# 2014 Homeless Count Draft Terms of Reference

**Homelessness Secretariat** 

May 22, 2013

## 1. Purpose

This report provides terms of reference for conducting the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count. It provides background information on the count, describes the methodology, includes a project workplan and budget, and sets out the roles and responsibilities of project team members.

#### 2. Context

Since 2002, the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) has conducted a region-wide count of homeless individuals every three years. The most recent count was in 2011 and planning is underway for 2014. The main purpose of the homeless count is to enumerate and learn more about the homeless population in the Metro Vancouver region. Specific objectives include:

- Estimating the number of people who are homeless;
- Obtaining a demographic profile of people who are surveyed or enumerated during the count;
   and
- Identifying long-term trends in the number and profile of people who are homeless.

Service providers, planners, community groups, health authorities, municipalities and funders, use count data to assist in policy development, planning, and prioritizing programs and services to address the needs of people who are homeless. The count is also used for public education and to increase awareness about homelessness and its solutions.

This report sets out the strategy for conducting the count. It reflects feedback on the proposed 2014 count process from the RSCH Governance Working Group, the Community Homelessness Tables (CHTs), and other stakeholders.

# 3. Methodology

The 2014 homeless count will follow the same basic methodology and protocols used in previous counts to ensure that the data is comparable. It will take place over a 24-hour period and will include both a nighttime and daytime component.

The nighttime component will include a count and surveys of people staying in emergency shelters, transition houses for women fleeing abuse, and youth safe houses. It will also include a count and process to obtain basic information on the age and gender of people with No Fixed Address (NFA) who stayed in jails, detention centres, hospitals and addictions facilities during the count.

The daytime component will include brief surveys to count and learn more about people sleeping or living on the street and other homeless people (e.g. people who are couch-surfing) who access homelessness services at locations where homeless people are known to assemble on the day of the count.

The RSCH will continue to work with the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee (AHSC) to ensure the count is conducted in a culturally appropriate manner. As recommended by the AHSC, InFocus

Consulting will be engaged to work with Aboriginal service providers throughout the region to identify locations where Aboriginal people who are homeless are likely to be found and recruit Aboriginal volunteers to administer the survey with Aboriginal people. InFocus has been involved in previous homeless counts since 2005.

The 2014 homeless count will build on experience from 2011 to implement a youth strategy to address undercount issues for youth who are homeless and to make a special effort to reach out to this population. The strategy will include partnering with youth-serving agencies and outreach workers and setting up youth hubs on the day of the count.

For 2014, a few changes will be made to the homeless count project to:

- Reduce the number of questions that were asked in the 2011 survey to be more consistent with previous surveys and increase the response rate.
- Introduce an additional survey component to obtain information from individuals who are not homeless but who use services for people who are homeless on the day of the count. Service providers in the region have requested that an attempt be made to include this population to provide a more accurate assessment of the demand for their services and community needs.<sup>1</sup>
- Release the Homeless Count results together with an additional report on the population at risk
  of homelessness using 2011 Census INALH data (In Core Housing Need and Spending At Least
  50% of Income on Shelter) or other appropriate data sources.

The count will rely on the support of at least 650 community volunteers. The demand for volunteer support has increased significantly in recent years in keeping with the community's attempts to conduct a more comprehensive count.

# 4. Workplan

The following sections set out a summary of the tasks to be undertaken by the Homelessness Secretariat in conjunction with consultants and community volunteers to conduct the 2014 regional homeless count. A complete list of the tasks and a schedule is provided in Appendix 1.

## Phase 1 – Planning (April 2013 – September 2013)

The purpose of this phase is to address all aspects of planning for the count, including fundraising, assembling the project team, consulting with Community Homelessness Tables (CHTs), updating the methodology and survey, developing a media strategy, and preparing the necessary letters and forms to recruit and track volunteers. Deliverables will include terms of reference and survey instruments approved by the RSCH Constituency Table. The project team and all necessary resources will also be in place to prepare for the count.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This component of the count will be an optional add-on for communities.

#### Phase 2 – Count Implementation (October 2013 – March 2014)

This phase will include the recruitment and training of at least 650 volunteers who will be the backbone of the count. It will also include the identification of known locations where people who are homeless congregate, preparation of homeless location maps where volunteers will be sent to conduct surveys, assignment of volunteers to survey locations and shifts, instructions for all volunteers, acquisition of supplies for Count Day, identification and setting up of local command centres for Count Day, and management of the count on Count Day. The main deliverable will be completed surveys for people who are homeless and others who are accessing homeless services in the region.

## Phase 3 – Data Analysis and Reporting (April 2014 – July 2014)

This phase will involve analysis of the data provided through the count surveys to create a series of reports to inform the public and community stakeholders about the results of the 2014 count. A press conference will be organized to release the preliminary results of the count. Key deliverables of this phase will include a preliminary report on the results of the count followed by a final report a few months later.

#### Phase 4 – Evaluation (August 2014 – December 2014)

In an effort to continually improve the count process through learning, a post-count evaluation will be conducted among key participants, including community volunteers, partners and staff. The instruments of the evaluation will include an electronic survey and personal interviews. The main deliverable will be an evaluation report on the results of the surveys and interviews.

# 5. Project Management

The Homeless Count is a complex undertaking that requires several key players. At the request of the RSCH, the Homelessness Secretariat will provide overall project management to implement the 2014 homeless count.

In keeping with the request of the RSCH, implementation of the count will combine the efforts of Secretariat staff with the support of consultants. The project team is described below. Job descriptions and an organizational chart are detailed in Appendix 2, and roles and responsibilities are in Appendix 3.

a. Homelessness Secretariat. The Homelessness Secretariat will be responsible for project management, ensuring the count is carried out as planned and according to budget, analyzing the survey results and preparing the preliminary and final reports. It will contribute 1.5 FTEs to the homeless count, including the services of the Manager, Regional Planner, and Senior Program Officer. The Manager will exercise overall responsibility for the project. The Regional Planner will serve as the Project Manager and will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project, including the planning, coordination of all project participants and stakeholders, and preparation of the preliminary and final reports. In addition to current staff, the Homelessness Secretariat will retain part-time administrative support for the period September 1, 2013 –

- March 31, 2014 to assist with administrative aspects of the homeless count including tracking all volunteers and registering volunteers for training sessions.
- b. Count Advisor. The Count Advisor will provide advice on the count methodology, survey, implementation issues, communications, data entry, data cleaning, analysis, and the preliminary and final reports.
- c. Count Coordinators. The Homelessness Secretariat will secure resources for 9 area coordinators to support communities throughout Metro Vancouver to implement the count. As recommended by the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee (AHSC), in Focus Consulting will be engaged to work with Aboriginal service providers throughout the region to identify locations where Aboriginal people who are homeless are likely to be found and to recruit Aboriginal volunteers to administer the survey with Aboriginal people. The 2014 homeless count will also build on experience from 2011 to implement a youth strategy to address undercount issues for youth who are homeless and to make a special effort to reach out to this population. A Youth Coordinator will be engaged to lead this work. Additional coordinators will be required to coordinate data collection in the shelters, obtain data from health and corrections facilities that serve people who are homeless (No Fixed Address), and to assist with communications.
- d. CHTs/communities. The CHTs will play an important role in assisting the Homelessness Secretariat and project team to recruit volunteers, identify locations, assign volunteers to locations, and provide volunteers with the instructions, maps, and the support they need to carry out the count and complete surveys as required. It is expected that the City of Vancouver, through the Housing Policy Division, will assume these functions for the homeless count in Vancouver. The Homelessness Secretariat will meet with members of CHTs/communities to ensure the count is implemented consistently across the region, brainstorm issues that arise, identify workable solutions, review the draft preliminary and final reports, and receive feedback about lessons learned from the 2014 count.
- d. RSCH. The RSCH Constituency Table will be responsible for approving the draft Terms of Reference, the methodology and preliminary and final reports on the results of the homeless count.

## 6. Budget Requirements

The Homeless Count will be funded with resources from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the community. It is estimated that the total project cost will be about \$194,000. This does not include Homelessness Secretariat staff time that will be devoted to this project (1.5 FTE), or volunteer time for RSCH members to meet with Homelessness Secretariat staff. A detailed budget is in Appendix 4.

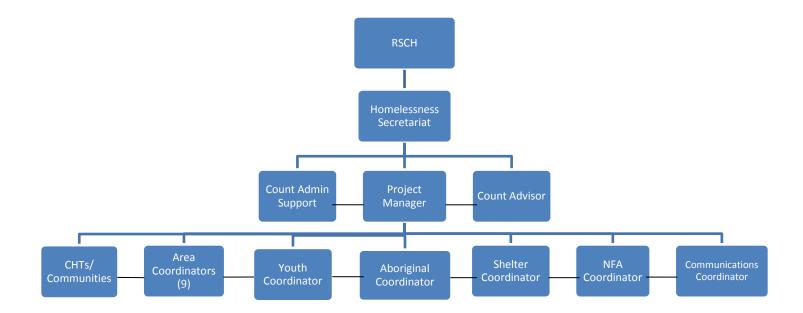
Appendix 1 - Workplan and Schedule

Task	Date Completed
Planning	
Secure availability of count advisor	May 1/13
2. Draft Terms of Reference: roles and responsibilities, resources required, budget and schedule	May 15/13
3. Consult with CHTs, City of Vancouver, AHSC and others: Draft terms of reference, resources,	June 30/13
survey and mapping	
4. Raise Funds	June 30/13
5. Arrange to purchase liability insurance for volunteers on behalf of RSCH	June 30/13
6. Investigate software options for communication with area coordinators	June 30/13
7. Prepare list of shelters to assist in planning for volunteers	June 30/13
8. Complete review of methodology, survey and protocol and recommend changes as needed	Aug 15/13
9. Prepare volunteer recruitment letters, forms, and other info about the count	Aug 31/13
10. Develop process to receive volunteer forms, track volunteers, and provide to Coordinators	Aug 31/13
11. Terms of Reference, methodology and surveys approved by RSCH Constituency Table	Sept 30/13
12. Hire temporary part time administration support and engage Area Coordinators, Shelter	Sept 30/13
Coordinator, NFA Coordinator, Aboriginal and Youth Engagement Teams	
Implementation	
13. Recruit volunteers	Oct 1/13 – Feb 28/14
14. Ongoing coordination with Area, Shelter, NFA Coordinators, Aboriginal and Youth teams	Oct 1/13 – Feb 28/14
15. Ongoing coordination with CHTs/communities to ensure consistency and brainstorm issues	Oct 1/13 – Feb 28/14
16. Identify and prepare list of all nighttime (sheltered) locations (shelters, transition houses,	
safe houses, and NFA locations- develop data collection strategy for each	Oct 1/13 – Feb 28/14
17. Identify and prepare list of all daytime locations and prepare maps (street locations, lanes,	
parks, line-ups, service agencies that will conduct client interviews, and youth hubs)	Oct 1/13- Feb 28/14
18. Assign volunteers to locations. Inform volunteers of proposed route and partner - inform	March 7/14
them of training session dates and locations	
19. Prepare assignment sheets, instructions, and maps/routes for volunteers - for inclusion in	March 7/14
packages	
20. Register volunteers for training sessions	March 7/14
21. Get supplies: buttons, cigarettes, candy, counters, surveys, and instructions	March 7/14
22. Create packages for each volunteer team (i.e. map, instructions, pens, candy & cigarettes)	Prior to Training— March
23. Set up one or more area stations in each community for Count Day: arrange for	Feb – March 7 (Prior
coffee/refreshments, prepare sign-in sheets to confirm pick-up and drop-off of packages	to Training)
24. Train volunteers	TBD - March/14
25. COUNT DAY – Attend at area stations 5:00 am – 11:00 p.m.: provide sign-in sheets, packages,	
coffee/refreshments, debriefing, and ensure surveys returned to organizers	TBD - March/14
Communications	
26. Communications plan/media strategy	Dec 31/13
27. Arrange for spokespersons for each region, youth, and Aboriginal groups	March 7/14
28. Press conference - with release of preliminary results	April 30/14
Data analysis and reporting	
29. Collect all surveys	TBD – March/14
30. Data entry and cleaning	TBD – March/14
31. Tabulate results	April 30/14
32. Release preliminary results	April 30/14
33. Prepare draft report	June 30/14
34. Prepare final report and present results to CHTs/communities	July 31/14
35. Municipal report – if required	Oct 15/14
Evaluation	
36. Volunteer surveys and community interviews	Dec 15/14
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## Appendix 2 – Job Descriptions and Organizational Chart

The following organizational chart illustrates the project management structure for the Count. Job descriptions are provided for the following positions:

- 1. Homelessness Secretariat
- 2. Count Advisor
- 3. Area, Shelter and Aboriginal Coordinators
- 4. NFA Coordinator
- 5. Youth Coordinator
- 6. Count Administrative Assistant
- 7. CHTs/Communities



#### 1. Homelessness Secretariat

The Manager of the Homelessness Secretariat has overall responsibility for ensuring that the count is carried out as planned and according to budget. The Regional Planner will serve as the Project Manager and will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project, including the planning, coordination of all project participants and stakeholders, and preparation of the preliminary and final reports. Other members of the Secretariat will provide support as needed.

#### **Planning**

- 1. Secure availability of count advisor
- 2. Prepare terms of reference: roles and responsibilities, resources required, budget and schedule
- 3. Consult with CHTs, City of Vancouver, AHSC and others<sup>2</sup>
- 4. Raise Funds
- 5. Arrange to purchase liability insurance for volunteers on behalf of RSCH
- 6. Investigate software options for communication with area coordinators
- 7. Prepare list of shelters to assist in planning for volunteers
- 8. Complete review of methodology, survey and protocol and recommend changes as needed
- 9. Prepare volunteer recruitment letters, forms, and other info about the count
- 10. Develop process to receive volunteer forms, track volunteers, and distribute forms to Area Coordinators
- 11. Work with count advisor to recommend final version of methodology and surveys to be approved by RSCH Constituency Table prepare report for approval by RSCH Constituency Table
- 12. Hire temporary part time administration support and engage Area Coordinators, Shelter Coordinator, NFA Coordinator, Aboriginal and Youth Engagement Teams

#### Implementation

- 13. Monitor recruitment of volunteers and work of project team
- 14. Coordinate with CHTs/communities to ensure consistency and brainstorm issues
- 15. Ensure the following is completed: List of all nighttime (sheltered) locations (shelters, transition houses, safe houses and NFA locations data collection strategy for each
- 16. Ensure the following is completed: List of all daytime locations and prepare maps as needed (street locations, lanes, parks, line-ups, service agencies that will conduct client interview, and youth hubs)
- 17. Ensure volunteers are assigned to locations, informed of proposed route and partner, training session dates and locations
- 18. Ensure assignment sheets are prepared along with instructions, maps/routes for volunteers for packages
- 19. Register volunteers for training sessions
- 20. Get supplies: buttons, cigarettes, candy, counters, surveys, and instructions
- 21. Assist with creating packages for volunteers
- 22. Ensure area stations are set up in each community for Count Day
- 23. Work with CHTs/communities to plan and deliver training sessions for volunteers: locations, agendas, sign-in sheets and waiver of liability. Attend sessions.
- 24. COUNT DAY Provide support as needed ensure collection of all surveys

## Communications

- 25. Prepare communications plan/media strategy
- 26. Arrange for spokespersons for each region, youth, and Aboriginal groups. Create speaking notes.
- 27. Arrange press conference coordinate with all levels of government and CHTs for release of preliminary results

#### Data analysis and report

- 28. Collect all surveys
- 29. Data entry and cleaning
- 30. Tabulate results
- 31. Release preliminary results
- 32. Prepare draft and final report, and present results to communities/CHTs
- 33. Review municipal reports if required

#### **Evaluation**

34. Conduct volunteer surveys and CHT/community interviews

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Review terms of reference, resources available, survey and mapping.

#### 2. Count Advisor

Responsible for providing advice on methodology, protocols and implementation procedures, data analysis and reporting, and participating in meetings as needed. This position will report to the Manager, Homelessness Secretariat.

# 3. Area, Shelter, and Aboriginal Coordinators

Responsible for ensuring that volunteers conduct the count at pre-assigned locations.

- 1. Become familiar with area/shelters (tour with local agency)
- 2. Work with local Community Homelessness Tables (CHTs) to identify daytime locations
- 3. Recruit target number of volunteer interviewers with assistance from Metro Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat and CHTs
- 4. Verify accuracy of maps
- 5. Coordinate with Secretariat and CHTs to review and update progress in volunteer recruitment
- 6. Area and Aboriginal Coordinators work together to ensure locations are covered and have no overlap in interview locations
- 7. Liaise with Youth Coordinator as necessary
- 8. Work with CHTs to assign volunteers to a specific shift in a certain location
- 9. Sign up volunteers to a training session
- 10. Inform volunteers of proposed shift, assignment/route and partner for the count
- 11. Attend area or designated training sessions and answer questions
- 12. Prepare assignment sheets insert assignments and maps into volunteer packages
- 13. Ensure area station is set up for Count Day
- 14. Support volunteers on Count Day, maintain phone access, provide extra materials, coffee, answer questions, debrief
- 15. Provide survey packages and unused supplies to the Homelessness Secretariat the day after the count.
- 16. Attend meetings as required

## 4. NFA Coordinator

- 1. Develop NFA outreach strategy
- 2. Work with local Community Homelessness Tables (CHTs) and other partners and stakeholders to identify NFA locations
- 3. Contact NFA locations to ask officials to gather data on gender and age of persons with no fixed address who stayed overnight in their facilities on the night of the count
- 4. Contact NFA locations on the day of the count to obtain the data
- 5. Provide data to the Homelessness Secretariat the day after the count
- 6. Attend meetings as required

#### 5. Youth Coordinator

Responsible for enhancing and implementing the youth count strategy developed for the 2011 count. This includes:

- 1. Coordinate with youth hubs throughout Metro Vancouver
- 2. Recruit youth leaders to assist with the count to provide for a youth-driven youth homeless count
- 3. Develop a targeted youth-driven communications strategy
- 4. Recruit youth volunteers to conduct surveys with homeless youth
- 5. Attend training session and train youth count volunteers
- 6. Manage youth honorariums
- 7. Arrange Count Day activities
- 8. Provide for de-briefing after the count
- 9. Provide survey packages and unused supplies to the Homelessness Secretariat the day after the count.
- 10. Attend meetings as required

#### 6. Count Administrative Assistant

Provides administration support related to the Homeless Count.

- 1. Send out volunteer recruitment letters, forms and other info about the count as directed by the Homelessness Secretariat on behalf of RSCH
- 2. Receive and input information from volunteer recruitment forms and provide info to Coordinators to assist them in monitoring progress
- 3. Inform volunteers of training session dates and locations
- 4. Obtain supplies needed for the Homeless Count: buttons, cigarettes, candy, counters, surveys, and instructions
- 5. Register volunteers for training sessions
- 6. Assist in booking rooms for training sessions, arranging for coffee/refreshments
- 7. Assist in creating packages for volunteers (i.e. map, instructions, pens, candy and cigarettes)
- 8. Assist with setting up of area stations as needed

# 7. CHTs/Communities

Responsible for working with the Homelessness Secretariat and Coordinators to identify locations, verify maps, assign appropriate volunteers to the identified locations. Will also work with the Secretariat to ensure the count is implemented consistently across the region, brainstorm issues that arise, identify workable solutions, review the draft preliminary and final reports, and provide feedback about lessons learned from the count.

- 1. Recommend CHT members to work with the Homelessness Secretariat and Coordinators to identify daytime locations so that maps can be prepared
- 2. Assist in recruiting volunteers
- 3. Assist in verifying the accuracy of maps
- 4. Assist in assigning volunteers to locations
- 5. Assist with providing volunteers to help create packages for each team of volunteers
- 6. Identify appropriate locations for training and area stations and in obtaining coffee/refreshments
- 7. Provide support at area stations on the day of the count
- 8. Arrange for spokespersons on the day of the count
- 9. Participate in a press conference upon release of the preliminary results

4	Appendix 3 –	Roles and Responsibilities	
Task	Secretariat	Coordinators	CHTs/ Community
Planning			
Secure availability of count advisor	Х		
2. Draft Terms of Reference	Х		
3. Consult with CHTs, City of Vancouver, AHSC and others	Х		Х
4. Raise Funds	Х		
5. Purchase liability insurance for volunteers	Х		
6. Investigate software options	Х		
7. Prepare list of shelters	Х		
8. Complete review of methodology	Х		Х
Prepare volunteer recruitment letters, forms, and other info	Х		
10. Develop process to receive volunteer forms and track volunteers	X		
11. Terms of Reference, methodology and surveys approved by RSCH CT	X		
12. Hire temporary part time administration support and Coordinators	X	Х	Х
Implementation		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
13. Recruit volunteers	X	X	X
14. Ongoing coordination with Area, Shelter, NFA Coordinators,	X	X	X
Aboriginal and Youth teams	^	Α	, A
15. Ongoing coordination with Homelessness Secretariat	X	Х	Х
16. Prepare list of nighttime locations & develop data collection strategy	X	X	X
17. Prepare list of all daytime locations and maps	X	X	X
18. Assign volunteers to locations, inform volunteers of proposed route	^	X	X
and partner, training session dates and locations		^	^
19. Prepare assignment sheets, instructions, and maps/routes for		X	X
volunteers		^	^
20. Register volunteers for training sessions	X	X	
21. Get supplies: buttons, cigarettes, candy, counters, surveys,	X	^	
instructions etc	^		
22. Create packages for each volunteer team	X	X	X
23. Set up one or more area stations in each community for Count Day	X	X	X
24. Train volunteers	X	X	X
25. COUNT DAY	X	X	X
Communications	^	^	^
26. Communications plan/media strategy	X		X
27. Arrange for spokespersons for each region, youth, and Aboriginal	X		X
	^		^
groups  28. Press conference, with release of preliminary results	X		X
28. Press conference - with release of preliminary results	^		^
Data analysis and reporting			
29. Collect all surveys	X	Х	Х
30. Data entry and cleaning	X		
31. Tabulate results	X		
32. Release preliminary results	X		
33. Prepare draft report	X		
34. Prepare final report and present results to CHTs/communities	X		X
35. Municipal report – if required	X		Х
Evaluation			
36. Volunteer surveys and community interviews	Х	X	X

# Appendix 4 – 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Proposed Budget

Contribution Income	
Homelessness Partnering Strategy	60,000
Real Estate Foundation of BC (pending)	
Vancouver Foundation (pending)	
City of Vancouver (pending)	
Surrey Homelessness and Housing Fund (pending)	
Translink - 480 bus passes (pending)	4,000
TBD	130,000
Homelessness Partnering Strategy 1.5 FTE	
Total	194,000
Expenses	
Additional Contracted Staff/Consultants	
Count Advisor, Coordinators and Communications	99,500
Temporary Administrative Support	25,460
Subtotal Contracted Consultants/Support	124,960
Implementation Expenses	
Community Homelessness Table support	20,000
Youth volunteer recruitment, training and honorariums	5,250
Aboriginal volunteer recruitment, training and honorariums	5,250
Data Entry	7,000
Printing (external)	4,500
Supplies	4,500
Training - refreshments and area stations and special events	3,500
Translink travel (day passes)	4,000
Insurance for volunteers	1,000
Travel (to attend training and travel on Count Day)	1,000
Post count follow-up	2,500
Other/contingency	3,040
Subtotal Implementation Expenses	61,540
Total Budget	
Contracted Consultants/Support	124,960
Implementation Expenses	61,540
Subtotal	186,500
GST @5% (consultants & expenses)	7,500
TOTAL	\$194,000