

Phase Three



Prepare for the Youth Count



Phase Three is the last phase before holding the youth count. During this phase, you will finalize all of the logistics for the youth count, hold the Count Strategy Meeting, recruit Guides, Team Leaders and other volunteers, and conduct the trainings for the youth count.

Phase Three is the third 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: Convene the Leadership Team Count Planning Meeting

This second Leadership Team meeting allows the Leadership Team to finalize the youth count logistics and to prepare for the Count Strategy Meeting. The meeting will take approximately 90 minutes, with additional time needed for follow up.

Leadership Team Count Planning Meeting Tools



- [Leadership Team Count Planning Meeting Annotated Agenda](#)
- [Count Strategy Planning Worksheet](#)

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Leadership Team will have:

- ✓ Developed recommended **Street Count Teams**
- ✓ Developed recommended plans for the **Organizational Count** and **Come and Be Counted locations**
- ✓ Finalized the **Day-Of Schedule**
- ✓ Finalized the **Day-Of Logistics**
- ✓ Developed the volunteer **recruitment** plan

Detailed guidance on conducting the meeting is included in the Leadership Team Count Planning Meeting Annotated Agenda.

Step Two: Convene the Count Strategy Meeting

Count Strategy Meeting Tools



- [Count Strategy Meeting Invitation](#)
- [Count Strategy Planning Worksheet](#) (Phase Three, Step One)
- [Count Strategy Meeting Annotated Agenda](#)

The goal of the Count Strategy Meeting is to review and finalize the teams for the Street Count and the plans for the Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations. The Stakeholder Team will also develop a recruitment plan and finalize all outstanding logistics for the youth count. We found it helpful to have the Leadership Team develop draft recommendations in advance of the Count Strategy Meeting. More information about preparing for the Count Strategy Meeting is in the preceding step.

The Count Strategy Meeting objectives can be accomplished in one hour. For some VoYC Youth Counts, we scheduled longer meetings to allow more time to develop recruitment plans. While the Count Strategy Meeting can be held via conference call, we found the meetings were more productive when held in person.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Stakeholder Team will have:

- ✓ Finalized the plan for Street Count teams and recruitment
- ✓ Finalized a list of Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations and outreach plan
- ✓ Developed a plan to respond to youth in-need during the youth count

Detailed guidance on conducting the meeting is included in the Count Strategy Meeting Annotated Agenda.

Step Three: Recruit Guides and Volunteers for the Youth Count

Youth Count Recruitment Tools



- [Guide Recruitment Flyer](#)
- [Guide Recruitment Language](#)
- [Organizational Count Outreach Language](#)
- [Come and Be Counted Flyer](#)

The goal of the recruitment phase is to a sufficient number of knowledgeable Guides, Team Leaders and other volunteers.

Guides should be young people ages 18-25 who are currently or recently experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Guides are responsible for most of the primary data collection, including determining who to include in the Visual Count and conducting the Brief Youth Surveys. Guides will need to approach strangers to invite them to complete a survey.

Team Leaders should be comfortable working with young people and preferably have experience conducting street outreach. They may be provider staff or volunteers. Team Leaders provide logistical and transportation support to Guides as they conduct the youth count. Team Leaders should have access to reliable transportation and a working cell phone, be able to oversee all of the paperwork and be comfortable approaching strangers.

Volunteers conduct surveys at Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted locations. Volunteers should be comfortable working with young people. They must be able to administer the brief youth survey and be willing to engage with strangers.

We discuss the decisions made to recruit Guides, Team Leaders and volunteers for VoYC Youth Counts below.

“We needed to get youth involved who we actually **serve**. It was one of the most **beautiful**, rich parts of the whole process.”

Steven Jella
Associate Executive Director
San Diego Youth Services

The more knowledgeable the Street Count teams were about the area in which they counted, the more successful they were in reaching youth during the VoYC Youth Count. Oftentimes, Guides had personal relationships with those that they were attempting to connect with on the day of the count. These relationships proved to be critical in reaching and surveying youth.

While staff or youth may be connected to an agency, it does not mean that they know the area in the immediate vicinity well. When recruiting, work with each person to identify

the area where they are most comfortable conducting the youth count.

Team Leaders need to be able to support the Guides as they conduct the youth count—from transportation assistance to coaching. Provide clear guidance to the Team Leaders during recruitment about their expected role during the youth count. Emphasize why a youth-led approach was selected, and encourage them to think of the youth count as both an information-gathering activity and a youth empowerment process.

Young people already engaged in the VoYC Youth Count planning process were often the best resource for recruiting other Guides. We were limited in using social media to recruit Guides for the VoYC Youth Counts because we had IRB approval to recruit only through informational flyers, but this often came up as a recommendation during the focus groups.

With so many people involved in recruitment, it can be hard to keep track of how the process is going. For the VoYC Youth Counts, we often created shared documents to track our recruitment goals for the Street Count Teams and progress toward these goals, which we maintained via a document sharing hub or which can be shared via email.

Step Four: Hold the Trainings

Training Tools



- [Guide Training Presentation](#)
- [Guide Training Protocol](#)
- [Team Leader Training Presentation](#)
- [Team Leader Training Protocol](#)
- [Volunteer Training Presentation](#)
- [Volunteer Training Protocol](#)

The goal of the trainings is to ensure that the information gathered in the field is accurately documented and that everyone remains safe during the youth count.

There are three trainings:

- A training for Guides
- A training for Team Leaders
- A training for staff and volunteers administering surveys for the Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations.

Guidance on running the trainings is included in the training protocols. We discuss the decisions made for VoYC Youth Counts below.

We held the trainings for the Street Count teams, for the Guides and Team Leaders, in person so we could strongly emphasize safety considerations, practice administration of the survey and review how to approach youth to complete a survey. The Guide and Team Leader trainings take 60- to 90-minutes. The Guides and Team Leaders participated in separate trainings to review their roles and responsibilities.

Some communities recommended holding combined trainings in the future to ensure a shared understanding of who was responsible for what and to help build connections amongst team members who did not already know each other.

We offered an online training for the staff and volunteers helping with the Organizational Count and Come and Be Counted Locations, which can be found [here](#). The online training takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

We kept track of who completed each type of training to ensure that everyone had participated in the appropriate training before conducting the Youth Count.

While in most communities, Guides and Team Leaders completed training immediately prior to the youth count, in some communities, Guides and Team Leaders completed an initial training about a week before the Youth Count and another training immediately prior to the Youth Count so we could more extensively review how to conduct street outreach. This was done to help reinforce safe approaches to conducting street outreach when the Team Leaders were not seasoned outreach staff.

We had the Guides and Team Leaders practice administering the survey during the training to ensure that everyone understood the questions and the information they were collecting.

During the training with Team Leaders, we reviewed what their roles and expectations were and emphasized that their primarily role was to support the Guides as they conducted the Youth Count. We discussed the different types of assistance they might need to provide, such as helping Guides get between hot spots, helping Guides evaluate who to count and survey, and helping youth who asked for assistance.

Finally, we had the teams review their materials and develop a strategy for how they would cover their area. 

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