**The Guide to the Youth Count for**

**Connecticut Colleges and Universities**

The Connecticut Coalition To End Homelessness

December 4 2017

What is the Youth Count?

Youth and young adults are a particularly difficult population of homeless to identify. They are less likely to self-identify or seek out services. Connecticut and CCEH have been working to call attention and resources to this population and the Youth Count is an important element of this effort. The Youth Count is a statewide, volunteer driven effort that uses an application-based survey at targeted sites and with a comprehensive consideration of geography to capture data on youth ages 13-24 regarding their housing status currently and over the last year. The 2018 Youth Count is building on the momentum and successes of our efforts to better understand this vulnerable population through counts in 2015 and 2017. The goal is to use data from the Youth Count to steer efforts to end youth homelessness by 2020.

Youth Engagement Team Initiatives (YETIs) have been and continue to be a driving force behind the Youth Count. Regional YETIs formed to bring together stakeholders in communities statewide such as schools, Department of Children and Families, local government, housing providers and youth serving agencies. The coordination and broad participation of these groups is a vital element for the success of the 2018 Youth Count.

The 2018 CT Youth Count will take place from January 24-30, 2018 directly following the night of the annual [**Point-in-Time Count**](http://cceh.org/pit/ct-pit-2017/). While the survey is administered throughout the week to youth and young adults below the age of 25 (13-24), the data collected measures the homelessness on the single night of January 24th.

The application-based survey was created to collect data on two main components: information about an individual’s housing status and the HUD required information regarding demographics and homeless status. A partnership with Microsoft and Nutmeg Consulting, L.L.C. allowed the survey to be created. The survey is easily downloaded onto a phone or tablet.

Methods for Counting

YETIs implement several strategies for the Youth Count to reach as many young people as possible. Each of the following strategies is an important element for the Youth Count and is also an essential step in community engagement, awareness and education, and partnership building for our stakeholder groups.

**School Engagement**

Each YETI should work to engage McKinney-Vento Liaisons, principals, and schools to be on their team for long-term work to end youth homelessness in that region. McKinney-Vento Liaisons are responsible for connecting homeless youth to resources in their area and can be a gateway into school systems.

The purpose of engaging schools is to increase awareness among youth and young adults to encourage them to be counted as well as volunteer. For schools, we have developed a school engagement packet which includes materials to introduce the Youth Count and elaborate on the different levels of involvement.

**Come and Be Counted Locations**

A Come and Be Counted location is a place where volunteers are stationed for a certain time to administer the Youth Count survey to youth and young adults that present themselves. These locations can be places outside of schools or near community centers that are advertised through communications materials within schools or at key locations where unstably housed youth may gather.

Examples include libraries with youth service departments, coffee shops or food locations near high schools or community colleges.

**To set up one of these locations:**

* **Consider the target population you are hoping to engage when determining the location.**

*Remember that homeless and unstably housed youth often hang out where other youth in the community are going. Generally, this includes coffee shops and other public locations with wifi.*

* **Utilize the perspectives of youth and young adults** to determine effective locations, potential incentives to increase participation, and strategies to engage youth and young adults.

*Be creative! Some regions are offering headphones and gift cards to local hang-outs. Be aware that youth are the best sources of information on what their peer group might like.*

* As the count will be at the end of January,**indoor locations may be preferable.**

*While indoor locations may be most popular, be aware that some outdoor locations such as Skateparks and ice rinks may be populated as well.*

* **Businesses or nonprofits should be informed that the survey is being administered**.

*This is especially true if the event is being advertised and students or youth are being directed to these locations. Make sure that if you are offering food as an incentive the organization is aware and has given approval.*

* Advertise to the target population where the location is and when volunteers are available.

**Organizational Connections**

Organizations which have the staff and capacity to administer the youth count survey without the presence of volunteers can be locations where youth can be directed throughout the week. These locations are important to strengthen connections in local communities and are an opportunity to build relationships for future efforts to end youth homelessness in Connecticut.

To set up one of these locations:

* **Determine which locations will have access to connections with youth and young adults experiencing housing instability.**

*Examples may include health clinics, libraries, community centers, youth service bureaus, and counseling centers.*

* **Engage these locations personally with information on why the Youth Count is important and the effect of data on obtaining resources for these youth and young adults.**

*Click*[***here***](http://cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/How-to-volunteer.pdf)*for a flyer that can be used to elaborate on the Youth Count to prospective partner organizations.*

* **Train staff at the locations to administer the survey.**

*All volunteers or staff who will be administering the survey must be trained in-person before participating. Contact****training@cceh.org****to be connected to your Youth Engagement Team Initiative leader or if you are having trouble reaching them. Make sure that they have a contact information for troubleshooting throughout the week.*

**Hotspots**

Hotspots are indoor or outdoor locations where youth and young adults tend to congregate and can be engaged for the Youth Count. These are locations where volunteers will need to be deployed to outreach during the survey.

**To prepare to survey hotspots in the Youth Count:**

* Determine at least one hotspot in each town or community. Youth and young adults with lived experience are essential to determining the most effective survey hotspots as well as the best time to outreach.
* Map these locations with the Youth Engagement Team Initiatives through the regional Google Maps that they maintain to track these locations and determine where teams of volunteers are necessary.
* Train and organize volunteers into teams to outreach and administer the survey at those locations.

For access to your region’s 2018 CT Youth Count! map of hotspots, organizations, and schools please email **training@cceh.org**.

Coordinated Access Network Region Breakdown: Town List

**Fairfield County**

New Milford Easton Stamford

Sherman Fairfield Darien

New Fairfield Bridgeport Greenwich

Brookfield Weston Bridgewater

Danbury Redding Roxbury

Bethel Ridgefield Cos Cob

Newtown Wilton

Monroe Westport

Stratford New Canaan

Trumbull Norwalk

**Greater New Haven**

Shelton Derby West Haven

Milford Orange New Haven

Oxford Woodbridge Branford

Beacon Falls Madison North Branford

Bethany Hamden Guilford

Seymour North Haven

Ansonia East Haven

**Middletown, Meriden, Wallingford**

 Meriden Portland Killingworth

 Wallingford East Hampton Deep River

 Middlefield Haddam Essex

 Middletown East Haddam Old Saybrook

 Cromwell Chester Westbrook

 Durham Clinton

**Southeast**

 Colchester Griswold Bozrah

 Lebanon Voluntown Salem

 Franklin North Stonington Montville

 Sprague Preston Ledyard

 Lisbon Norwich Stonington

 Groton Old Lyme Lyme

 Waterford Mystic

 East Lyme New London

**Northeast**

 Thompson Woodstock Union

 Putnam Eastford Coventry

 Killingly Hampton Columbia

 Sterling Brooklyn Danielson

 Plainfield Scotland Willimantic

 Canterbury Ashford Willington

 Brooklyn Chaplin Mansfield

 Pomfret Windham

**Central**

 Bristol New Britain Southington

 Plainville Berlin

**Greater Hartford**

 Stafford Glastonbury East Granby

 Tolland Manchester Granby

 Ellington Rocky Hill Simsbury

 Somers Wethersfield Bloomfield

 Enfield Newington West Hartford

 East Windsor Hartford Avon

 Vernon East Hartford Rockville

 Bolton South Windsor Farmington

 Andover Windsor Canton

 Hebron Suffield

 Marlborough Windsor Locks

**Torrington/Litchfield**

 Hartland Morris Cheshire

 Barkhamsted Litchfield Prospect

 New Hartford Torrington Naugatuck

 Harwinton Goshen Middlebury

 Plymouth Cornwall Colebrook

 Thomaston Sharon North Canaan

 Watertown Canaan Southbury

 Woodbury Norfolk Waterbury

 Bethlehem Winchester Washington

 Kent Salisbury Wolcott

 Warren Burlington

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|  **Train the Trainer Dates and Locations statewide**Monday January 8 1-4 pm *Greater Hartford* YETI at the Lumsden CenterTuesday January 9 1-4 pm *Greater New Haven* YETI at the United Way of Greater New HavenWednesday January 10 9-12 am *Meriden, Middlesex, Wallingford* YETI at the Women and Families Shelter in Meriden. Wednesday January 10, 1-4 pm for the *Central* YETI at the New Britain LibraryThursday January 11 9-12 pm *Northeast* at the Windham City Hall. Thursday January 11, 1-4 pm in the *Southeast* at the United Way of Southeastern CTFriday January 12, 9-12 pm *Waterbury and Litchfield* at the United Way of Waterbury. 1-4 pm *Fairfield* at the Norwalk City Hall. |

**Questions to Guide Youth Counts:**

1. Which faculty or staff member is going to be the lead for the Youth Count?
2. How will this lead person recruit volunteers to conduct the Youth Count?
3. What other faculty or staff could assist in this project or other efforts related to ending student homelessness? What will their roles be? How will you enlist their help and keep them engaged?
4. Which active student groups will be most likely to volunteer and help with this Youth Count?
5. What locations on campus are students experiencing homelessness or housing instability most likely to frequent? (Helpful to make a list of “hot spots” such as the library, student center, cafeteria, food pantry, parking lot, etc.)
6. What time of the day are these students most likely to be in these locations?
7. How do you plan to have your survey volunteers staffing these locations during the Youth Count?
8. What incentives can offer students to encourage them to take the survey?
9. If a student identifies him/herself as homeless, what existing protocols are in place linking this student to available services?
10. Who will be responsible for training your volunteers? (The CT Coalition to End Homelessness will provide a train-the-trainer training on how to use the app, conduct survey, engage students)
11. What will your schedule look like for the week of the Youth Count January 24-31?
12. How will you market the Youth Count effort and also raise awareness about the issue of homelessness?