

2007 Santa Clara County Homeless Count

Street Count FAQ

Thank you for your interest and participation in the 2007 Santa Clara County Homeless Street Count. Please read the following guidelines before beginning the street count.

1. What is the definition of “homelessness?”

1. An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and
2. An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
 - (a) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), or
 - (b) An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
 - (c) A public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

This means that a person must satisfy **both** conditions 1 and 2 above.

2. Are payments to the Street Count Workers made in cash?

Homeless Street Count Takers are paid in cash. They are paid \$20 for attending the training session, and are paid \$10 per hour for working the census. All cash payments are made when the street count is complete. Homeless and volunteer Street Count Workers are also reimbursed for their mileage.

3. What information will be gathered by the street count?

Under the direction of Team Captains, Street Count Workers will do a count of homeless people that they observe, doing their best to observe the age and gender, if possible.

4. If trained homeless workers show up on time at the deployment center on Census Day, are they paid?

Yes. Street Count Workers who have attended the training and who show up on time at a Deployment Site on Census Day will be paid \$20 for showing up and having attended the training.

5. Do Street Count Workers ask questions of the homeless persons?

No. Street Count Workers are asked to observe only, and not to approach or engage in conversation of any sort. If Street Count Workers observe people sleeping in a car or shed, but cannot observe the number, age, or gender, they are asked to make a notation on their census Tally Sheet.

6. Are the Street Count Workers supposed to count as many people as possible?

The Street Count Workers are asked to be as accurate as possible, without overcounting or undercounting. Please count every person you directly observe.

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7. How will the Street Count Workers do the count?

Street Count Workers will be deployed in teams of two, in one vehicle, with one cell phone. The teams consist of one homeless worker who is familiar with the deployment area, and one volunteer. They will drive to their assigned area, and walk the streets on foot, moving from one neighborhood to another by car. When they observe homeless persons, the team should record the information on the Tally Sheet.

8. Will every homeless person be counted?

No. It is impossible for us to count every person who fits the description of “homeless” as defined above. There is no way, through this methodology, for us to know of families sharing living quarters, or people sleeping in garages or sheds, etc. However, we will rely on the numbers that are actually observed, and will be able to make estimations of an annualized population based on that information.

9. How do we know if someone is homeless?

A common understanding of the appearance of a homeless person will serve to be the visual indicator. For example, if a person looks as though they are wearing many layers of clothes, is in poor hygiene, and seems to be loitering, it may be commonly understood that that person may be homeless.

10. Will the census results be available to all?

Yes, in the spring of 2007, through the Santa Clara County Office of Affordable Housing.

11. When will the street count take place?

The street count will be conducted on January 29-30, 2007.