

Guide Training Protocol



Overview: The Guide Training Protocol accompanies the Guide Training Presentation, outlining the role of Guides in the youth count. This training should be conducted in person.

Objectives: At the conclusion of the training, participants will know how to:

- ✓ Fill out the Tally Sheet
- ✓ Conduct the Brief Youth Survey
- ✓ Assess safety and reduce risk

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

Meeting Length: The training will take between 45-90 minutes depending on the size of the group.

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

Room Preparation:

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

Introductory Remarks (Slides 1-3)

Welcome, my name is _____. Thank you for participating in the youth count.

Introductions (Slide 1): *Let's go around the room and all introduce ourselves. Please let us know your name and anything else you'd like us to know about you.*

What is a youth count and why do one? (Slide 2): *A youth count is a one-day census of young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. For our count, we will be focusing on youth ages 13-25. The information you help us collect will help improve advocacy efforts so we can get more services and more funding to help young people. We will also use the information to make sure that the types of services young people need are available in the locations they need them.*

Why are youth important? (Slide 3): *You, the Guides, are the most important people helping to conduct the youth count. Some of you may have participated in a focus group to plan the youth count—your expertise on locations where young people may be is so important if we are going to get an accurate count. We also hope that many youth will understand and feel more comfortable talking to you than they would to a Team Leader.*

Roles and Responsibilities (Slides 4-6)

Role of the Guide (Slide 4): *Let's talk about what you will be doing during the youth count. You will be part of a team with other Guides and 1-2 Team Leaders. Together, you will go to a specific area to count and survey youth. You will be paid \$10/hour for your time, including the training and check in and check out.*

Role of the Team Leader (Slide 5): *The Team Leader is a key member of the team. Team Leaders are getting a similar training so they know what you will be doing, but their job is to be your support. They will help carry the extra supplies, keep the paperwork organized so you can work, and they will be there in case someone is uncomfortable talking to a peer or is in need of assistance. They can also answer questions you may have. Your team should always stay together in case someone gets upset while taking the survey or someone needs help. Let your Team Leader know if there are any other places you think you should go that are not on your list.*

Team Assignments (Slide 6): *Each team will get a packet (hold up packet to reference) with a map and a list of locations. These may be outdoor locations, like intersections or parks, or may be indoor locations, like a library. The hot spots in your area will be marked on your map, and you will also have a list of all of them. The list will also have information on each location, like the best time to visit, what to look for, and exactly where to go, if available. You will go to all of the places marked on your map, as well as any other locations within your map area that you know of where people might be hanging out. Please do not go outside of your marked area as there will be teams going to other parts of the community.*

Your safety is the most important part of this process, so if a hot spot makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or is inaccessible in anyway, please leave. Mark the spot on the map and let us know when you come back to check in.

Take a break and ask if there are any questions.

Materials (Slide 7)

You will have a number of supplies, which include:

- Clipboard and pencil – for you to hold the Tally Sheets and surveys
- Tally sheets – to conduct the count
- Surveys – for surveying
- Envelopes – to store and seal completed surveys
- Gift cards – to give to each person that completes the survey
- An ID badge
- Resource list –in case someone asks about services

How to Conduct the Count (Slides 8-13)

The next set of slides is very detailed but we want to be sure you know what to do during the youth count. The directions for using the Tally Sheets and surveys are very specific. We want to ensure everyone's safety, as well as an accurate count. Let's talk about how we actually count.

Who and How to Count (Slide 8): Teams will work together to count the youth they see in hot spot locations. Not all youth look the same and it may be difficult to determine if a youth should be counted. Work with your team to decide who to tally and/or approach. One person should be in charge of recording the information on the Tally Sheet, while the other Guides will help them to identify how many youth to include and details on age, gender, location and appearance.

To perform the count, you will use a Tally Sheet to record information about any youth at the hot spot who appears to be BOTH homeless or unstably housed AND aged 13 through 25. For each youth, you will fill in information on the Tally Sheet, using a different row per youth. All of this information should be recorded based on your observation. You will likely end up making some mistakes, but that is ok. Do not go back and correct anything on the Tally Sheet, even if you later learn that you were wrong about someone's age or other characteristics.

Anyone that you plan to ask to do a survey should be counted on the Tally Sheet.

Trainer should give an example of how they would be counted on the Tally Sheet—If you were counting me and I looked within our target age range, how would you describe me on the Tally Sheet? What gender would you indicate? What race would you indicate? What is a defining characteristic about me that you would include, such as what I am wearing? This information helps us clean up the data in case someone ends up being counted twice.

Now, let's practice by counting the person sitting next to you.

Every time you get to a new area, you will first start by doing the visual count. You will not approach anyone right away—you will first observe all the people in each hot spot and make your best guess of how to count them on the Tally Sheet. Only once you have done that should you start the next step--the survey.

Take a break and ask if there are any questions

Who will you survey and how? (Slide 9): After your team has counted all of the youth in an area, you will approach those same youth and ask them to complete the brief youth survey. If any youth who were counted leave the area or go into a building, do not follow them. Assume that means they do not want to do a survey. There may also be young people who you count who you do not feel comfortable approaching. Safety is our first concern and you should not approach anyone if you feel uncomfortable doing so.

What will you be asking about? (Slide 10): In the brief youth survey, you will be asking for birth date and initials, but never a name. You will also be asking about 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.

What do youth get? (Slide 11): *Each youth that completes the survey (through question 5) will receive a gift card. Youth can only take the survey once.*

What does the survey process look like? (Slide 12 and 13):

Step 1: You will screen to determine whether or not to approach each youth. Never approach someone who is sleeping, working, too inebriated, or cannot be seen.

Step 2: Read the consent statement on top of the survey and obtain consent. You have to read the full text of the consent before doing the survey. It can be awkward to jump right into reading the consent, so you can start by asking if the person wants to take the survey. If they agree, then let them know you have to read the consent statement before you do the survey. Each youth has to verbally agree to take the survey before you go on to asking any questions. If they say yes, make sure to mark the yes bubble on the survey and then move on to the rest of the questions.

If a youth refuses, bubble the refusal box, thank them, DO NOT give them a gift card, and move on to the next person.

Step 3: Read the questions aloud in English or Spanish if the youth agreed to take the survey.

One of the first questions you will ask is whether the youth has already completed a survey with someone with a badge like this (hold up the badge). If they say yes, do not do the survey again. Thank them for their time and let them know they are not allowed to take the survey again.

You will then ask the youth their age. If they are older than 25 or younger than 13, they are not eligible to complete the survey. If they are too young or too old, thank them for their time and let them know they are not allowed to take the survey.

Skip any questions youth do not want to answer, and if the youth does not answer right away, repeat the question, but only one time.

Step 4: Thank the youth, give the youth one gift card and return it to the Team Leader.

When your team is finished with all the surveys in the location, you will go back to the Tally Sheet and try to see who you were able to complete surveys with. You will mark “completed survey” next to their row on the Tally Sheet. Do not worry if you do not know for certain, just do your best. Do not make any changes to the Tally Sheet except to mark that a survey was completed.

What Ifs (Slides 14-15)

If a youth wants to take the survey again, they cannot. So if they say they have already done a survey, do not continue doing it. 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 is uncomfortable answering a question, they can skip it—mark refused to answer for any question a young person does not want to answer. If a youth does not respond to a question, you should 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, alert your Team Leader, who will provide the youth with a resource list.

Practice (Slide 16)

Please pair up and practice conducting the survey. It can be hard to conduct the survey when you are out there, so we would like you to each practice conducting the survey before you leave. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Take a break and ask if there are any questions

Important Reminders (Slides 18-21)

Voluntary Participation (Slide 18): *All participation in the youth count is completely voluntary.*

When you are doing the count, you should not be talking to anyone. Instead, as a team, use your best judgement to count everyone in the area and fill out the Tally Sheet. When in doubt, include the person in the count. Remember that once a Tally Sheet is completed, it should not be changed, even if you learn during the survey that someone should not have been included.

You must read the consent statement in full for each youth you approach to take the brief youth survey and get a verbal response.

Never pressure a youth to take the survey or answer any questions the youth chooses not to answer.

Respect Privacy (Slide 19 and 20): *Respecting the privacy of the youth you count and survey is of utmost importance. Thus, the brief youth surveys should be completed at a safe distance from others to ensure privacy.*

NEVER talk with anyone except your team members about the youth you encounter or the surveys. Talk to your Team Leader if you have any questions about a survey.

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.

Inform your Team Leader right away if any materials are lost or stolen.

Ensure Safety (Slide 21): *Safety is another vital component of the youth count. We want to make sure you are safe at all times.*

Please stay close to your team at all times. Make sure everyone is surveying in safe, public places only.

Be aware of your surroundings. Try to stay within eyesight of your team members when you can. If you feel uncomfortable in any way, walk directly to your Team Leader and let them know. If you start to feel

unsafe, stop the survey you are doing and walk away. If it will help, give out a gift card even if the youth has not finished the survey.

If you are worried about the safety or well-being of a youth you are talking to, please let your Team Leader know. They can provide the youth a resource list, and contact us (the Team Captains) immediately. Dial 911 if it is an emergency.

Questions and Next Steps (Slide 22)

Thank you for your participation today. We really appreciate your time and dedication to the youth count. We are going to form a line to check out and for payment. When you check out, we will talk to each of you about your team assignment and meeting place.

*As a reminder, the youth count will be held on: **Date**.*

*We ask that you arrive at: **Time**.*

Before we finish up, does anyone have any final questions or comments?