Initial Findings from Voices of Youth Count

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Emerging insights for discussion.
Not for circulation, citation, or public release.
Agenda

• VoYC background
• Over-represented subpopulations
• Going upstream
• Toward policy implications
• Discussion
Who is in the room?

- McKinney-Vento liaisons
- Homeless services providers
- Youth providers
- Continuum of Care staff
- Others?
VoYC Background
VoYC: a public-private partnership

Voices of Youth Count is an innovative, national policy research initiative designed to link evidence and action to end youth homelessness.
22 partner communities
Legislative impetus

2008 RHY Act reauthorization

- Requires estimates at 5-year intervals – beginning within 2 years of enactment – of the incidence and prevalence of RHY, ages 13 to 25.

- Directs HHS to assess the characteristics of these youth by surveying and interviewing a representative sample.

- Law does not specify the methodology for carrying out the studies, except to say that HHS (or research entity) should base the estimate on the best quantitative and qualitative social science research methods available.

- Authorizes Congress to appropriate such sums as may be necessary to fund the studies.
VoYC Components

Youth Counts
Brief Youth Survey
CoC & Provider Surveys
In-depth Interviews
National Survey of Adults
Existing Data
Evidence Review
Policy & Fiscal Review
Who are we talking about?

• Homelessness (broadly defined):
  – Staying in shelters, transitional housing programs, hotels/motels
  – Sleeping outside, in cars, in abandoned buildings, in 24-hour business, anywhere not meant for human habitation
  – Staying with acquaintances/friends/relatives but lacking stable housing
  – Exiting hospitals/jails/other facilities

• Ages 13-25
Youth Counts & Brief Youth Surveys
VoYC Youth Counts

**Purpose:** Develop a replicable methodology that can be used by communities across the US to count homeless youth and gather information about their characteristics.

- Youth-sensitive PIT count with brief survey
- 22 diverse counties
- Respondents ages 13-25
- \( n = 4,139 \)
Planning Partners

- Youth
- Behavioral health providers
- Continuums of Care
- Homeless adult providers
- Homeless youth providers
- Local government
- Social service organizations
- K-12 Schools
- Universities
Key Elements of VoYC Youth Counts

- Youth engagement
- Street Count + Community Count + Organizational Count
- Hot spot mapping
- Collaboration
- Youth-specific surveys
- Data integration
Check me out!

CONDUCTING A YOUTH COUNT: A TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides a step-by-step roadmap to conduct a youth count using the VoYC methodology implemented in collaboration with 22 urban, suburban and rural VoYC partner communities throughout the summer of 2016. It reflects the VoYC approach to engaging and empowering youth and a broad array of community stakeholders for a better youth count.

The toolkit is organized into five phases with guidance and links to helpful tools for each phase. Within the guidance, you will find details about the steps for planning and executing a youth count along with a description of our lessons learned while we were in the field. The tools
In-Depth Interviews
In-Depth Interviews

Purpose: Deeper understanding of youth homelessness and intervention opportunities.

- Purposive sampling
- 5 diverse counties (Cook, Travis, San Diego, Walla Walla, Philadelphia)
- Mixed-methods: in-depth interview and survey
- Respondents ages 13-25
- n = 215
If you were to think of your experiences with housing instability as a story, where would your story begin?

Who, what, when, how, where, why?

And then what happened?

And then what happened?

Jo FFiSSH

Jo= Jobs/Finances
F= Family
Supports Fi= Friends & Intimate Partners

S= School
S= Services and
H= Health
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RedCap Software</strong></td>
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<td><strong>App for iPad</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spanish/English</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Automatic Upload to Data Base</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Overlap with BYS questions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Demographic Questions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>System Involvement and Service Use</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Also asks about:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gov’t Service Use, other services (general and school based)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A select set of adversities while stably housed and while unstably housed</strong></td>
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National Survey of Adults
National Survey of Adults

**Purpose**: Estimate national 12-month prevalence and incidence, and examine the correlates

- Nationally-representative phone-based survey
- Adults with youth ages 13-25 in their households
- Detailed follow-up interviews with 150 respondents
- \( n = 26,161 \)
Towards a reliable national estimate

A. Typically counted youth homelessness

B. Typically uncounted youth homelessness (exclusion errors)

C. Non-homeless youth that may be captured in some estimates (inclusion errors)

Working towards a sampling approach and indicators that best capture A + B and avoid C.
Over-represented subpopulations
Pregnant and Parenting Youth

More than **1 out of 3** homeless young women are pregnant or parenting

(In 2015, the birth rate for 15-19 year old females was 2.3%, or 22.3 per 1,000)

Source: Youth Counts (n=4,139)

Parenting youth are ~2.2x more likely to experience homelessness than non-parenting youth

Source: National Survey (n=6,297)
Race & Ethnicity

Different Methods, Different Insights

Black/African American youth are $\sim 1.8x$ more likely and Hispanic youth are $\sim 1.3x$ more likely to experience homelessness than White youth.
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

21% of youth experiencing homelessness identified as LGBTQ

(source: Youth Counts, n=4,139)

(vs 7% of general millennial population)

LGBTQ youth were more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness as their non-LGBT peers

(source: National Survey, n=6,297)

Extent to which an agency affirmed & protected LGBTQ+ youth played a major role in youths’ service engagement

(source: In-depth Interviews, n=215)
Youth with Limited Education and Income

Education

- 34% of youth (ages 18-25) did not have a high school diploma/GED (vs. 11% of general youth population)
- Youth without a high school diploma or GED are ~4.5x more likely to experience homelessness than youth who complete high school

Income

- Youth who are not employed are ~1.6x more likely to experience homelessness than youth who are employed
- Youth with an annual household income ≤ $24,000 are ~2.6x more likely to experience homelessness than youth with an annual household income > $24,000
Going upstream
The case for prevention

- Prevalence estimates show a large, mostly hidden population of youth experiencing homelessness
- Roughly half of the youth identified in the national survey had experienced homelessness for the first time in the past 12 months
The case for early intervention

- Homelessness isn’t an event—housing instability and its antecedents start early
- 64% of 18- to 25-year-olds self-reporting homelessness also reported couch surfing; most youth in the IDI sample had 2 or more different kinds of homelessness.
- We know some (but not all) of the correlates to target
- Engaging key systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice) may expedite progress
Trajectories into homelessness begin early

**Age at first homelessness**

- 16 to 18: 48%
- 13 to 15: 19%
- 9 to 12: 6%
- 19 to 21: 13%
- 13 to 15: 13%
- 22 to 25: 1%
- Unassigned: 13%

Source: In-depth Interviews (n=215)
Where does your story begin?

Critical conditions emerging from in-depth interviews (n=215)

• Entrance into foster care

• **Loss of a caregiver** (> 1 out of 3 youth)

• Family homelessness

• **Parent struggles** (mental health, addictions, and with child’s emerging sexuality)

• **Chronic conflict** (in family, in parent-child dynamic and between youth and parent’s new spouse or partner)
Engaging key systems upstream

29%
Ever in Foster Care
vs. 2% of general youth population

46%
Spent Time in Juvenile Detention, Jail or Prison
vs. 15% of general (older) youth population

We can’t infer causality, but the overrepresentations are striking.

Source: Youth Counts (n=4,139)
Toward informing policy & practice
From research to recommendations

- Findings
- Implications
- Recommendations
A solutions framework

- Prevention & early intervention
- Data & evidence
- Addressing spatial realities
- Tailoring to high-risk sub-populations
- Youth-centric systems for currently homeless youth
Discussion

1. Questions? Reactions? Implications?
2. We didn’t get to it? Email: bhorwitz@chapinhall.org
3. Sign up for our Newsletter for regular updates on youth homelessness and VoYC research

website: www.voicesofyouthcount.org