Initial Leadership Team Meeting Annotated Agenda

At the Initial Leadership Team Meeting, the Leadership Team will develop a number of recommendations about the youth count process and will prepare for the Focus Group Planning Meeting with the Stakeholder Team. Due to the length of the meeting and the importance of the decisions, holding this meeting in person is strongly recommended.

The meeting will last approximately 2.5 hours but can be split into multiple, smaller meetings. If splitting into two meetings, we recommend holding one meeting of approximately 90 minutes to discuss the youth count logistics, and another one hour long meeting to discuss the youth compensation plan, the Stakeholder Team membership and to plan for the focus groups.

Recommended materials

- Copy of the VoYC Toolkit
- Any drafts of recommendations about youth count plans prepared prior to the meeting
- Youth Count Timeline Planning Tool
- Focus Group Planning Worksheet
- Potential Leadership Team and Stakeholder Team Members document
- Survey instruments

Agenda and Annotation

Welcome and Introductions 5 minutes

Meeting Objectives 5 minutes

Meeting one:

- Review roles and responsibilities
- Define who will be counted
- Determine where to count
- Select the methods for counting
- Pick a survey tool
- Finalize the youth count timeline
- Plan the youth count "day of" schedule
- Identify deployment sites

Meeting two:

- Develop the youth compensation plan
- Identify Stakeholder Team members
- Prepare for the focus groups

Roles and Responsibilities **5 minutes**

The Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the success of the youth count. The Leadership Team develops recommendations for each aspect of the youth count, which the Stakeholder Team reviews, adjusts and helps implement.

The Stakeholder Team is comprised of a broad group of stakeholders who are invested in ending youth homelessness. The Stakeholder Team helps plan and recruit for the focus groups and youth count.

Define Who Will Be Counted **10 minutes**

Discuss what ages to include and what definition of homelessness to use for the youth count.

Note: This decision may be influenced by your reasons for conducting the youth count (i.e., HUD mandated youth count) and will likely influence other decisions in your planning process, such as who to include in the Stakeholder Team and what questions to ask in the survey.

Adopting an expansive definition – covering the many ways unaccompanied homeless and unstably housed youth are defined by various federal statutes – allows you to gather more information to help inform a local strategy to end youth homelessness.

Tip: Create survey questions and responses that allow you to report data that meet the requirements of individual funders or as required by HUD.

Determine Where to Count **10 minutes**

Discuss where you will conduct the youth count.

Possible locations:

Street Count

- Teams go to previously identified hot spots where youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability spend time and approach youth to complete surveys.
- Benefits: Youth who are not accessing services can be surveyed.
- Limitations: It can be very hard to determine visually which youth are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Large numbers of people are needed to conduct the youth count.

Organizational Count

- Staff at provider locations conduct surveys with the youth they serve who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability.
- Benefits: Surveys are completed through existing programs and staff, which may make this an easier approach logistically.
- Limitations: Youth who are not connected to services may not get counted.

Come and Be Counted Locations

- Youth are invited to complete surveys at special locations.
- Benefits: Youth who are not connected to services can participate. The Come and Be Counted Locations can be run by just a few people.
- Limitations: Information has to be spread widely so youth know to visit the Come and Be Counted Locations. People who are not in your target population may show up. You may need an event or other incentive to get youth to show up.

There may be other places that you want to count young people in your community. Discuss these as a group and finalize your plan for the youth count.

Select methods for counting **10 minutes**

Discuss the pros and cons of each method of counting and determine what approach you will use for the count.

- Visual Count approach: teams count youth through observation and use of tally sheets, making decisions about who to count without surveying anyone
- Survey approach: teams approach youth to complete a survey

Surveys can take longer to administer, making them harder to complete with everyone in a short period of time. But, they allow you to gather information and confirm whether individuals are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. This confirmation can be particularly important when counting young people, as youth who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability are often not visually distinguishable from youth who are stably housed.

Tip: You can use both approaches, or choose to use one approach in some settings and a different approach in others.

Discuss who will be conducting the count. Will the teams be made up of young people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability, provider staff, community volunteers, or some combination?

Note: The team composition will impact subsequent decisions, such as the survey structure and recruitment plans.

Pick a Survey Tool **10 minutes**

If you decide to use a survey, you will need to determine what questions to ask and what sequence to ask them in.

When selecting the questions to ask, consider:

- What information does the community need to better meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability?
- What information does the community need to fulfill data reporting requirements for HUD and other funders?

If a question does not meet either of these categories, discuss why you need the information.

Next, determine the order in which the questions will be asked:

- The questions should be sequenced to gather the information you most need first, in case youth choose to stop the survey midway.
- More sensitive questions should be asked later in the survey, allowing youth to first become comfortable answering questions.

Tip: Youth may experience some questions as more or less sensitive based on who is administering the survey. Questions that may feel very comfortable when asked by a peer may be very sensitive when asked by a community volunteer or vice versa.

Note: The VoYC Brief Youth Survey does not request all of the information that HUD requires for reporting from the January Point-in-Time Counts.

Finalize the Youth Count Timeline **10 minutes**

Discuss when to hold the youth count, considering:

- What local events and festivals are planned that could impact recruitment and inflate numbers?
- What is the school schedule?
- What day of the week is best?

Having selected the date for the youth count, the planning steps should be scheduled, working backwards:

- Initial Leadership Team Meeting—Week 1
- Focus Group Planning Meeting—Week 3
- Focus Groups—Week 7
- Count Strategy Meeting—Week 8
- Trainings—Day of or day before youth count
- Youth Count—Week 12

Fill out the Youth Count Timeline Planning Tool as you make decisions. The schedule will get shared with the Stakeholder Team during the Focus Group Planning Meeting in Phase Two.

Plan the Youth Count "Day-Of" Schedule — 10 minutes

Develop a draft schedule for the day of the youth count. The schedule will be shared with the Stakeholder Team for review and finalization during the Count Strategy Meeting in Phase Three.

Note: The draft schedule will likely need to be adjusted after the focus groups, when you gather information about when you will go to the hot spots where youth spend time.

As a group discuss:

- Will the youth count be conducted in a 24-hour period, over multiple days, or weeks?
- If a 24-hour period is chosen, is it logistically easier to do all of the counting in one calendar day or to work across two calendar days?
- When will trainings happen? If you want to complete the youth count in one calendar day, you will likely need to hold the trainings the day before the youth count.
- Does it make more sense to have more, shorter shifts or fewer, longer shifts?

Two possible schedules for a youth count held in a 24-hour hour period are included below.

day 1	day 2		day 1	day 2
Training 1:00pm - 2:30pm	**Shift 1** 6:00am - 12:00pm **Shift 2** 3:00pm - 9:00pm **Shift 3** 5:30pm - 11:30pm	OR	**Training** 1:30pm - 3:00pm **Shift 1** 3:00pm - 9:00pm **Shift 2** 5:30pm - 11:30pm	**Shift 3** 6:00am - 12:00pm

Tip: Plan a mid-shift break or shorter shifts for Street Count teams who have to do a lot of walking so they can rest, hydrate and eat.

Identify Deployment Sites — 10 minutes

For the Street Count, you will need deployment sites, or meeting places, from which everyone will start and end their shifts.

When thinking about the deployment sites, consider the following:

- Which organizations have the capacity to provide sufficient space for the full duration of the youth count?
- Which organizations are easy to access by both public transit (if applicable) and cars?
- Are there organizations that already have 24-hour staff that could offer space?

Deployment sites should have a large multi-purpose room that can accommodate all of the people coming to the site, with additional rooms for training if you will be holding trainings the day of the youth count. Having one room for check-in and deployment helps ensure that everyone hears the same message and that teams get out into the field expediently.

Determine who will contact each deployment site to reserve space for the full duration of the youth count, plus an additional three hours before and after for set-up and clean-up.

Develop a Youth Compensation Plan — 15 minutes

Young people play a significant role in the success of the youth count, both as Guides and as participants in the brief youth survey. Providing compensation for these different contributions (which may take many forms including cash, gift cards, or checks) is an important step for ensuring that they will be able to participate in the youth count process.

Discuss the Guide compensation, determining what type of compensation to provide and what amount is appropriate given the level of effort requested.

Discuss the incentives for youth who complete the brief youth survey.

Tip: Incentives can take many forms, such as gift cards, public transit passes, or toiletry kits. Select incentives that the young people will appreciate, but that are small enough that young people do not feel pressured into taking the survey in order to get the incentive.

Tip: You will need to purchase more incentives than you need to ensure that the teams have enough incentives with them. Consider how you can use extra incentives as you determine what incentives to offer.

Discuss how you can secure funding to pay Guides and provide incentives, such as from local funders or through fundraising events.

Create the Stakeholder Team Invitation List — 15 minutes

The planning process is an important opportunity to bring together a diverse cross-section of providers who may not typically collaborate but will be necessary players for a successful youth count and can provide the foundation for implementing a strategy to end youth homelessness.

Tip: While agency leadership may need to provide authorization, it is most helpful to have program staff helping with the planning process, as program staff often interact with the youth population and know the community very well. By empowering program staff early and engaging them in the planning process, they are more likely to want to put in the effort needed to make the youth count successful.

Using the Potential Leadership Team and Stakeholder Team Members document, discuss which agencies, and who from each agency, should be invited to join the Stakeholder Team.

Tip: Engage the adult- and family-focused service systems and other youth-serving organizations in planning the youth count. Often, young people are not connected to traditional homeless services agencies, but instead are receiving support from youth-service organizations, faith-based institutions, or other community organizations.

Once a list of invitees is developed, determine how you will invite everyone (i.e., by phone or email) and who will be responsible for inviting each person.

Prepare for the Focus Groups **30 minutes**

Develop initial plans for the focus groups in preparation for the Focus Group Planning Meeting. The recommendations can be noted in the Focus Group Planning Worksheet.

Determine how many focus groups to hold, which is influenced by the diversity and size of the populations of youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability in your community.

- Review the subpopulations of youth that you want to include in the focus groups and the approximate number of youth to include from each subpopulation. This will give you a rough number of youth to include in the focus groups, and by extension, the number of focus groups to hold, as each youth focus group should be limited to 8-12 people.
- Determine if there are any safety considerations, such as groups of youth who cannot be in the same focus group, which would require additional focus groups.

Develop a list of providers who should be invited to the provider focus group.

- Discuss which agencies have staff who know about places where youth spend time. Outreach staff are often the most knowledgeable about hot spot locations.
- Determine how many provider focus groups to hold. Provider focus groups should be limited to 15 people.

Develop a tentative schedule for the youth and provider focus groups, and a list of desired locations.

- Focus groups typically last 90 minutes.
- Allow enough transportation time between locations for facilitators if holding multiple focus groups in the same day.
- Review whether there are any events or meetings that could impact participation.
- Determine the day(s) and times for the focus groups using the Youth Count Timeline. Make sure to schedule the focus groups to ensure that youth can participate, even if in school or working.

Tip: Select focus group locations that have internet access so that hot spots can be mapped in real time using Google Maps.

Develop a list of providers who can help recruit youth for the focus groups. Think broadly about who should help with recruitment to ensure diverse youth participation, including youth who have been involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems, youth who identify as LGBTQ, and youth who are pregnant or parenting, among other subpopulations.

Determine who will facilitate the focus groups.

- Will the same people facilitate all of the focus groups, or will different people facilitate different groups?
- Should the facilitator be someone who is seen as third-party or be someone participants know?

For each person who you identify as a possible facilitator, make notes of who will be responsible for contacting the facilitators to see if they are available.

REMINDER: All of the focus group plans will remain tentative until after the Focus Group Planning Meeting.

Next Steps **10 minutes**

Review the next steps:

- Secure funding for youth compensation
- Send out save the dates to volunteers
- Contact deployment sites
- Prepare a handout for the Stakeholder Team that reviews the decisions from this meeting
- Invite Stakeholder Team to Focus Group Planning Meeting

Focus Group Planning Meeting date: DATE