



Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the count in the winter and not the summer? Why is it conducted the last 10 days of January?

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development mandates that all **Continuums of Care conduct a census of their homeless population during the last 10 days of January**. One reason the Count is conducted in January is that it's historically the coldest month of the year, promoting more folks to be in shelter for the colder weather, making it easier to conduct the census. The reason for conducting the Count towards the end of the month is because that is when more people experience homelessness.

How confident are you with the numbers? Don't you miss a lot of people?

Our margin of error is less than 2%. We rely heavily on the knowledge of residents to help us count in their areas. That's why it is really important for volunteers to come out and support the effort in their neighborhoods.

How do you know the demographic characteristics if it's a visual only count?

There are four components to the Homeless Count. The most publicized is the **Street Count when thousands of volunteers conduct a visual tally**. The second component is the **Shelter and Institution Count** where we ask service providers and institutions to report on how many homeless individuals occupied their facilities on the night of the Count. The third component is the **Youth Count, which is survey-based**. Youth experiencing homelessness are extremely difficult to identify by sight so we rely on a survey-based methodology. The fourth component is the **demographic survey**. This survey allows us to confidently estimate demographic characteristics such as veteran status, race, and gender for the entire homeless population in our Continuum of Care. This demographic information is also applied to the tally sheets collected during the Street Count.

Why is homelessness increasing so much?

According to the data gathered in the 2018 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, **the Homeless population in Los Angeles County decreased by 4% from the 2017 Homeless Count**. It is important to note that [visible Homelessness increased year over year from 2017 \(slide 13\)](#). Homelessness is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors ranging from systemic injustices to the health of the economy. In Los Angeles we face the huge challenge of the lack of affordable housing.

What is LAHSA doing to end homelessness in Los Angeles?

In addition to sponsoring the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count every year, we take on a coordinating role in the region by **applying for and administering funding to service providers** throughout Los Angeles County. In coordination with the City of Los Angeles & the County of Los Angeles, **LAHSA utilizes and distributes Measure H funding to Homeless Service Providers**. LAHSA manages the **Coordinated Entry System (CES)** which coordinates supportive services and housing resources across Los Angeles County, to form a collaborative, no-wrong door network for homeless individuals and households. In addition, LAHSA is responsible for the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LACoC) **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** which is a vehicle to foster cooperation, improve program quality, and collect accurate data. Clients can access CES outreach teams, access centers, and 211. LAHSA also has **Homeless Engagement Teams (HET)** who provide direct outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Why is the count important?

Our solutions are only as good as our information. **The more informed we are, the better we are equipped to understand and solve issues.** The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count is where we gather as much information as possible from those experiencing homelessness so that we can make informed decisions and develop creative solutions. It enables us to gather important data that is key for us to bring about an end to homelessness in Los Angeles.

Through the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, we will:

- Inform the state of homelessness in LA
- Bring vital community resources
- Increase engagement bringing together leaders, residents and stakeholders

Why do we have to do the count every year?

While the Federal Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) mandates a Homeless Count every two years, LAHSA conducts a Homeless Count yearly to **gain an understanding of trends, track progress, and better understand our homeless population.**

Why do we count at night?

Our aim is to count when homeless individuals are beginning to settle in for the night. **Counting at night or in the early morning hours reduces the chance of double counting** someone who has moved from one area to another.

How long is going to take to volunteer?

Typically, volunteers are needed for **3-4 hours on the night/morning of the Count.**

How will volunteers be assigned to or choose a deployment site?

Volunteers will register at www.theycountwillyou.org and will go through a 2 step process. The first step is to **select a location** in the community or neighborhood of their choice. The second step is to **provide contact information** to complete the RSVP process. If a volunteer wishes to modify their site selection after completing the registration process, they should contact their Community Engagement Coordinator to modify their RSVP. Deployment sites do have limited capacity and sign-ups are **at first-come first-serve basis.**

How can I volunteer beyond the Count?

We encourage volunteers to **connect with local service providers where they can volunteer.** LAHSA Community Engagement Coordinators can direct volunteers to local coalitions and service providers.

How do I contact a Community Engagement Coordinator?

LAHSA has assigned a Community Engagement Coordinator for each Service Planning Area (SPA) in Los Angeles County. To find a Coordinator, **please visit [the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count website](#) and click on the email address for the appropriate Coordinator.** For more general questions, please email homelesscount@lahsa.org or call (213) 683-3333 and we will respond as soon as we are able.