PERIOD PREVALENCE COUNTS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING

HOMELESSNESS

A GUIDE FOR RURAL AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Ministry of Housing

April 2017

Ontario

Submitted to:

The Homelessness Secretariat
Ministry of Housing, Government of Ontario

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Acknowledgements

This guide was developed and prepared by Dr. Carol Kauppi and Associates with input from staff at the Ministry of Housing, Government of Ontario.

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1. ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Period Prevalence Count (PPC) is a method for conducting an enumeration of homelessness. This guide provides an overview of the PPC approach and methodology, and provides guidance for implementation.

This document is based on experience gained through conducting 15 PPCs of people who were experiencing homelessness in a Census Metropolitan Area (a city with a population over 100,000), two medium sized cities (populations of approximately 50,000), and three small towns in northern Ontario (populations of 2,000 to 5,000). The communities included a mainly Francophone town (Hearst), an Indigenous community (Moosonee) and places with diverse populations (Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay and Cochrane).

The experience gained from conducting many PPCs has shown that it is possible to use the method in a range of communities in Ontario. This guide provides an introduction to a standard PPC enumeration methodology and explains how PPCs differ from Point-in-Time (PiT) counts and other methods. Community stakeholders who are planning a PPC should read this guide to ensure that they plan and execute enumeration activities in a way that meets good standards.

2. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Greater attention is now focused on studying and measuring homelessness in Ontario and Canada due in part to the growing awareness that homelessness is present in many communities where it was not seen or recognized in the past. The report of Ontario's Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness (the Panel), A Place to Call Home,[1] stated: "Over the past several decades, homelessness in Canada has

[1] Link to the report A Place to Call Home found here: www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=11038

been on the rise” (2015, p.7). The experience of homelessness is understood to be a severe form of deprivation for people affected by a wide range of factors over which they have no control, such as unemployment or precarious employment, challenges with finding affordable housing, and economic hardship. Further, homelessness has unequal impacts that are linked with racialization, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, immigration status, socioeconomic status, mental health and addictions issues, regional location, and Indigenous identity. Learning more about the prevalence and realities of homelessness can galvanize community stakeholders who want to develop more effective ways of addressing it.

Community enumeration studies of homelessness provide important information about the number and characteristics of people living with homelessness at the local level. Point-in-Time (PiT) counts are being used extensively in Canada to produce information about the extent of homelessness. PPCs provide another approach to enumerating people who are experiencing homelessness. A well-executed PPC can provide sound and comprehensive information about the extent and forms of homelessness within communities. The PPC method is especially helpful in communities where there are fewer shelters or services (e.g., in small, rural and northern communities). However, the approach can also be useful in larger communities with well-developed service systems because the service-based component can be used to complement other enumeration methods. Enumeration guidelines recognize that more than one method can be combined in a single enumeration within a community.

This guide is divided into five sections that provide an overview and introduction to the PPC method, and describe the activities and tools used in the three main phases of the PPC: Planning the PPC, conducting the PPC and following-up once the PPC has been completed.

2.1 Purpose and objectives of Period Prevalence Counts

A PPC provides an estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness within a given period of time, such as seven days. It is a method for counting and obtaining information about people experiencing homelessness. A broader objective is to obtain information that can support communities in developing strategies or solutions to address homelessness. Conducting a homeless "count" or enumeration can help communities to track changes over time, as long as the same PPC method is used for each data collection. Using the same method each time builds expertise and can produce good quality data that enables communities to track trends.

2.2 Description

What is a PPC (see **Box 1: What is a PPC?**) and how does it differ from other methods of counting people who are experiencing homelessness?

A major difference between a PPC and a PiT count is that the PPC takes place over a longer period of time than standard PiT counts, which necessitates some differences in methods. The concepts of point and period prevalence are used in fields such as medicine.[2] Point prevalence refers to a single point, such as a few hours or a given day. A PiT count provides a snapshot or point prevalence. Many PiT counts take place over 24 hours, with some covering a shorter time period such as six hours. The Point-in-Time Toolkit provided by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy of Canada states that counts of unsheltered people who are experiencing homelessness are conducted within a 24-hour period.

[2] https://www.ctspedia.org/do/view/CTSpedia/StudyPrevalencePoint
https://www.ctspedia.org/do/view/CTSpedia/StudyPrevalencePeriod

A Registry Week is a method used by some communities to complete surveys with people who are experiencing homelessness who are willing to be interviewed.[3] The Registry Week method involves a co-ordinated, multi-day count and survey of homeless persons to collect information that will help find housing for persons experiencing homelessness, starting with the most vulnerable.

Box 1: What is a PPC?

- A PPC conducts enumeration over a longer period of time than other methods of enumeration (e.g., seven consecutive days).
- Enumeration using PPC captures people experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered, using emergency shelters, or using a variety of other community services including community meal programs or food banks.
- A PPC is more likely to include people experiencing hidden homelessness because it casts a wider net. To get a more comprehensive count of people experiencing hidden homelessness, door-to-door neighbourhood surveys can be added to the surveys conducted in service locations, shelters, and unsheltered locations.

[3] The initiative is supported by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Link to website found here: http://www.20khomes.ca/resources/registry-week-toolkit/

A key strength of a PPC is that it can lead to more complete data collection compared with other methods. Period prevalence provides an estimate of prevalence over a period of time, such as seven days or longer, and can provide a reasonable understanding of the scale and nature of homelessness within a community. The PPC method can produce more complete data because people who are not located during a 24-hour PiT count may be able to take part in a longer enumeration that is conducted within a wide range of locations. In addition, particular subgroups that are more likely to experience hidden homelessness such as women, LGBTQ2S communities, Indigenous peoples, immigrants, racialized people and youth, may have less opportunity to participate in PiT counts that take place within a short period of time.

As information about the size and characteristics of the population experiencing homelessness is gathered over the course of several days, a PPC allows a community to learn more about the extent of homelessness than may be provided by a 24-hour PiT count. For this reason enumeration guidelines in the United States recognize that some communities may take seven days to complete an enumeration study. In northeastern Ontario, some PPC projects took longer than seven days, even several weeks, if a door-to-door neighbourhood survey was conducted.

The risk of enumerating over longer periods is that people who use a number of different community services may be surveyed more than once. To make sure that each person surveyed is only counted once (“de-duplication”), additional information must be collected. This information is combined to create a unique identifier for each survey respondent. For example, creating an identifier using initials, date of birth, and combining this information with self-reported gender identity, allows duplicates to be identified and removed from the database once enumeration is complete (discussed later in this guide).

Some enumeration efforts used in Canada and the United States base their counts on the number of people using shelters, including emergency shelters, transitional shelters, and domestic violence shelters. It is recommended that shelter counts be coordinated with other enumeration methods, as many people who are experiencing homelessness do not stay in shelters and must be counted using other methods.

2.3 Selecting the PPC method

Why should a community utilize the PPC method?

In general, the PPC method can provide more complete data on the prevalence of homelessness, particularly in small, rural, and northern communities where homelessness is less visible. Hidden homelessness presents a challenge for all communities and methods of enumeration. However, brief counts in places where there are fewer services available are known to underestimate the level of hidden homelessness. In their report, A Place to Call Home, the Panel highlighted the scope and nature of hidden homelessness in small and rural areas:

[They are] estimated to represent 80 per cent of those who have no place to call home. They include provisionally sheltered people and families who are "couch surfing" in unsustainable circumstances and often overcrowded housing to avoid the streets; women and children experiencing domestic violence and living in constant fear; people sleeping in abandoned buildings and overcrowded spaces (often sleeping in shifts); and families living in temporary accommodation due to evacuations (A Place to Call Home, p. 7).

PPCs can be an effective method for including people experiencing hidden homelessness, when they are conducted over a period of one week or longer and include a variety of services and service locations, other known locations that people experiencing homelessness frequent, and, if possible, a neighbourhood door-to-door survey.

A PPC allows time for word-of-mouth to spread and provides more opportunities than the PiT count for people to take part, as it takes place over a longer period of time and in a wider range of locations. Also, the service-based aspect of a PPC (i.e., reaching people through the services they use) can be combined with other methods, such as a PiT count, to enhance coverage and generate more complete counts.

2.4 Definitions of homelessness

Challenges in defining homelessness and deciding upon who will be included in enumeration are important to consider when determining an appropriate methodology. People who fit existing definitions of homelessness may not define themselves as homeless. For example, in PPCs that were conducted in northern Ontario, people often stated that they had a home—even if the rail yard was where they were sleeping. The PPC method uses definitions of homelessness from the published literature. These definitions are based on living situation, rather than whether a person defines themselves as homeless.

2.4.1 Living situations that constitute forms of homelessness

The report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness defined homelessness in a way that takes into account four broad groups: (1) unsheltered (absolute homelessness), (2) emergency sheltered (staying in an emergency shelter), (3) provisionally accommodated and (4) at risk of homelessness.

The report further states that people who are provisionally accommodated are those “who are ‘couch surfing’ in unsustainable circumstances and often overcrowded housing to avoid the streets; women and children experiencing domestic violence and living in constant fear; people sleeping in abandoned buildings and overcrowded spaces (often sleeping in shifts); and families living in temporary accommodation due to evacuations” (A Place to Call Home, p.7). It also notes that many people are at risk of homelessness due to “economic hardship, precarious employment, barriers to opportunity, and a lack of affordable housing” (ibid).

A PPC can be designed to include people in these four groups. It is important to recognize that extra effort must be taken to include people living with the risk of homelessness and hidden homelessness.

2.4.2 Living situations that constitute hidden homelessness

Definitions of homelessness should include hidden homelessness, as it has been reported that a large proportion of the population experiencing homelessness is “invisible” to service providers and the general public. This is especially important for rural, northern, and small communities to recognize. The forms of hidden homelessness may include (1) staying with family or friends, (2) tied accommodation such as domestic service, survival sex or partnering, (3) substandard accommodation, (4) temporary accommodation, (5) squatting, (6) institutionalization leading to homelessness upon release, and (7) outdoor accommodation in forests, encampments, or camps.

2.4.3 Chronic and episodic homelessness

The report A Place to Call Home recommended adopting definitions of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)[4] for chronic homelessness and episodic homelessness. According to the HPS:

“Chronically homeless refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).”

“Episodically homeless refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place).”

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[4] Link to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy can be found here: http://www.edsc.gc.ca/eng/communities/homelessness/housing_first/approach/index.shtml

2.5 Summary of recommended standards for PPCs

The purpose of defining a set of basic standards is to get accurate information about homelessness in a community, considering the practical limitations of implementing a PPC. It can be challenging to conduct an effective PPC, but it is possible to do so with sound planning.

Key standards for conducting a PPC enumeration:

- Establish a community Coordinating Committee for the PPC.
- Engage community partners.
- Select an appropriate date, time, duration, and methodology for the PPC.
- Adopt an appropriate definition of homelessness that specifies who is to be enumerated (sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families, including hidden homeless).
- Develop a questionnaire, also referred to as a "survey tool", to collect information from people experiencing homelessness. The survey tool includes core questions, any optional questions selected by the local PPC committee, and unique identifiers.
- Collect sufficient data to ensure that individuals are counted only once and develop a plan to de-duplicate the data in a reliable way.
- Adopt a data collection protocol that ensures the privacy and safety of participants.
- Adopt a protocol that ensures the safety of the data collectors.
- Provide training for all project staff and volunteers regarding all aspects of the PPC.
- Maintain records about the methods used and prepare a report on the methods used to gather PPC data including information about limitations of the study.

2.6 Engaging with Indigenous peoples and organizations

Engaging Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations and peoples, in the planning and implementation of PPC projects is vital. Research shows that Indigenous peoples are significantly over-represented among the population experiencing homelessness–especially in the north. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada[5] has emphasized the damaging effects of residential schools and other impacts of colonization upon Indigenous communities, economic activities, education, families, culture, language, and spirituality. Many Indigenous groups have had negative experiences with projects conducted by non-Indigenous people in the past, and they may have concerns about the involvement of Indigenous peoples in a PPC, and how enumeration would address the needs of Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous organizations have asserted that traditional knowledge, culture, and world views need to be recognized and affirmed in order to build positive working relationships. Given that a PPC will involve enumerating Indigenous peoples, and recognizing the importance of reconciliation, it is important that the PPC planning process includes a commitment to ongoing dialogue and relationship-building with local Indigenous groups including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and organizations.

In planning for the PPC, there may be preparatory work involved to learn about the history and culture of Indigenous peoples in the region. Learning about the history of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples from their perspectives can help with understanding differences in world views, beliefs, and cultural practices between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It is important and respectful to gain some knowledge of these issues before starting to work with Indigenous peoples in the community. Indigenous peoples working in the area of homelessness have emphasized the connections of Indigenous peoples to the land and to traditional homelands

[5] Link to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada found here: http://reconciliationcanada.ca/resources/shareable-documents/

which can affect how people define their own circumstances. Loss of homeland can contribute to a sense of homelessness. Additionally, people who are comfortable with and enjoy living on the land (outdoors) may not feel that they are homeless.[6]

Making a commitment to and learning how to adopt culturally sensitive methods within the PPC can lead to greater interest, engagement, recruitment, and participation in the project. Culturally sensitive, decolonizing methods[7] have been developed to guide non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in working together on data collection projects. Striving for a decolonizing approach requires active recognition of the colonial past and the need to ensure that project activities do not reproduce the historical Indigenous-settler relationships. According to Margaret Kovach, “the purpose of decolonization is to create space in everyday life…and society for an Indigenous perspective without it being neglected …or dismissed.”[8] Kovach notes that the inclusion of cultural protocols as part of project planning is essential to a decolonizing approach. She explains that Indigenous peoples are connected to and identify with various communities such as tribal, urban, Métis, or Inuit. PPC project leaders should take into account the implications for varied Indigenous communities.

Indigenous organizations have examined the issue of data collection and research, and tools are available to guide a culturally competent approach to enumeration that is rooted in respect and relationship-building. As part of this process it is important to discuss principles that can inform the enumeration process with Indigenous partners.

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[6] Faries, E. (2015). Voice of the People on the Re-Location Issue: Kashechewan First Nation, Ontario, Canada. OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 99-110, 2015. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2612102

[7] Kovach, M. (2009). Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[8] Kovach M. (2009). Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pg. 85.

One example of a tool that can be used to inform discussions with Indigenous organizations is the Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles.[9] In 2007, the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)[10] reinforced the importance of OCAP principles: "The First Nations principles of OCAP are a set of standards that establish how First Nations data should be collected, protected, used, or shared… Standing for ownership, control, access and possession, OCAP asserts that First Nations have control over data collection processes in their communities, and that they own and control how this information can be used." FNIGC notes that OCAP principles apply to all collection and management of First Nations data (see Box 2: First Nations OCAP Principles).

[9] Link to OCAP principles found here: http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html

[10] Link to the First Nations Information Governance Centre found here: http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html

Box 2: First Nations OCAP Principles

Many First Nations organizations have affirmed the importance of OCAP principles in guiding activities that draw upon Indigenous data. The First Nations Information Governance Centre explains the four principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession as follows:

Ownership refers to the relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge, data, and information. This principle states that a community or group owns information collectively in the same way that an individual owns his or her personal information.

Control affirms that First Nations, their communities, and representative bodies are within their rights in seeking to control all aspects of research and information management processes that impact them. First Nations control of research can include all stages of a particular research project, from start to finish. The principle extends to the control of resources and review processes, the planning process, and management of the information.

Access refers to the fact that First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where it is held. The principle of access also refers to the right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information. This may be achieved, in practice, through standardized, formal protocols.

Possession or stewardship is more concrete than ownership which identifies the relationship between a people and their information in principle. It refers to the physical control of data. Possession is the mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected.

Organizations examining ethical practices in data collection with Indigenous peoples have drawn upon and reinforced OCAP principles.[11] The OCAP principles should be discussed with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners involved with the PPC. Local Indigenous organizations may have additional or alternate principles that they want to bring forward as part of the process of planning for enumeration approaches. It is important to ask and learn from local Indigenous partners what principles are important to them in the planning and implementation of a PPC process.

Indigenous peoples must be consulted about the role they will play in the interpretation and dissemination phases of the PPC. Working collaboratively through a relationship-building approach with Indigenous partners can lead to joint understanding of the ways in which data collection can be mutually beneficial to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The FNIGC states that data can be valuable in creating new knowledge and positive change. The data can help with accessing new funding for Indigenous programs, planning for new services, or assisting with lobbying efforts.

It is important that community partners invest additional time for outreach, dialogue and engagement to work collaboratively and effectively with Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations and people.

2.7 Phases of the PPC

Conducting a PPC has three main phases and involves a number of decisions and activities:

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[11] For example, the chapter (chapter 9) about data collection involving Indigenous or First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples of Canada of the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2, 2010) provides guidelines for determining when community engagement with FNMI people is required: (i) when doing research on FNMI lands, (ii) when recruitment includes Indigenous peoples as a subgroup, (iii) when seeking input from participants about any aspect of heritage, traditional knowledge or characteristics, (iv) research that includes Indigenous identity as a variable, and (v) interpretation of results that refers to Indigenous peoples.

2.7.1 Planning the PPC

Planning the PPC takes four to six months and involves:

- Engaging local community partners to create a PPC planning team, to build local support for conducting the PPC.
- Planning the PPC approach, including:
  - Defining the methodology and scope of enumeration (e.g., timing, sampling strategy).
  - Community outreach.
  - Developing the survey tool.
  - Adopting/revising protocols that will be used in the field.
  - Identifying the type of remuneration or incentive (recommended) for participation and type of ethics review that is required.
- Preparing to implement the PPC begins approximately two months before the start date. The Coordinating Committee should begin:
  - Recruiting the workforce or “data collectors,” including volunteers for the count.
  - Mapping (obtaining maps) and dividing areas (marking boundaries on the maps).
- Gaining support and participation from community partners.
- Developing a resource list that surveyors can distribute.
- Making practical preparations for enumeration including:
  - Identifying a central location.
  - Monitoring the weather and events in the community that could impact a PPC (e.g., community crises) and begin making contingency plans.
  - Establishing teams and replacements.

- Producing training materials and preparing supplies.
- Communicating PPC plans to community organizations.
- Making plans for monitoring the data collection process, collecting, and storing completed forms.
- Developing strategies and protocols for implementation (e.g., for debriefing; training on managing honoraria; developing a system for managing the data).

2.7.2 Conducting the PPC

A service-based count and an unsheltered count are typically conducted over seven days. In general, an effective strategy is to set up tables at service locations or tent stations at street locations to enhance visibility so that people who are experiencing homelessness can easily find them. Word-of-mouth will spread information about the PPC. For communities that include a neighbourhood door-to-door survey, enumeration can take a week or up to two months depending on the size of the PPC team.

Preparations also must be made for the follow-up activities that take place at the end of each day of the count. These involve creating a systematic approach to check with each member of the team, confirmation of forms, the storage of forms, debriefing and resolving any outstanding issues.

2.7.3 Following-up after the PPC

At the end of the enumeration, PPC follow-up activities involve compiling the data to support analysis and reporting to community stakeholders. The results of the PPC should provide information that improves understanding of homelessness within the community and supports the development of local action plans to address homelessness. Activities related to compiling the data include data processing, entry, and cleaning.

3. PLANNING A PPC

3.1 Engaging Local Community Partners to Create a Planning Team

It is strongly recommended that a broad-based community consultation process be undertaken to build community support for conducting a PPC. Based on the community consultation, planning, and implementation, this type of enumeration requires the formation of a Coordinating Committee and the identification of a PPC Coordinator.

A vital aspect of planning a PPC is undertaking activities to involve community partners, which includes service providers and other community partners that can contribute to planning and conducting the PPC (e.g., participating on the Coordinating Committee or helping to access volunteers or participants) and/or in follow-up activities.

3.1.1 Developing a list of service providers

PPCs incorporate service-based methods. That is, PPCs involve connecting with services that people experiencing homelessness use. As such, successfully conducting a PPC requires the involvement of a diverse range of service providers who are able to contribute time and skills to the organization and implementation of a PPC.

Particular attention should be paid to establishing the full list of services that people experiencing homelessness have access to. The list of service providers must be based on up-to-date information and informed by community partners. This list determines who should be involved in the PPC. More information is provided in the section below.

3.1.2 Recruiting community partners

Developing a list of services and other community partners is helpful in the process of establishing a Coordinating Committee. Recruiting a diverse group of people for the Coordinating Committee can contribute to knowledge of various cultures, circumstances, and experiences. Including a range of people can enrich the planning process through insights into a variety of experiences and backgrounds which can lead to heightened cultural sensitivity. People who are experiencing homelessness are often vulnerable people, and it is helpful to include community members with different backgrounds who can inform others about how to show understanding and respect for one another's differences as well as similarities (see Box 3: Involvement of Community Partners).

To develop a comprehensive list, it is useful to compile existing information about planning or advocacy groups and the types of local services offered throughout the community, and then to conduct a thorough process to expand and update the list. Keeping the list of local partners up-to-date involves checking for changes to the service system and in staffing (i.e., to establish the full list of relevant services, providers, advocates, and policy makers, and identify people who are currently experiencing or have formerly experienced homelessness).

Sharing information about the benefits of conducting a PPC can assist with recruitment of participants to a Coordinating Committee. Such benefits include:

- Collecting accurate information about the size and characteristics of the population experiencing homelessness.
- Dispelling stereotypes and myths about people experiencing different forms of homelessness, including hidden homelessness.
- Obtaining information about homelessness to strengthen proposals to funders.
- Improving community awareness and mobilizing people to address homelessness within the community.

Community partners can also help by providing expertise or resources, identifying locations for the PPC, assisting with PPC activities, giving access to volunteers or participants, acquiring or providing incentives for participation, and leveraging community supports.

Those leading a PPC must consider how to reach out to the groups listed below and any others that are present in the community with the capacity to assist with aspects of coordination and support.

The Coordinating Committee should consider how to incorporate the expertise of stakeholders who are not members of the Committee. This can be accomplished through a subcommittee, through a presentation to the Coordinating Committee, or through other forms of communication.

Box 3: Involvement of Community Partners

Individuals in the following types of organizations should be involved in the PPC:

i. Providers of services to people experiencing homelessness
ii. Coalitions and advocacy groups
iii. People experiencing homelessness and people who have formerly experienced homelessness
iv. Service providers in the community (other than homelessness service providers)
v. Government partners
vi. Indigenous partners
vii. Multi-cultural organizations and service providers, including those for newcomers and Francophone populations
viii. Universities and colleges
ix. Civic groups and volunteers
x. Local business partners

I. Providers of services to people who are experiencing homelessness

The participation of all organizations providing services to people who are experiencing homelessness is essential to the success of any PPC. It is helpful to develop or update a list of providers of services to people who are experiencing homelessness and/or are living in poverty within the geographic area to be included in the PPC. The service providers may include publicly funded, non-profit, and privately operated services such as:

- Shelters or transitional housing.
- Soup kitchens or food banks.
- Drop-ins or community centres.
- Detox, treatment or recovery programs.
- Mental or physical health programs.
- Indigenous and cultural programs.
- Outreach programs, homelessness or housing programs or registries.
- Data collection/coordination programs such as the Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

Service providers may also include organizations that serve specific populations such as youth, people experiencing violence, or people with military service experience.

II. Coalitions and advocacy groups

Influential people and organizations within the community that have an interest in issues pertaining to housing and homelessness should be invited to participate in the Coordinating Committee. Such people may be members of boards of directors or participants in homelessness or housing coalitions. These individuals may be especially helpful in recruiting other stakeholders for involvement in the PPC.

III. People who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness

People experiencing homelessness or people who have previously experienced homelessness can have an active and valuable role in many aspects of a PPC. For example, they can help with the planning, recruiting, training, and data collection processes. People who have experienced homelessness are often knowledgeable about the locations where people gather or sleep, and are aware of ways to be respectful when interacting with people who are experiencing homelessness.

IV. Service providers in the community (other than homelessness service providers)

Staff of organizations that offer services include highly skilled and experienced people. Some are in a position to assist with the tasks of planning and implementing a PPC. For example, staff in programs and services related to education, youth, Indigenous peoples, veterans, community and culture, and local public services such as public libraries, parks, transit, or emergency response may wish to participate in the PPC process.

V. Government partners

As homelessness is an issue for all levels of government, it is important to consider how to include local, provincial, or federal employees. Their participation on the Coordinating Committee, subcommittees, teams, and in other PPC activities can be valuable. They may contribute to administration, logistical supports, communications, data collection and processing, reporting and/or knowledge mobilization.

VI. Indigenous partners

It is essential to involve Indigenous partners, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations and peoples in PPC planning and implementation processes. Building relationships with organizations and leaders in these communities can support broader participation in a PPC, and is important given the over-representation of Indigenous peoples among the population of people experiencing homelessness. Relationship-building with Indigenous organizations is also an important step towards addressing historical oppression and moving towards greater understanding, dialogue, and reconciliation. Reciprocity and giving something back to the community (e.g., specific information about homelessness amongst their community members) and participants (e.g., honorarium or gift of appreciation) demonstrate that the PPC is being conducted in a way that recognizes the importance of the well-being of their members. Indigenous community partners can include service providers, housing providers, formal or informal leaders, Elders, interested members, or business people who are part of the community and understand it.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations and peoples need to be engaged in projects that have an impact on their well-being.[12] Information is available that provides guidance about approaching Elders or Indigenous knowledge holders in a respectful manner. Some communities may have traditions that involve the presentation of tobacco or other forms of gift giving which may connote entry into a relationship. Initiating the process for forming a PPC Coordinating Committee should recognize and respect cultural and ethical practices. (Please see the section above, **2.6 with Indigenous peoples and organizations**).

VII. Multi-cultural service providers

Cultural, linguistic, and minority groups, including newcomers, should be recruited for participation in the PPC. It is important to assess the level of need for Francophone services and, given the French Language Services Act*,* R.S.O. 1990, c. F.32, the involvement of Francophones in PPCs should be encouraged**.** Organizations that can be engaged include those providing services to people experiencing homelessness, those that can provide survey locations, hold magnet events, or contribute staff members to participate in planning. Newcomer services should be identified for inclusion in the project.

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[12] TCPS2. (2010). Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada. http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter9-chapitre9/

VIII. Universities and colleges

University and college staff and students can be helpful in planning and implementing a PPC. People with expertise and experience in project design, data collection and knowledge about issues relating to poverty and homelessness can make a valuable contribution to an enumeration study. Individuals from post-secondary educational institutions can assist with design, ethics and integrity, planning, and implementing the study, as well as data processing, entry, cleaning, and report writing. Students may be interested in doing placements with the project.

IX. Civic groups and volunteers

Faith-specific and nondenominational volunteer service organizations are present in every community, and members may be willing to assist with a PPC.

X. Local businesses

Local business owners or managers may contribute to planning or conducting the PPC through sponsorships, donations, or contributions of time. In particular, donations of supplies such as refreshments, office supplies, or gifts for participants (e.g., gift cards, services, health supplies or other incentives) can support the enumeration.

3.1.3 Forming an advisory or Coordinating Committee

Initially, the process may begin with one or two people who have an interest in doing a PPC and willingness to establish a Coordinating Committee (see **Appendix A: Sample Letter to Service Providers**). The work of connecting with community partners can begin with identifying people in organizations that serve those experiencing homelessness, visiting organizations, or attending meetings or events. Coordinating Committee members can invite others to a meeting—via email, telephone, direct interpersonal interaction or a combination of forms of communication (e.g., letters, email, posters or flyers). The first meeting provides an opportunity for people to discuss the membership of the Coordinating Committee and the approach to the PPC. An agenda, circulated in advance, may include:

- Welcome remarks and introductions.
- An introduction to the issue and the PPC method.
- Discussion of the method.
- Discussion of criteria for joining the Coordinating Committee.
- Tasks and commitments.
- Expression of interest in being part of the Coordinating Committee.
- Division of labour and commitment to contacting potential participants who are not present.

3.2 Planning the Approach

The length of time required to plan a PPC depends on the amount of time that Coordinating Committee members and partners can commit to the required tasks, and whether or not it is the first time that a homeless enumeration has been completed in the community. A general rule is to start the process six months before the start of the PPC, ideally, and no less than four months in advance. It is also important to build in extra time for outreach, engagement, and dialogue with Indigenous partners, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations early in the planning process. This section presents information about how to plan a PPC, including information about the components, elements or phases of a sound plan.

3.2.1 Gaining support and participation from community partners

Coordinating Committee members should identify and discuss reasons why there may be some reluctance amongst certain community partners to conduct a PPC in the community. Concerns may centre on a perceived lack of time or resources for the PPC or protection of the privacy of people who use their services. Having an understanding of perceived barriers can help to develop strategies that address them. For example, prior PPCs gained the support and participation of community stakeholders by using a variety of strategies to address perceived barriers such as:

- Lack of time or resources: The Coordinating Committee can identify organizational needs and develop plans for supporting the organization with volunteers who will collect the data, thereby relieving the agency of the requirement to use its own staff time or resources. Coordinating with agency staff will still be required.
- Ethics and the privacy of people who use services**:** The Coordinating Committee must adopt a confidentiality policy to ensure that the privacy of participants is fully respected. Paying close attention to expressed concerns and integrating ideas for addressing them is vital to gaining broad support for the PPC (see **Appendix C: Confidentiality Policy and Agreement**).
- Usefulness of results*:* Discussing how the information generated from the PPC will be useful to participating organizations can help individuals and organizations to understand why they have a stake in supporting the PPC.
- Existing relationships: Coordinating Committee members or allies who have pre-existing positive relationships with reluctant stakeholders may be able to engage in fruitful discussions to help with stakeholder engagement.

3.2.2 Defining methods for and scope of enumeration

Following the formation of a Coordinating Committee several aspects of the count must be defined, planned and coordinated. Subcommittees can be established to enable planning on several aspects of the count simultaneously. For example, subcommittees can be established for provider outreach; survey design/revision; securing donations and sponsorships; volunteer recruitment and training; as well as for planning activities that will occur following enumeration, such as data entry and cleaning and reporting results.

Provider outreach

Provider outreach involves working with existing service providers to gather relevant information such as: geographic areas to be covered; service locations accessed by people who are experiencing homelessness; other locations where people experiencing homelessness congregate; and other useful information about locating, approaching, and surveying people who are experiencing homelessness.

Survey tool development

The tasks involve reviewing and revising the existing core questions to be included in the data collection tool, determining supplementary questions that may be useful to local community stakeholder groups, obtaining input on survey design from cultural subgroups (e.g., Indigenous peoples, minority groups, youth, people with military service/veterans, families), and determining any need for translation and strategies for translation. The survey tool is discussed in detail in **Section 3.2.3 Developing a survey tool,** below.

Devising the sampling strategy

Sampling for service-based counts and unsheltered counts

Devising the sampling strategy includes making decisions about the geographical scope (i.e., selecting the geographic areas for inclusion), obtaining maps, determining the timing of data collection, and recruiting particular populations (e.g., youth, women, families, cultural groups, hidden homeless, unsheltered people, veterans). The goal of conducting service-based counts and unsheltered counts is to survey all people who are experiencing homelessness who are willing to participate.

Homeless enumerations are sometimes referred to as censuses but it must be noted that every count, including a PPC, produces an underestimate of the prevalence of homelessness. This is because it is impossible to locate and approach every person who is experiencing homelessness and some people will choose not to participate. It has been acknowledged that some groups, such as youth, are undercounted because they avoid enumerations, especially if they are underage, have run away from home, or are suspicious of official activities.

Special methods have been developed to reach out to particular subgroups by identifying sites where they may be found. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness has developed a Youth Count Toolkit to assist enumeration teams with finding homeless youth.[13]

"Magnet events" may also be planned. Magnet events are special events taking place during the PPC that are easily accessible to people who are experiencing homelessness. These events often include food or activities that will attract people who are experiencing homelessness to participate in the count.

Sampling for Neighbourhood surveys

This section outlines a sampling strategy for conducting door-to-door surveys in neighbourhoods in order to examine hidden homelessness.

A door-to-door survey in neighbourhoods within the community can provide important information about hidden homelessness and histories of homelessness amongst local residents. In communities where few services are available, it may be very important to include a neighbourhood survey as part of the PPC. It also provides information about living circumstances that is not otherwise available to the PPC team. When enumerators conduct a door-to-door survey, they gather first-hand knowledge about living conditions.

Available maps of the community can be used to generate a systematic sample of the areas in the geographic region to be studied. These areas can be numerically sectioned, and selected using random sampling. Alternatively, criterion sampling can be used to select low income areas and neighbourhoods. In addition, sampling methods can be combined to obtain a random sample of neighbourhoods, while oversampling low income areas because of the assumed higher risk of homelessness in those regions.

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[13] Link to the Youth Count Toolkit found here: http://homelesshub.ca/youthcounttoolkit

A cluster sampling method can subsequently be used so that a random sample of sections can first be selected, followed by a systematic sample of individual residences in each section to be identified for the survey (the sampling units are individual residences). Depending on the size of the jurisdiction, approximately 25 per cent of residential streets may provide a sufficient sample for a door-to-door community survey.[14]

Donations or sponsorships

Planning a PPC can involve activities to obtain donations from local stakeholders. Sponsorship agreements can be made with local businesses for various types of goods (e.g., office supplies), services (e.g., printing), or refreshments (e.g., water, beverages, snacks for participants or volunteers).

Honoraria, incentives, or gifts

Honoraria, incentives or gifts are often recommended as a way to encourage or recognize participation in an enumeration, but this practice is sometimes viewed as controversial (or even unethical if it reaches the level of undue inducement or coercion, especially if food is used as an incentive). This issue should be discussed by the Coordinating Committee members. In a PPC in Sudbury in early 2015, participants received $5 each as reimbursement for expenses incidental to their participation. In the United States, the guideline for PiT count methods specifies that incentives can take the form of transportation tickets, credit cards containing a specified amount such as $10, restaurant cards, or goods such as backpacks containing items such as toiletries or hygiene products.

The toolkit of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness recommends the use of gift cards, granola bars, and transportation passes as honoraria, but states that the gift should be discussed only after a participant gives consent for participation to avoid coercion. In one

[14] McMillan, T., Cubbin, C., Parmenter, B., Medina, A. & Lee, R. (2010). Neighbourhood sampling: how many streets must an auditor walk? International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 7: 20 http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/7/1/20

location, both gifts of engagement and gifts of thanks were provided to participants (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2014).[15] Consulting with Indigenous community members is important to decide upon respectful and appropriate ways to recognize participants' contributions to the PPC.

Timing of enumeration

An initial task is to decide on the time period to be covered by the PPC. A common approach is to conduct the PPC over a full week (seven days). The start and end times for the PPC must be determined. It may be set at 7:00 am on the first day and it may end at the same time of the day after seven full days. Some counts use timing such as sunrise or sunset to determine the start and end dates. In a PPC, because data are collected to de-duplicate the database, there is less concern about precisely determining the start and end times than for six-hour or 24-hour counts.

In some communities, PPCs may be conducted over a longer timeframe of up to eight weeks or in special circumstances, even longer. A longer timeframe may be needed if a community-based door-to-door survey is conducted. As noted below, PPC enumeration requires the collection of sufficient information to de-duplicate the database.

Community stakeholders should be consulted when making decisions about the timing of the PPC. While it is recommended that a PPC be conducted over seven consecutive days in order to collect data on every day of the week, the timing during the month is important. People who rely on financial supports through government tax credits or programs such as Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Trillium Benefit, Child Tax Credit or Canada Pension Plan receive their cheques at a particular time of each month. The payment schedules can impact peak periods of service use. Conducting the PPC during peak periods is recommended to obtain a more complete enumeration.

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[15] Calgary Homeless Foundation (2014). Point-in-Time Count Report. http://calgaryhomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Winter-2014-PIT-Count-Report.pdf

Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the PPC must be determined early in the planning process. One requirement set by the Government of Ontario is that Service Managers will select municipalities and then engage in full coverage of the municipalities selected or all known locations. A common approach is to identify known sites and areas where people are located such as shelters and outdoors locations including parks, camp grounds, abandoned buildings, bridges, tunnels, bus or train stations, trail systems, forested areas or other outdoor places.

Maps exist for communities in Ontario, and consulting with community partners can provide information about the size of the jurisdiction and the location of sites known to be occupied or inhabited by people who are experiencing homelessness. This information can help to determine the number of data collectors and teams required.

Conducting enumeration activities at service-based locations is a good way to make contact with people who are experiencing homelessness. Soup kitchens and other food services, drop-in services, cultural and social services, and all private and public services accessed by people who are experiencing homelessness should be included in the service-based count. Discussions with service providers and other community partners can help with decision making about locations where tables or outdoor stations can be set up during the PPC.

3.2.3 Developing a survey tool

This section outlines the components of the survey tool used for enumeration.

The survey tool includes information about the enumeration interaction and all of the survey questions used to collect information directly from people experiencing homelessness. The survey tool also includes the consent form.

The survey cover sheet should include sections to record information about enumeration interactions, including:

- The date;
- The location of the questionnaire/survey completion; and
- The enumerator identification number/code.

These prompts and spaces can be inserted into a text box indicating "Office Use."

Tally sheet for those who are not surveyed

Counts based on the number of surveys partially or fully completed will underestimate the number of people experiencing homelessness because they only include those willing and able to answer survey questions. Individuals who are unwilling or unable to participate in the survey but who are clearly homeless can be counted on a separate sheet. For example, an individual sleeping outdoors or in a vehicle should not be awakened to request participation but can be counted on a separate form. Similarly, someone in a shelter who does not wish to participate in the survey can be counted. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy provides one example of a tally sheet to provide a count those who are not surveyed but are clearly homeless.

A. Script for Enumerators

It is helpful for enumerators to have a short script memorized so that they can feel more comfortable approaching people. A sample script has been adapted from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy's Point-in-Time (PiT) count guidelines:

Hello, my name is (NAME) and I'm a volunteer for the (COMMUNITY NAME) housing needs survey. We are conducting a survey to provide better programs and services to people experiencing homelessness. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

- Participation is voluntary and your name will not be recorded.
- You can choose to skip any question or to stop the interview at any time.
- Results will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will help with research to improve services.

Enumerators: here are some other conversation points you can use while interviewing to reassure participants and remind them that their participation is voluntary:

- "The questions are short and easy."
- "Your participation does not affect your use of services in any way."
- "You can choose not to answer any question."
- "You can stop the interview at any time."
- "You can even change your mind and ask us to destroy your form in front of you."

B. Consent form

Appendix C: Confidentiality Policy and Agreement contains a letter and form that can be adapted. These pages can be included in the packages prepared in advance of the enumeration, as explained below in section **3.3.8 Printing documents and preparing packages for enumeration**.

If university researchers are involved with the Period Prevalence Count project, the Research Ethics Board will require that consent be obtained from each participant and that they also receive a copy of the information letter and consent form.

Survey questions are not asked unless consent is provided. However, individuals who do not participate in the survey can still be counted as homeless on a separate tally sheet.

C. Unique Identifiers

To make sure that the same person is not counted several times, unique identifiers are created using information collected in the survey process. Unique identifiers are created by combining pieces of information to differentiate one person from another, while still maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. If individuals participate in the survey more than once, this information is used to identify and remove duplicates in the database once data collection is complete (“de-duplication”).

Data can be gathered specifically for this purpose (e.g., initials and birthdate) and combined with the information collected in the survey such as gender identity to create a unique identifier while still maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

Initials of name: __ first __ middle __ last

Date of birth: __ month __ year

Gender Identity (from Survey question 8)

The unique identifier can be created in the data entry phase but enumerators must make sure that information needed to create the unique identifier is collected in the survey, to the best of their ability.

D. Screening questions

It is important to screen potential participants to ensure that they fit the definition of homelessness adopted for the study. Screening questions have been developed by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Screening questions determine whether or not the surveyor should begin the survey with each respondent. Communities can adjust these criteria to “screen in” populations they want to capture. For those who are screened in, the surveyor starts the survey by noting the responses to question C.

Screening question A

Have you already answered this survey with a person with this [identification tag]?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

All survey teams should have an identifying name tag (first name only) showing the title of the study. Over the course of the count, it is possible that the same individual may be approached by two survey teams. This question is intended to reduce double-counting.

Screening question B

Are you willing to participate in the survey?

- ☐ Yes: Go to C
- ☐ No: Thank and tally

Screening question C

Where are you staying tonight?

- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ Own apartment/house
- ☐ Someone else's place (friend or family)
- ☐ Motel/hotel
- ☐ Hospital, jail, prison, remand centre
- ☐ Emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter
- ☐ Transitional housing
- ☐ Public space (e.g., sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, bus shelter)
- ☐ Vehicle (car, van, rv, truck)
- ☐ Makeshift shelter, tent or shack
- ☐ Abandoned/vacant building
- ☐ Other unsheltered location (specify) _____________
- ☐ Respondent doesn't know [likely homeless]

This question includes a list of sheltered and unsheltered locations. It will be the primary tool for determining whether a respondent is considered to be experiencing homelessness. In the case of a daytime unsheltered count, the question would be, “Where did you stay last night?”

E. Core questions

Core survey questions include questions used by the Homeless Partnering Strategy and the mandatory questions required by the province (questions one through 15, with 11a as optional). These questions are equally appropriate for the Point-in-Time (PiT) count, Registry Week surveys and PPC approaches.

1. (Record response from screening question C)

Where did you stay last night or will stay tonight? [This is an open question with categories provided.]

- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ Own apartment/house
- ☐ Someone else’s place (friend or family)
- ☐ Motel/hotel
- ☐ Hospital, jail, prison, remand centre
- ☐ Emergency shelter, Domestic violence shelter
- ☐ Transitional shelter / housing
- ☐ Public space (e.g., sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, bus shelters)
- ☐ Vehicle (car, van, RV, truck)
- ☐ Makeshift shelter, tent or shack
- ☐ Abandoned / vacant building
- ☐ Other unsheltered location unfit for human habitation
- ☐ Respondent doesn’t know

2. In total, how much time have you been homeless over the past year? [Best estimate]

- ☐ Length ___________ days / weeks / months
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

3. In total, how many different times have you experienced homelessness over the past year? [Best estimate]

- ☐ Number of times ___________ [Includes this time]
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

Some participants will be uncertain of the exact number. Enumerators should strive to get a best estimate, if at all possible.

4. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? [Do not read options. This is an open question with categories provided. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays]

- ☐ Illness or medical condition
- ☐ Addiction or substance use
- ☐ Job loss
- ☐ Unable to pay rent or mortgage
- ☐ Evicted other reason (not financial)
- ☐ Experienced abuse by: parent/guardian
- ☐ Experienced abuse by: spouse/partner
- ☐ Conflict with: parent/guardian
- ☐ Conflict with: spouse/partner
- ☐ Incarcerated (jail or prison)
- ☐ Hospitalization or treatment program
- ☐ Unsafe housing conditions
- ☐ Other reason: ________
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

This is an open question with categories provided. Enumerators would select the categories that best fit the response to the question. These responses can help to determine the pathways into homelessness in your community and identify potential areas of focus for interventions to prevent homelessness.

5. **How old are you? [OR] In what year were you born? [If unsure, ask for best estimate]**

    ☐ Age (in years): ______
    ☐ Year born: _________
    ☐ Don't know
    ☐ Decline to answer

    Respondents may answer with their age or year of birth.

6. **Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry? This includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, with or without status. [If yes, please follow up to specify]**

    ☐ Yes, If yes follow-up to specify:
        ☐ First Nations
        ☐ Inuit
        ☐ Métis
        ☐ Non-status / Have Indigenous ancestry
    ☐ No
    ☐ Don't know
    ☐ Decline to answer

7. **People may identify as belonging to a particular racial group. For example, some people may identify as Black or African-Canadian, other people may identify as Asian or South Asian, and other people may identify as white. What racialized identity do you identify with? [Do not list categories. Select all that apply]**

    ☐ Aboriginal or Indigenous
    ☐ Arab
    ☐ Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)
    ☐ South-East Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
    ☐ South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
    ☐ West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
    ☐ Black or African-Canadian
    ☐ Filipino
    ☐ Hispanic or Latin American
    ☐ White (e.g., European-Canadian)

☐ Other (please specify)
☐ Don't know
☐ Decline to answer

8. With what gender do you identify with? [Show list.]

☐ Male/Man
☐ Female/Woman
☐ Two-spirit
☐ Trans Female/ Trans Woman
☐ Trans Male/ Trans Man
☐ Genderqueer/Gender Non-conforming
☐ Not Listed: _________________
☐ Don't know
☐ Decline to answer

Note that survey teams should not read the list to the respondent. Also, "other" responses must be specified.

9. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example, Straight, Gay, Lesbian? [Show list.]

☐ Straight/Heterosexual
☐ Gay
☐ Lesbian
☐ Bisexual
☐ Two-spirit
☐ Questioning
☐ Queer
☐ Not Listed: _______
☐ Don't know
☐ Decline to answer

10. In what language do you feel best able to express yourself?

☐ English
☐ French
☐ No preference
☐ Neither (please specify) ______

- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

11. What family members are staying with you tonight? [Indicate survey numbers for adults. Check all that apply]

- ☐ None
- ☐ Partner (include Survey # of partner if partner also participates)
- ☐ Child(ren)/Dependent(s)
- ☐ Other Adult (include Survey # if other adult(s) are participating)
- ☐ Decline to answer

11a. Follow up question to gather more information about Child(ren)/ Dependent(s) (optional):

CHILD(REN)/DEPENDENT(S)		1	2	3	4	5
[indicate gender and age for each]	GENDER					
	AGE					

Each survey form should have a unique Survey Number that can serve as an anonymous identifier for the respondent. In the case of families, each adult member should have her or his survey number indicated on the forms for their family members next to their relationship (e.g., partner, parent, other). Using this format keeps the information about the family together and can provide information about family size.

12. Have you ever had any service in the Canadian military or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)? [Military includes the Canadian Navy, Army or Air Force]

- ☐ Yes, military
- ☐ Yes, RCMP
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

13. Do you identify as having any of the following?

a) Chronic / Acute Medical Condition

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

b) Physical Disability

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

c) Addiction

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

d) Mental Health Issue

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

14. Have you ever been in foster care and / or a group home?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

If yes, how long ago was that?

☐ Length (in years) ________

15. Where do you get your money from? [You may provide examples from the list. Check all that apply]

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Informal/Self-Employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling)
- ☐ Employment Insurance
- ☐ Welfare/Social Assistance
- ☐ Disability Benefit
- ☐ Seniors Benefits (e.g., Canadian Pension Plan/Old Age Security / Guaranteed Income Supplement)
- ☐ Child and Family Tax Benefits
- ☐ Money from family/friends
- ☐ Other source: ________________________
- ☐ No income
- ☐ Decline to answer

This is an open question with categories provided, including those related to employment, informal sources (e.g., bottle returns), tax benefits, and family and friends. This question can be used to identify which supports are being accessed and which are not. For example, it could indicate whether homeless seniors are accessing Old Age Security or the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

16. Did you move to [Community name] in the past year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Decline to answer

Some communities experience high rates of migration among the population experiencing homelessness. Recent arrivals may not know where to go to access services in the community. The inclusion of this question can provide your community with information about recent arrivals and their needs.

17. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past 5 years?

- ☐ Yes, immigrant
- ☐ Yes, refugee

  If yes (to either immigrant or refugee) follow up with:
  - ☐ How long have you been in Canada?
  - ☐ Length: ___________Days | Weeks | Months | Years
  - ☐ OR Date: ____/_____/_____ Day / Month / Year
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

Most newcomers (immigrants and refugees) will have received support with resettlement in Canada. High numbers of newcomers may signal an issue that can be addressed upstream with organizations assisting with resettlement in order to prevent homelessness.

18. Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year? [Prompt: Give local examples of homeless shelters]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer

Many communities have comprehensive shelter use data, but little information on the population experiencing homelessness that does not use shelters. This question can provide information on the size and needs of this population. For the surveys with individuals staying in a shelter, the surveyor can indicate "yes."

F. Supplementary questions

The core questions provide demographic and background information on the population experiencing homelessness. However, additional information is often required by the local PPC committee and it is helpful to consider additional questions to be added to the questionnaire. It should be recognized that when additional questions are added, it takes more time to complete each survey. A general guideline is to construct the survey with a length of no more than 15 to 20 minutes. In PPCs conducted in northern Ontario towns and cities, participants completed surveys that took 20 to 25 minutes to complete (Kauppi, 2015).

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, in consultation with several communities, has developed a set of questions that can be added to local survey tools.

3.3 Preparing to implement the PPC

3.3.1 Determining a location for "PPC Headquarters"

Determining a central location for the PPC headquarters is critical. A participating partner may offer an available space, or the Coordinating Committee may conduct a search for an appropriate space that is accessible and available during the hours of the PPC operations. In the preparatory phases, the space may be used for activities such as meetings, training sessions, preparing enumeration packages, and storing supplies.

The headquarters should include a secure location, such as a separate office, with a door that locks in which completed questionnaires (and assembled blank packages) can be stored. This location will be used during and following the PPC for opening and processing envelopes containing completed questionnaires. Depending on the size of the population experiencing homelessness, it may be helpful to have a space that can accommodate a long table. Storage boxes will need to be brought into this secure space to be used for storing questionnaires.

3.3.2 Volunteer recruitment

If sufficient funding is obtained to pay all members of the PPC team, volunteer recruitment may not be required. However, volunteers can play a role in many PPC activities. The involvement of volunteers can allow for better coverage of the area or for data to be collected in a larger geographic area. It can assist with obtaining broad support and community buy-in. It can minimize the amount of agency staff time and resources required and redirect staff time and resources to essential aspects of the PPC (such as coordination, planning, supervision, and monitoring).

The process for recruiting volunteers should begin with a clear set of guidelines on the roles of volunteers (e.g., training other volunteers, obtaining donations or sponsorships, participating in enumeration activities and data processing, entry and cleaning/verification). Numerous manuals on volunteer recruitment are available, and a useful guide for recruiting and training volunteers was identified by the Calgary Homeless Foundation.[16]

Recruitment of volunteers can occur through strategies such as notices, advertisements or flyers, emailed appeals, direct contacts, or through a local PPC website, Facebook page, or other social media campaigns (see **Appendix B: Volunteer or Job Posting** for a sample advertisement). A participating organization may have a volunteer registry that can be utilized. Volunteer recruitment activities may be directed to organizations and agencies providing services, service organizations, faith-based groups, local coalitions, government staff and other community or business organizations. Particular attention should be given to recruiting front-line staff, outreach workers, and others who have first-hand experience working with people who are experiencing homelessness. Once individuals have been recruited, they must be informed of the date(s) for training session(s) (see **Appendix B1: Sample Email to Volunteers or Paid Staff**).

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[16] Link to the Calgary Homeless Foundation toolkit found here: http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/re-housing-triage-and-assessment-survey-toolkit

3.3.3 Formation of teams

Survey teams must be created whose members will collectively be responsible for covering an assigned area. The size of survey teams may be between two and four individuals, depending on the location and nature of their responsibilities. The composition of each team should be considered with regard to their background characteristics (e.g., gender, cultural and/or linguistic group) to create diversity on the teams. Team leaders should be chosen based on prior experience working with people experiencing homelessness. It should be recognized that there may be some turnover in the composition of teams if individuals become unavailable during the course of the PPC. Planning for team formation should be flexible to allow for reassignment in the event of changes in team composition.

Assignment to teams can begin during training sessions. Consideration should be given to the composition of teams so that they are as diverse as possible in terms of gender, age, and cultural group. If teams are based on two or three enumerators, it may not be possible to create diversity in all teams. Each team should include one experienced person. It should be noted that, for door-to-door surveys, teams should consist of only two people, as a larger number may intimidate or overwhelm residents. The composition of the teams must be appropriate for the locations to which teams will be assigned. Since there may be turnover if some individuals become unavailable to serve on a team, it may be necessary to recruit additional team members. In addition, some teams may need to be reconfigured if interpersonal issues arise. Members of the Coordinating Committee may be assigned to such troubleshooting tasks.

3.3.4 Engaging Indigenous peoples

The composition of the teams and the protocols for approaching individuals must be designed so that they are sensitive to culture and reconciliation. Indigenous peoples should be involved in a review of the composition of the enumeration teams, protocols for surveying areas of the community, training of volunteers, and ways of approaching people for enumeration.

Seeking and including Indigenous peoples is a priority when recruiting enumerators. Teams to be deployed into areas where they are likely to encounter Indigenous peoples should include at least one Indigenous person. Moreover, if enumerators are being assigned to organizations that serve Indigenous peoples (such as Friendship Centres), the team members must include Indigenous peoples. This must be discussed with Indigenous stakeholders at the organization or on the Coordinating Committee. When considering gifts of appreciation for participation, Indigenous peoples should be consulted to ensure that appropriate choices are made.

The PPC method allows for comparable data to be generated, across sites and over time. However, it is important for the approach to be equitable in valuing and recognizing the ideas of Indigenous partners. The PPC method provides flexibility to add questions that address other issues of importance. Non-Indigenous people must do the relational work of connecting with Indigenous peoples and communities, of showing reciprocity, and of giving back.

3.3.5 Training

Volunteer training sessions should occur well enough in advance of enumeration to ensure that all individuals receive appropriate training. However, the training must not occur so far in advance that the information is not retained. For these reasons, it is advisable to train volunteers between one and two weeks before the start of the PPC. Training of staff and Coordinating Committee members can be combined with volunteer training. It may be necessary to hold more than one training session depending on the number of volunteers to be trained and their availability.

Training sessions are most effective if volunteers are present in person. However, in large, geographically dispersed areas, it may be necessary to use teleconferencing or web-based video-conferencing for training. It is also possible to use a “train-the-trainer” approach if experienced and skilled volunteers are available. This approach can work well if a new volunteer is paired with an experienced one.

The content of training sessions should cover all aspects of the PPC. Training sessions typically take three hours, including some time for role playing and practicing in pairs. Components of training should include:

- Purpose of the PPC and definition of homelessness (i.e., who should be included in the PPC and who should not).
- Information about how to contact members of the Coordinating Committee and circumstances under which it is essential to share information with someone on the Coordinating Committee.
- Ethical issues, including confidentiality and privacy of participants and PPC Confidentiality Policy (see **Appendix C: Confidentiality Policy and Agreement**). More detail about training on confidentiality and ethics is provided below.
- Cultural sensitivity and cultural safety.
- Supplies provided and required.
- Timeframe for the PPC, maps to be used in collecting data, and the areas to be covered by each team (when and where the enumeration will take place).
- Consent form, if used (see sample in **Appendix D: Sample Information Letter and Consent for PPC**).
- Gift or honorarium, if used (see **Appendix E: Sample Receipt Form**).
- Enumeration tool or tools (i.e., survey or questionnaire).

- Outreach to specific groups (e.g., youth, people with military experience/veterans, families, people experiencing chronic homelessness, people in camps).
- What to wear (e.g., identification [ID] tags, plain, suitable clothing and footwear, no jewellery).
- Roles, responsibilities, role-playing, and practicing in pairs.
- The need to ensure consistency in the methods used to approach, screen, recruit, and survey participants.
- Learning about the safety protocols and understanding the vital importance of following them (see **Appendix F: Sample Safety Protocol** for an example).[17]
- Reporting back and debriefing protocols and practices.
- Additional opportunities for assisting with data processing, data entry, data cleaning, and reporting on results.
- **Appendix G: Sample Agenda** provides an example of an agenda for a training session.

A full set of documents and supplies must be assembled in advance of the training sessions. All elements of the survey tools must be created and assembled beforehand so that they can be reviewed at the training sessions. A sufficient number of copies must be prepared, including any handouts on ethics, data collection with vulnerable people, flyers, information letters, consent forms, and questionnaires. A folder for each enumerator should be made that contains all documents.

Training each team should include discussion of PPC activities and protocols; roles and responsibilities; distribution and collection of confidentiality forms for team members to sign; and the ethics of data collection, including confidentiality and the limits to confidentiality.

An excellent resource for all people working on a PPC is the book by Pranee Liamputtong (2007), Researching the Vulnerable, as she

[17] http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/safety_code_of_practice.pdf

discusses issues for varied subgroups, including Indigenous peoples.[18] Chapters 3 and 4 may be especially helpful. Approaches to addressing potential barriers to the participation of Francophones and other minority groups will have been addressed (e.g., linguistic barriers).

3.3.6 Ethics and confidentiality

Since information gathered as part of the PPC must be kept confidential, it is important for all members of the PPC team to read and sign confidentiality agreements that specify their responsibilities (see **Appendix C: Confidentiality Policy and Agreement**).

In addition, obtaining informed consent to participate in data collection is required by research ethics boards at universities, and some community organizations also have ethics committees. In order to obtain informed consent, enumerators must provide information that is relevant to the decision about whether or not to participate. Also, enumerators need to determine that the person is able to assess the risks and benefits of participation in terms of cognitive capacity.

Participation must be voluntary, which is an important consideration when approaching people who are experiencing homelessness who may think that they must participate in order to receive services or perhaps a gift of participation. Care must be taken to ensure that coercion is not a factor in participation.

Limits to confidentiality

The issue of limits to confidentiality is challenging for enumerators and participants. It is unlikely an enumerator will encounter a situation where a participant should be told about the limits to confidentiality, and this should be communicated to enumerators. However, if there is concern about the possibility that enumerators may encounter people who present risks to self or others, it is important that enumerators have the information they need to manage these situations.

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[18] Liamputtong, P. (2007). Researching the Vulnerable. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

It is ethical to inform participants in advance about the duty to report. A statement about this issue was used in a study of family homelessness in Timmins, Ontario:

"The information you provide during the interview will remain confidential. However, if you give me information that indicates you are at imminent risk to harm yourself or others or there are reasonable grounds to believe that your child is facing abuse, neglect or maltreatment, I will be obliged to inform the appropriate agency. I will tell you first that I will be doing this."

In most data collection contexts, it is not necessary to make this type of statement. However, if information is revealed that indicates a risk, there is a duty to report.[19] Within the context of PPC training, the information should be shared so that all members of the team are aware of their obligations.

Approaching people who are experiencing homelessness

Another issue to be discussed in training sessions pertains to sensitivity when approaching and recruiting people who are experiencing homelessness. It is essential that enumerators show respect for participants and use a non-judgmental approach when administering the survey. Participants can be given a handout to reinforce the importance of being respectful, in addition to being given a presentation on this issue. Being a good interviewer is a skill that is learned and reinforced by volunteering or working on the PPC.

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[19] See http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/abuseandneglect.aspx

3.3.7 Resource list for distribution

A list of resources can be compiled for distribution to participants. The list can include contact information for the types of local services available to people. It can also include 1-800 numbers for services in Ontario that may not be available in the community. The list can contain headings for different types of services such as health, mental health, crisis services, food, and accommodation.

3.3.8 Printing documents and preparing packages for enumeration

The packages will contain information letters, guides for service providers who agree to collect information for the PPC from clients (see **Appendix H: Guide for Service Providers** for a sample), consent forms, questionnaires, and envelopes. All documents must be printed well in advance of the first day of the count and packages must be assembled so that they are ready to be provided to teams of enumerators. Printing different documents in different colours assists enumerators in the field to administer the PPC survey effectively. **Box 4: Advance Preparation of Envelopes Containing Consent Forms and Gifts or Honoraria** suggests how information letters, consent forms, questionnaires, and receipts can be printed in different colours and assembled in advance into packages.

The number of copies of documents required will be larger than the number completed by participants experiencing homelessness (by a factor of three or four). It is more efficient to print additional copies of documents in advance than to fall short of the number needed during the PPC as a shortfall can hamper data collection. Even if additional packages are available at the outset of enumeration, it is difficult to anticipate how many packages will be required. A Coordinating Committee subcommittee should be ready to print additional copies and prepare envelopes for teams in the field if a shortfall occurs.

Questionnaires and envelopes should be numbered in advance. The same number (starting with one and proceeding consecutively) should be assigned to each questionnaire and each large envelope. All parts of the survey (consent form and questionnaire) can be paper clipped together and placed into a large envelope (size 9x12"). If a gift card or money gift is to be given, a receipt can be attached to each card or bill with a paper clip placed inside a smaller envelope (e.g., 5x7") along with a copy of the information letter. The smaller envelope containing the gift card clipped to a receipt, as well as a copy of the information letter, can be placed into the larger envelope. The documents containing signatures or any identifying information can be separated from the large envelope later during the data processing in order to safeguard confidentiality. Suggested instructions for administration of the package in the field are shown in **Box 4: Advance Preparation of Envelopes Containing Consent Forms and Gifts or Honoraria.**

Box 4: Advance Preparation of Envelopes Containing Consent Forms and Gifts or Honoraria

Contents of a 9x12" envelope:

- Consent forms (yellow)
- Questionnaire (green)
- Receipt for gift (blue)
- Small envelope (5x7") containing gift card with an attached receipt (blue) and copy of the consent form and information letter (white)

Instructions for enumerators:

1. The participant understands and signs the consent form (signing with an “X” or a street name is acceptable) (yellow).
2. S/he completes the questionnaire (green).
3. Place the completed questionnaire (green) and signed consent form (yellow) into the large envelope (signing with an “X” or a street name is acceptable).
4. Take the small envelope out of the large envelope and retrieve the receipt (blue) with the attached gift card or $5 bill.
5. Ask the participant to sign the receipt (signing with an “X” or a street name is acceptable).
6. Place the signed receipt (blue), along with the signed consent form (white) and the completed questionnaire (green), into the large envelope.
7. Seal the large envelope.
8. Give the gift card or $5 bill and the small envelope (containing a blank copy of the consent form and information letter) to the participant.
9. Keep all envelopes in a secure location (e.g. in a backpack) until they are collected by the coordinator or a research assistant or until they are returned to the PPC headquarters.

Box 5: Supplies for Enumeration Teams lists the supplies and reminders for enumerators. Organizing supplies in backpacks is an effective way to provide materials to the PPC data collectors. Materials must be organized at the PPC headquarters in a manner that makes restocking backpacks easy and quick to manage.

Backpacks to be used by enumerators should be prepared ahead of time so that team members can become familiar with them. Name tags can also be prepared in advance. When conducting the PPC, each member must be instructed to wear the identification tag; tags on strings that are worn around the neck, over clothing may be the most appropriate and visible, especially if the PPC is being conducted in cold weather when bulky outer clothing must be worn. First names along with the project title can be printed in a large size font on name tags. Some enumeration efforts have had team members wear distinctive clothing items to clearly identify them as enumerators. This can be considered with regard to cost and feasibility.

Box 5: Supplies for Enumeration Teams

An effective way of providing supplies to each team is to put them into backpacks. Materials can be organized in a backpack containing dividers. Backpacks also provide a hands-free way of carrying the supplies while out in the field.

The backpacks can be stocked with supplies beforehand so that they contain required materials. Supplies include:

- Maps showing areas to be covered by the team (each team can be marked with a number and in a specified colour).
- Copies of consent forms clipped to questionnaires in prepared envelopes.
- Copies of the instruction sheet.
- Contact information for designated members of the Coordinating Committee or central number to call (for questions or emergencies).
- Handouts containing lists of resources offering supports for participants.
- Supplies for team members: flashlights in good working order, clip boards, pens and pencils, and identification tags to be worn on outside clothing.
- List of reminders for team members: wear appropriate clothing (plain, no jewellery), protective outerwear, comfortable protective footwear and hats, scarfs, gloves/mitts, bring a cell phone with available calling time and a water bottle.

This section provides detailed information about how to implement a plan for data collection through the description of various tasks that must be completed in the phase prior to the actual conduct of the PPC.

3.3.9 Develop plans and strategies for debriefing

Making plans for debriefing team members is an important aspect of a PPC. Enumerators may encounter disturbing circumstances with which they are unfamiliar. As they are bound by confidentiality provisions not to discuss specifics or incidents with others not involved with the PPC, they may need to debrief with someone on the team. The coordinator or a member of the Coordinating Committee should be available for debriefing. Debriefing sessions can be planned in advance so that enumerators can participate in such meetings. Team leaders may also be trained to debrief other members of the enumeration team.

3.3.10 Managing the provision of honoraria or other incentives

If honoraria or gifts are being provided, it may be necessary to ensure accountability for the gifts. This aspect of the PPC can be managed effectively through the procedures outlined in **Box 4: Advance Preparation of Envelopes Containing Consent Forms and Gifts or Honoraria** above. An important aspect of training sessions is to emphasize the significance of managing the project resources in a responsible way.

3.3.11 Developing a schedule to coordinate the work of each team

It is important to develop a schedule to organize the work of the enumerators. This begins with obtaining information about the availability of each person who will work on the project. Free online tools such as Doodle Polls (doodle.com) can be used to assist with the task of scheduling. The number of areas to be enumerated determines the number of teams required to obtain coverage.

Based on availabilities, teams can be formed for different shifts. The need to re-configure teams is likely to arise. A strategy to help with assignment of replacements, when needed, is to identify team leaders who have responsibility for ensuring that changes in availability are communicated appropriately. All enumerators must be aware of the importance of reporting changes in their availability.

3.3.12 Strategies for identifying duplicates

A primary method for avoiding double counting is to collect data in the questionnaire to identify people who have participated in enumeration more than once. As noted above (**Unique Identifiers**), this is done by collecting information about first and last initials, exact date of birth and gender identity. These variables can be combined to create a unique but anonymized identifier. A method for de-duplicating the database is described below. During the count, enumerators must understand the importance of collecting this information during the PPC. If the information is not provided, the survey is unusable because it will be unknown whether the person was counted by a different team.

Some people may want to participate more than once in order to benefit from the gift or honoraria given for participating. The provision of gifts or honoraria is helpful to recruitment efforts as a way of recognizing people for their time and contribution. However, to prevent people participating more than once, it is very important to collect the information that allows the unique anonymized identifier to be constructed.

3.3.13 Managing the data (confidentiality, gathering forms and data storage)

Developing a system for collecting data in envelopes that are sealed after completion can help to ensure confidentiality. When in the field, enumerators administer the package and then seal the documents in an envelope which is stored in a backpack. A sound practice is to assign a PPC coordinator or project assistant the task of circulating between the various sites to collect completed packages, store them in a locked vehicle, and periodically deliver them to the PPC headquarters.

Implementing measures to maintain confidentiality and security of the data is essential.

4. CONDUCTING THE PERIOD PREVALENCE COUNT

This section explains aspects of conducting a PPC. It describes the activities and tasks that must be completed during the data collection period.

4.1 Activities already completed

Well before the date set for the enumeration, the Coordinating Committee, which includes local community partners and Indigenous partners, will have made decisions about the start and end dates of the PPC and the times of the day when the PPC activities will take place, the service locations where the count will occur, as well as outreach stations. It will also have obtained maps of the areas to be covered with sectors numbered and marked in different colours for each team.

The staff training will have addressed issues involving conducting surveys with vulnerable people and issues related to confidentiality. A list of resources will have been compiled for distribution to participants, which includes information on services such as health, mental health, crisis services, food, and accommodation.

The service locations that will be used as the sites for surveys have been determined. This includes obtaining permission from organizations to allow for the presence of enumerators during the PPC, and identifying willingness of organizations to allow staff to be enumerators. It may be possible for enumerators to set up a table or to have a team present during the PPC at agency activities, such as meals, clinics, or recreational activities.

The possibility of hosting "Magnet Events," special events taking place during the PPC that are easily accessible to people who are experiencing homelessness, will also have been explored. These events often include food or activities that will attract people who are experiencing homelessness to participate in the count.

The Coordinating Committee will have identified individuals to fill each role, such as coordinator, assistant, team leaders and team members. Handouts will have been refined so that each individual on the PPC project will have received a folder containing a copy of the PPC materials and training, so that they know how to complete the enumeration activities.

The training session provided an opportunity for data collectors to practice interviewing. Team members understand the field protocols to be followed and will be familiar with the location of the PPC headquarters, how they will get to the location, and how they will travel to their assigned sites. A schedule to organize this work will also have been developed, as well as a debriefing schedule for the enumerators.

4.2 PPC field activities and protocols

Each team must report to the PPC headquarters for its scheduled data collection on the first data collection day and each day afterward. For example, team members must not go directly to their scheduled area and begin data collection. At the PPC headquarters, they will meet with other team members and collect backpacks containing the supplies required for the shift. Each team goes to its scheduled location(s), whether an outdoor area or at a service-based site.

At the location, the enumeration team must find, approach, screen, and recruit participants for the PPC survey. Good training is key to ensuring that enumeration teams are able to find people who fit the definitions of homelessness. They should be comfortable approaching people who are experiencing homelessness and proceeding with the administration procedures. Their training will have provided suggestions for approaching people safely, while showing respect. They will know what to do when people do not want to be approached or when they refuse to answer some questions. They must do their best to implement the methodology consistently in order to enumerate the population experiencing homelessness in the areas that they have been assigned.

In outdoor areas, it may be more challenging to approach people than in service locations. People who have experience in reaching and serving people who are experiencing homelessness can take the lead with this activity while other members of the team observe and learn. In addition, enumeration teams should be given support and guidance by knowledgeable service providers (such as members of outreach teams). Enumerators must be aware of safety protocols and follow them strictly. Effective training must ensure that enumeration teams remain safe at all times and know how to react and what to do in the event that their safety is at risk.

Enumeration teams will also be assigned to service locations at which agencies have provided prior approval for the assignment of PPC enumerators. They will follow through with arrangements made with agencies and organizations to set up tables or arrange space to allow enumeration activities to take place. Signage reflecting the PPC enumeration activity is helpful to the recruitment process.

In some service locations the PPC enumeration team may be viewed as an intrusion or may be refused access for confidentiality or other reasons. However in other locations, the staff of the organization will enumerate people who are experiencing homelessness; in such cases, the role of PPC supervisors will be to offer support. The PPC coordinator or project assistant should check in periodically to determine whether any information, supplies, or supports are required.

The coordinator and designated project assistant(s) will circulate to various locations and will be available to provide assistance, problem-solve, deliver additional supplies, and collect completed survey envelopes, as needed. The secure location (e.g., in the PPC headquarters) will be used to collect and store the completed questionnaires as well as the assembled blank packages.

The days of the PPC count are busy for the Coordinating Committee, coordinator, project assistant(s) and teams. The coordinator and project assistant(s) require access to transportation to allow them to visit sites, pick up and deliver materials, and also to troubleshoot and resolve problems. Senior members of the Coordinating Committee must be available to provide support and to make decisions about challenges, should they arise. Some issues that can arise involve situations where team members become aware of people who are experiencing homelessness who are struggling and need supports, where people may want to participate more than once if gifts are being offered, or where young people may want to participate but are younger than age 16. Such situations can be addressed in training sessions, however, when in the field, enumerators may need help in deciding how to resolve the situation.

4.3 Implementing a neighbourhood survey

A door-to-door survey in neighbourhoods within the community can provide important information about hidden homelessness and histories of homelessness amongst local residents. In communities where few services are available, it may be very important to include a neighbourhood survey as part of the PPC. It also provides information about living circumstances that is not otherwise available to the PPC team. When enumerators conduct a door-to-door survey, they gather first-hand knowledge about living conditions.

4.3.1 Sampling strategy

Available maps of the community can be used to generate a systematic sample of the areas in the geographic region to be studied. These areas can be numerically sectioned, and selected using random sampling. Alternatively, criterion sampling can be used to select low income areas and neighbourhoods. In addition, sampling methods can be combined to obtain a random sample of neighbourhoods, while oversampling low income areas because of the assumed higher risk of homelessness in those regions.

A cluster sampling method can subsequently be used so that a random sample of sections can first be selected, followed by a systematic sample of individual residences in each section can be identified for the survey (the sampling units are individual residences). Depending on the size of the jurisdiction, approximately 25 per cent of residential streets may provide a sufficient sample for a door-to-door community survey.[20]

A team of project assistants must be trained to gather data in order to conduct the neighbourhood survey, ideally within the same timeframe as the service-based data collection. However, it is acceptable to continue the data collection in neighbourhoods for a longer time period as long as information required to de-duplicate the resulting database is collected. When sampling a section, the enumerators must be paired together to form teams of two. The teams are given a pre-determined systematic sample of households to canvas, such as every fourth door on the street or multi-unit residential complex.

4.3.2 Procedure

One member of the team explains the purpose of the survey and outlines ethical considerations (e.g., voluntary participation, withdrawal, confidentiality, anonymity). If the resident agrees to hear more about the survey, she or he is given a letter and consent form which explains the project, the ethical principles, and contact information. The structured interview is then conducted by one team member while the other can record the address and basic demographic information about the participant (e.g., age, gender). As part of the survey, respondents can be asked if there is anyone living in the residence who fits the definition of homelessness. The same data collection tool used in the service-based study must be used in this phase of the study so that the same information about the demographics of people experiencing homelessness collected in the service provider count of the PPC is also gathered for the population

[20] McMillan, T., Cubbin, C., Parmenter, B., Medina, A. & Lee, R. (2010). Neighbourhood sampling: how many streets must an auditor walk? International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 7: 20 http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/7/1/20

experiencing hidden homelessness. In door-to-door surveys in northern Ontario, the response rate was 62 per cent. Women were more likely to answer the door and to agree to participate than were men.

4.4 Monitoring the PPC

4.4.1 Progress, coverage of team members, and problem-solving

The PPC coordinator and project assistant(s) must be made aware that they will be extremely busy during the scheduled timeframe for the PPC. The duties of visiting sites, monitoring progress through briefings from the teams, delivering supplies, and collecting completed packages fill up shifts. Due to some turnover in staffing on the teams, it is helpful to be overstaffed rather than understaffed to plan for the unexpected.

The need for problem-solving will likely arise. While serious problems are unlikely to occur, there can be some challenges in approaching or recruiting people who are experiencing homelessness, resolving interpersonal issues between enumerators, or unexpected changes at assigned sites. The coordinator and members of the Coordinating Committee should be prepared to receive calls or texts that require intervention. The weather can pose challenges if it is hot, cold, or wet. The appropriate decisions must be taken to ensure the safety and security of teams.

4.4.2 Effectiveness of both interview and self-administered questionnaire methods

The PPC method requires face-to-face interviews with people who are experiencing homelessness. This involves locating, approaching, screening, and recruiting. The population experiencing homelessness is diverse and includes people who have excellent reading and writing skills, in addition to people who have literacy challenges. Following the screening, some people prefer to self-administer the questionnaire. Having clipboards and pencils/pens available enables people to choose whether they want to complete the questionnaire themselves or have it administered to them. Giving people the choice can address the issue of literacy without having to ask sensitive questions.

In instances where people choose to self-administer the questionnaire, it will need to be checked. Enumerators must balance people's right to refrain from answering some questions with the importance of collecting complete data. Potential participants should be informed that the information for de-duplication is essential. This part of the questionnaire must always be recorded by enumerators, as the data for an individual will not be usable if the de-duplication information is missing.

4.4.3 Participation of team members and replacing as necessary

The conduct of enumerators in the field can be observed by other team members. If it is found that some conduct is unacceptable, this must be addressed, as it is in any work setting. Unacceptable conduct can occur with regard to the way in which people who are experiencing homelessness are approached and addressed. Behaviour that causes harm to others must be prevented or corrected. The training must address this possibility and enumerators must be informed that any disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated. In the event that difficult or problematic conduct is observed, it must be reported to a designated person and addressed as soon as possible. If needed, corrective action may require replacing the person in question.

4.4.4 Distribution of gifts, honoraria, or incentives

The resources available for a PPC are limited. If gifts of thanks or honoraria are provided, enumerators must be made aware that they are accountable for managing the distribution appropriately and according to the PPC protocols developed for the project. Accountability may involve a requirement for participants to sign or initial in some way to indicate that they have received the gift. A procedure is outlined in **Box 4: Advance Preparation of Envelopes Containing Consent Forms and Gifts or Honoraria** indicating how the distribution can occur smoothly in the field.

Distributing enumeration materials and monitoring the need for additional deliveries of materials

In order to ensure that enumeration teams have sufficient supplies with them, each person can be provided with a stocked backpack. Therefore, each member of the team has a stock of blank packages for the shift. An unexpected peak in the number of people accessing a service can result in a shortage of supplies in the field. Staying in touch with the PPC headquarters to give notice of potential shortfalls is a way to deal with this possibility. A coordinator or project assistant can deliver additional supplies. In a PPC conducted in Sudbury in early 2015, the number of people accessing services was consistently higher than expected in some locations but lower than expected in others. The PPC coordinator and a project assistant constantly delivered packages of enumeration materials to some sites. If supplies run short, it is impossible to continue with enumeration activities, so re-supplying teams is an essential task.

4.5 Issues to consider when involving Indigenous peoples in PPCs

In the data collection phase of a PPC project, those involved with implementing the project should recall the fundamental point that nearly all data collection completed in the past was done by non-Indigenous people. Indigenous peoples have often regarded such projects with some concern or mistrust. Overcoming this problematic history is a challenge for every group conducting a PPC. The primary advice given by Indigenous writers (such as Kovach, 2009) is to work at establishing and maintaining reciprocity and trust throughout the process.

Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles and guidance on the ethics of projects involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada[21] applies to the data collection aspects of the

[21] http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter9-chapitre9/

PPC. All groups conducting a PPC must plan and execute the enumeration in a way that does not breach ethical principles. In particular, the ethical principle specifying the importance of conducting activities in a collaborative and participatory manner should be interpreted to mean that Indigenous peoples must be consulted and, ideally, be involved in data collection when approaching, screening, recruiting, and interviewing Indigenous peoples.

4.6 Follow-up activities required to complete enumeration

A number of activities take place at the end of each day of the count. These involve checking with each member of the team, collecting and confirming and safely storing surveys and forms, and debriefing and resolving any outstanding issues.

4.6.1 Collecting all completed questionnaires

Given the effort required to collect information in the PPC, it is crucial to ensure that all completed questionnaires have been collected. This involves a check with all members of teams and with all agency sites where data collection took place. The training of enumeration teams should include instructions for delivering completed questionnaires to the PPC headquarters or giving them to the coordinator or a project assistant. A system for tracking the envelopes/packages should be developed using the numbers written on each envelope. The tracking sheets can indicate, by a check mark, that the envelope/package has been received at the PPC headquarters. The blank (uncompleted) packages will also have to be received and checked.

If any completed surveys are lost, the participants' and team members' time will have been wasted as the lost questionnaire data will not be processed. Therefore, the final efforts to retrieve the questionnaires are worthwhile. After all retrieval has been completed, the next steps are to sort, review, and process the data (see sections below).

4.6.2 Debriefing team members

In addition to collecting and confirming the completeness of all completed surveys and forms, enumerators are debriefed. Arrangements will have been made in advance for the location and scheduling of debriefing sessions. Debriefing can be done by team leaders at the end of every shift.

There are many reasons why team members may need to be debriefed during the PPC. Some enumerators may want to discuss questions that they find difficult to ask during administration or responses they found upsetting. Some individuals may become upset if they are unfamiliar with the circumstances of people who are experiencing homelessness. They may hear about challenges of living outdoors, food insecurity, violence, “banning” from services, or other difficult experiences of the participants. Enumerators may also want to share rewarding experiences that they had. The ability to speak to someone experienced in debriefing is important. Debriefing should be done daily. Members of the Coordinating Committee and team leaders may be asked to take on these responsibilities.

5. FOLLOWING ENUMERATION - DATA ENTRY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

This section outlines critical issues pertaining to sorting, coding, and inputting data collected through a PPC. If envelopes are used to seal in questionnaires and other documents, the first steps for sorting them involve recording on tracking sheets (to be provided by the Coordinating Committee) the number placed on the outside of the envelope. The tracking sheets will have columns for check marks indicating that the particular questionnaire (marked with the same number as on the envelope) was received at the PPC headquarters. The envelopes containing completed questionnaires must be opened and placed in numerical order. Consent forms and other documents must be separated from the questionnaires, sorted appropriately, and stored securely.

5.1 Screening phase of data coding and entry

Each questionnaire should be reviewed prior to coding. If the data required for de-duplication was not provided, the questionnaire must be set aside as there will be no way to ascertain whether the person completed the questionnaire more than once.

An important aspect of the review is to consider questions about meeting the definition of homelessness. If it is clear that an individual who completed the questionnaire was not experiencing homelessness, the questionnaire should be set aside for a second reviewer or the Coordinating Committee to examine and to decide whether to include it in the database.

The review will check for the presence of any extraneous notes or information provided by participants on the questionnaires. In prior PPCs in northern Ontario, some participants have written extensive notes about their experiences. The questionnaire number must be noted on any extra pieces of paper included with the questionnaire. These can be examined later. The Coordinating Committee may decide to identify questionnaires that have extensive notes on the questionnaires or attached to them for further review.

Any information that is obviously transposed should be corrected using a different coloured pen or pencil. This practice will make clear any new marks on the questionnaires that were made after data collection. The check will also indicate whether the questionnaire answers are legible, that each question requiring only one answer has only one response, how many questions were skipped, and whether it is clear that there has been a valid response to the survey.

Decisions must be made about how to handle questionnaires that have issues with the responses. Following the check, the anonymous questionnaires will be ready for coding.

5.2 Strategies for coding, inputting, and cleaning data

A first step in the coding process is to code any open-ended responses. A codebook must be created for structured content analysis. It is beyond the scope of this guide to include detailed instructions for coding, but there are many guides available to assist with this.

The codebook should also contain the codes for each variable. However, good questionnaire design can ensure that each question has been pre-coded. This allows for data entry without coding closed-ended questions. Any codes that are applied to questionnaires during the coding process, including new codes, will be included in the code book. Every response will have a numeric code after the coding process has been completed.

5.3 Examining the quality of data, data entry, and de-duplication

Software for data entry should be used to enter all questionnaires into a database. Many projects use database software such as Microsoft Access or Excel, or software such as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). The Coordinating Committee should select the software to be used.

Data should be entered into a database. A unique identifier should be constructed by combining information from the participant's initials, date of birth, and gender identity. Once it has been entered, it will be possible to sort the data and determine whether there are individuals in the database who have participated more than once. De-duplication procedures are required to identify and mark cases as duplicates. It is recommended that, when duplicates are identified, the original questionnaires be reviewed to determine that they are the same person. The questionnaire with the most complete information should be retained and the other questionnaire placed in the duplicate file. The unused questionnaire should not be destroyed. The questionnaire that is retained for coding must be marked "Original" and the unused one marked "Duplicate of number X." They must be properly referenced to each other by marking the identification number on each questionnaire the number of the matching (duplicate) questionnaire(s) from the tracking sheets. If the same individual has participated more than twice, each duplicate will be marked with the identification number of the original.

5.4 Cleanup phase of data entry

Once data have been entered into a database, it is possible to complete checks based on frequency distributions. These activities can include searching for data entry errors and range checks. Following data entry, a second project assistant should check the database to ensure that each questionnaire has been correctly entered. Any discrepancies between the responses marked on the questionnaire and the numbers entered must be corrected. Out of range values may indicate data entry errors or actual responses that have been written on the questionnaires that are outside of the response options given on the questionnaires. This commonly occurs, and decisions must be made about how to handle such values. In general, the database must be cleaned to be consistent with responses given by the participants. Contingency cleaning and logic checks are another form of data cleaning activities. Experts should be consulted about engaging in such checks and how to conduct data cleaning.

Additional information about post-count activities is included in the Point-in-Time Toolkit.[22]

5.5 Involving Indigenous peoples in data entry, interpretation and dissemination

Many Indigenous peoples have research expertise and training, and should be involved in varied roles pertaining to the data entry process. A key issue to consider is how the PPC can strengthen the capacity of Indigenous peoples and communities. The PPC can be a good opportunity to involve Indigenous peoples as project leaders and assistants. The discussion of OCAP principles by the First Nations Information Governance Committee[23] contains information about the significance of involving Indigenous communities in the interpretation of project results. Indigenous peoples should be involved in reviewing and participating in the interpretation of findings in reports and the presentation of data. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners can be involved by reviewing or validating findings, correcting any cultural inaccuracies, and ensuring that Indigenous community members are respected. Collaborative, participatory, community-based data collection guidelines specify that participation of Indigenous peoples covers all phases of the project. Indigenous peoples must be consulted about the role they will play in the interpretation and dissemination phases of the PPC.

[22] Link to the Homelessness Strategy post count activities found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html#TOC8

[23] Link to OCAP principles found here: http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html

6. REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Homelessness

Ontario. (2015). A Place to Call Home: Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
Link to the report: www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=11038

Enumeration Guides and Resources

Ontario's Guidelines for Service Manager Local Homeless Enumeration
http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page15240.aspx

Canada. (2016). Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Employment and Social Development Canada.
Link to the guide: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/point-in-time.html

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. Point-in-Time Toolkit.
Link to the toolkit: http://www.homelesshub.ca/pitcounttoolkit

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2014). Point-In-Time Count Methodology Guide.
Link to the guide: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4036/point-in-time-count-methodology-guide

20,000 Homes Campaign Registry Week Toolkit
Link to the toolkit: http://www.20khomes.ca/resources/registry-week-toolkit/

Ethics and Practices of Data Collection with Indigenous Peoples

First Nations Information Governance Committee. (2007). OCAP: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession. First Nations Information Governance Committee, Assembly of First Nations. Ottawa: National Aboriginal Health Organization.
Link to OCAP principles: http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html

Kovach, M. (2009). Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ethics and Practices of Data Collection with Multicultural Groups

Liamputtong, P. (2007). Researching the Vulnerable. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Safety Protocol

Social Research Association. (n.d.) Code of Safety for Social Researchers.
Link to the code: http://the-sra.org.uk/sra_resources/safety-code

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTER TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

LOGO(S)

[date]

Dear Service Provider,

Re: Period Prevalence Count of Homelessness in [name of community]

[date of the project, if known]

In January 2015, Ontario established an Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness to provide advice on how to achieve the goal of ending homelessness under the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Panel made a number of recommendations including that the province require local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness. In December 2016, the province passed legislation that requires all Service Managers to conduct an enumeration of people experiencing homelessness in their service area. Enumeration data will help the province and local governments better understand the scale and nature of homelessness to better prevent, reduce, and end it.

In collaboration with the [name of organization], a community team is conducting a Period Prevalence Count (PPC) of homelessness in [name of community] and outlying areas. We are asking you to support this project by [attending a meeting to establish a Coordinating Committee OR participating in the collection of information on the homeless and near homeless people using services of your agency].

The objective of the project is to collect information about homeless and near homeless individuals who are accessing services in [name of community]. The results will be used for service planning for the next [number] years. The project will also enable the community to gain a better understanding of the issues related to forms of homelessness including absolute and at-risk individuals, chronic and episodic homelessness. The results will be available to local agencies, local government, and the general public through a report that will be presented in a community forum.

We will be using an existing data collection tool with questions developed by the Government of Ontario. The PPC study will allow us to count the number of homeless people and provide information on basic characteristics. To ensure accuracy, we are asking all agencies to conduct this count over the same one-week period, [potential dates]. A separate data collection will take place at food banks during their days of operation.

Members of the PPC team will contact you to discuss this project and answer any questions on the data collection tool and methodology. For further information please do not hesitate to contact the PPC Coordinator via email at homeless@xxxxxxx.xx or at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

This project relies on involvement from all service providers in [name of community] in order to obtain accurate information about homeless people locally and to plan services for homeless individuals. With your help, we can learn more about and respond to homelessness in [name of community]. Thank you in advance for your help with this important project.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Chair

Period Prevalence Count in [name of community]

APPENDIX B: VOLUNTEER OR JOB POSTING

LOGO(S)

VOLUNTEER OR STAFF JOB POSTING

[Organization name] is committed to equity in employment and encourages applications from all qualified applicants including women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities, and persons with disabilities.
Coordinators with the Period Prevalence Count (PPC) in [name of community] are seeking to hire temporary volunteers or staff to conduct a period prevalence count on poverty and homelessness. During the PPC, the volunteers/staff will be placed at varied locations and agencies and will administer short surveys to service users/homeless people.

Location: [place], Ontario
Date: [dates]
Hours are flexible and based on the employee's availability. Bilingualism and experience working with vulnerable populations are assets.

Salary: [specify or delete for volunteers]
Please email a current resumé to:
PPC Project Coordinator
xxx-xxx-xxxx extension xxxx
PPC_Coordinator@email.ca

AFFICHAGE D'EMPLOI

[Nom de l'organisme] souscrit au principe de l'équité en matière d'emploi et encourage toutes les personnes qualifiées, y compris les femmes, les Autochtones, les membres des minorités visibles et les personnes handicapées à poser leur candidature.
Les coordonnateurs/trices du Décompte sur une période donnée(DPD) à [nom de la communauté] cherchent du personnel temporaire pour mener un décompte sur une période donnée sur la pauvreté et le sans-abrisme. Les personnes embauchées seront placées dans des agences de services sociaux et aideront les utilisateurs de services à répondre à un bref questionnaire.
Lieu : [Endroit], Ontario
Dates : [dates]
Les ***heures de travail*** sont flexibles et dépendent de la disponibilité de l'employé. Le bilinguisme et une expérience de travail préalable auprès de populations vulnérables sont des atouts.
Salaire : [Indiquer ou supprimer pour des volontaires.]
Prière de faire parvenir votre curriculum vitae à jour à:
Coordonnateur du projet
xxx-xxx-xxxx poste xxxx
DPD_Coordinator@email.ca

APPENDIX B1: SAMPLE EMAIL TO VOLUNTEERS OR PAID STAFF

LOGO(S)

[date]

Dear Candidate,

Re: Project Assistant Training Session

I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected for the position of [**Project Assistant or Enumerator**] [temporary staff or volunteer] for the Period Prevalence Count (PPC) in [name of community].

The primary responsibilities are as follow:

- To attend the training session to learn about various aspects of the PPC.
- To conduct short surveys with homeless people during the PPC.
- To work in a team or pair during the PPC.
- To work flexible hours during the PPC.
- Other responsibilities will be assigned as needed.

The information regarding the training session is as follow.

Date: **[date]**

Time: **[start and end time].**

Venue: **[address of location]**

Please do not hesitate to contact [name] at [contact information] to confirm your attendance.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Chair

Period Prevalence Count in [name of community]

APPENDIX C: CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND AGREEMENT

LOGO(S)

Period Prevalence Count of Homelessness in [name of community] [date of the study]

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The confidentiality of information given by the project participants must be respected in the following ways:

1) No information about the participants involved in this project will be released to other agencies, organizations, or individuals without written consent of the project director.
2) Information about participants' views or personal lives that comes to the attention of research team through their participation in the research project must not be discussed without written consent of the project director.
3) All data will be stored in a secure location and access to the data is restricted to research team members.
4) Research team members will follow the guidelines for maintaining confidentiality of the data collected for the research project.
5) Information that emerges from the research which relates to legal responsibilities and the limits to confidentiality must be discussed with the project director/coordinator.
6) All research team members must agree to follow these practices, conduct project activities in an ethical manner, and sign this Confidentiality Policy.

Research team member’s name (print): ______________________________

Research team member’s signature:_________________________________

Witness name (print):____

Witness signature:____

Date: ________________________

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FOR PPC

LOGO(S)

Project Title: Period Prevalence Count of Homelessness in [name of community]

Project Director:	[Name and affiliation]
Coordinator:	[Name and affiliation]
Project Assistant:	[Name and affiliation]
Community partner:	[Name and affiliation]

In collaboration with the [name of organization], a community team is conducting a Period Prevalence Count (PPC) on homelessness in [name of community] and outlying areas. The data collection is being planned to take place from [date] to [date]. It is intended to provide information that will lead to the development of policies and changes that will support people experiencing homelessness more effectively.

I understand that the project will take approximately 10 to 20 minutes of my time and will involve participating in a brief interview to complete a questionnaire. If I do not want to participate or answer some of the questions, I am free to say so. I can also complete the questionnaire by myself.

I understand that:

- This is an ongoing project involving a PPC team that includes [service managers, community partners, volunteers and student assistants]. The results will be analyzed and published by members of the PPC team.
- Discussing or sharing my views and identifying my needs might cause some anxiety and/or fatigue.
- My participation in this project is strictly voluntary.
- If I want, I can show my consent to participating in the project by signing with an X or street name, rather than my name.
- I have the right to withdraw at any time and my relationship with people and agencies supporting me will not be affected if I do so.
- My identity will not be revealed at any time through the research activities or reports.
- All information I provide will be held strictly confidential.
- The information from this project will be entered into a database and used for ongoing research and education about homelessness.
- The results of the project will be provided to service providers serving homeless

people and policy makers and will be posted on the project website at www.website.ca

- A community meeting will be held to share the results and develop recommendations.

If I have any questions or concerns about the project or about being a participant, I can call [name] at xxx-xxx-xxxx or email name@email.ca

I agree to participate in the PPC and I have received a copy of this consent form. I have also received a list of services in [name of community] that support homeless people and people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

DATE: ____

NAME: ____

SIGNATURE: ____

WITNESS: ____

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE RECEIPT FORM

LOGO(S)

[Name of Place] - Period Prevalence Count

Gift/Honorarium

Date of participation: (Circle day and month):

[Date on day 1]	[Date on day 8]
[Date on day 2]	[Date on day 9]
[Date on day 3]	[Date on day 10]
[Date on day 4]	[Date on day 11]
[Date on day 5]	[Date on day 12]
[Date on day 6]	[Date on day 13]
[Date on day 7]	[Date on day 14]

I, (NAME) have received [item or amount] to recognize my participation in the [name of community] Period Prevalence Count.

Participant (Name): ____

Participant (Signature): ____

Witness (Name): ____

Witness (Signature):____

Note: Participants can sign with a street name or other symbol if they choose.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE SAFETY PROTOCOL

A Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers (developed by the Social Research Association, United Kingdom)

Introduction to the Code

This is the Social Research Association's Code of Practice for the safety of social researchers, particularly those conducting research in the field on their own. The code focuses on safety in interviewing or observation in private settings but is of relevance to working in unfamiliar environments in general.

There are a number of dimensions to the risk that social researchers may face when involved in close social interaction:

- Risk of physical threat or abuse.
- Risk of psychological trauma, as a result of actual or threatened violence or the nature of what is disclosed during the interaction.
- Risk of being in a compromising situation, in which there might be accusations of improper behaviour.
- Increased exposure to risks of everyday life and social interaction, such as road accidents and infectious illness.
- Risk of causing psychological or physical harm to others.

The Code is designed for research funders, employers, research managers and researchers carrying out fieldwork. The aims are to point out safety issues which need to be considered in the design and conduct of social research in the field and to encourage procedures to reduce the risk. The intention is not to be alarmist about potential dangers but to minimise anxieties or insecurities which might affect the quality of the research.

The Code covers:

- Clarifying responsibilities.
- Budgeting for safety.
- Planning for safety in research design.
- Risk assessment.
- Preparing for fieldwork.
- Setting up fieldwork.
- Interview precautions.
- Maintaining contact.

- Conduct of interviews.
- Strategies for handling risk situations.
- Safety of respondents.
- Debriefing and support after the event.
- Making guidelines stick.

Clarifying responsibilities

Employers of researchers, generally universities or research institutes, have a 'duty of care' towards their employees under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act, extended by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations which are supported by a European Union Framework Directive. The European Directive provides a code covering elements of guidance such as:

- Avoid risk altogether.
- Combat risks at source.
- Adapt work to the individual.
- Make sure employees understand what they need to do.
- Ensure that an understanding of risk is integrated within the organisation's overall policy framework.

Although a personnel officer might legally stand as the employer, the duty of care might be regarded as reverting to the research manager who might be, for example, either the head of the research unit or the grant-holder.

Safety at work is a dual responsibility of the employer and the employee. A number of situations can arise in the conduct of social research where the responsibility for safety might be contested, if, for example, a researcher has to stay overnight in a hotel while on fieldwork.

Budgeting for safety

All research proposals and funding agreements should include the costs of ensuring the safety of researchers working on the project. It may be helpful to distinguish infrastructure costs which are apportioned to all projects, from costs particular to the project.

Infrastructure costs might cover training on risk assessment, communication aids, personal or vehicle insurance coverage, a named member of staff responsible for fieldwork safety, staffing a fieldwork contact point. It will be important to clarify which of these costs fall to the employer and which are to be borne by the funder.

Project costs might include extra fieldwork time (working in pairs, providing a 'shadow' or reporting back to base), taxis or hired cars, appropriate overnight accommodation, special training and counselling for staff researching sensitive topics. These extra costs elements may need to be discussed with funders as the proposal is being drafted.

The research institute should be prepared to devote resources to safety issues: raising awareness; clarifying responsibilities and lines of accountability; creating and implementing procedures; carrying out regular reviews.

Planning for safety in research design

Researcher safety can be built into the design of proposals.

- Choice of methods - include safety in the balance when weighing up methods to answer the research questions. Challenge research specifications which take for granted face-to-face interviews in potentially risky sites.
- Choice of interview site - consider whether home interviews are necessary for the research. Interviews in a public place may be acceptable and safer substitutes; for example, meeting a working person during the lunch break rather than at home in the evening.
- Staffing - consider designs where it is possible to use pairs of researchers to conduct an interview or to interview two members of the household simultaneously.
- Choice of researchers - consider whether the research topic requires the recruitment of researchers with particular attributes or experience. Research managers may have to decide against using existing staff if the content of the interview will arouse strong feelings or cause distress.
- Recruitment methods - where possible, design methods of recruitment to allow for prior telephone contact. This provides an opportunity to assess the respondent and their circumstances.
- Time-tabling - take account of the tiring effects of spells of intensive fieldwork. A more relaxed schedule may mean that researchers are more alert to risk and better able to handle incidents.

Assessing risk in the fieldwork site

Once the fieldwork site has been selected try to reconnoitre the area before fieldwork starts. Questions to ask include:

- Is there reliable local public transport?
- Are reputable taxi firms easy to access?
- Is it safe to use private cars and leave them in the area?
- Is there a local rendezvous or contact point for researchers?
- Are there appropriately priced and comfortable hotels within easy reach?
- Are there local tensions to be aware of such as strong cultural, religious or racial divisions?
- What do local sources, such as the police, say about risks in the research territory?
- It may be useful to prepare the ground by:
    - Meeting local 'community leaders' to explain the research and gain their endorsement.
    - Informing other significant local actors, such as statutory and community organisations in touch with potential interviewees
    - Notifying the local police in writing about the purpose and conduct of the research and asking for a contact telephone number.

Risk and respondents

The topics for discussion in many social research interviews - for example, poverty, unemployment, relationship breakdown, social exclusion, bereavement and ill-health - may provoke strong feelings in respondents and prompt angry reactions. Some research may be concerned explicitly with phenomena where the threat of violence is likely - investigating criminal behaviour, working across sectarian divides or studying homophobic violence, for example.

Some respondents may present a greater possibility of risk than others. Some research involves people who have a history of psychological disturbance or violent behaviour. If such characteristics are known in advance, the researcher and supervisor should be as fully briefed as possible on the risks involved and understand the precautions they need to undertake.

Issues of race, culture and gender may impact significantly on the safety of researchers. Lone female researchers are generally more vulnerable than lone males. More orthodox cultures may be hostile towards them. Certain racialised contexts may make the conduct of non-ethnically-matched interviewing more fraught than otherwise. Situations of these kinds may be avoided by contacting respondents in advance to ask about preferences and expectations.

Setting up fieldwork

Wherever possible, interviewers should try to obtain prior information about the characteristics of selected respondents, their housing and living environments.

- Study a map of the area for clues as to its character. Look for schools, post offices, railway stations and other hubs of activity. Think about escape routes from dense housing areas.
- If doubts about safety are indicated, reconnoitre the vicinity in advance to assess the need for accompanied interviews, shadowing and pre-arranged pick-ups.
- If the design allows, telephone in advance to assess the respondent and enquire whether any other members of the household will be at home.
- If 'cold-calling' in a potentially risky area, travel in pairs to set up interviews.
- Arrange alternative venues, already assessed for safety, if security is in doubt.

Interview precautions

Research managers should instruct interviewers to take precautions to minimise risk in the interview situation and ensure that help is at hand. The following practical tips might be considered.

- Avoid going by foot if feeling vulnerable. Use convenient public transport, private car or a reputable taxi firm. Plan the route in advance and always take a map.
- Try to avoid appearing out of place. Dress inconspicuously and unprovocatively, taking account of cultural norms. Equipment and valuable items should be kept out of sight.
- Where 'cold calling', assess the situation before beginning the interview and if in doubt re-arrange the interview for when a colleague can be present. Plan what to say on entry phones to maintain control while protecting confidentiality.
- Try to make sure you are seen entering an interviewee's home. Greet porters or caretakers, ask in a local shop for directions or use other ways of ensuring your presence is noted. But take care not to compromise interviewee confidentiality.

- In multi-storey buildings, think about safety when choosing lifts or staircases.
- If in the light of prior information there is any doubt about personal safety, a co-researcher or paid staff member should wait in the dwelling or in a visible position outside. If waiting outside, a system for communicating needs to be arranged in advance.
- Carry a screech alarm or other device to attract attention in an emergency.
- Let the interviewee know that you have a schedule and that others know where you are. Stratagems include arranging for a colleague or taxi to collect you; making phone calls; arranging for calls to be made to you. Leave your mobile phone switched on.
- Assess the layout and the quickest way out. If interviewing in a private dwelling, stay in the communal rooms.
- Always carry identification, a badge or a card, authenticated by the head of the research organisation and giving the researcher's work address and telephone number. Respondents should be invited to check the authenticity.

Maintaining contact

It is essential to establish reliable lines of communication between the usual office base and the fieldwork site. The research manager should designate a responsible person at the office-base fully briefed on the research team's schedule and clearly instructed on when and how to take action.

The main elements of a fieldwork contact system are as follows:

- Details of the researcher's itinerary and appointment times - including names, addresses and telephone numbers of people being interviewed or called and overnight accommodation details - should be left with a designated person at the office base or a temporary fieldwork base (taking care about interviewee confidentiality).
- The researcher should notify base of any changes during fieldwork.
- Fieldworkers should carry mobile phones so that base can contact them.
- Where more than one researcher is working in the site they should meet or communicate by mobile phone at pre-arranged times. If such an arrangement is not kept, the other researcher should inform the responsible person at base.

Ideally, at the end of the day's work a telephone call should be placed informing base that the schedule of work has been completed. This may require the designated person being on duty outside normal office hours to receive the call or check for recorded messages, and to follow-up if no call arrives. Or the employer might contract with an alarm service.

If the researcher prefers to call in to a household member or friend, then this should be agreed with the employer, whose responsibility it is to ensure researcher safety.

Conduct of interview

Despite taking precautions, risk situations may arise in the course of the interview. Issues in race, culture and gender may prompt hostility.

To avoid engaging in inappropriate or provocative behaviour researchers:

- Should be briefed on cultural norms.
- Need to be aware of the gender dynamics of interactions.
- Need to appreciate the use of body language and the acceptability or not of physical contact.
- Need to establish the right social distance - neither over-familiar nor too detached.

Strategies for handling risk situations

Employers should ensure that researchers are trained in techniques for handling threats, abuse or compromising situations, and research managers could consider ways of refreshing their knowledge.

Carrying mobile phones and/or personal alarms may be helpful, as long as these are considered only as part of a comprehensive safety policy. Over-reliance on mobile phones and alarms must not substitute for proper training in inter-personal skills.

Researchers should always carry enough money for both expected and unexpected expenses, including the use of taxis. It is sensible not to appear to be carrying a lot of money, however, and to carry a phone.

Household dogs may make some researchers uncomfortable. It is reasonable to ask the owner to put the dog in another room until the researcher has left.

Researchers should also be prepared to deal with the effects of the interview on respondents, and be ready to spot signs that the respondent is becoming upset or angry. Often, the researcher's training means that strong feelings of this kind can be acknowledged and contained, but there may be occasions when it is more sensible to end the discussion and leave. Such a withdrawal should be decisive and quick, offering an appropriate reason. A lost interview may be made up, if this seems appropriate after discussion with the research manager.

Debriefing and support after the event

When research fieldwork is complete, it is helpful for researchers and their supervisors to reflect on their adherence to the guidelines and raise any difficulties encountered in meeting them. Some research institutes routinely conduct project reviews, and these should include an assessment of fieldwork safety. Researchers should be encouraged to cover fieldwork safety dimensions in reporting their research findings to funders.

If incidents have occurred, these should be recorded. Serious incidents should be discussed with safety officers or professional associations. If violent incidents have occurred which may have some impact on the well-being of the researcher, these should be reported to the employer's health and safety officer and to the local police force.

If incidents arise during the course of the fieldwork, these need to be dealt with straight away for the well-being of the researcher. The trauma of violence or the threat of violence may require structured support through counselling or the use of victim support organisations, or by providing leave of absence (taken as sickness leave). If the fieldwork is not complete, there may be a need for particular forms of support to enable the researcher to undertake any remaining work.

Appropriate debriefing - which should also protect the confidentiality of the respondent - may also help the researcher come to terms in a healthy way with the incident and feel free to continue his/her work programme, as well as providing further material to inform the development of safety codes.

Making guidelines stick

Ways of making guidelines stick will include awareness raising among both new and experienced staff.

- Safety issues should feature in the training of all new research staff, and guidelines should be included in induction packs and staff handbooks.
- There is a need for continual reminders and reinforcement throughout a researcher's career.
- Supervisors and research managers may need to take staff through procedures with each new fieldwork period.
- Support staff responsible for setting up fieldwork arrangements should be trained in the procedures.

There may be role for safety officers and outside bodies, to visit occasionally to bring fresh perspectives and maintain interest in issues.

It will always be important to remind research staff that if they ignore their employers' policies and procedures for health and safety at work, they may be considered negligent should an incident occurs.

The authors are grateful to all those individuals and organisations which provided comments and ideas or simply encouraged us to write this code.

Some further reading on the subject

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APPENDIX G: SAMPLE AGENDA

LOGO(S)

PPC Training [Date and location]

1. Introductions
2. Project summary, purpose and dates of the PPC
3. PPC contact information
4. Definition of homelessness
5. Time frame for the PPC, maps, tracking sheet and accountability for envelopes
6. Confidentiality policy and form
7. Training document: ethics and consent to participate, cultural sensitivity and cultural safety, field notes
8. Guidelines/instructions for conducting the survey
9. Survey package: script, consent form, roles and task list, questionnaire, receipt for gift or honorarium, procedure for large and small envelopes
10. Outreach to specific groups
11. Safety protocol for enumerators
12. Debriefing for enumerators
13. Supplies
14. Role playing and practicing in pairs
15. Work report template (staff and volunteers) and reporting back to PPC Headquarters
16. Timesheets and work report information
17. Additional opportunities for assisting with data processing, data entry, data cleaning and reporting

If hiring staff:

18. Payroll – direct deposit form
19. Tax – Federal
20. Tax – Provincial
21. Other

Thank you for helping us with this PPC.

Name, PPC Director, contact information

Name, PPC Coordinator, contact information

Name, PPC Research Assistant, contact information

APPENDIX H: GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

LOGO(S)

HOMELESSNESS IN [NAME OF COMMUNITY]:

PERIOD PREVALENCE COUNT (PPC)

[DATE]

GUIDE FOR COMPLETION OF THE PPC SURVEY

WHAT: A project to gather information from people experiencing homeless using a questionnaire.

WHEN: The project will take place between [dates].

PURPOSE: To get a count [7-day or time] of people experiencing homeless.

DATA GATHERING: To be completed by agency staff or by PPC staff or volunteers (see our contact information below).

Background
In January 2015, Ontario established an Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness to provide advice on how to achieve the goal of ending homelessness under the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Panel made a number of recommendations including that the province require local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness. In December 2016, the province passed legislation that requires all Service Managers to conduct an enumeration of people experiencing homelessness in their service area. Enumeration data will help the province and local governments better understand the scale and nature of homelessness to better prevent, reduce and end it.

Definitions of homelessness
The PPC takes into account people who are: (1) unsheltered (absolutely homeless and not staying in a shelter), (2) emergency sheltered (staying in an emergency shelter), (3) provisionally accommodated ('couch surfing' in unsustainable circumstances, overcrowded housing to avoid the streets, domestic violence, sleeping in abandoned buildings, living in temporary accommodation due to evacuations) and can be designed to include those who are at risk of homelessness (e.g., due to economic hardship, precarious employment, barriers to opportunity, and a lack of affordable housing). It is important to recognize that extra effort must be taken to include people living with the risk of homelessness and hidden homelessness.

Living situations that constitute hidden homelessness

Definitions of homelessness, especially important for rural, northern and small communities to recognize, should include hidden homelessness as it has been reported that a large proportion of the homeless population is “invisible” to service providers and researchers. The forms of hidden homelessness may include (1) staying with family or friends, (2) tied accommodation such as domestic service, survival sex or partnering, (3) substandard accommodation, (4) temporary accommodation, (5) squatting, (6) institutionalization leading to homelessness upon release and (7) outdoor accommodation in forests, encampments, or camps.

Chronic and episodic homelessness

According to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), “**chronically homeless** refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).”

HPS also defines episodic homelessness. “**Episodically homeless** refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place).”

INSTRUCTIONS:
In order to ensure the success of the project, it is vital that the same procedures are followed when collecting information. Please read the following instructions to assist in gathering the information for the homeless enumeration project.

1. Please read the definitions above. In this project, we are using a broad definition of homelessness that includes persons who are absolutely homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. This broad definition includes people experiencing absolute homelessness, hidden homelessness or those at risk of becoming homeless.
2. We are asking you to invite people experiencing homeless who access the agency to participate by completing the questionnaire within the specified one-week time period for the project. Please ask each person who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless if s/he is willing to complete our questionnaire. S/he may need support in completing the questionnaire.

3. Persons who have literacy, vision issues or difficulty reading may need help in completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire can be completed with support from a staff person, a volunteer, or researchers with the PPC project. It can also be completed independently by the service user who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Steps

4. (I) The participant understands and signs the consent form; (II) S/he completes the questionnaire; (III) Place the completed questionnaire and signed consent form in the large envelope; (IV) Take the small envelope out of the large envelope and retrieve the receipt with the honorarium (e.g., $5.00); (V) Ask the person to sign the receipt and then give the honorarium to him/her; (VI) Place the signed receipt into the large envelope (along with the signed consent form and the questionnaire); (VII) Seal the large envelope. Please keep the envelopes in a secure location.
5. Please ensure that all information is filled out completely and accurately on each questionnaire for each person who uses your services during the one-week period. We require the initials, the date of birth for each client and gender to ensure that we can obtain an unduplicated count—so that each client is only counted once. Without this information (initials, date of birth and gender), we cannot include those cases and the data for such cases is therefore lost. Please be assured that all information will be held strictly confidential and individual information will only be seen by the researchers at the PPC project after the large envelope has been sealed.
6. Please note the questionnaire includes information that pertains to children/ dependents under age 18. The dependents are those who may accompany the participant or the participant has custody. The information for each dependent is to be recorded on a separate line in the questionnaire.
7. Please note that we would like to obtain complete information from each person, while recognizing that participation is voluntary. People can indicate N/A if a question does not apply to them.
8. A member of the research team will stop by to collect the questionnaires. The research team member will make arrangements for the pick-up.

If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the PPC team:

Contact information:

Thank you, Merci, Miigwetch for your assistance with this important project!

Ministry of Housing

ISBN 978-1-4606-9870-9 (HTML)
ISBN 978-1-4606-9871-6 (PDF)

04/17

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