

**THE 2013 ANAHEIM HOMELESS COUNT
FINAL REPORT**

**SPONSORED BY
THE ANAHEIM POVERTY TASK FORCE**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The data presented here represent the number of people observed on the streets and believed to be homeless within the borders of the City of Anaheim on a single day, January 26, 2013. This process was a first ever attempt at a full canvass of the city – meaning that the process was planned around the assumption that all geographic areas of the city were to be entered by a field team either on foot or in a vehicle. This process was focused exclusively on observing and tallying those who were living outdoors or other locations not intended as living quarters, so no persons staying in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, hospital, jail or similar institutional setting are included in these results. These data also do not include anyone staying in a motel/hotel setting with a voucher given by a local service provider. However, information regarding the number of those staying in shelters located in Anaheim in January of 2012 is available and will be presented later in this report (January, 2013 information is not yet available).

The 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count resulted in a total count of **447 persons**. This number was calculated based upon persons directly observed, hence no statistical projections or calculations were used.

- The number of males over 18 years of age was **346 persons**;
- The number of females over 18 years of age was **89 persons**; and
- The number of homeless believed to be 17 years of age or younger was **12 persons** (seven were male and five were female)

The 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count employed a methodology modeled after similar projects approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and is also consistent with accepted social science research practices. Homeless persons not physically observed were not counted. This conservative research approach likely produced an undercount. This process does not, nor was it intended to, convey the total number of persons experiencing homelessness in the City of Anaheim throughout the year in 2013.

BACKGROUND

Homeless Definitions

Because most homeless services funding comes from various programs administered by HUD, research and services related to homelessness generally use the federal definitions of homeless as the basis for their work. The primary definition used to guide homeless services for a number of years was established in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, first passed in July, 1987. In May of 2009, Congress passed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act). This new legislation made substantial changes to

existing McKinney-Vento Act programs, and codified into law a number of programs and regulations that had been created through HUD, but were not part of the original McKinney-Vento legislation, or any subsequent amendments. In addition, the HEARTH Act was the first significant change to the federal definition of homelessness in a number of years.

The new HEARTH Act definition of homeless, which took effect in January, 2012, is multifaceted and complex. Because the 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count was the first time such a project was conducted in the city, the planning team chose to focus the scale of the project on a single subpopulation – the chronically, unsheltered homeless – and not to include all of the components or subpopulations that now need to be counted according to the HEARTH Act requirements. As a result, the primary definition of homeless addressed by this project is:

An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.¹

Other Orange County Homeless Data

McKinney-Vento School District Data

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, there are two primary data sources that are efforts to enumerate the homeless in communities: (1) the number of homeless children enrolled in K-12 public schools, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of January, 2002), and (2) the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless observed and/or surveyed during the biennial Point-In-Time homeless count process. Although the new HEARTH Act definition of homeless now incorporates several other federal definitions, the enumeration of homeless children will likely continue independently of the Point-In-Time process.

There are seven school districts that serve schools within Anaheim’s boundaries: Anaheim City (elementary), Anaheim Union High (middle and high schools), Centralia (elementary), Magnolia (elementary), Orange Unified (elementary, middle, and high schools), Placentia-Yorba Linda (elementary and high schools), and Savanna (elementary). Only one district - Anaheim City – includes only students who live within the city of Anaheim. The remaining districts have students from multiple cities. Although the number of homeless students with ties to Anaheim cannot be determined from the aggregate data provided by each district, the data from the one Anaheim-specific district is already substantial:

¹ “Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining ‘Homeless.’ *Federal Register* 76 (December 5, 2011). https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf (accessed on March 15, 2013).

Orange County Homeless Children and Youth - 2011-12²

- Anaheim City = 1,410 (only district with Anaheim-specific student population)
- Anaheim Union High = 3,732
- Centralia = 660
- Magnolia = 1,453
- Orange Unified = 243
- Placentia-Yorba Linda = 614
- Savanna = 356

These numbers only reflect the child registered to the local school district and identified by district staff as either literally homeless, or at-risk of homelessness due to imminent eviction, living with friends or family in a temporary situation, or living in a motel or shelter. These data do not reflect any adult members of the household, who could be presumed to also be homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Countywide Point-In-Time Homeless Count Data

The 2013 Orange County Point-In-Time Count (PITC) data will not be available until May, 2013. However, the methodology employed during the past several PITC cycles does not allow for city-specific information to be teased out from the countywide data. Although there are discussions to expand the methodology to allow for this in future years, there is no method for comparing the 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count data to any previous year's countywide homeless count (2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013).

Yet, there are data available showing how many shelter beds were available within Anaheim on January 27, 2012 among the shelter providers that supply data to the countywide Homeless Management Information System database (HMIS). On that night, there were **no emergency shelter beds** (generally beds that allow for stays between 1 and 90 days) and there were **112 transitional housing beds** (generally beds in longer term programs that last between 18 to 36 months). It will not be known how much this number may have changed between 2012 and 2013 until the countywide homeless count results are released in May.

The Anaheim Poverty Task Force (PTF)

The PTF has been in existence for approximately four years and was formed as a collaborative effort among faith-based organizations, non-profits, local advocates and Anaheim residents to address issues that perpetuate poverty among the city's residents. Homelessness has become the main issue on which the PTF has focused, which resulted in the publication of its Five Year Plan to End Homelessness in Anaheim.

² Orange County Department of Education. Division of School and Community Services. "Orange County Homeless Children and Youth 2011-2012". (Orange County, California, 2013).

This plan was largely modeled on the Orange County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, with the recommendations targeted at the more specific needs in Anaheim. One of those recommendations was to conduct a homeless count within the city, so there could be more precise data available to facilitate better collaboration among the city and its existing service providers and to direct services where most needed. The 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count was the first project sponsored by the PTF to address this recommendation.

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Planning Process

The planning for this project began in October, 2012. Due to limited volunteer and financial resources, the PTF planning team decided to keep the methodology relatively simple, yet still as consistent with HUD Point-In-Time homeless count guidelines as possible. As a result, this count was an observation only process. Field volunteers were trained in observational techniques to assist their identification of possible homeless persons in outdoor locations, but did not approach anyone to determine their exact status.

The date and time of the count was Saturday, January 26, 2013 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. This date was selected because the countywide count and survey was taking place on the same day, although in the early morning hours. The planning team decided this would be the least disruptive to homeless residents, as there would not be multiple days of counting taking place. In addition, the planning team hoped that the word-of-mouth outreach among the homeless and local service providers about both projects would create additional incentive for the homeless to be visible on the streets on the day of the count.

Because this project did not attempt to survey potential homeless persons we were unable to determine demographic information beyond what could be observed at a distance – gender and age. If either gender or age were unable to be definitively determined from observation alone, field team volunteers were trained to determine these characteristics to the best of their ability.

Details of Methodology

The planning team decided to use existing maps, known internally among city staff as “base maps,” that are already widely used by several departments for planning and staffing purposes. There are 284 total base maps, which encompass all of the approximately 50 square miles of land within the city limits. Each base map represents about one quarter of a square mile. Of the total, 54 base maps were excluded, typically because the terrain contained in it could not be canvassed through ordinary means, or because the terrain was not accessible to the public. A total of 230 base map areas were ultimately included in the final canvass.

An additional month was spent acquiring “hot spot” location information from the staff of several city departments. Staff in Public Utilities (utility meter readers), the Police and Fire Departments, and Code Enforcement were asked to provide information about locations where they typically saw homeless persons in the course of conducting their regular duties. Over 120 hot spot location forms were submitted by city staff, which ultimately provided information on approximately 80 unduplicated locations where volunteers might find homeless on the day of the count. These “hot spots” were plotted on the final field team maps. The field teams were instructed that if their maps contained such locations, to begin canvassing in those areas, and then to continue through the entire mapped area from those locations.

In order to achieve a full canvass of the entire city (excluding those mapped areas eliminated as explained previously), the volunteer recruitment goal reflected the need to train approximately 125 to 150 volunteers. Each field team requires three people, and each team would need to canvass between three and six mapped areas, with the number of maps depending on the residential and commercial density of the areas.

Description of Enumeration Process

All field volunteers were required to attend a 90 minute training session. Volunteers were trained to address data quality, and all tally sheets were double-checked by the three Deployment Center Managers before volunteers left at the end of their shift.

Approximately 85 volunteers ultimately participated, the bulk of which were deployed to canvass in the field. At the conclusion of the count it was determined that 35 base maps had gone uncanvassed due to lack of volunteer resources.

The 230 base maps that were included as part of the final methodology were divided among three general areas of the city – the west end, central city, and the east end. Each of the three areas had its own Deployment Center, or a location from which field teams were dispatched and to which they returned when they completed canvassing their mapped areas. The three Deployment Centers were located at Brookhurst Community Center (covering the west end of the city, south and west of Interstate 5), Martin Recreation Center (covering the central part of the city, between the northeast side of Interstate 5 and the Santa Ana River), and the East Anaheim Community Center (covering the eastern portions of the city, roughly all areas east of the Santa Ana River and areas north of the river that are east of Kraemer Boulevard).

The accuracy of the previously identified “hot spot” locations seemed to vary widely, with certain parks, schools and retail locations being the most likely to yield results, while other parks, intersections and retail locations that were listed as high probability locations yielded no sightings of homeless persons or encampments. Additionally, some teams reported finding evidence of recent encampments (sleeping bags, shopping bags, etc.) in locations that were not designated as hot spots, but did not observe their possible occupants. This could have been due to the time of day, when encampment residents would be most likely to be absent from their sleeping areas.

Differences between Anaheim and Countywide Counts

Although both processes occurred on the same day, the countywide count and survey took place between 5:00 and 10:00 a.m. while the Anaheim count took place in the afternoon so as not to interfere with the county process. An afternoon timeframe for a homeless count is not ideal, as people are more likely to be moving around more during those hours. This movement can create two potential problems: (1) this makes the homeless more difficult to find, particularly when they are inside buildings (restaurants, service locations, libraries), and (2) the likelihood of duplication – or counting one person more than once – much higher.

The observation only nature of this process also does not allow for collection of detailed demographic, housing or health data, as would be required for a community that must submit their homeless count data to HUD as a requirement for homeless services funding. Therefore, without an accompanying survey, we were unable to determine:

- The housing or disability status for each person counted;
- Whether a person belonged to a particular HUD subpopulation category (which include: chronically homeless adults and children, unaccompanied children/youth, veterans, the severely mentally ill, chronic substance abusers, persons with HIV/AIDS, or victims of domestic violence);
- There also was no separate youth count, which was more common among communities in 2013.

Some communities also conduct separate research processes to determine their populations of those at-risk of homelessness (e.g., those “couch surfing” with friends or family) or those living in motels/hotels as either emergency shelter or long-term housing because they lack the resources to acquire suitable permanent housing. Neither the Anaheim nor the Orange County processes included these separate research projects, but may include them in future years.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2013 Anaheim Homeless Count was a significant research undertaking that was successful despite limited financial and volunteer resources. Perhaps the most significant finding was that 447 unsheltered homeless were discovered, despite the less-than-ideal timeframe in which the count was conducted. Assuming that the PTF is able to continue the homeless counts as an annual process, a change in the time of year and time of day will likely yield more consistent results with less possibility of duplication.

Most of the 447 homeless were found in the central and west parts of the city, with the single largest tally coming from the base map that included La Palma Park (81 homeless were counted in and around the park). This result is consistent with most anecdotal evidence, and suggests where public policy and direct service might best come together to meet the needs of the

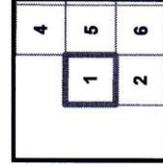
homeless residents. Perhaps implementation of a long-term housing and services plan at that location could be replicated in other areas around the city with their own unsheltered homeless populations.

CITY OF ANAHEIM



Legend

- City Index
- Public Restrooms
- Libraries
- Park
- School
- City Boundary
- Homeless Hot Spots



**Base Map
1**

