

# Volunteer Training Protocol



**Overview:** The Volunteer Training Protocol accompanies the Volunteer Training Presentation, outlining the key components of conducting the youth count at Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations. This training can be conducted in person or as a webinar.

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of the training, participants will know how to conduct the Brief Youth Survey.

**Staffing Requirements:** 1 facilitator for groups of 15 or fewer; 2 facilitators for larger groups.

**Meeting Length:** The training will take between 10 minutes and one hour depending on the size of the group.

**Recommended Materials:** Sign-in sheets, name tags, training presentations, and sample surveys.

## **Room Preparation:**

- Arrange room in small circle/horseshoe or combine tables.
- Pass out sign in sheets, pens, and blank sheets of paper.

## Introductory Remarks (Slides 1-2)

*Thank you for participating in this training about being a volunteer for the youth count. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be walking you through the youth count activities.*

**Agenda (Slide 2):** *During this training, we will go through the process for the youth count at Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations. Then, we will outline each role in the process, review how we collect the data, and what our protocols look like. Then we will talk about what we need to do next.*

## Administering the Survey (Slides 3-7)

**Who will we survey? (Slide 3):** *The youth we will be surveying are unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability who are between the ages of 13 and 25. They may be living on the street, in shelters, in housing programs, or be doubled up, couch surfing, staying in hotels/motels, living in cars, or involved in the sex trade. While they cannot be living with their own parents, they may themselves be parenting.*

*We will be surveying all youth within the community on the day and night of the count. We know we will end up counting some youth who are from other communities, and that there will be some youth from here who are not in the community on the day of the youth count.*

**What will you be doing? (Slide 4):** *As a volunteer, you are a vital part of the youth count team. You will be going to Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations, such as shelters, transitional living programs, drop-in centers, youth-serving agencies, and community locations.*

*You will be completing surveys with youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability who come to the location to access services, or who have come to the location to complete a survey.*

*If any youth walk away, do not follow them.*

*We will be providing you with all of the materials you need to complete the survey—copies of the survey, gift cards, and pens or pencils.*

**What will you be asking? (Slide 5):** *In the survey, you will be asking youth for birth date and initials, never a name or other identifying information. We collect this information solely for the purpose of later checking for duplicate surveys. You will also be asking about their current living situation, demographic characteristics, history of foster care, history of detention or jail, if they are currently pregnant or parenting, and their current school and employment status. For every question you ask, youth can choose to refuse to answer or to respond “don’t know.”*

**What do youth get? (Slide 6):** *Each youth who answers at least the first five questions will receive a \$5 gift card (we want them to answer all of the questions if possible). They can only receive one gift card during the youth count. The gift cards were chosen based on feedback from the young people who participated in the focus groups.*

**What will the process look like? (Slide 7):** *When you approach a young person, read the consent statement on top of the survey and obtain consent. The youth must verbally agree, saying si or yes, before you conduct the survey. If a youth refuses, bubble the refusal box, thank them, do NOT give them a gift card, and move on to the next person. If the youth consents, bubble the “yes” box and move on to the next step.*

*Read the questions aloud in English or Spanish if the youth agrees to take the survey. Skip any questions youth do not want to answer, and repeat each question only once.*

*When you have finished the survey, thank the youth, give the youth one gift card, and place completed surveys into an envelope. You may need to return the surveys to the youth count deployment site, or a youth count team member will come and pick them up from you. This varies based on site, and will be determined when you sign up to volunteer.*

## What Ifs (Slides 8-9)

*If a youth wants to take the survey again, they cannot.*

*If they walk away or stop responding in the middle of the survey, check “refused to answer” for the rest of the questions and place the survey into the envelope.*

*If a youth feels uncomfortable about answering a question, remind them that they can skip any question they do not want to answer—check the “refused to answer” option and move on to the next question.*

*If a youth does not respond to a question, repeat the question once, and then move on if there is still no response.*

*If a youth gets upset or emotional while taking the survey, offer the youth a resource list. Contact the Team Captain if you have any questions or if you are unsure what to do.*

## The Survey (Slide 10)

*Let’s take a look at the Brief Youth Survey. It is a scannable form so you will need to bubble in the responses to the questions. The questions are organized in a specific order; please read the questions in the order listed. Make note of any questions the youth refuses to answer.*

## Important Reminders (Slides 12-13)

**Voluntary Participation (Slide 12):** *All participation in the youth count is completely voluntary. You must read the consent statement in full for each youth you approach to take the Brief Youth Survey. You must get a verbal consent (yes or si) before continuing with the survey questions.*

*Do not pressure a youth to take the survey or answer any questions the youth chooses not to answer.*

**Respect Privacy (Slide 13):** *Respecting the privacy of the youth we count and survey is of utmost importance. Thus, the Brief Youth Surveys should be completed at a safe distance from others to ensure privacy.*

*Place each Brief Youth Survey in an envelope immediately after it is completed, and never leave the completed surveys unattended or visible.*

*Return all blank and partially completed surveys. Please do NOT throw away ANY surveys.*

*Seal the envelope when you are done in the provider or community location. This helps ensure that we know where the surveys came from.*

*Inform the Team Captain right away if any materials are lost or stolen.*

## Thank You and Next Steps (Slide 14)

*Thank you again for volunteering to help with the youth count. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the process when you receive your materials. In some instances, this will mean coming to a deployment site, and in others, the youth count team will bring them to you. If you are unsure what is going to happen, please contact **NAME**.*

*Thank you.*