

**State of Louisiana:
2013 Homeless Demographic & Needs Survey**

What is the 2013 Homeless Demographic & Needs Survey?

The 2013 Homeless Demographic & Needs Survey, also known as the "Point-in-Time", is a local and state-wide effort to conduct an unduplicated count of Louisiana's homeless population and obtain information directly from homeless consumers to better assess their service and housing needs. **Because it is a "point-in-time", we are interested in learning about persons' housing situations on the NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 25th. This survey is being conducted in all regions of Louisiana during the four day period between Tuesday, February 26th and Friday, March 1st, 2013.** The Louisiana Offices of Community Services, Mental Health, Public Health and Addictive Disorders, and the Louisiana Advocacy Coalition for the Homeless are encouraging all homeless assistance providers to participate in the study. The distribution and collection of the survey is being coordinated locally through each region's continuum of care collaborative. Similar counts have been conducted annually or biennially throughout the state since 1998.

Why is it important?

Documenting the number of homeless people and collecting survey information on their needs will help us to plan for more effective programs and develop additional funding resources. The results of the survey will be available for use in developing the Homeless Assistance components of the State Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development Programs, homeless population data in HUD Homeless Assistance grant applications, and reports for Louisiana State government. This is in addition to meeting the data collection needs for any city, parish, or regional requests.

How will the survey be conducted?

REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH HOMELESS ASSISTANCE AGENCY AND/OR VOLUNTEERS WILL COMPLETE A SURVEY ON EACH UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL (ADULT OR YOUTH), HEAD OF EACH HOMELESS FAMILY GROUP, AND ADDITIONAL ADULT MEMBERS OF A HOUSEHOLD¹ SERVED OR ENCOUNTERED DURING THE FIVE DAY PERIOD BETWEEN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH AND FRIDAY, MARCH 1ST, 2013. The one page questionnaire should take less than 5 minutes for each person surveyed. A suggested script is available and may be useful in conducting the survey. A survey questionnaire template with the region number, parish name, and program name may have been prepared in advance, based on anticipated participation. Each agency is asked to make the necessary number of copies to complete one survey for each adult household member.

Who should complete the survey?

A survey may be completed in one of three ways. Ideally, agency representatives and/or volunteers will conduct an interview with a known client or a person who may be homeless, as the survey instrument is designed to have direct input from homeless consumers. In cases that an agency representative has previous knowledge of a homeless consumer and can provide the requested information, he/she may elect to complete the survey on the client's behalf. Finally, a homeless consumer may wish to complete the survey on his/her own. In this case, an agency representative should review the document with the client, and then review for incomplete or inconsistent responses once he/she has finished. Before a survey is administered, all agency representatives/volunteers must thoroughly read the survey and accompanying documents to make sure he/she understands all the questions, responses, and procedures.

Where do I send the completed surveys?

Agencies within Region IX, or agencies serving consumers within those regions, should mail, fax, e-mail completed surveys by **Friday, March 15th, 2013** to:

**Erin Matheny
Northlake HMIS Data Project
Southeastern Louisiana University
SLU Box 10509
Hammond, LA 70402**

Telephone number: 985-549-5373 * Fax number: 985-549-2485

E-mail: ematheny@northlakehomeless.org

¹ Whenever there is a dependent child(ren) in a household with more than one adult (e.g. a two-parent family), the requested demographic information relating to the child(ren) should only be recorded with the designated head of household. A separate survey must be completed for the additional adult, but the child(ren) should not be recorded on the additional survey.

Appendix A

Notes on Homeless Demographic and Needs Survey

*****A separate survey questionnaire should be completed for each person within a household over the age of 17. IF there are multiple persons within a household, one person should be designated as the Head of Household, and any children who were residing with that person on the night of February 25th, should be recorded on his or her questionnaire.*****

Survey: Region, Parish, and Place of Contact help to determine geographic information regarding the location of the survey session. The "Region" is a two digit number that has been pre-filled for you. The "Parish" is the name of the parish in which the survey is conducted. The Service Provider Name or Place of Contact is a reference point for where the survey is conducted ("corner of Pine and Oak Sts.", "Medicaid Office", etc.).

Question #1 helps determine whether someone's current housing situation fits within the HUD definition of homelessness.

Questions #1, #3, #4 and #6 are very important because they will give us information that identifies people whom **HUD considers chronically homeless**. The current HUD definition of chronic homelessness is:

An unaccompanied individual or adult within a family who is disabled and has been in an emergency shelter or in places not meant for human habitation for at least one year or who has had at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the last three years.

Question #7 helps us determine the number of households that include children, as well as the number of adults that are in each family group. This answer should align with the Head of Household response (Q8).

Examples:

1. When a participant states that he/she is an *Unaccompanied Individual, WITHOUT children living with you* (Q6) then he/she is also the *Head of household* (Q8).
2. When a participant states that he/she is a *Single parent household, WITH children living with you*, then he/she is also the *Head of household*.
3. When a participant states he/she is part of a *Couple, WITHOUT children living with you*, one adult should be labeled as *Head of household (HOH)* and the other adult should complete a separate survey, indicating that he/she is *Another adult member of a household (not HOH)*.
4. When a participant that states he/she is part of a *Two-parent household, WITH children living with you*, one adult should be labeled as *Head of household (HOH)* and the other adult should complete a separate survey, indicating that he/she is *Another adult member of a household (not HOH)*.

Question #5 helps us gauge the effectiveness of the state's discharge planning for homeless persons' exiting mainstream human service systems. Please read all responses thoroughly aloud, and mark all that apply.

Question #6 asks about a respondent's disabilities and health conditions. Please read all responses thoroughly aloud, and mark all that apply.

Questions #9a-9i (Demographic Information) should be recorded for the survey respondent (single adult, unaccompanied youth, or additional adult living in the household) or the head of household for a family group. Please read each item in the form of a question ("What is your date of birth?" or "Have you ever served in the US military?" etc.). In addition to providing information regarding the homeless population in Louisiana, these responses will help us to de-duplicate surveys.

Questions #9i (FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18) should be recorded for the dependent children who were living with the survey respondent on the night of February 25th. If there is more than one adult in the household, one adult should be designated as the Head of Household, and the information on the children should be recorded on his/her questionnaire only. Please record the gender, date of birth, first three letters of each child's first name, and first three letters of his or her last name.

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

"On the street": a phrase used to describe any location that a person may be residing that is not intended for human habitation; includes automobiles, wooded areas, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, barns, under bridges, etc.

Transitional housing for homeless persons: programs that provide extended shelter and supportive services for homeless individuals and/or families with the goal of helping them live independently and transition into permanent housing; stays are generally longer than two weeks but typically 60 days or more and, in many cases, up to two years or more; may be configured for specialized groups within the homeless population such as people with substance abuse problems, homeless mentally ill, homeless domestic violence victims, veterans or homeless people with AIDS/HIV

Unaccompanied child: a school-age youth who is homeless and not in the custody of a parent, a guardian, or a state agency

U.S. Military Veteran: A veteran is someone who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. People who were in the inactive military reserves or the National Guard should not be counted as a veteran unless they were called up for active duty. Someone who is dishonorably discharged from service is still considered a veteran, but is not eligible for VA services.