



# Winnipeg Street Census Information for Community Organizations

## **What is a Street Census?**

A Street Census is a survey conducted over a 24-hour period to gather information about the extent and nature of homelessness in Winnipeg. Though some cities call these projects “Point in Time Counts” of homelessness, we have chosen the term Street Census because the project will involve more than simply counting people; the methodology is designed to increase understanding of the demographics of those who are experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg, and what they identify as their service needs.

## **When is the Street Census?**

The Street Census will occur on October 25 – 26, 2015.

## **Why is a Street Census important?**

Conducting a Street Census is essential to all communities. We currently do not have reliable estimates on who and how many people are homeless in Winnipeg. We cannot say with certainty if homelessness is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same.

The Street Census is a tally of who is homeless on a given day and provides a snapshot of who experiences homelessness throughout the year.

- Findings from the Street Census will demonstrate the housing and service needs specific to Winnipeg
- The Street Census will provide information to aid community organizations, funders and all levels of government plan for the funding and service needs of homeless persons in Winnipeg
- Data from the Street Census, when done in future years, can tell us how successful we have been in addressing homelessness

The Street Census will include indicators of how many people are experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg, where they stay, and how long/how many times they have been homeless. It will also gather demographic information like age, gender, Aboriginal and newcomer status.

## **Why is the Street Census completed in 24 hours?**

The methodology of the Street Census has been used in many communities across Canada and other parts of the world. It is done over 24 hours to reduce duplication and to make it as cost and resource effective as possible. Because it is the same method used in many cities, it will be possible to compare results across Canada.



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## **How will you reach everyone experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg?/ Where will you do the Survey?**

Any enumeration of homeless populations is only an estimate. This is because invisibility is a survival strategy for many people who are homeless. The Street Census in Winnipeg uses the following methodology to provide the best possible estimate:

- (1) Street Survey
- (2) Sheltered Survey
- (3) Indoor Known Locations Survey- takes place in participating drop-in centres, ministries, resource centres, soup kitchens, etc., and reaches individuals that may have been missed in the street or sheltered surveys.**
- (4) Data from agencies/government- includes those living in institutions (e.g. hospitals, prisons) who do not have a permanent address.

## **Who will be conducting the surveys?**

Surveys will be conducted by approximately 250 trained volunteers, including people who have experience of homelessness, in addition to service provider staff and outreach workers.

## **Should I tell my clients/participants about the Street Census?**

Yes! Posters and handouts about the Street Census will be available for agencies to post in advance. The survey is voluntary and we want people experiencing homelessness to be aware of the project, its goals, and to want to participate.

## **What can agencies expect for their clients/participants on the day of the Street Census?**

Volunteers will arrive at your agency at a pre-arranged, designated time and/or may be visible within the general location of your agency. Volunteers will talk one-on-one with individuals who are interested in completing the survey and this will be done in the style of a short interview (about 10 minutes each).

If your agency would prefer to have staff conduct surveys because of the nature of your services (highly confidential, vulnerable population, etc.) we can discuss this option.

All participants, including those who access your services, will be informed of their right to privacy and confidentiality. Clients will be respected regardless of their decision to participate or decline participation at any point during the survey. Individuals who decide not to interact with interviewers or who are asleep will not be disturbed. No identifying information will be collected from interviewees therefore the interview participants will remain anonymous.

The services of existing outreach teams or staff at your agency (depending on the agency and advance agreement) will be sought so that if an interviewee requires assistance, the interviewer can connect that person to resources immediately. Interviewees will also be provided with information about the Street Census with contact information so they can ask questions or raise concerns about the project.



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Participants will receive a small thank you gift for their time. On the street and in most locations, this will be a cigarette and a granola/chocolate bar. If your organization would like a different thank-you provided due to the nature of your programming or participants, we can arrange something else.

## Who is involved in the Street Census?

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg is coordinating the Street Census, working in partnership with:

Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre	Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba	Macdonald Youth Services
Canadian Mental Health Association Winnipeg	Mount Carmel Clinic
EAGLE Urban Transition Centre	Resource Assistance for Youth
Institute of Urban Studies	Rossbrook House
John Howard Society of Manitoba	Salvation Army Booth Centre Winnipeg
Lived Experience Circle	Siloam Mission
Main Street Project	Spence Neighbourhood Association
	West Central Women's Resource Centre
	Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council

The project is funded by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy through the Government of Canada. Many other community agencies are supporting through participation on planning groups, providing administrative data, and assisting with the survey at their locations.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding the Winnipeg Street Census please contact:

Christina Maes Nino

[cmaes@spcw.mb.ca](mailto:cmaes@spcw.mb.ca)

(204)943-2561