

# Focus Group Planning

## Meeting Annotated Agenda



The Focus Group Planning Meeting finalizes plans for the youth and provider focus groups with the goal of ensuring they involve a diverse array of youth (i.e., youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability with diverse backgrounds and experiences) and service providers/other adults (i.e., those who come into contact with both youth experiencing homelessness as well as housing instability). The Focus Group Planning Meeting will also confirm times and locations for the focus groups so that each focus group maximizes diverse participation.

The meeting should occur at least two weeks, if possible, before the focus groups to allow sufficient time for recruitment for the focus groups. This annotated agenda can be used to facilitate the meeting. This meeting will last approximately 90 minutes.

The Focus Group Planning Worksheet should be updated live to reflect the Stakeholder Team's decisions, using a screen or white board so that notes are visible to the attendees. Information in the meeting will build from what has come before and people will need to be able to reference it.

### Recommended materials

- Pre-populated Focus Group Planning Worksheet with Leadership Team recommendations, including:
  - List of service providers working with homeless and unstably housed youth
  - List of subpopulations of youth in the community
  - Schedule and locations for focus groups
- Maps of the geographic area of the youth count, with key provider locations identified

### Supplemental materials for in-person meeting

- Large post-it notes/white board/other space to write
- Name tags

### Supplemental materials for video/conference call

- Virtual meeting platform or teleconference option

## Agenda and Annotation

**Welcome and Introductions** **5 minutes**

**Meeting Objectives** **5 minutes**

- Review why to hold a youth count
- Review overall plan for the youth count
- Understand the focus group process
- Plan focus group logistics
- Create focus group recruitment plan

**Why Conduct a Youth Count?** **5 minutes**

Review why you are holding a youth count and what you hope to accomplish with the information that will be collected.

People may ask why counting youth requires a separate approach.

- Counting unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability using the same approach used to count adults and families experiencing homelessness is not effective.
- Using a distinct approach to count youth will more accurately determine how many youth are experiencing homelessness and housing instability.
- It is important to have accurate data about this population to inform program and policy decisions necessary to end youth homelessness.

**Review the Youth Count Logistics** **15 minutes**

Review the decisions made during the Initial Leadership Team Meeting, including who will be counted, where to count, methods for counting, the decisions for the survey tool, and the timeline for the youth count.

Ask the Stakeholder Team for questions and feedback about the decisions.

**Youth Voice in the Youth Count** **15 minutes**

Discuss the role of youth in planning and conducting the youth count. Review the important, central role that youth play in conducting a successful youth count. Review the decisions made by the Leadership Team about youth compensation.

Discuss what other steps can be taken to ensure that youth voice is at the center of the youth count, including how to best support youth to participate and how to ensure that a diverse group of youth are involved.

## Overview of Focus Groups

5 minutes

Review the main purpose of the focus groups: to gather information on “hot spots,” locations where unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability spend time.

During the focus groups, youth and providers will complete a mapping exercise, identifying:

- Where: locations where youth spend time
- Who: what groups of youth spend time in each location
- How many: number of youth are likely to be found
- When: what times of day are youth at each location

This information will help guide the Street Count. Focus group participants will also provide guidance on which organizations to partner with for the Organizational Count, where to hold the Come and Be Counted Locations, and how to spread the word about the youth count.

There will be separate focus groups for youth and providers. This is intended to make it more comfortable for youth to share information about locations where they and their peers may be found.

Focus groups will last 90 minutes and should include 8-10 youth for each youth focus group and 10-15 providers for the provider focus group. Focus groups will be facilitated by 2-3 people depending on the number of participants anticipated, with one person mapping the locations and taking notes and the other person(s) facilitating the conversation.

Remind the group about payment or other compensation being offered for youth who participate in the focus groups.

## Review the Focus Group Plan

5 minutes

Review the Leadership Team’s suggested plan for the focus groups, which is reflected in the pre-populated Focus Group Planning Worksheet:

- Review the suggested number of focus groups
- Discuss why the number of focus groups was selected
- Review the schedule of focus groups and proposed locations and make any needed adjustments
- Identify who will be responsible for reserving space for the focus groups

Discuss what to do if too many youth show up for the focus groups. Some possible solutions include: paying youth some amount of money who show up but don’t participate, holding additional focus groups last minute, or asking youth to leave.

At the conclusion of this discussion, there should be a finalized schedule of focus groups, including dates, times and locations, and a point person in charge of finalizing the space.

**Tip:** Have the map of the community displayed, with local providers indicated on the map, to help the group think through where to hold the focus groups.

### Develop Youth Recruitment Plan

15 minutes

Have the Stakeholder Team review the pre-populated list of providers on the Focus Group Planning Worksheet and ensure that no one is missing from the list. Develop a recruitment plan for the youth focus groups, identifying goals for each provider and determining which focus groups the youth will attend.

**Tip:** Plan to over-recruit for each focus group in case some people do not show up last minute.

Document how many youth each provider will be recruiting and what subpopulation of youth they represent. After going through all of the providers, review the list of subpopulations of youth to make sure that they are all represented in the focus group targets. Be particularly attentive to the diversity of age and housing experiences.

If any providers are not in attendance at the meeting, identify who will contact the provider(s) about the focus group plan and youth recruitment. Indicate this information on the shared notes so that it is clear who is responsible for follow up.

### Develop Provider Recruitment Plan

10 minutes

Review the list of providers and other stakeholders who have knowledge of where youth spend time.

**Tip:** Outreach workers and case managers are often the most knowledgeable about where youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability spend time. Police officers, representatives from business improvement districts and outreach staff who work with the chronically homeless often know where youth are (or are not) based on their work.

Review the list of providers and ask:

- Will this organization have insight into where youth spend time outside of their facilities?
- Who at the organization is best positioned to know where youth spend time?
- Are organizations missing from the lists?

**Note:** There may be different providers who should attend the provider focus group than those helping with the youth recruitment.

### Finalize Focus Group Facilitation Plan

5 minutes

Review the Leadership Team's suggestions of facilitators and make adjustments as needed.

**Tip:** While different people can facilitate each conversation, it can be helpful to have the same team run all of the focus groups, so that they can clarify any potentially conflicting information received from multiple groups.

**Next Steps****5 minutes**

Review the next steps:

- Who is reaching out to other providers?
- Who is recruiting youth?
- Who is scheduling focus groups?
- Who is facilitating focus groups?

Following the meeting, the Leadership Team should review all of the notes to make sure nothing is missing and then prepare the Focus Group Recruitment Plan Template (Phase 2, Step 2) to share with the Stakeholder Team.