funded youth providers and non-traditional homeless youth service providers (such as libraries, juvenile justice, and community colleges), and youth themselves as the biggest achievements of their 2015 count efforts. As one community reported, "**New doors have been opened and new partnerships have been formed.**" "**All of these connections – I don't think they will go away. We can bring them together at other times, for other purposes,**" noted another CoC coordinator. Several communities have continued to engage with young adults who helped their count planning processes, inviting them to work as youth advisors for the CoC.
- **Local service planning:** Finally, several communities noted that piloting youth activities in their 2015 PIT counts helped them to identify existing gaps in local services and community plans and

collect data to support advocacy and planning of local initiatives for youth.

- **Spotlight on underserved communities:** *We Count, California's!* focus on rural and low resource communities helped to fill a gap in the existing knowledge base about what it takes to be successful in counting youth under these circumstances. Actively recruiting rural communities to attend our regional convenings, prioritizing low-resource CoCs for seed grants and technical assistance, and sharing lessons learned from other rural partners enabled these communities to learn from one another and make tangible strides in improving youth inclusion in 2015.

## Challenges

Even with best efforts, youth remain a difficult population to reach and enumerate, and youth count efforts may yield discouraging numbers. Seed grant and TA communities reported a number of barriers that impacted this year's counts and are expected to be continued challenges to youth inclusive PIT counts.

### *Identifying youth*

Communities frequently described the challenges of being able to identify homeless and unstably housed youth during the count, with getting youth to self-identify as such, and with reaching particularly hidden subgroups of youth, including rural, LGBT, migrant, out-of-school, and service-disconnected youth. Youth may not self-identify as homeless due to stigma, fear of being reported to child welfare, or a perception that their housing status does not constitute homelessness.

Furthermore, in some regions the combination of cold weather during the January count and a lack of shelter resources result in youths' finding temporary, hidden places to stay that render them inaccessible during the count. Rural areas in particular continue to present a unique challenge in this regard. In areas that do not have services and in which community members may be extremely wary of outsiders, there continues to be substantial barriers to accessing and enumerating youth. In addition, current methods for counting are not well adapted to the extremely large, sparsely-populated regions of the rural and mountain areas of California.

Extensive, ongoing relationship-building and youth engagement will be required to ensure that all groups of young people from a community are identified and included in future PIT counts. As one count coordinator stated, **"From my perspective, I think one of the biggest things we've learned is that they really are hidden and tougher to find without experts - who are the youth - to help you navigate that."**

### *Community politics*

A number of community-related factors may influence the results of counts while not actually changing the size of a community's homeless youth population. Furthermore, pressure to show progress (not just at the federal but at the local level) via PIT count numbers continues to be a challenge in investing and validating Youth Count data.

- Anti-homelessness ordinances in many communities can bias the results of a count. The **criminalization of homelessness** through laws such as bans on panhandling and sitting or lying in public spaces may drive people underground during a count. A recent report reveals that California cities are far more likely than other US cities to have these ordinances, with a 25-50% greater likelihood of having laws banning activities such as sitting/lying in public spaces, camping, sleeping in vehicles, and sharing food with the homeless. Several communities reported concerns that these local ordinances had disrupted the typical patterns of their homeless populations and created tension in relationships with services providers and law enforcement figures, making it increasingly difficult to engage with

youth and adults during the PIT count.<sup>5</sup>

- Concerns regarding the **reporting obligations** of PIT staff regarding unaccompanied minors may also impact count findings. Although California state law (Section 11165.15 of the Penal Code) states that “the fact that a child is homeless or is classified as an unaccompanied minor is not, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect,” a few communities continued to express concern about their obligations to report any unaccompanied minors encountered during the PIT count and a resulting reluctance to engage with minors during count activities.
- **Local public officials and community leaders** can heavily impact the success of PIT counts and subsequent use of PIT count data for local planning purposes. In several communities, city or county supervisors took on the youth count as a special interest issue and became involved with the planning of the count or participated in count activities. This can help to elevate the issue of youth homelessness both within a CoC as count plans are being developed, and in the general public when counts are being implemented and results shared locally. Demonstrations of local political support for improved youth data may also help to assuage a concern expressed in many communities regarding what the local political and public ramifications might be if better youth count efforts resulted in an increased total 2015 PIT count number. It is important to be sure that CoC leaders, local elected officials, and county representatives in any community striving to better capture youth data be educated about why methodologies may need adjustment to better include youth, the importance of youth inclusion in the PIT count, and the federal support for improved youth data.
- Finally, the fact that 2015 represents only the second year in which transitional age youth have been counted separately from the general adult population means that in most communities, **partnerships are still being developed** between youth-focused providers and their local CoCs, and we are still learning what count methods work best for youth. Youth providers in California may not receive HUD funding; many youth providers have not historically been partners at the table with their CoC. This can result in strained communications, minimal or token involvement of youth and youth providers in the count planning process, or lack of follow-through with dissemination of information to local stakeholders after the count.

### *Count priorities and capacity*

California’s communities have dedicated a remarkable amount of energy to better including young people in their recent PIT counts. However, despite local enthusiasm and a growing national push to improve youth data, youth counts remain an under-resourced part of a large and largely unfunded task. A number of count leaders reported that their commitment to improving youth data is hampered by limited manpower, lack of resources, and community-level prioritization of other subgroups experiencing homelessness. Most commonly, communities expressed concern about:

- **Limited manpower:** Count planning requires a leader or dedicated committee of youth-focused leaders and coalition of stakeholders, which is difficult to accomplish without adequate support.
- **Limited planning and education about the count:** There is a tension between the limited time that stakeholders can dedicate to this work and the level of detailed knowledge required to make informed decisions about youth count activities. In many communities, limited time and provider engagement may mean that stakeholders only receive a basic introduction to the PIT count. Given the complexity of the Point-in-Time count, stakeholders and youth engaged in the planning process may benefit from gaining a more in-depth understanding of the count and activities, similar to the full-day regional convenings conducted in Phase 1 of

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cohsf.org/Punishing.pdf>; <http://larkinstreetyouth.org/larkin-street-news/trendlines-unintended-consequences-the-impact-of-quality-of-life-laws/>; [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2558944](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2558944); *Adding Insult to Injury: The Criminalization of Homelessness and Its Effects on Youth*

this project. Furthermore, the count leads in several communities were identified late in the planning process, meaning that they had to simultaneously learn about the count in the midst of planning. Allowing for enough time and intensive training for count leaders to absorb the nuances of the PIT count would be helpful.

- **Lack of youth focus:** In some communities, the intensive resources and planning dedicated to efforts to meet the federal government’s goal to end chronic and veteran homelessness by 2016 left little time, energy, or funding to focus on youth. As one count coordinator stated, *“The service providers had no prior youth focus and had difficulty seeing past the focus of chronic and veteran homelessness.”* In some communities, an historical lack of focus on youth meant that in the face of competing concerns and limited resources, efforts specifically targeted for youth remain a low priority. *“Demonstrating the value and purpose of the Youth Count has also continued to be a challenge for our CoC, particularly for key decision-makers less familiar with or attuned to this population, and its continued existence has typically fallen on a handful of advocates inside and outside of our lead agency. This has hindered our ability to strengthen, expand, or otherwise improve our methodology for counting youth, and for establishing a meaningful baseline.”*
- **Limited funding:** Although seed grants from *We Count, California!* supported many communities’ youth count activities this year, several count coordinators voiced concern that without funding, their capacity to continue focused youth count efforts will be diminished in future counts.

### Count methodology

Perhaps the greatest challenges lie in questions of count methodology and data interpretation. A number of communities reported wrestling with questions around **how to integrate youth-appropriate count methods into the overall PIT count**. The methods that are most effective for engaging youth in a PIT count (counting during daytime hours, partnering with Local Education Agencies to count students, or administering youth-specific survey questions for example) may differ significantly from those undertaken in a general adult PIT count.

In some communities, concerns about local or federal consequences of using youth-specific methods presented a significant challenge to piloting and fully integrating these tactics into the 2015 counts. Communities reported encountering concerns that adding new youth count methods would hinder a CoC’s ability to compare data across years; that separate youth counts would result in duplication of numbers captured in the general count; and/or that proposed youth counting and data analysis methods would not meet HUD’s PIT count requirements. This resulted in situations in some communities where the CoC declined to conduct youth-specific counts, or youth data were collected but not included in final numbers reported to HUD. One community reported being deterred by their count consultant from developing a youth-specific survey; *“Establishing buy-in from youth agencies was challenging during the planning phase for the PIT count as a result of the lack of flexibility in using a separate survey tool,”* they reported. As more than one community shared and more than one experienced, *“While our local CoC verbally supported youth count efforts, count results were still not included in the final countywide report.”* In other communities, youth and general count numbers were reported separately in local reports, which can lead to misinterpretation and a discrediting of youth numbers. Without express guidance on and effective tactics for integrating youth and general count methods, CoCs are likely to face continued challenges to collecting accurate youth data. There is an urgent need for the development of new methods of counting and characterizing homeless youth that could either be employed nationally to count youth or in selected cities as a gold standard to evaluate the effectiveness of the PIT and characterize the specific ways in which the PIT count may systematically exclude youth. These methods may include respondent-driven-sampling, capture-recapture methods, or other increasingly established methods developed to enumerate hidden populations.

### *Defining homelessness*

HUD's definition of homelessness as it applies to the PIT count continues to present barriers to capturing the range of youth's experiences of homelessness. The fact that the PIT count does not capture nor account for the highly intermittent nature of youth homelessness is a continued problem, as it leads to underestimates of the overall number of homeless youth in any community. That minors cannot be reported to be chronically homeless in the PIT count, may lead to an underestimate of chronic homelessness among youth. Further, the fact that multiple federal systems are operating with multiple and conflicting definitions of youth homelessness, of which the PIT count assess those meeting the most narrow, means that developing meaningful and productive relationships with Department of Education and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act-funded providers continues to be a challenge (See Table 2). Finally, we argue that the definition of homelessness for minors and youth requires a developmentally appropriate definition. The definition for youth must account for the basic human need of safe and stable shelter required to grow to adulthood both physically and emotionally (a phase which extends to the early twenties in studies of the adolescent brain).<sup>6</sup>

### *Federal support*

On the local and federal level, youth-inclusive counts have historically been hindered by a lack of focus on and understanding of youth homelessness. Just as homelessness services must be tailored to youth needs, so must count strategies be developed that are feasible and effective at enumerating and characterizing the homeless youth population. As we strive to develop effective tactics for counting youth, **federal funding and guidance regarding how youth counts can fit with the methodology and data requirements of the general Point-in-Time count** are sorely needed.

- There is a high level of concern in many communities about potential negative consequences of changing numbers resulting from changes in methodology. Communities expressed concerns that changes in youth numbers could lead to repercussions from HUD and from local stakeholders. **Guidance regarding appropriate methods and assistance in communicating about any changes in methodology and/or resultant numbers** both to HUD and within local communities is needed.
- Differing definitions of homelessness, lack of staff time, and conflicting school versus PIT count calendars can present barriers to productive coordination with McKinney-Vento school liaisons. Despite these challenges, many communities were able to develop strong partnerships with school staff in this year's count. This process requires flexibility and creativity on the part of both CoC and school stakeholders. Even after partnerships are developed, it can remain difficult to ascertain how school and PIT count data may be appropriately merged – as one community whose school district conducted a parallel count during the PIT count noted, *"We have not yet determined a way to integrate these data into what is reported to HUD and instead are using it as another data source to inform local systems planning."* **Guidance regarding ways to better integrate data collected in school systems with the PIT count** could help to institutionalize these partnerships and establish effective, mutually supportive and acceptable data collection procedures.
- Though they provided crucial and helpful information to communities, the **timing of directives** from HUD regarding the 2015 count presented a challenge to many communities. Planning efforts began far in advance of when communities received instructions for data submission, meaning that in several communities, decisions about data instruments and count methods had to be revisited and revised to ensure they were in accordance with HUD's requirements.
- Finally, as expressed in our 2013 assessment, one of the most pressing challenges to improved youth data continues to be a lack of **funding** to support count activities. A federal provision of

<sup>6</sup> Steinberg, Laurence. "Should the Science of Adolescent Brain Development Inform Public Policy?" *Issues in Science and Technology* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2012) at <http://issues.org/28-3/steinberg/>

(even limited) funds specific to youth counts could not only help communities in these efforts but also, more importantly, send a crucial signal of support to communities concerned about any potential negative funding and political ramifications of efforts to improve youth data.

## Recommendations

- Community
  - **Begin planning early:** Though we know that the PIT count will take place in January every other year, coordinated planning efforts often don't start until fall. This is not enough time to adequately plan a dedicated effort to count youth. A community plan should be developed in late spring or early summer to ensure a successful count with enough time to develop ideas and get input from local stakeholders.
  - Continue developing relationships with youth and providers, keeping in mind that **young people should not only be partners, but drivers in action**, including all aspects of planning and conducting the count.
  - Be sure that youth perspectives are honored and respected and that their participation is not tokenized. Young people will feel more comfortable contributing to the conversation if they are **not the only person in the room with lived experience of homelessness**.
  - **Partner with alternative stakeholders** who touch upon homeless youth such as child welfare services, probation, workforce development, schools and community colleges, libraries, LGBT centers, etc.
  - **Share back information** with community stakeholders, especially youth themselves.
  - **Take the data with a grain of salt:** Be mindful in using PIT numbers to inform program planning that the cyclical nature of youth homelessness means that translation to an annualized need for youth services in a community will not be the same as it is for adults. Numbers from the count should be a jumping off point for community dialogue, rather than the end of the conversation.
- State
  - **Guidance regarding unaccompanied minors:** Though homelessness alone is not sufficient criteria to report an unaccompanied homeless minor to child welfare services, confusion still exists on the part of CoCs around counting and surveying minors. In 2013, Governor Brown signed AB 652 (now Section 11165.15 of the Penal Code) into law, reinforcing federal reporting standards that preclude homelessness as the reason for a child welfare report. However, additional awareness and state guidance would be helpful to clarify the legality of such practices as they relate to data collection.
  - **State-coordinated activities:** In light of the inherent challenges to counting homeless youth, in 2013 and 2014, the Massachusetts Office of Health and Human Services invested \$150,000 in counting youth across the state. Led by the Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, this initiative provided funding, technical assistance training, and a coordinated youth count survey and methodology to Massachusetts communities preparing for their PIT counts. Similar to Massachusetts, California could opt to take a coordinated statewide approach to counting youth. Though California does not have a Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, if formed, a State Interagency Council on Homelessness that could plan, coordinate activities, and access additional federal funds related to all populations, including homeless youth could be helpful in this effort.

- Federal
  - **Clearer guidance on count methods:** Since 2013 was the first time communities were required to count transitional age youth, appropriate methodology is still being developed. Clear and relevant federal guidance regarding regulations around mandated reporting, suggested youth survey questions, and requirements around permissible time(s) of day for the count would greatly help communities as they continue to take steps forward in future years.
  - **Timely guidance:** There is clear consensus that conducting the point in time count is a large undertaking that can take several months to plan responsibly. However, challenges can occur when federal guidance is released too close to the upcoming count, leaving communities to scramble to ensure that their count methodology is in line with HUD requirements. Releasing guidance in a timely fashion would enable communities to plan with enough advance notice to conduct successful and considered January counts.
  - **Funding support:** Though resources to conduct the count may be requested and granted as part of the budget for CoC planning activities in a CoC's application to HUD for funding (or NOFA), most communities understandably prioritize funding for direct services. As a result, the most frequently cited structural barrier for conducting the PIT is a lack of funding. This understandably leads many communities to prioritize counting the chronically homeless adult population. However, we found that by and large, communities across California are eager to obtain a better estimate of youth and young adults living on the streets; they simply lack the capacity to plan and conduct an adequately inclusive count. Count efforts could be amplified by receiving even small amounts of federal funding to support this work.
  - **Support for dedicated youth counts or improved youth data:** Federal policy could provide rewards (such as points in a review of a CoC's funding request or NOFA) for conducting youth counts or for increased youth inclusion.
  - **Recognition that improved youth numbers mean increased youth numbers and that the current undercount of youth cannot be a baseline.** In a May 2015 Senate Hearing, HUD Senior Advisor Jennifer Ho emphasized, *"While we know it is still not complete, we are beginning to see a clearer picture than we did in 2010 about the prevalence of homelessness among youth and young adults. As communities improve and refine their methodologies we expect that data collection through the point-in-time count will continue to improve, and over the next several years, we may even see the point-in-time count for youth increase."* Continued recognition and messaging from senior federal officials will decrease local communities' hesitation to count, and report, more inclusive (and higher) numbers of homeless youth.
  - **Political support:** Political support at all levels will be critical to both capturing a confident estimate of homeless youth, and ultimately ending youth homelessness. Local leaders can lend support and legitimacy by participating in their local count, and uplifting the narratives of young people experiencing homelessness. Federal partners must continue to think holistically about all people experiencing homelessness, including youth, and ensure that messaging around one sub-group of homelessness individuals does not lead to unintended investment in other sub-groups. Federal partners must continue to underscore the urgency and importance of ending youth homelessness, and build capacity to fully realize the data strategy outlined in the youth framework of the federal strategic plan to end homelessness. It is only through working together that we can achieve the goal of ending youth homelessness in California and beyond.

## **Appendix 1. Lexicon of Terms**

**Census:** Point-in-time count of a population

**CoC:** Continuum of Care, a regional or planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals in a specific region.

**Couch-surfing:** The act of moving place to place, residing as a short-term, temporary guest with friends or family members.

**DOE:** Department of Education

**Doubled-up:** The act of sharing a residence with other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or other circumstances.

**HDX:** Homelessness Data Exchange, an online tool enabling Continuums of Care to submit data to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**HHS:** Department of Health and Human Services

**HUD:** Department of Housing and Urban Development

**HMIS:** Homeless Management Information Systems, an electronic database used to collect information on homeless individuals and families accessing residential or other homeless assistance services.

**HEARTH Act:** Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act.

**HIC:** Housing Inventory Count, conducted annually, collects information on the total number of beds and units in each Continuum of Care.

**CHYP:** California Homeless Youth Project

**LGBTQ:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Questioning/Queer

**LEA:** Local Education Agency, also commonly referred to as a school district or County Office of Education (COE).

**Literally homeless:** Residing in a place not intended for human habitation (e.g. sleeping in a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or on the street).

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:** This federal legislation aims to provide children and youth experiencing homelessness a full and fair opportunity to succeed in their education by requiring the public school system to provide a range of services.

**McKinney-Vento homeless liaison:** This role complies with the McKinney-Vento Act by identifying the children and youth experiencing homelessness and ensures they receive educational services. Such services include: providing referrals to health care, dental, mental health and other appropriate services; informing parents/guardians of the educational opportunities available to their children; providing parents/guardians with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education; disseminating public notice of educational rights; ensuring an expedited enrollment when applicable; assisting families and youth in accessing transportation services.

**Minor:** A youth under the age of 18.

**NAEH:** The National Alliance to End Homelessness

**NOFA:** Notice of Funding Ability

**Precariously or unstably housed:** Lacking a fixed residence, and therefore couch surfing or residing in places such as: hotels, shelters, recovery/transition houses, and jails.

**PIT:** Point-in-Time count

**RHY:** Runaway and Homeless youth

**RHYA:** Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

**TA:** Technical Assistance

**TAY:** Transitional Age Youth, between the ages of 18 through 24

**UID:** Unique Identifier, often consisting of a homeless individual's first and last initial, gender, date of birth, and/or state of birth, used in ensuring an individual is not counted more than once.

**USICH:** United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, an independent agency within the federal executive branch consisting of 19 federal Cabinet secretaries and agency heads, coordinates the federal response to homelessness.

**Unaccompanied Minor:** Youth, age 12 through 17, who are living apart from their parents or legal guardians.

**Youth:** Refers to both unaccompanied minors (age 12 through 17), and transition age youth (age 18 through 24).

## Appendix 2. CoC-Level Point-in-Time Count Data: 2011 – 2015

The national Point-In-Time (PIT) count of unsheltered homeless individuals occurs every other year in the last ten days of January. County Continuums of Care (CoCs) were first required to submit counts of transitional age youth (TAY) (i.e., youth from the ages of 18 and 24) in 2013. For this reason, 2011 TAY and total unsheltered children and youth figures should not be compared with later years, as they do not represent the true size of the unsheltered TAY population that year. TAY enumerated in 2011 were collected from local count reports, as these numbers were not federally mandated or reported in 2011, and may not represent all of the communities which collected local data on TAY in that Point-in-Time count. Comparisons may be made across all years, however, among the figures for unaccompanied minors. Unaccompanied minors are children under age 18 and without a parent or guardian on the night of the PIT count.

In the following tables, the following notations are used:

- NR indicates data were not reported to the data source.
- N/A indicates there was no CoC conducting a PIT count in that year.
- An asterisk (\*) indicates that the county was part of a multi-county CoC that year, but figures are unable to be attributed to that county alone. Specifically, in 2011 and 2013, Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, Tehama, and Trinity Counties comprised the Dos Rios CoC. Together, they counted 43 homeless TAY and 1 unaccompanied minor in 2013. In 2011, they did not report TAY data, but reported 0 unsheltered unaccompanied minors. Although not listed among the county data, those figures are included in the California totals for 2011 and 2013.

A note regarding Los Angeles County and its constituent CoCs: Youth count numbers for Los Angeles County include the Los Angeles, Glendale, Pasadena, and Long Beach CoCs. In 2015, the Los Angeles CoC conducted a Youth Count to inform local planning; the total youth number derived from both the LA Youth and General Counts is presented here [for consistency across count years](#), but due to differences in methodology between the two counts has not been reported in official federal data systems. 2015 data for Los Angeles County does not include data from the Glendale CoC, which was not reported to the data source.

California	Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	5,620	9,770	10,531
Unaccompanied Minors	1,217	1,668	834
Total	6,837	11,438	11,365

Alameda County	Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	21	143	82
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	0
Total	21	143	82

Alpine County	Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unaccompanied Minors	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A

Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne Counties	Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	23	34
Unaccompanied Minors	3	1	0
Total	3	24	34

<b>Butte County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	201	45	36	
Unaccompanied Minors	7	4	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>36</b>	

<b>Colusa, Glenn, and Trinity Counties</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	NR	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	NR	
<b>Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>NR</b>	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

<b>Contra Costa County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	71	109	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	13	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>109</b>	

<b>Del Norte County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	N/A	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

<b>El Dorado County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	1	4	3	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	

<b>Fresno and Madera Counties</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	323	92	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>92</b>	

<b>Humboldt County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	101	165	82	
Unaccompanied Minors	5	18	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>86</b>	

<b>Imperial County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	9	34	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>	

<b>Inyo County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

<b>Kern County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	29	43	
Unaccompanied Minors	1	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43</b>	

Kings and Tulare Counties		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	14	23	
Unaccompanied Minors	2	0	0	
Total	2	14	23	

Lake County		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	4	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	1	
Total	*	*	5	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

Lassen County		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	N/A	
Total	*	*	N/A	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

Los Angeles County		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	3,628	2,865	4,519	
Unaccompanied Minors	282	720	442	
Total	3,910	3,585	4,961	

*Please refer to text regarding Los Angeles County and cities data in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

City of Glendale CoC		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	0	NR	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	NR	
Total	0	0	NR	

*Please refer to text regarding Los Angeles County and cities data in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

Long Beach City CoC		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	77	52	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	2	1	
Total	0	79	53	

*Please refer to text regarding Los Angeles County and cities data in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

Los Angeles CoC		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	3,593	2,776	4,436	
Unaccompanied Minors	279	716	437	
Total	3,872	3,492	4,873	

*Please refer to text regarding Los Angeles County and cities data in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

City of Pasadena CoC		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	35	12	31	
Unaccompanied Minors	3	2	4	
Total	38	14	35	

*Please refer to text regarding Los Angeles County and cities data in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

<b>Marin County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	29	348	
Unaccompanied Minors	1	1	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>354</b>	

<b>Mendocino County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	86	59	
Unaccompanied Minors	13	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>59</b>	

<b>Merced County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	20	59	
Unaccompanied Minors	2	4	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>	

<b>Modoc County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

<b>Mono County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

<b>Monterey and San Benito Counties</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	183	327	226	
Unaccompanied Minors	97	15	46	
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>272</b>	

<b>Napa County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	0	1	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	1	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	

<b>Nevada and Placer Counties</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	46	46	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	

<b>Orange County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	215	178	52	
Unaccompanied Minors	13	1	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>54</b>	

<b>Plumas County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

<b>Riverside County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	281	111	116	
Unaccompanied Minors	109	4	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>128</b>	

<b>Sacramento County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	54	155	
Unaccompanied Minors	20	4	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>159</b>	

<b>San Bernardino County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	78	107	
Unaccompanied Minors	3	17	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>114</b>	

<b>San Diego County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	370	344	
Unaccompanied Minors	148	13	30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>374</b>	

<b>San Francisco County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	1,533	1,259	
Unaccompanied Minors	25	125	119	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,378</b>	

<b>San Joaquin County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	11	13	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	

<b>San Luis Obispo County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	209	382	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	31	14	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>396</b>	

<b>San Mateo County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	81	36	
Unaccompanied Minors	2	5	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>36</b>	

<b>Santa Barbara County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	48	63	
Unaccompanied Minors	1	0	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>68</b>	

<b>Santa Clara County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	552	884	745	
Unaccompanied Minors	145	183	41	
<b>Total</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>786</b>	

<b>Santa Cruz County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	838	235	
Unaccompanied Minors	72	127	28	
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>263</b>	

<b>Shasta County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	48	437	
Unaccompanied Minors	1	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>437</b>	

<b>Sierra County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

<b>Siskiyou County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Unaccompanied Minors	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

<b>Solano County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	130	100	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>109</b>	

<b>Sonoma County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	437	810	593	
Unaccompanied Minors	260	271	48	
<b>Total</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>641</b>	

<b>Stanislaus County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	65	51	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	0	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	

<b>Sutter and Yuba Counties</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	0	5	
Unaccompanied Minors	0	99	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>12</b>	

<b>Tehama County</b>		<b>Number</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	*	*	6	
Unaccompanied Minors	*	*	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>6</b>	

*Please refer to text regarding the counties formerly comprising Dos Rios CoC in the introduction to Appendix 2.*

Ventura County		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	67	1	
Unaccompanied Minors	4	10	0	
Total	4	77	1	

Yolo County		Number		
Age Group	2011	2013	2015	
Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	NR	13	31	
Unaccompanied Minors	1	0	3	
Total	1	13	34	



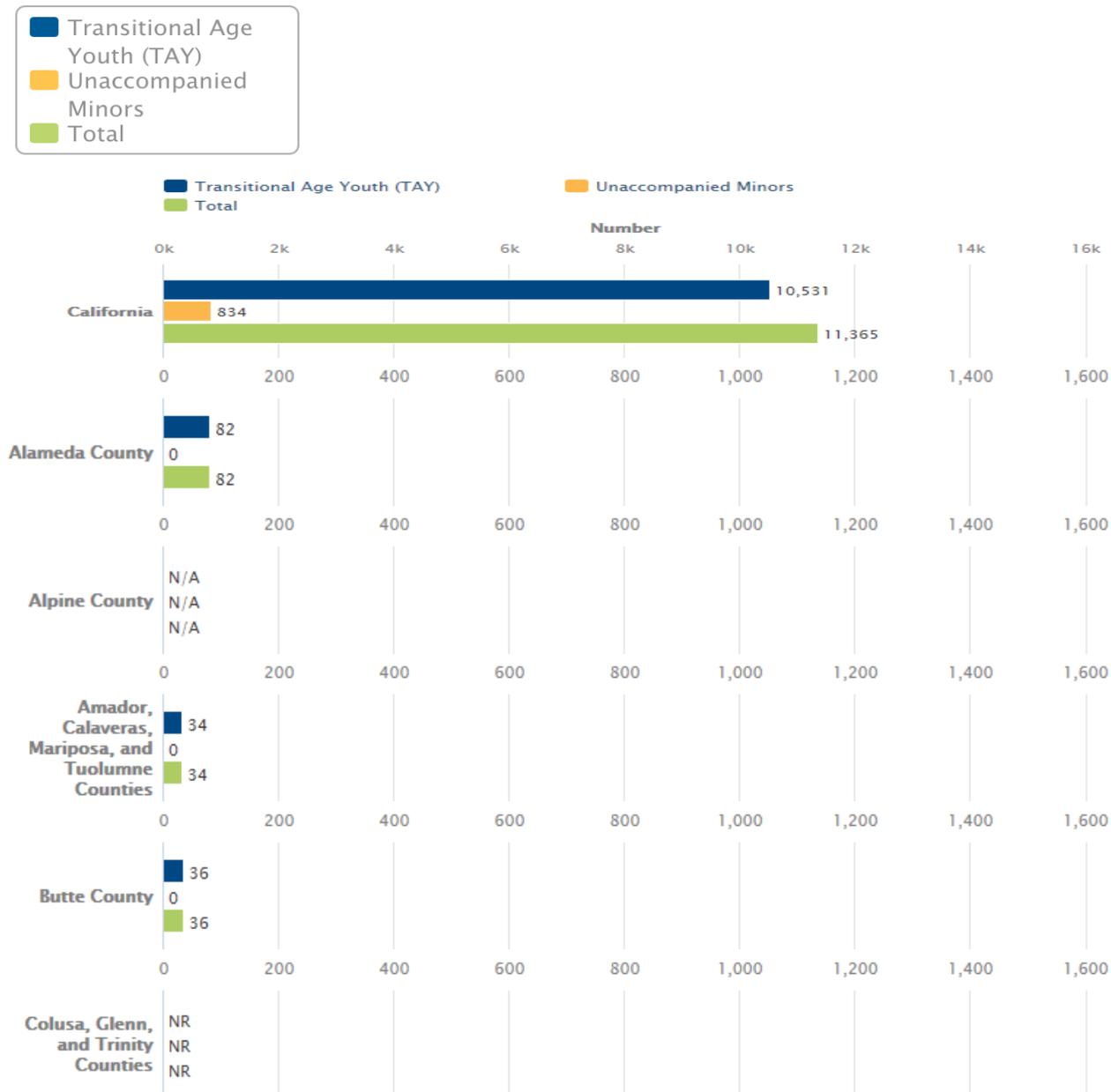
### Appendix 3. CoC-Level Point-in-Time Count Data: 2015

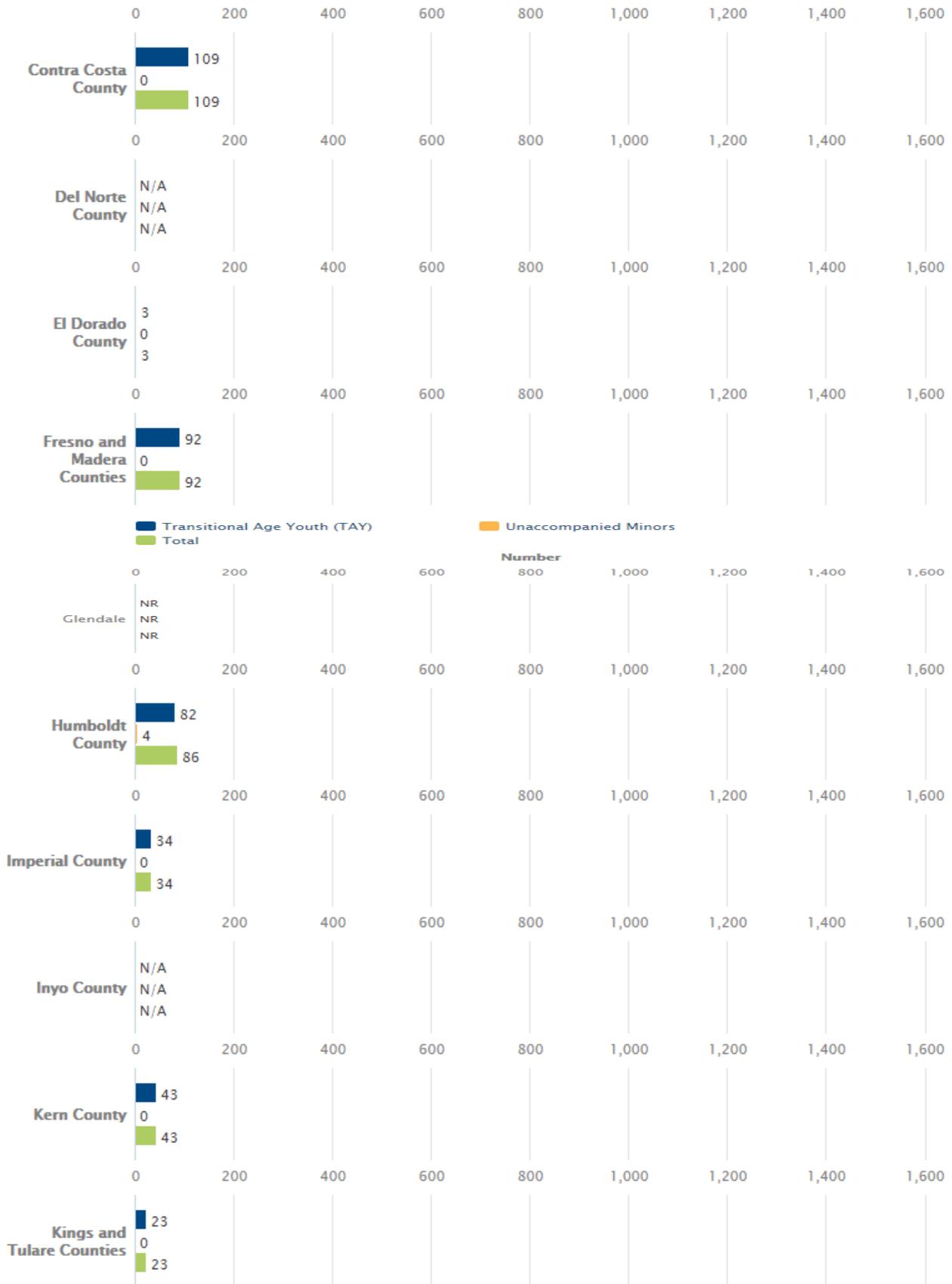
In the following tables, the following notations are used:

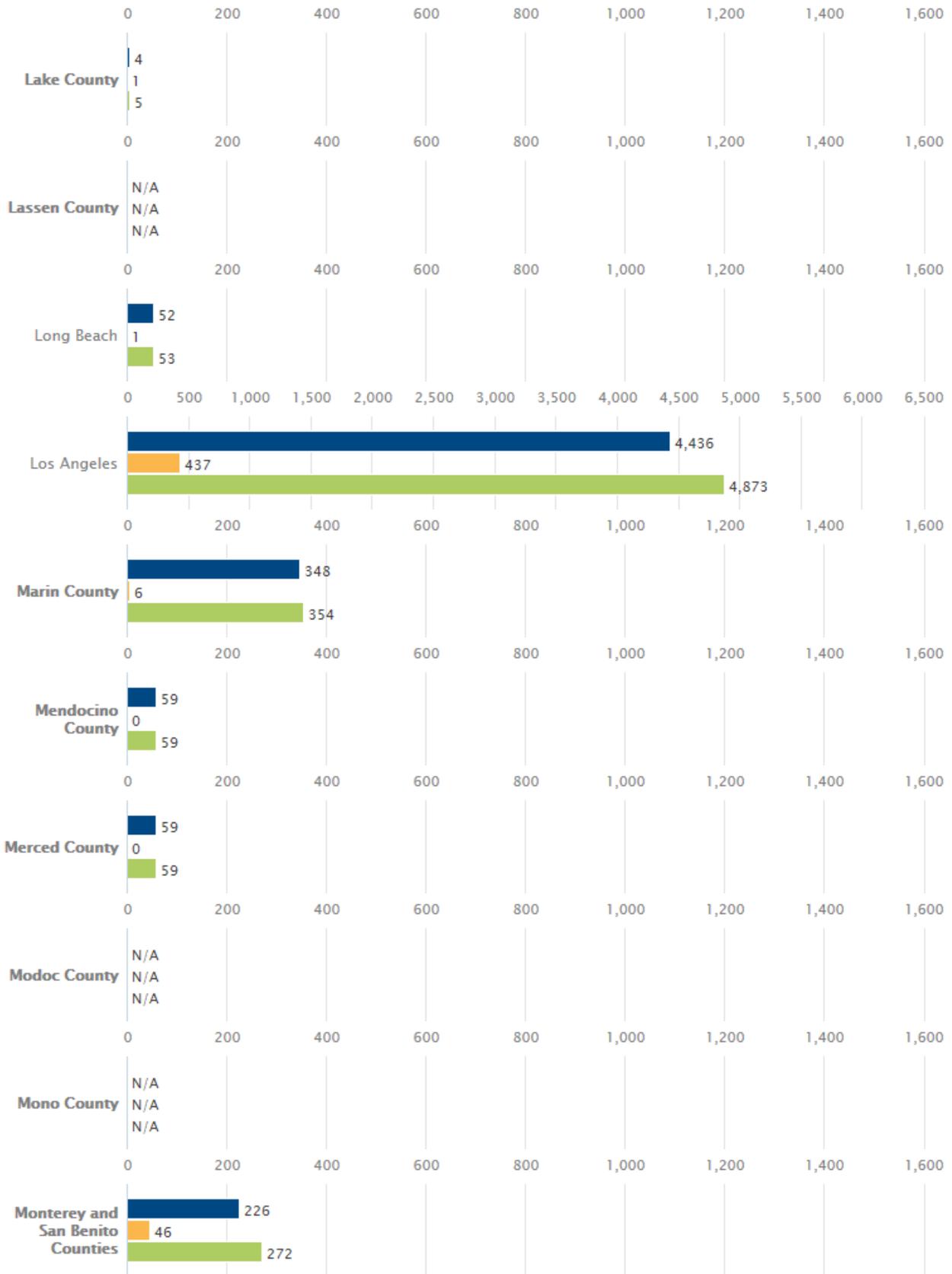
- NR indicates data were not reported to the data source.
- N/A indicates there was no CoC conducting a PIT count in that year.

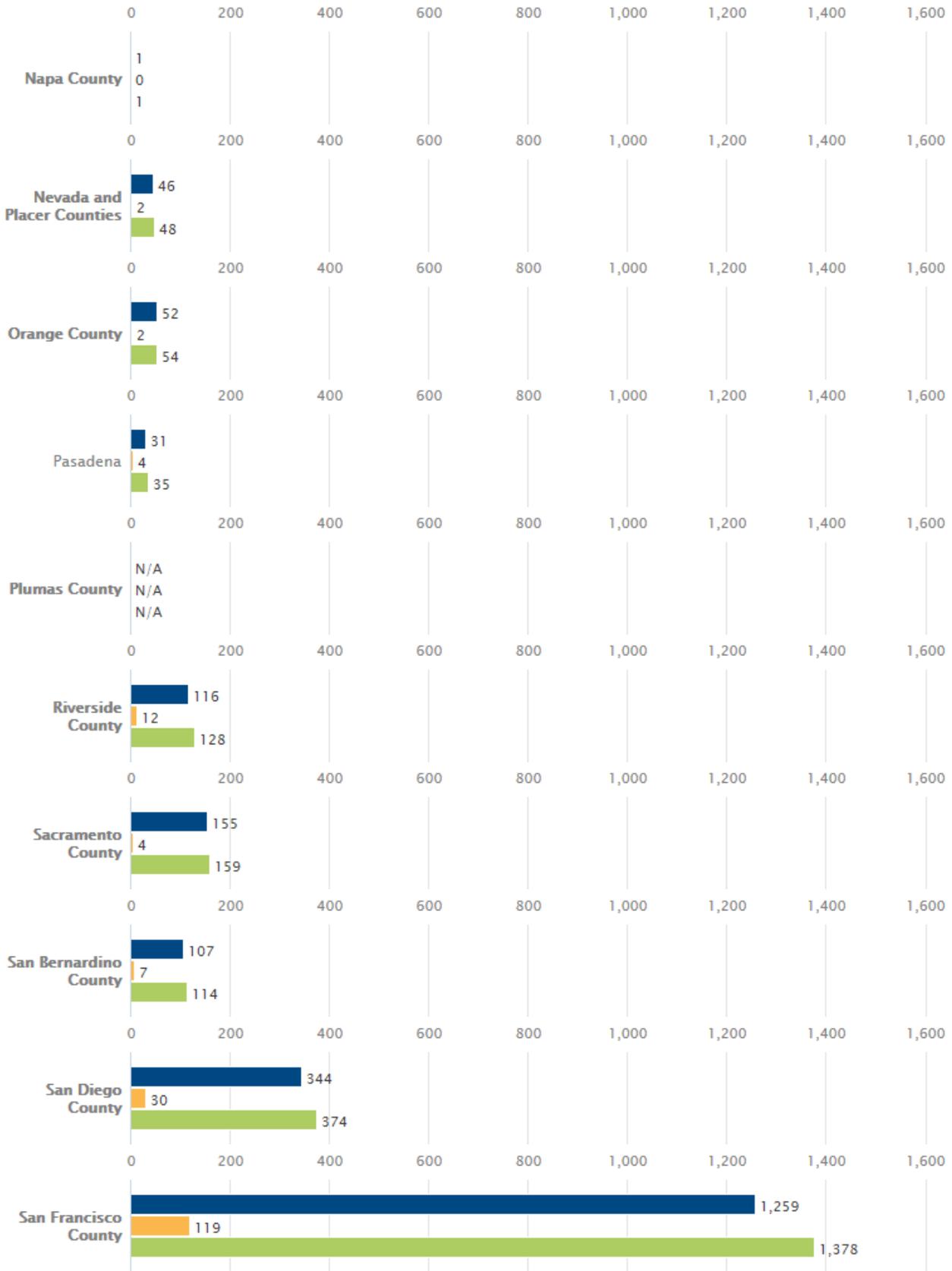
In 2015, the Los Angeles CoC conducted a Youth Count to inform local planning; the total youth number derived from both the LA Youth and General Counts is presented here **for consistency across count years**, but due to differences in methodology between the two counts has not been reported in official federal data systems.

Please note that the scales used to depict California (overall) and Los Angeles CoC’s youth count numbers differ from those of the other bar charts.

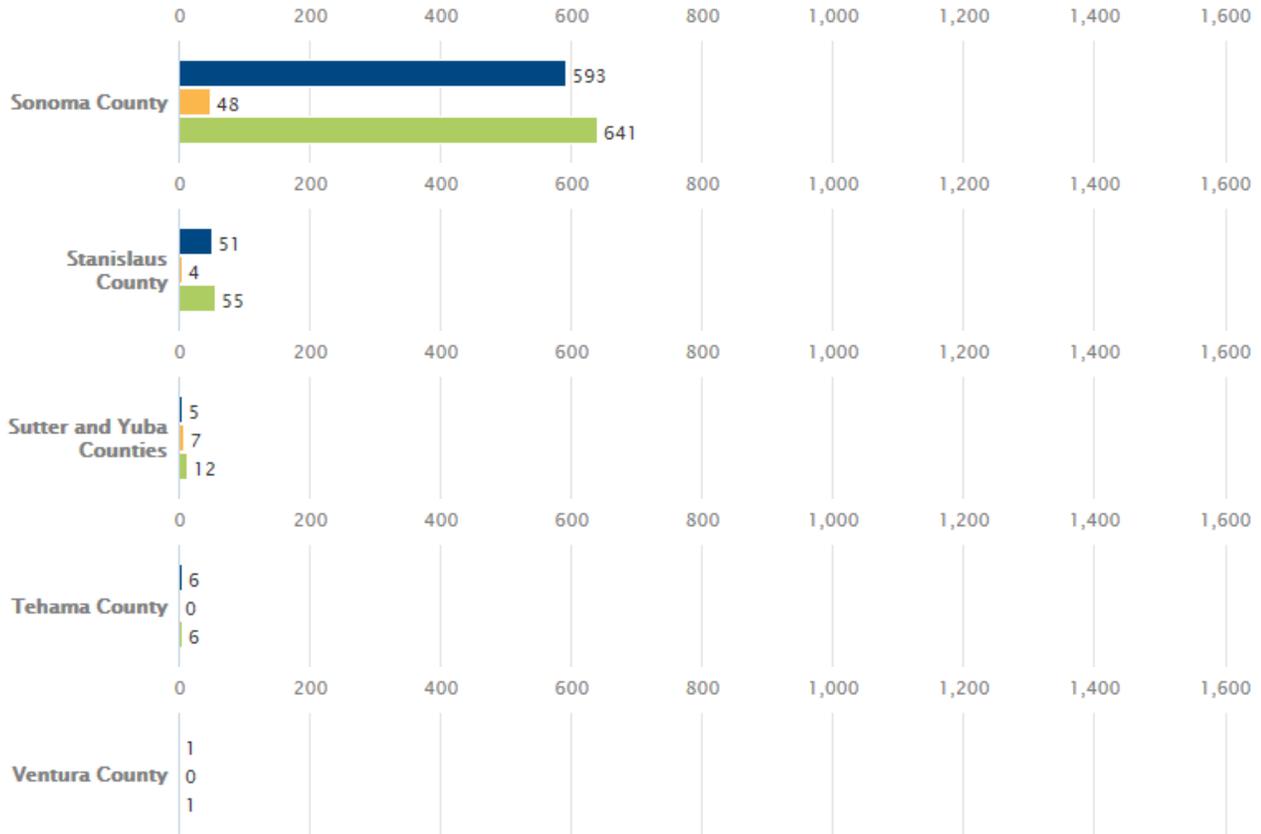












## Appendix 4. Resources

### We Count, California!

#### To access the PIT and McKinney-Vento school data publicized in this report:

The number of children and youth found to be unsheltered in each county during the national Point-In-Time (PIT) count is available on [kidsdata.org](http://kidsdata.org). To explore these data, click [here](#) or go to [kidsdata.org](http://kidsdata.org) and type 'PIT' into the search box. Also available are the [number and percentage](#) of public school students who were recorded as being homeless at any time in the school year, [by grade level](#) and [nighttime residence](#) at the state, county, and school district levels. The [number](#) of homeless public school students in each state legislative district also is available, provided by the [California Homeless Youth Project](#) at the California Research Bureau and the [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#). Counts of [very young homeless children](#) (i.e., from birth through Kindergarten) also are presented for each county.

#### We Count, California! Google Group

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/we-count-california>

*Site for communications regarding youth counts and links to all materials produced by the We Count, California! project, including the [regional convening training manual](#) and [youth count survey templates](#).*

#### Prepare for the 2015 Point-in-Time Count, Enumerating Unsheltered Youth, September 2014.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/webinar-recording-prepare-for-the-2015-point-in-time-count-enumerating-unsh>

*Webinar regarding strategies for including youth in the 2015 Point-in-Time Count. Includes presentation by We Count, California!*

#### Making a Difference for Youth Experiencing Homelessness—A National Perspective,

November 2014.

<http://usich.gov/blog/2015-making-a-difference-for-youth-experiencing-homelessness-a-national-per>

*Tips for youth-inclusive Point-in-Time counts.*

#### Youth Counts COUNT!, May 2015.

<http://usich.gov/blog/youth-counts-count>

*Reflections regarding the importance of youth Point-in-Time count data.*

#### Hidden in Plain Sight: An Assessment of Youth Inclusion in Point-in-Time Counts of California's Unsheltered Homeless Population, April 2013.

[http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/Hidden-in-Plain-Sight\\_FullReportFINAL.pdf](http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/Hidden-in-Plain-Sight_FullReportFINAL.pdf)

*Identifies emerging best practices and current challenges to counting homeless youth across CA.*

#### A Toolkit for Counting Homeless Youth, June 2012.

[http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/Toolkit\\_for\\_Counting\\_Homeless\\_Youth.pdf](http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/Toolkit_for_Counting_Homeless_Youth.pdf)

*Features processes in Los Angeles in planning youth counts. Includes sample volunteer training and other count materials.*

## Guidance for Counting Youth

**Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide**, March 2015.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4036/point-in-time-count-methodology-guide/>

*HUD standards and guidance concerning acceptable methodologies and approaches to conducting PIT counts.*

**Point-in-Time Survey Tools**, December 2014.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3322/point-in-time-survey-tools/>

*Model surveys, guides and tools provided by HUD for the 2015 PIT count.*

**HIC/PIT Webinar: Preparing for Your 2015 Housing Inventory Count and Point-in-Time Count**,

December 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icgEtTAyZeo>

*HUD webinar highlighting data collection guidance and new reporting requirements for the 2015 HIC and PIT counts.*

**Submitting 2015 HIC and PIT Data—Deadline Reminder**, May 2015.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/news/submitting-2015-hic-and-pit-data-deadline-reminder/>

**Rural Continuums of Care**, June 2009.

<https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/RuralCoCGuidebook.pdf>

*General Point-in-Time Count guidance for rural communities available on pp. 40-44.*

**Counting Homeless Youth: Promising Practices from the Youth Count! Initiative**

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412876-counting-homeless-youth.pdf>

*Summary of promising practices, areas for improvement, and recommendations, following the efforts of nine communities across the U.S.*

*Full Youth Count! Report*

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412872-youth-count-process-study-2.pdf>

**Outreach & Sampling Methods for Youth Count! Data Collection**, December 5, 2012.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/sampling-methods-youth-count>

*Approaches to sampling strategies, ways to map best locations for reaching homeless youth in street counts, and how to build creative partnerships.*

**Youth Targeted Point-in-Time Counts: What You Need to Know!**, October 25, 2012.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/webinar-youth-targeted-point-in-time-counts-what-you-need-to-know>

*Focus on developing key partnerships, planning, and considerations for rural communities.*

**Making PIT Counts Work for Your Community**

[http://100khomes.org/sites/default/files/images/Registry%20Week%20PIT%20Integration%20Toolkit\\_FINAL.pdf](http://100khomes.org/sites/default/files/images/Registry%20Week%20PIT%20Integration%20Toolkit_FINAL.pdf)

*Integrating the Registry Week Methodology into Your Point-in-Time Count.*

**A New Tool to Target Homeless Youth for Supportive Housing**, June 14, 2013.

<http://www.csh.org/2013/06/a-new-tool-to-target-homeless-youth-for-supportive-housing/>

*“Transition Age Youth Triage Tool” of six items to help prioritize youth for supportive housing.*

## Appendix 5. School-Based Count Materials from the Santa Cruz County Office of Education

# 2015 Point-in-Time Count for Schools

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the 2015 Homeless Point-in-Time Count and our effort to include McKinney-Vento school data in national estimates of homelessness. Your efforts are important and essential to helping develop a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness among children and families

### What is the Point-in-Time Count?

All communities receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for homeless populations through Homeless Assistance Grants are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a biennial Point-in-Time count of unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals and families. The count must happen within the last ten days of January and all data must be tied to one night (a single “point-in-time”).

### Why does the Point-in-Time Count matter?

Point-in-Time Count data are the primary data used for federal funding allocations and national estimates of homelessness. The numbers reported by your community are used by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and all federal departments including Housing and Education. PIT Count numbers are also most often cited by local strategic plans, state, county and city government and the media.

### Why is your participation and data essential to the Point-in-Time Count?

Government and nonprofit estimates of the number of homeless youth vary widely, from tens of thousands to over a million. No one has an accurate estimate of how many children and youth are currently homeless. Not knowing the true size of the population makes it hard to measure progress in ending and preventing homelessness.

While Point-in-Time Counts are used by most federal agencies, they have traditionally underestimated the number of children and families experiencing homelessness. It is the goal of the 2015 Point-in-Time Count to improve data collection on children and families and to develop a homeless Point-in-Time Count number that is accepted by school districts, homeless services providers and the federal government.

### Who is included in the Point-in-Time Count?

Part of the difficulty in developing these estimates is that different counts use different age ranges and definitions of homelessness. The Point-in-Time Count focused on children under 18 as well as those between the ages of 18 and 25, but uses a very narrow definition of homelessness (category 1 of the Hearth Act definition). This means that only those students and family members residing in public shelters, vehicles, on the street, or in places not meant for human habitation can be included in the count. It excludes children living in a “double-up” accommodation which accounts for roughly 70-90% of the number of homeless children typically reported in CALPADS.

In order to include homeless youth identified through the COE, your districts will need to verify where each student was on the night of the Point-in-Time Count. Many of the students identified as homeless by the COE will not be included in the Point-in-Time Count, as they will fall outside the narrow definition



of homelessness used for the count. While the majority of students identified by the schools are in a double-up situation, some double-ups such as those living in unconverted garages or basements, outbuildings or other places not intended for human habitation can be included in our PIT count. Students and family members residing in community shelters or in hotels will already be included in the PIT Count through other outreach efforts and therefore will not be included through the COE data.

### How can you count and verify the locations of children and families?

The County Office of Education is asking all districts to contact McKinney-Vento identified families and students grades K-12 to verify their place of residence in the weeks following the January 22<sup>nd</sup> count. We ask that you record information on each member of the households contacted for the count. We understand that the list of McKinney-Vento identified students may be too large for you to connect with each student or household during this narrow timeframe. If that is the case, we recommend prioritizing the list and contacting those households and families that are most likely to meet the Point-in-Time Count definition of homeless first. These would be the students who have been identified as unsheltered, living in cars/vehicles and those in other categories (double ups or shelters) who have high truancy rates.

We also understand that every district and every school may have a different way of tracking students therefore we suggest starting by looking students in the CalPADS database. Here are some suggested steps that have worked in other communities:

1. Run the list of students in CalPADS by school district and school
2. Ask each district or school MV Liaison to review the list
  - a. Look at their own data on identified students and confirm individuals on the list
  - b. Check that the students are currently enrolled in school
  - c. Look to see if there are students from the same family or household so that the household is only contacted once

Once these lists are completed, determine who will contact each of the households (district staff, school staff, district volunteers or interns) during the last two weeks of January.

We ask that you use the following script and data collection form when contacting families and keep a record of what family and phone number was used for each of the households recorded in the data collection forms. We recommend announcing this as a McKinney-Vento housing survey rather than a “homeless count”. A survey script is provided for your assistance in data collection; however you and your schools know these students and families so please alter the introduction as you see fit. We also understand that this is a conversation and the phone calls will not follow this script exactly.

Please record the information you gather from the survey on the data collection form. You will record information by household but gather information on all household members. If a child is living on their own and not living with an adult, they will still be counted as a household.

Once you have completed all of your calls, we ask that you send your information back to the COE. We ask that all data charts are returned to the COE no later than February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015. We thank you for your time and effort. We know this is a difficult and time consuming request; however we are dedicated to collecting this data and increasing our county’s understanding of youth and family homelessness.



## 2015 Point-in-Time Count Survey Script

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (school, district or program) and we are doing a quick survey to update the housing status of students in our programs. If it is okay with you, we would like to ask you a couple of questions about where you are currently staying and with the people in your household.

Our records indicate that you/your child was \_\_\_\_\_ (current listed status).

All of your information you provide will remain confidential and your responses to the questions I ask today will not prevent you from receiving any assistance or services you are already receiving. In fact, these questions are being asked to better support your needs and improve the wellbeing of our community.

This survey is part of a national effort to better understand and hopefully address housing challenges for students and families. We will never share your name with any other organization and all of the information gathered will be reported together so that no one will know how you responded. It will only take 2 or minutes. Is that okay with you? Or, do you have any questions?

No: Okay, thank you for your time.

Yes: Great, let's get started.

I am going to ask you a couple of questions about where you were staying on the night of Thursday January 22nd and a little information about each of the people in your household. Because these questions are part of a national study, they may sound a little bit funny or may be confusing. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop me at any time. If you don't want to answer the questions just say "pass."

1. Where will/were you staying on the night of January 22nd? *(Please insert the following code into the form, if you are unsure, please write in a description of where the person is staying)* **(Column D)**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outdoors           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Street</li> <li>ii. Park</li> <li>iii. Encampment area</li> <li>iv. Backyard</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. A place in a house not normally used for sleeping (unconverted garage, kitchen, hallway, etc.)</li> <li>c. A shed or storage structure</li> <li>d. Vehicle (Car/Van/RV/Camper)</li> <li>e. Homeless Shelter or Transitional Housing           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Emergency</li> <li>ii. Transitional)</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Motel/Hotel paid for by you</li> <li>g. Motel/Hotel paid for by an shelter provider or organization</li> <li>h. Living in an apartment or home with friends or family</li> <li>i. Living in an apartment or home of their own</li> </ul> |
|---|



2. In what city or area? **(Column E)**
3. How many people including yourself are in your household? *(Household includes all family members who currently live together. This can include unrelated people such as partners or significant others. A person living alone is also considered a household, even though it is a household of 1.)* **(Column F)**
4. Are/were all of them living with you on the night of January 22nd? *(Ask them to answer the following questions about only those living with them on the night of the count)*
5. What are the ages of each of those people? *(Please note: unaccompanied youth living by themselves or with a sibling should be considered an independent household for reporting purposes)* **(Column H)**
6. I am going to ask you about the gender of the members in your household. I will ask how many people in each age group are male, female or transgender. First, thinking about the people age under age 0-17 in your household....
  - a. How many are male? **(Column I)**
  - b. How many are female? **(Column J)**
  - c. How many are transgender? (male to female or female to male) **(Column K or L)**
7. Now, thinking about the people age 18 -24 in your household....
  - a. How many are male? **(Column I)**
  - b. How many are female? **(Column J)**
  - c. How many are transgender? (male to female or female to male) **(Column K or L)**
8. Okay, now thinking about the people age 25 and older in your household....
  - a. How many are male? **(Column I)**
  - b. How many are female? **(Column J)**
  - c. How many are transgender? (male to female or female to male) **(Column K or L)**
9. Now I am going to ask you about the race and ethnicity of the members in your household. First I will ask if they identify as Hispanic or Latino and then I will ask how they identify their race. I will ask about people in each age group, just like before. Thinking about the people age under age 0-17 in your household....
  - a. How many consider themselves Hispanic or Latino? **(Column N)**
  - b. How many consider themselves Non-Hispanic or Latino? **(Column O)**
  - 
  - a. How many consider themselves White? **(Column P)**
  - b. Black or African American? **(Column Q)**
  - c. Asian? **(Column R)**
  - d. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander? **(Column S)**
  - e. American Indian or Alaskan Native? **(Column T)**
  - f. Other? **(Column U)**
10. Now, thinking about the people age 18 -24 in your household....
  - a. How many consider themselves Hispanic or Latino? **(Column N)**
  - b. How many consider themselves Non-Hispanic or Latino? **(Column O)**
  - 
  - g. How many consider themselves White? **(Column P)**
  - h. Black or African American? **(Column Q)**



- i. Asian? **(Column R)**
  - j. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander? **(Column S)**
  - k. American Indian or Alaskan Native? **(Column T)**
  - l. Other? **(Column U)**
11. Okay, now thinking about the people age 25 and older in your household....
- a. How many consider themselves Hispanic or Latino? **(Column N)**
  - b. How many consider themselves Non-Hispanic or Latino? **(Column O)**
- 
- m. How many consider themselves White? **(Column P)**
  - n. Black or African American? **(Column Q)**
  - o. Asian? **(Column R)**
  - p. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander? **(Column S)**
  - q. American Indian or Alaskan Native? **(Column T)**
  - r. Other? **(Column U)**
12. Great, I have one last set of questions about military services. **(Column V)**
- a. Have you or a household member served in the U.S. armed forces? (Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines) – *if yes mark as a veteran and skip to the end*
  - b. Were you or a household member ever called into active duty as a Reservist or National Guard? - *if yes mark as a veteran and skip to the end*
  - c. Have you or a household member ever received benefits or medical care from a VA (veterans administration) center? - *if yes mark as a veteran and skip to the end*

**Thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate your help with this survey.**



# 2015 Point-in-Time Count for Schools (Spanish version)

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Gracias por aceptar participar en el 2015 Homeless Count Point-in-Time y en nuestro esfuerzo para incluir datos de la escuela McKinney-Vento en las estimaciones nacionales de la falta de vivienda. Sus esfuerzos son importantes y esenciales para ayudar a desarrollar una comprensión más completa de la falta de vivienda entre los niños y las familias.

## ¿Cuál es el punto en el tiempo de cuenta?

Todas las comunidades que reciben financiamiento federal para dar asistencia de vivienda y servicios para personas sin hogar a través de subvenciones de asistencia para personas sin hogar son requeridos por el Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano para llevar a cabo un recuento bienal de punto en el tiempo de las personas y familias sin hogar sin techo y protegidas. La cuenta debe ocurrir dentro de los últimos diez días de enero y todos los datos deben ser contados en noche (una sola "point-in-time").

## ¿Por qué el tiempo de cuenta importa?

Point-in-Time datos de recuento son los datos primarios utilizados para la asignación de fondos federales y las estimaciones nacionales de la falta de vivienda. Las cifras reportadas por su comunidad son utilizadas por el Consejo Estadounidense Inter-agencias sobre Personas sin Hogar (USICH) y todos los departamentos federales, incluyendo vivienda y educación. Contar números PIT también son más citadas por los planes estratégicos locales, estatales, del condado y de la ciudad gobierno y los medios de comunicación.

## ¿Por qué es importante su participación y sus datos para el punto en el tiempo de cuenta?

Estimaciones del Gobierno y organizaciones sin beneficio del número de jóvenes sin hogar varían ampliamente, de decenas de miles de personas a más de un millón. Nadie tiene una estimación precisa de la cantidad de niños y jóvenes están actualmente sin hogar. Sin saber el tamaño real de la población hace que sea difícil de medir el progreso en poner fin y prevenir la falta de vivienda.

Mientras cuentas de punto en el tiempo son utilizados por la mayoría de las agencias federales, han tradicionalmente subestimado el número de niños y familias sin hogar. Es la meta del 2015 la cuenta de punto en el tiempo para mejorar la recopilación de datos sobre los niños y las familias y desarrollar una serie conde sin hogar Point-in-Time que es aceptado por los distritos escolares, proveedores de servicios sin hogar y el gobierno federal.

## ¿Quién está incluido en el punto en el tiempo de cuenta?

Parte de la dificultad en el desarrollo de estas estimaciones es que los diferentes conteos utilizan diferentes rangos de edad y definiciones de la falta de vivienda. El punto en el tiempo de recuento se concentra en los niños menores de 18 años, así como los que existen entre las edades de 18 y 25, pero utiliza una definición muy estrecha de las personas sin hogar (categoría 1 de la definición Ley Hearth). Esto significa que sólo los estudiantes y miembros de la familia que residen en refugios públicos, vehículos, en la calle, o en lugares no destinados a la habitación humana pueden ser incluidos en el



conteo. Se excluye a los niños que viven en un alojamiento "doble", que representa aproximadamente el 70-90% del número de niños sin hogar típicamente reportados en CALPADS.

Con el fin de incluir a los jóvenes sin hogar identificado a través del COE, los distritos tendrán que verificar que cada estudiante estaba en la noche del Conde de punto en el tiempo. Muchos de los estudiantes identificados como personas sin hogar por el COE no se incluirán en el Conde de punto en el tiempo, ya que se quedan fuera de la definición estrecha de la falta de vivienda usada para la cuenta. Mientras que la mayoría de los estudiantes identificados por las escuelas están en una situación de doble plano, algunas dobles-ups como los que viven en garajes o sótanos no convertidos, dependencias u otros lugares no destinados para la habitación humana se pueden incluir en nuestra cuenta PIT. Los estudiantes y los miembros de la familia que residen en albergues comunitarios o en hoteles ya estarán incluidas en el PIT Cuenta a través de otros esfuerzos de alcance y por lo tanto no se incluirá a través de los datos del COE.

### ¿Cómo se puede contar y verificar la ubicación de los niños y las familias?

La Oficina de Educación del Condado está pidiendo a todos los distritos a contactar McKinney-Vento familias identificadas y estudiantes de los grados K-12 para verificar su lugar de residencia en las semanas posteriores al 22 de enero recuento. Le pedimos que registre información sobre cada miembro de las familias contactadas para el conteo. Entendemos que la lista de McKinney-Vento identificó los estudiantes pueden ser demasiado grandes para que te conectes con cada estudiante o del hogar durante este período de tiempo limitado. Si ese es el caso, se recomienda dar prioridad a la lista y ponerse en contacto con los hogares y las familias que tienen más probabilidades de cumplir con la definición de la cuenta de Point-in-Time de personas sin hogar en primer lugar. Estos serían los estudiantes que han sido identificados sin hogar, que viven en los coches / vehículos y los de otras categorías (ups dobles o albergues) que tienen altas tasas de absentismo escolar. También entendemos que cada distrito y cada escuela pueden tener una forma diferente de seguimiento de los estudiantes, por lo tanto sugerimos comenzar por mirar a los estudiantes en la base de datos CALPADS. Aquí hay algunos pasos sugeridos que han funcionado en otras comunidades:

1. Ejecute la lista de estudiantes en CALPADS por el distrito escolar y la escuela
2. Pida a cada distrito o escuela MV de Enlace para revisar la lista
  - a. Mira sus propios datos sobre los estudiantes identificados y confirmar individuos en la lista
  - b. Compruebe que los estudiantes están matriculados en la escuela
  - c. Mira a ver si hay estudiantes de la misma familia o del hogar para que la casa sólo se pone en contacto una vez

Una vez que estas listas se han completado, determinar quién se pondrá en contacto cada uno de los hogares (del personal del distrito, personal de la escuela, los voluntarios del distrito o pasantes) durante las dos últimas semanas de enero.

Le pedimos que utilice la siguiente secuencia de comandos y formulario de recogida de datos cuando se comunique con las familias y mantener un registro de lo que se utilizó la familia y número de teléfono para cada uno de los hogares registrados en los formularios de recogida de datos. Recomendamos anunciar esto como una encuesta sobre la vivienda McKinney-Vento en lugar de un "conteo sin hogar". Se proporciona un script de encuesta por su ayuda en la recopilación de datos; sin embargo usted y sus escuelas saben estos estudiantes y sus familias así que por favor alterar la introducción como mejor le parezca. También entendemos que esto es una conversación y las llamadas telefónicas no seguirán este



guion exactamente.

Por favor registre la información que se reúnen a partir de la encuesta en el formulario de recogida de datos. Va a registrar la información por los hogares, pero reunir información sobre todos los miembros del hogar. Si un niño está viviendo por su cuenta y que no vive con un adulto, todavía se contarán como un hogar.

Una vez que haya completado todas sus llamadas, le pedimos que nos envíe su información al COE. Pedimos que todos los datos de los gráficos sean devueltos al COE a más tardar el 20 de febrero de 2015. Le damos las gracias por su tiempo y esfuerzo. Sabemos que esto es una solicitud de consumir difícil y el tiempo; sin embargo estamos dedicados a la recogida de estos datos y aumentar la comprensión de nuestro condado de la juventud y la falta de vivienda familiar.



## 2015 Point-in-Time Count Survey Script (Spanish version)

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Hola mi nombre es \_\_\_\_\_. Estoy llamando en nombre de \_\_\_\_\_ (escuela, distrito o programa) y estamos haciendo una encuesta rápida para actualizar el estado de la vivienda de los estudiantes en nuestros programas. Si está bien con usted, nos gustaría hacerle un par de preguntas sobre dónde el que se encuentre y con las personas en su hogar.

Nuestros registros indican que usted / su hijo era \_\_\_\_\_ (estado actualmente cotizada).

Toda su información que proporcione será confidencial y sus respuestas a las preguntas que me hago hoy en día no le impedirán recibir cualquier tipo de asistencia o servicios que usted ya está recibiendo. De hecho, estas preguntas se le pide para apoyar mejor sus necesidades y mejorar el bienestar de nuestra comunidad.

Esta encuesta es parte de un esfuerzo nacional para comprender mejor y tratar con suerte desafíos de vivienda para estudiantes y familias. Nunca compartiremos su nombre, con cualquier otra organización y toda la información recogida serán reportados juntos para que nadie sepa cómo respondió. Sólo le tomará 2 o minutos. ¿Eso está bien con usted? O, ¿tiene alguna pregunta?

No: Muy bien, muchas gracias por su tiempo.

Sí: Buenísimo, vamos a empezar.

Voy a hacerle un par de preguntas sobre dónde se hospedó en la noche del jueves 22 de enero y un poco de información acerca de cada una de las personas en su hogar. Debido a que estas preguntas son parte de un estudio nacional, que puede sonar un poco gracioso o pueden ser confusos. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor siéntase libre para detenerme en cualquier momento. Si no desea responder las preguntas simplemente decir "pasar."

- 
13. ¿Dónde se quedara/quedo en la noche del 22 de enero? (Por favor, inserte el código siguiente en el formulario, si no está seguro, por favor escriba en una descripción del lugar donde se encuentre la persona) (Columna D)
- a. Afuera
    - i. En la calles
    - ii. El parque
    - iii. Un lugar de campamento
    - iv. Patio trasero
  - b. Un lugar en una casa ni se use para dormir (garaje no cubierto, cocina, pasillo, etc.)
    - c. Una estructura cobertizo o almacenamiento
    - d. Vehículo (Coche/Van/RV/Camper)
    - e. Homeless Shelter/Albergue o Vivienda de transición
      - i. Emergencia



## ii. Transición

- f. Motel/Hotel pagado por usted
- g. Motel/Hotel pagado por un proveedor o organización refugio
- h. Viviendo en un apartamento o casa con amigos o familiares
- i. Viviendo en un apartamento o casa propia

14. ¿En qué ciudad o área? **(Columna E)**
15. ¿Cuántas personas incluyéndolo a usted, en su hogar? (La familia incluye a todos los miembros de la familia que actualmente viven juntos. Esto puede incluir a personas no relacionadas, como socios o personas significativas. Una persona que vive sola también se considera un hogar, a pesar de que es un hogar de 1.) **(Columna F)**
16. *Son / fueron todos ellos viven con usted en la noche del 22 de enero? (Pídales que respondan las siguientes preguntas sobre sólo los que viven con ellos en la noche del recuento*
17. ¿Cuáles son las edades de cada una de esas personas? (Tenga en cuenta: los jóvenes no acompañados que viven solos o con un hermano debe ser considerado un hogar independiente a efectos de información) **(Columna H)**
18. Voy a preguntarle sobre el sexo de los miembros de su grupo familiar. Me pregunto cuántas personas en cada grupo de edad son de sexo masculino, femenino o transgénero. En primer lugar, pensar en la edad las personas menores de edad 0-17 en su hogar...
- a. ¿Cuántos son hombres? **(Columna I)**
  - b. ¿Cuántos son mujeres? **(Columna J)**
  - c. ¿Cuántos son transexuales? (hombre a mujer o de mujer a hombre) **(Columna K o L)**
19. Ahora, pensando en la edad 18 -24 personas en su hogar ....
- a. ¿Cuántos son hombres? **(Columna I)**
  - b. ¿Cuántos son mujeres? **(Columna J)**
  - c. ¿Cuántos son transexuales? (hombre a mujer o de mujer a hombre) **(Columna K o L)**
20. De acuerdo, ahora pensando en el 25 años y más personas en su hogar ....
- a. ¿Cuántos son hombres? **(Columna I)**
  - b. ¿Cuántos son mujeres? **(Columna J)**
  - c. ¿Cuántos son transexuales? (hombre a mujer o de mujer a hombre) **(Columna K o L)**
21. Ahora le voy a preguntar acerca de la raza y el origen étnico de los miembros de su grupo familiar. En primer lugar voy a preguntar si se identifican como hispanos o latinos y luego voy a preguntar cómo identificar su raza. Voy a preguntar acerca de personas en cada grupo de edad, al igual que antes. Pensando en la edad las personas menores de edad 0-17 en su casa ....
- a. ¿Cuántas se consideran hispano o latino? **(Columna N)**
  - b. ¿Cuántas se consideran no hispano o latino? **(Columna O)**
  - 
  - s. ¿Cuántas se consideran Blanca? **(Columna P)**
  - t. ¿Negro o afroamericano? **(Columna Q)**
  - u. ¿Asiático? **(Columna R)**
  - v. ¿Nativo de Hawái o de las islas del Pacífico? **(Columna S)**
  - w. ¿Indio americano o nativo de Alaska? **(Columna T)**
  - x. ¿Otro? **(Columna U)**
22. Ahora, pensando en la edad 18 -24 personas en su hogar ....

- a. ¿Cuántas se consideran hispano o latino? **(Columna N)**  
 b. ¿Cuántas se consideran no hispano o latino? **(Columna O)**  
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 y. ¿Cuántas se consideran Blanca? **(Columna P)**  
 z. ¿Negro o afroamericano? **(Columna Q)**  
 aa. ¿Asiático? **(Columna R)**  
 bb. ¿Nativo de Hawái o de las islas del Pacífico? **(Columna S)**  
 cc. ¿Indio americano o nativo de Alaska? **(Columna T)**  
 dd. ¿Otro? **(Columna U)**
23. Bien, ahora pensando en el 25 años o más personas en su hogar....  
 a. ¿Cuántas se consideran hispano o latino? **(Columna N)**  
 b. ¿Cuántas se consideran no hispano o latino? **(Columna O)**  
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 ee. ¿Cuántas se consideran Blanca? **(Columna P)**  
 ff. ¿Negro o afroamericano? **(Columna Q)**  
 gg. ¿Asiático? **(Columna R)**  
 hh. ¿Nativo de Hawái o de las islas del Pacífico? **(Columna S)**  
 ii. ¿Indio americano o nativo de Alaska? **(Columna T)**  
 jj. ¿Otro? **(Columna U)**
24. Gran, tengo una última serie de preguntas acerca de los servicios militares. **(Columna V)**  
 a. ¿Usted o un miembro de la casa servido en las fuerzas armadas de Estados Unidos? (Ejército, Armada, Fuerza Aérea o infantes de marina) - *en caso afirmativo marca como un veterano y pase a la final*  
 b. ¿Fue usted o un miembro de la casa a ver llamado a servicio activo como Reservista o Guardia Nacional? - *Si marca sí como un veterano y pasar a la final*  
 c. ¿Usted o un miembro de la familia nunca recibió beneficios o atención médica de un (Administración de Veteranos) Centro de VA? - *Si marca sí como un veterano y pasar a la final*

**Muchas gracias por su tiempo. Realmente apreciamos su ayuda con esta encuesta.**





**For all inquiries, please contact:**

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