



Canadian Point-in-Time Count

Methodology and Toolkit

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WEBINAR

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Part 1

**WHY do a
PiT count?**

What *IS* it?

A PIT is a **snapshot** of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people in a community on a single night.

Can you do a perfect count?

PITs inherently **undercount** number of homeless.

- Does not capture hidden homeless;
- Relies on provider reports and client surveys;
- Does not provide information of system use throughout the year;



Why do a Count?

It tells us how we are doing.

- Provides a baseline
- Enables you to measure progress
- Helps identify priority populations

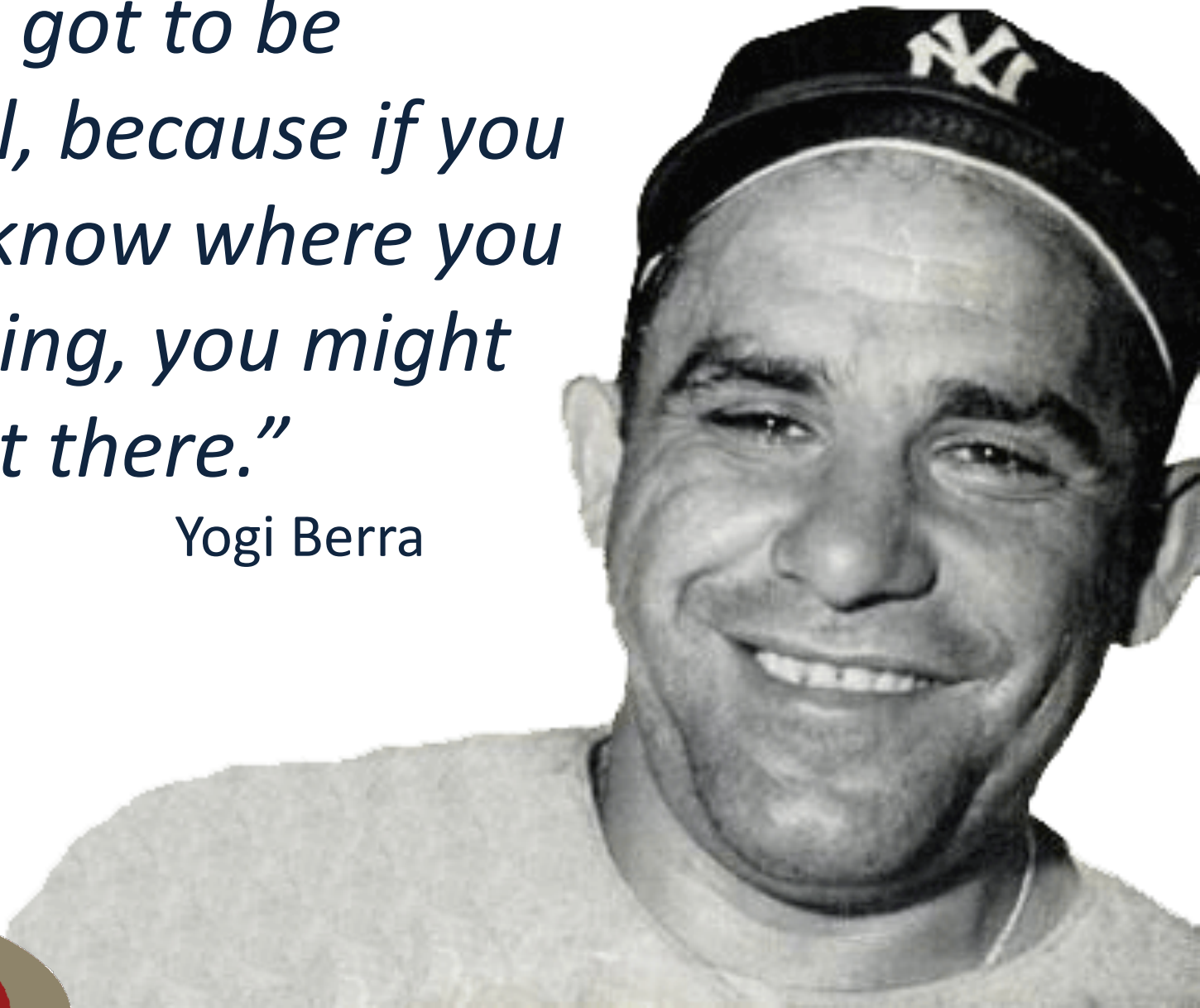
What's in it for your community?

Conducting a Point in Time Count ALSO allows you to:

- Better understand the homeless population;
- Make contact with hard to reach homeless people in your community;
- Raise public awareness about homelessness;
- Support systems planning and program development;
- Undertake a needs assessment that can help you more effectively plan services.

You've got to be careful, because if you don't know where you are going, you might not get there."

Yogi Berra



Why a common methodology?



First, communities have access to evidence-based tools.
Don't have to reinvent the wheel

Second, communities can compare results.

Third, results can be aggregated to provide reliable provincial / regional / pan Canadian data.



Canadian Point-in-Time Count Methodology and Toolkit

Developing the methodology

- Project directed by ***Dr. Alina Turner***
- Conducted an extensive literature review
- Assembled advisory team, including reps from Calgary, Lethbridge, Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton
- Developed methodology and toolkit
- Piloted methodology in the October 16, 2014 Seven Cities PiT Count in Alberta

What is in the tool kit?

1. Overview of PiT Counts
2. Planning your PiT count
3. Implementation
4. The Survey
5. Working with data
6. Mobilizing results



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Methodology and Toolkit

GOAL:

Building community capacity,
autonomy and independence
to conduct PiT counts on a
regular basis

Part 2

Planning a PiT count?

- The role of leadership
- Mobilizing your community
- Defining the scope of your count



Mobilizing the Community



Who to count?

Start with the Canadian Definition of Homelessness



Canadian Homelessness
Research Network

Canadian Definition Of Homelessness

DEFINITION

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other. That is, homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, organized here in a **typology** that includes 1) **Unsheltered**, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation; 2) **Emergency Sheltered**, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence; 3) **Provisionally Accommodated**, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, and finally, 4) **At Risk of Homelessness**, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. For many people homelessness is not a static condition.



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Work from the typology

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION	COUNTED
1	Unsheltered	1.1 People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract	✓
		1.2 People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	✓
2	Emergency Sheltered	2.1 Emergency overnight shelters for people who are homeless	✓
		2.2 Violence-Against-Women (VAW) shelters	✓
		2.3 Emergency shelter for people fleeing a natural disaster or destruction of accommodation due to fires, floods etc.	
3	Provisionally Accommodated	3.1 Interim Housing for people who are homeless	✓
		3.2 People living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing.	
		3.3 People accessing short term, temporary rental accommodations without security of tenure	
		3.4 People in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements.	✓
		3.5 Accommodation / Reception centres for recently arrived immigrants and refugees	
4	At-Risk of Homelessness	4.1 People at imminent risk of homelessness	
		4.2 Individuals and families who are precariously housed.	

When?

- What season?
- What time of day?



Part 3

Implementation

Some Considerations

Street Count

- Local areas to be canvassed
- Known locations or full coverage? Combination?
- Observed vs. Survey?
- Engagement gifts
- Ethics & survey training

Facilities Count

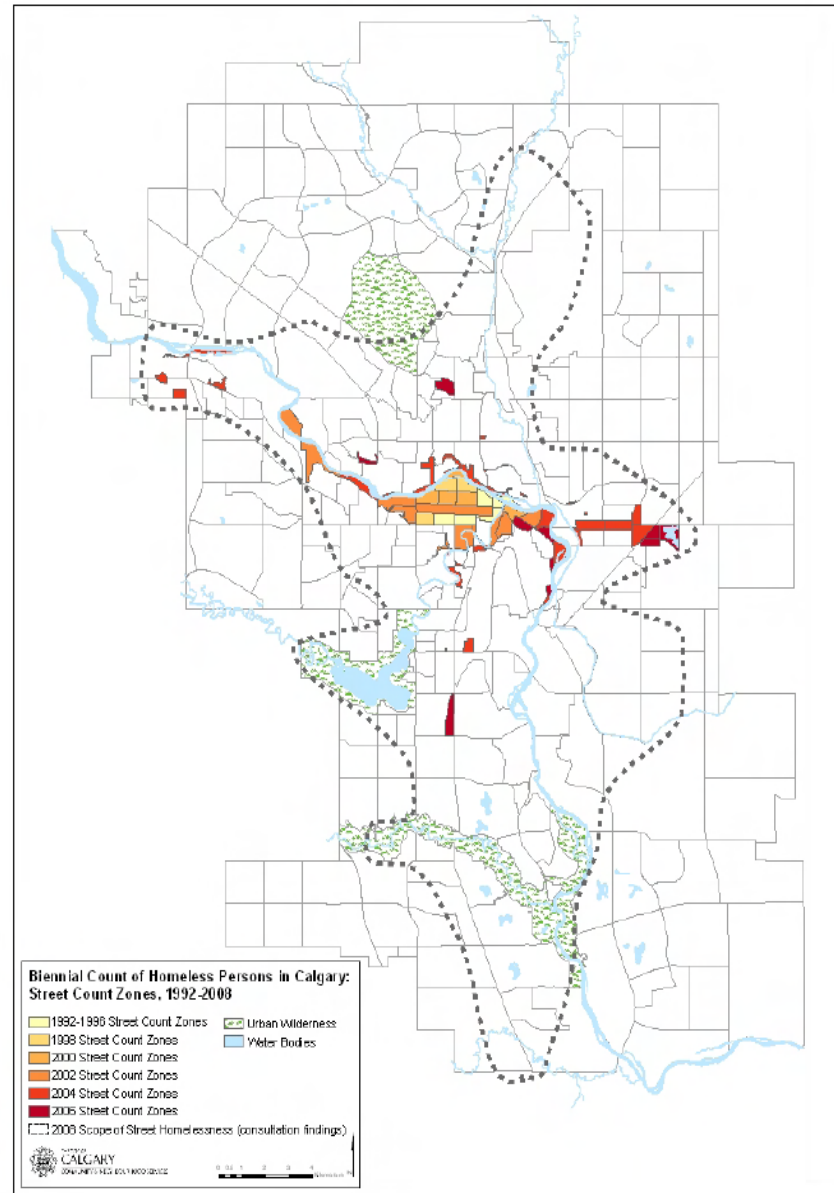
- Participating institutions & facilities
- Weather and contextual factors
- Timing impacts facility use
- Engaging & training staff
- Data quality

Prevalence Study

- Telephone access

FIGURE 1. BIENNIAL STREET COUNT ZONES IN CALGARY, 1992-2008

Mapping the street count



Working with volunteers



- Who?
- How many?
- Roles?
- Training?
- Support and compensation?

How many volunteers do you need for the Street Count?

- To determine the number of volunteers you need to recruit, consider the scope of your approach.
- Will you conduct the survey on the street or just in shelters?
- About how many minutes does each survey take? (you can do a test run to figure this out)
- If yes, will you take a full coverage or known locations approach (or a combination)?
- How many zones are you expecting to cover?
- If so, how many individuals are you expecting to interview?

Volunteer Training

- Team and lead training
- General training
- Ethics and respectful encounters
- Planning for a safe count



Home Base

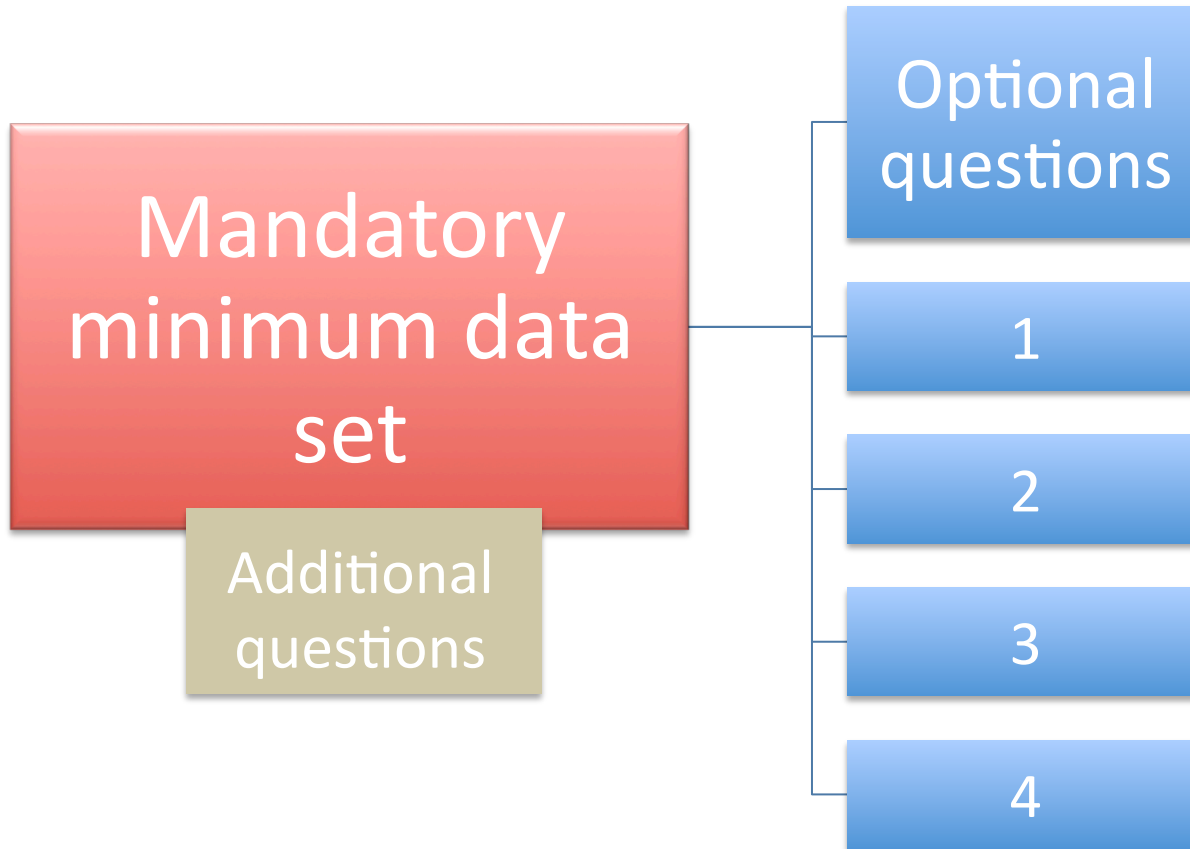
- Set up home base team
- Coordinating volunteers and assigning teams and monitoring
- Supplies
- Contingency planning and troubleshooting
- Data gathering



Part 4

The SURVEY instrument

What the survey covers?



Mandatory questions

- Screening
- Consent
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Migration
- Immigration
- Homelessness History
- Veteran Status

Screeners (to determine eligibility)

1. Have you answered this survey with a person with this yellow button (or other identification)?
2. Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?
3. Option A: Street Survey Only
Where are you staying tonight?
Option B: Emergency Shelter Survey Only
Are you staying in this emergency shelter tonight?
4. Do you give consent to participate in this survey?

Core Mandatory Questions

Gender

5.1 Which of the following do you identify with? (select all that apply)

- Female
- Male
- Transgender/Transsexual

Age

6.1 How old are you/what is your year of birth?

Aboriginal

7.1. Would you identify as being Aboriginal, including First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

Core Mandatory Questions

Migration

8.1. How long have you been in Canada?

8.2. How long have you been in _____ (community name)?

Homelessness History

9.1. How long have you been homeless most recently?

9.2. How many different times have you been homeless in the past three years (i.e. in and out of homelessness)?

Veteran Status

10.1 Have you ever had any military service in the Canadian Forces (includes army, navy, air force)?

Additional Questions (probes)

7.1. Would you identify as being Aboriginal, including First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Declined to answer

7.2. If you self-identify as Aboriginal, which group do you belong to?

- First Nations (Status)
- First Nations (Non-Status)
- Métis
- Inuit
- Other (specify)
- Don't know
- Declined to answer

7.3. What Aboriginal community are you from?

_____ (community/reserve name)

- Don't know
- Declined to answer

Optional Questions

- Family Status
- Employment
- Health
- Accessibility
- Sexual Orientation
- System Interactions
- Education
- Service Use
- Service Barriers
- Reason for Homelessness
- Rehousing Information

Counting Hidden Homeless

- Difficult to do
- Telephone survey
- Working through institutions (like schools)

Part 5

Administering the SURVEY

DATA ENTRY (Excel spreadsheet)

Point in Time Count - Data Entry			
		Medicine Hat	
Population Identifier		MH	<i>Note: This creates the identifier for each individual record. Change for each group.</i>
Team Number			<i>If more than 1 version of the workbook is used to enter data for a community each identifier must be</i>
Zone/Shelter			
Interviewer Name			
		Mandatory Data is Missing! PLEASE Fill in Missing Fields	
		SAVE Record	
SCREENING QUESTIONS		There are now 0 records in the database	
1	Have you answered this survey with a person with this yellow button (or other identification)?		
2	Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight? Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?		
3	Option A: Street Survey Only Where are you staying tonight?		
3	Option B: Emergency Shelter Survey Only Are you staying in this emergency shelter tonight?		
4	Do you give consent to participate in this survey?		
MANDATORY AND OPTIONAL DATA SET		***Mandatory Questions are in Highlighted this color and must be completed	
Gender			
5	Which of the following do you identify with? (select all that apply)		
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Transgender/Transsexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other(please specify)		
	No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSING DATA
6	How old are you/what is your year of birth?		
	Age		Enter #
	OR Birth year		Or Enter 4 digit year
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Declined to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSING DATA
Aboriginal			
7.1	Would you identify as being Aboriginal, including First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit?		MISSING DATA
Migration			
8.1	How long have you been in Canada?		
	Born in Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	# of years		Enter #
	OR # of months		or Enter #
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Mobile Data Entry



Using the count as a Housing First Priority Screener

The PiT count scores can be weighted to reflect local priorities, such as chronicity, health/mental health/addictions acuity, age, gender, etc.

Questions to include:

- Mandatory Questions (includes questions about chronicity)
- Optional questions (about health)
- Identify the person's name

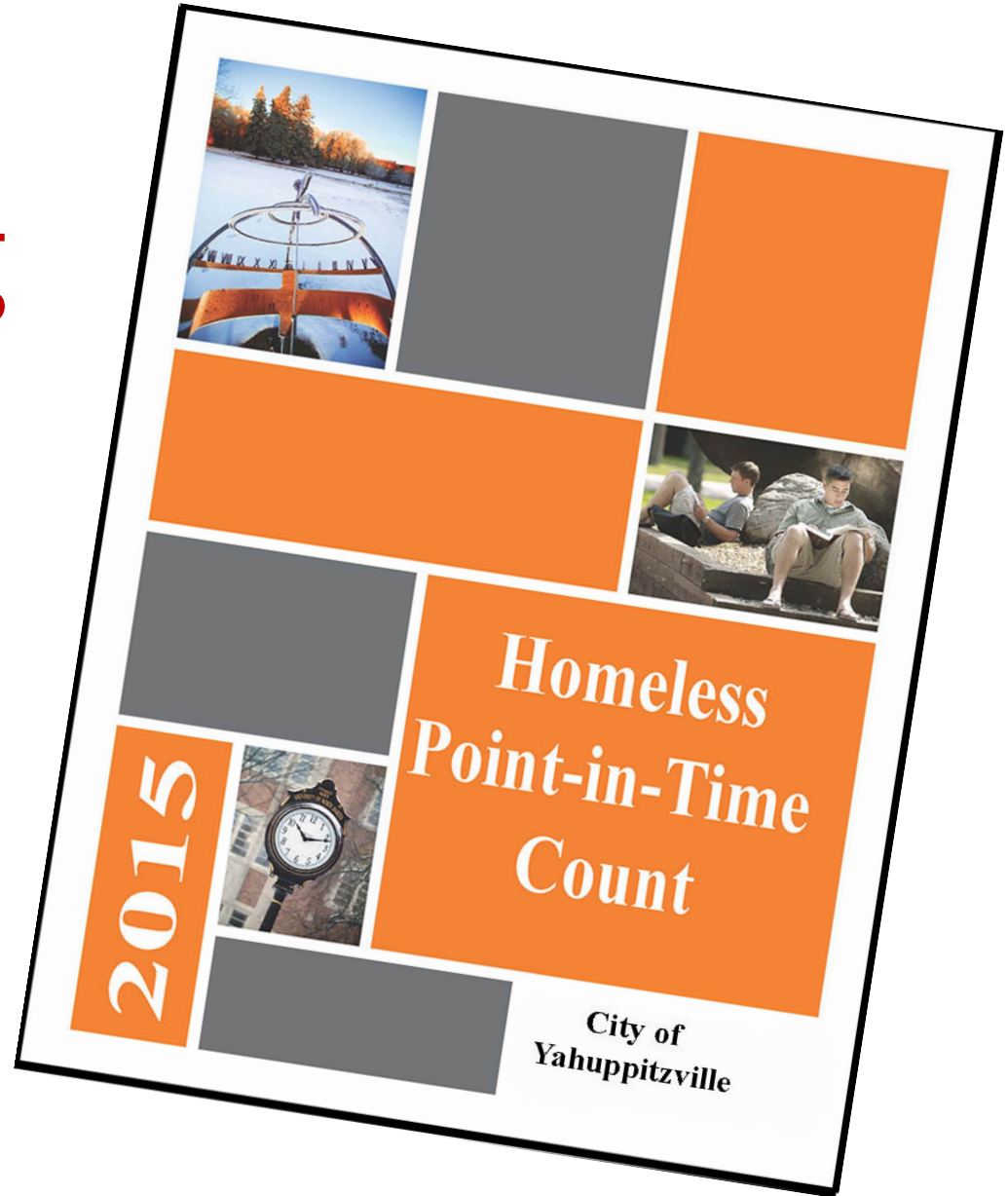
Part 6

AFTER
the count

Data analysis



Reporting out



Dealing with the media



Feeding results back into the planning process



Part 7

What's next?

Coordinated **Canadian** Point-in-Time Count



Late January, 2016



Homelessness Partnering Strategy

- Supporting a Canadian Coordinated Homelessness Count
- Communities may receive additional funding to support participation
- Assembling a community based advisory body
- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness providing tool kit and technical support



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Methodology and Toolkit

The following Tools will be available free of charge:

- Interactive online toolkit
- Hard copy of the toolkit
- Common methodology, survey script, screening questions and data set
- Supplementary data set
- Modules for Youth and Aboriginal counts
- Final report template



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Technical Assistance also available

The COH also provides training and technical assistance to participating communities. Examples of technical assistance include:

- General support for planning and implementation
- Logistical support regarding engagement of communities, volunteers, shelters, hospitals, etc.
- Technical support regarding data gathering
- Training needs of volunteers
- Data analysis and reporting
- Knowledge Mobilization support

Questions or comments?

