

Phase Five

Use the Data



Phase Five focuses on the cleaning and analysis of the data gathered during the youth count. The amount of information you gather will influence how long it takes to complete this phase.

Phase Five is the fifth phase of the Voices of Youth Count Toolkit. We encourage you to review the entire [Toolkit](#), where you can find more information about conducting a Youth Count using the VoYC approach.

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Step One: Clean the Brief Youth Survey Data

Following the youth count, the data should be entered into a database, cleaned, deduplicated and analyzed. The VoYC Brief Youth Survey data underwent a five-step cleaning and deduplication process before determining the final number of surveyed youth who met the VoYC definition of homeless or unstably housed. The steps to clean the data include:

- Exclude surveys in which the youth did not give consent;
- Exclude surveys in which the youth was under 13 or over 25 according to the provided date of birth;
- Exclude surveys in which the youth indicated that they had a stable place to stay; and
- Exclude surveys in which the youth indicated that they had already taken a survey.

VoYC Brief Youth Survey data was reviewed to identify and evaluate duplicate entries:

- Review the responses about date of birth and initials to identify possible duplicate entries.
- Next, look at the responses about race and gender identity for any possible duplicate entries. If all four categories match, this is likely a duplicate survey response that should be excluded from the data pool.
- If initials and date of birth match, but no other questions do, the data should be preserved in the sample.

Step Two: Analyze the Brief Youth Survey Data

Once the survey data is cleaned and deduplicated, determine what analysis should be done and how to best present the information, accounting for the intended audiences and purpose of the data collection. Multiple approaches may be necessary to respond to the full breadth of interest. Choices about data analysis and presentation should be driven by the way the information will be used. For example, if the youth count was held as part of the annual HUD PIT Count, a set of results will be prepared and reported according to HUD requirements. In other cases, the results may be used to educate the community about the scope and experiences of youth homelessness, which may require additional analyses to understand differences between age groups or the intersection between education and employment among the population.

Part of analyzing the data includes engaging others to help interpret the results. In the VoYC process, the stakeholders who participated in planning and organizing the Youth Count are reconvening to discuss the Youth Count experience and review the preliminary findings. This step is critical to contextualizing the results, understanding what and whom we might have missed, and identifying additional areas of analysis.

Step Three: Share the Findings

After the hard work of engaging youth and the community to complete a youth count, you will have a valuable resource to make change for homeless youth in your community. Youth count data can be used in many ways. It can be shared strategically with a range of stakeholders to identify concrete steps to take

to improve or expand services for homeless youth. It can be integrated with other important sources of data about homeless youth, such as the McKinney-Vento data collected by school districts, to create a fuller understanding about the size and needs of the local homeless youth population, including youth who are couch-surfing or doubled up. These findings can be used to identify the need for services or increased collaboration among systems for subpopulations of youth, such as youth involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

When sharing the findings, remind the audience that youth count data reflects only one source of information about young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability and should not be taken as the conclusive number of homeless youth in your community.

By collecting better data and sharing it with an engaged set of stakeholders, youth counts can catalyze and grow your efforts to take effective action to prevent and end youth homelessness. 🌸

Congratulations on completing a successful Youth Count!

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