



2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Executive Summary

Background

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the lead agency in the effort to end homelessness throughout the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC),¹ recently completed one of the largest homeless count operations in the United States. This report provides an in-depth review of homelessness in Los Angeles City and County, and provides valuable information to drive programs, services and planning to eliminate homelessness in our Continuum.

LAHSA would like to thank the City and County of Los Angeles for their generous support of this project, and the 1,100 volunteers and homeless individuals who participated with us to count and survey the homeless in our communities. This report is the most complete and comprehensive ever developed for the Los Angeles Continuum, and would not have been possible without their support.

Key Findings

The Numbers

- On any given day, there are an estimated **68,608 homeless people throughout the Los Angeles CoC.**
- Approximately 15% of these, or **10,100 are children** under the age of 18.
- An additional 5,094 homeless people counted in the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach (distinct separate Continuums in Los Angeles County) increase the **estimated homeless population for the entire County of Los Angeles at a point in time to 73,702.**

Annualized Numbers²

- Based on the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) protocols, an estimated **141,737** homeless people in the Los Angeles CoC **experience homelessness sometime during the year.** This annual estimate of homelessness represents approximately 1.5% of Los Angeles CoC's total population.

Regional Numbers

- The City of Los Angeles has an estimated **40,144** homeless individuals on any given night.
- Skid Row reported the greatest concentration of homeless persons at **5,131.**

¹ The Los Angeles Continuum of Care includes all of Los Angeles County, except the cities of Pasadena, Glendale and Long Beach, which administer their own separate continuums of care (CoC). These cities also conduct their own homeless census counts.

² In 2007, based on the survey responses of the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Homeless Street and Shelter survey, ASR used the annualization formula by the Corporation for Supportive Housing to calculate an annual estimate of the number of homeless people in the Los Angeles Continuum over the course of a year. This approach is the HUD-approved method for calculating the annual estimate of homeless people based on the point-in-time (PIT) count. It should be noted that in the 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, ASR used an alternative method that computed an annual multiplier which was applied to the PIT count number; therefore the different annualization numbers in 2005 and 2007 are not directly comparable.

- The San Gabriel Valley and Metro Los Angeles areas experienced an increase in the number of homeless from the prior count, while the remaining 6 Service Planning Areas (SPAs) saw decreases in their homeless populations. Following are the homeless estimates for each SPA:
 - SPA 1 – Antelope Valley 1,815
 - SPA 2 – San Fernando Valley 6,411
 - SPA 3 – San Gabriel Valley 9,942
 - SPA 4 – Metro Los Angeles 22,030
 - SPA 5 – West Los Angeles 6,703
 - SPA 6 – South Los Angeles 11,670
 - SPA 7 – East Los Angeles 5,580
 - SPA 8 – South Bay/Harbor 4,457

Demographics

Demographic information on the Los Angeles homeless population is based on over 3,230 surveys conducted throughout Los Angeles City and County. This survey provides valuable insight into the needs of these individuals.

Location of Homeless People

- Approximately **83%** of the homeless people identified in the point-in-time count were **unsheltered, sleeping in the streets, alleys, autos, encampments, overpasses, doorways, tents, unconverted garages, sheds, and the like** while only **17%** were living in either emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.
- An additional **6,000** homeless individuals were found to be **living in jails, hospitals and rehabilitation facilities**; however, since HUD does not recognize these individuals as homeless, they are not included in the totals counted above. If these homeless persons were added to the PIT total, there would be **74,731** homeless people in the Los Angeles CoC (excluding the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach).
- Each night, an estimated **7,998 children** sleep in locations not suitable for human habitation.
- The majority of survey respondents (84%) were living in Los Angeles County when they became homeless.

Gender³

- **Adult men** represent approximately 59% of the homeless in Los Angeles, with 85% without shelter nightly.
- **Adult women** represent approximately 24% of the homeless in Los Angeles, and 81% of them are unsheltered on any given night.
- Approximately 2% of total population are **adult transgender** homeless people.
- Approximately 15% of the homeless population are children under 18 years of age; **on any given night, over 10,100 children are homeless in Los Angeles, and 79% of them, or 7,998 are unsheltered.**

Family Status

- 24% of the total homeless population counted were living in families.
- 82% of the homeless family members were unsheltered, down from 87% in 2005.

³ Note: Gender totals do not total 68,608 because youth under the age of 18 are not included.

Ethnicity

- Over 50% of Los Angeles homeless individuals are African-American;
- Approximately 19% are Caucasian;
- Nearly 24% of respondents are Latino;
- 2% a American Indian or Alaskan Native;
- A little over 1% are Asian or Pacifica Islander; and
- Approximately 4% of respondents self-identified as multi-ethnic or another group not listed.

Age

- The median age of Los Angeles homeless individuals is 45 years old. The two largest age groups include 41-50 years old (34%) and 51-60 years old (24%).

Veterans

- Twelve percent (12%) of Los Angeles Homeless have served in the regular military service, with approximately 1% in the National Guard and over 1% had been in a reserve unit (answers not mutually exclusive).

Chronic Homelessness⁴

- Approximately 33%, or one third of the homeless in Los Angeles are chronically homeless.
- For 2007, the chronically homeless population is estimated to be approximately **22,376 people**.
- 49% of the single adult homeless are chronically homeless.
- The majority (71%) of chronically homeless people are male, Black or African-American (49%), and unsheltered (93%).
- Forty two percent (42%) of chronically homeless people have 4 or more disabling conditions

Disabling Conditions

- Overall, 74% of survey respondents indicated that they were experiencing a disabling condition⁵. The following conditions are not mutually exclusive:
 - Nearly 31% of these individuals are experiencing mental illness.
 - 52% were suffering from depression.
 - Almost 35% have a physical disability.
 - Over 42% abuse alcohol and/or drugs.

⁴ Chronically homeless - A profile of people who are chronically homeless was obtained from the data gathered from the homeless survey. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a chronically homeless person as: "An unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has been continually homeless for one year or more, or has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years." For the purposes of this study, a disabling condition was identified as a physical or mental disability, depression, alcohol or drug use, or chronic health problems. These conditions were self-reported by survey respondents. Of the 2,978 homeless persons interviewed, approximately 49% (1,468 respondents) can be considered chronically homeless using the above criteria. It should be noted that the HUD definition of chronic homelessness does not include chronically homeless families or the chronically homeless in transitional housing, those in jails, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities and they have been excluded from this calculation.

⁵ A disabling condition was identified as a physical or mental disability, depression, alcohol or drug use, or chronic health problems.

Access to Health Care

- Approximately 48% of homeless persons use hospital emergency rooms as a primary source of health care, and over 53% have been to the ER at least once in the 12 months.
- Approximately 22% report they have needed medical attention but have been unable to receive it while homeless.

Domestic Violence

- Nearly 11% of all homeless have experienced domestic violence.
- Approximately 20% of female respondents have been victims of domestic violence.
 - Over 50% of those noted above believe that domestic violence is a significant contributor to their becoming homeless.

Los Angeles Continuum of Care

Figure 1: Los Angeles Continuum of Care Overall Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projection

	Number of Homeless Persons	
	2007	2005
Number of People on One Night (Point-in-Time)	68,608	82,291
Number of People per Year (Annual Projection)	141,737	221,363

Figure 2: Los Angeles Continuum of Care Subpopulations Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projections

Subpopulation	Point-in-Time Results		Annual Projections ³
	2007	2005	2007
Sheltered	11,442	9,878	23,638
Unsheltered	57,166	72,413	118,099
Adult Men	40,407	47,813	83,477
Adult Women	16,716	20,092	34,534
Adult Transgender ¹	1,369	1,088	2,828
Total Youth (Under Age 18)	10,116	13,298	20,899
Age 18-24	5,264	6,659	10,875
Age 25-55	44,571	55,277	92,079
Age 56+	8,657	7,064	17,884
Black/African American	34,647	34,093	71,577
Hispanic or Latino	16,191	19,447	33,450
White	13,241	22,595	27,355
Multi-Racial and Other	4,528	6,156	9,355
# Individual Families w/ Children	6,238	7,397	12,887
# People in Families	16,643	19,882	34,383
Youth in Families	8,828	11,899	18,238
Youth in Families Age 5 or Younger	3,946	NA	8,152
Veterans	8,453	15,420	17,463
Chronically Homeless	22,376	34,512	24,848
Mentally Ill	24,505	29,293	50,625
Substance Abusers ²	24,740	43,920	51,110
People with HIV/AIDS	1,235	2,880	2,551
Victims of Domestic Violence	7,192	9,463	14,858
Unaccompanied Youth	1,288	1,394	2,661

¹ In 2005, the "Adult Transgender" category also includes people who declined to state their gender on the survey.

² Question wording was changed in 2007 to ask about alcohol/drug *abuse* rather than alcohol/drug *use*.

³ In 2007, ASR used the annualization formula by the Corporation for Supportive Housing to calculate an annual estimate of the number of homeless people in the Los Angeles Continuum over the course of a year. This approach is the HUD-approved method for calculating the annual estimate of homeless people based on the point-in-time (PIT) count. In 2005, ASR used an alternative method that computed an annual multiplier which was applied to the PIT count number; therefore the different annualization numbers in 2005 and 2007 are not directly comparable. HUD's annual formula was released after LAHSA had conducted its Street Count.

Note: The 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count did not include the cities and Continuums of Glendale, Long Beach, or Pasadena.

City of Los Angeles

Figure 3: City of Los Angeles Overall Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projection

	Number of Homeless Persons	
	2007	2005
Number of People on One Night (Point-in-Time)	40,144	48,103
Number of People per Year (Annual Projection)	73,489	130,362

Figure 4: City of Los Angeles Subpopulations Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projections

Subpopulation	Point-in-Time Results		Annual Projections ²
	2007	2005	2007
Sheltered	7,794	6,774	15,268
Unsheltered	32,350	41,329	58,222
Adult Men	24,172	26,811	44,624
Adult Women	9,598	11,233	17,598
Adult Transgender ¹	680	602	1,205
Total Youth (Under Age 18)	5,694	9,458	10,062
Age 18-24	2,959	3,942	5,412
Age 25-55	26,226	30,452	48,172
Age 56+	5,265	4,251	9,844
Black/African American	23,451	22,849	44,627
Hispanic or Latino	6,641	9,765	11,759
White	7,204	12,026	12,132
Multi-Racial and Other	2,848	3,463	4,971
# Individual Families w/ Children	3,443	4,439	6,134
# People in Families	9,238	13,973	16,336
Youth in Families	4,854	8,614	8,558
Youth in Families Age 5 or Younger	2,119	N/A	3,784
Veterans	5,338	8,851	9,562
Chronically Homeless	13,680	18,945	14,820
Mentally Ill	15,012	17,077	27,166
Substance Abusers ²	15,223	22,079	28,143
People with HIV/AIDS	949	N/A	1,698
Victims of Domestic Violence	4,268	4,425	7,966
Unaccompanied Youth	840	845	1,504

¹ In 2005, the "Adult Transgender" category also includes people who declined to state their gender on the survey.

² In 2007, ASR used the annualization formula by the Corporation for Supportive Housing to calculate an annual estimate of the number of homeless people in the Los Angeles Continuum over the course of a year. This approach is the HUD-approved method for calculating the annual estimate of homeless people based on the point-in-time (PIT) count. In 2005, ASR used an alternative method that computed an annual multiplier which was applied to the PIT count number; therefore the different annualization numbers in 2005 and 2007 are not directly comparable. HUD's annual formula was released after LAHSA had conducted its Street Count.

Skid Row

Figure 5: Skid Row Overall Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projection

	Number of Homeless Persons	
	2007	2005
Number of People on One Night (Point-in-Time)	5,131	3,668
Number of People per Year (Annual Projection)	7,717	N/A

Figure 6: Skid Row Subpopulations Census Results: Point-in-Time and Annual Projections

Subpopulation	2007	
	Point-in-Time Results	Annual Projections
Sheltered	3,334	5,015
Unsheltered	1,797	2,703
Adult Men	3,910	5,881
Adult Women	1,134	1,706
Adult Transgender	17	26
Total Youth (Under Age 18)	70	105
Age 18-24	182	274
Age 25-55	4,165	6,265
Age 56+	714	1,073
Black/African American	3,320	4,993
Hispanic or Latino	641	965
White	682	1,026
Multi-Racial and Other	487	733
# Individual Families w/ Children	8	12
# People in Families	24	36
Youth in Families	14	21
Youth in Families Age 5 or Younger	8	11
Veterans	877	1,320
Chronically Homeless	1,388	2,295
Mentally Ill	2,514	3,782
Substance Abusers	2,185	3,286
People with HIV/AIDS	133	201
Victims of Domestic Violence	426	641
Unaccompanied Youth	56	84

Confidence Intervals and Data Reliability

Since a multiple-methods approach was used to enumerate the homeless population of Los Angeles County, it was not possible to develop an overall confidence level or margin of error for the project as a whole. The following table briefly illustrates the methodologies used for the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, the results obtained from each method, as well as boundaries and margins of error inherent in each component, as appropriate.

Figure 7: Confidence Intervals and Boundaries (95% Confidence Level) Breakdown of Homeless Enumeration Methodologies

Methodology	Data Source	Results	Confidence Interval/Margin of Error
Street Count	Physical enumeration of 505 sampled tracts (235 selected, 270 random) out of a total of 1,886 valid tracts	15,350	Physical Count
Street Projections	Statistical analysis based on objective demographic and environmental data and the Street Count	19,983	95%/7.5%
Shelter and Institution Count (Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing only)	Los Angeles County shelters and institutions were either phoned for their occupancy, or faxed in their occupancy to LAHSA	11,442*	Physical Count
	Subtotal	46,775	95%/7.5%
Homeless Youth Count	Physical enumeration of locations where youth were likely to be found	1,087	Physical Count
General Population Phone Survey	Phone survey of 1,000 randomly selected households from the Los Angeles County area	20,746	Low Bound/8,174 High Bound/37,967
Total	All above sources	68,608	

*An additional 6,123 homeless people were housed in jails, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities, but do not meet HUD's homeless definition. For more detail, please refer to "Sheltered Homeless Not Meeting HUD's Homeless Definition" of the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report.

Regional and Political Subdivision Projections

The statistical confidence level for the Los Angeles CoC is 95% with a 7.5% margin of error. When these data are applied to a more granular level, i.e., supervisorial district, city council district, or city within Los Angeles County, the confidence level and potential margin of error increases, in some cases significantly. As a result, the regional and political subdivision numbers should be utilized with these limitations in mind, and are provided as a consideration to the many constituencies that make up the Los Angeles Continuum of Care.

All cities were given an opportunity to expand the study for a more robust homeless enumeration of their jurisdiction. No city elected to pursue this option and the numbers presented in this section should be used for general guidance only.

Figure 8: Homeless Estimates by Region

Region	Homeless Estimate	
	2007	2005
Los Angeles	40,144	48,103
Other Areas in the County*	28,464	34,188
Los Angeles CoC Total	68,608	82,291

*Note: This number excludes the cities of Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena, who have separate Continuums within the County.

Figure 9: Homeless Estimates by Service Planning Area

SPA	Homeless Estimate	
	2007	2005
SPA 1 – Antelope Valley	1,815	3,544
SPA 2 – San Fernando Valley	6,411	11,275
SPA 3 – San Gabriel Valley	9,942	9,254
SPA 4 – Metro Los Angeles	22,030	20,023
SPA 5 – West Los Angeles	6,703	6,860
SPA 6 – South Los Angeles	11,670	16,787
SPA 7 – East Los Angeles	5,580	7,178
SPA 8 – South Bay/Harbor	4,457	7,369
Los Angeles CoC Total	68,608	82,291

Figure 10: County Census Results by Supervisorial District: Point-in-Time¹

Supervisorial District	Supervisor	Point-in-Time Results		% of Total	
		2007	2005	2007	2005
District 1	Gloria Molina	18,916	20,840	27.7%	25.3%
District 2	Yvonne Brathwaite Burke	23,473	26,876	34.4%	32.6%
District 3	Zev Yaroslavsky	13,721	16,601	20.1%	20.2%
District 4	Don Knabe	5,529	7,623	8.1%	9.3%
District 5	Michael D. Antonovich	6,609	10,351	9.7%	12.6%
Total		68,248*	82,291	100.0%	100.0%

¹For a more detailed discussion of the subpopulations in each Los Angeles County Supervisorial District please see Appendix V of the full report. The results do not include the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, or Long Beach.

*The total of Supervisorial Districts does not equal the total of the entire count because some CoC shelters were unable to be located within specific Supervisorial Districts

Figure 11: Los Angeles City Census Results by City Council District: Point-in-Time¹

Los Angeles City Council District	Council Member	Point-in-Time Results		% of Total	
		2007	2005	2007	2005
District 1	Ed P. Reyes	2,644	4,587	6.6%	9.5%
District 2	Wendy Greuel	738	1,531	1.8%	3.2%
District 3	Dennis P. Zine	831	1,524	2.1%	3.2%
District 4	Tom LaBonge	1,811	1,929	4.5%	4.0%
District 5	Jack Weiss	2,245	2,066	5.6%	4.3%
District 6	Tony Cardenas	1,420	2,254	3.5%	4.7%
District 7	Richard Alarcón	937	1,769	2.3%	3.7%
District 8	Bernard C. Parks	2,696	6,484	6.7%	13.5%
District 9	Jan Perry	10,098	8,425	25.2%	17.5%
District 10	Herb J. Wesson	2,571	3,143	6.4%	6.5%
District 11	Bill Rosendahl	2,799	2,526	7.0%	5.3%
District 12	Greig Smith	768	1,123	1.9%	2.3%
District 13	Eric Garcetti	3,225	2,858	8.0%	5.9%
District 14	José Huizar	5,559	5,036	13.8%	10.5%
District 15	Janice Hahn	1,802	2,850	4.5%	5.9%
Total		40,144	48,103	100.0%	100.0%

¹For a more detailed discussion of the subpopulations in each Los Angeles City Council District please see Appendix VI: City Council District Breakdown of the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report.

2007 Improvements in Methodology

While economic factors and implementation of policies aimed at alleviating homelessness may have served to reduce the numbers of homeless people over the past two years, those factors are difficult to measure. Certainly, improvements in the execution of the Homeless Count significantly enhanced the overall integrity of the 2007 census. While the 2007 Homeless Count used similar methods as were used in the 2005 Homeless Count to facilitate comparison, the 2007 Homeless Count process enhanced the methods (see below), resulting in increased confidence in the 2007 findings.

a. In 2007, more resources were devoted to the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.

With support from the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles, LAHSA hired staff to conduct outreach, gather information to support operations and provide critical assessments throughout the process to ensure the credibility of the count. Organized into teams, these staff recruited volunteers from local universities, government agencies, service providers and other stakeholders. LAHSA Homeless Count staff conducted training of enumerators and interviewers, trained shelter and institutions staff to properly complete the forms and created maps to guide enumeration efforts. With this additional staff, LAHSA was also able to conduct a special operation to count homeless youth. In addition, an administrative staff person and database/web designer dedicated to the project provided critical support for mailings and electronic communications. In 2005, LAHSA had only two dedicated staff positions to support the homeless count.

b. Improvements in identifying “Must Enumerate” (high concentration of homeless people) census tracts were made. Collaboration with law enforcement, homeless service providers, and City and County stakeholders improved the ability to identify high concentrations of homelessness throughout the Los Angeles CoC. In addition, LAHSA continued to monitor homelessness within the County up to the night of the start of the Homeless Count in order to obtain the most accurate locations of the mobile homeless populations.

Of the 1,886 census tracts in the Los Angeles CoC, the 2007 Homeless Count selected a statistically appropriate sample of 505 census tracts to enumerate.

- 235 “Must Enumerate” Census Tracts in 2007 versus 211 in 2005
- 270 Random Census Tracts in 2007 versus 299 in 2005

With a higher number of “must enumerate” tracts in 2007, the incidence of outliers in the pool of random census tracts was minimized. Furthermore, analysis of the street count tally sheets revealed fewer statistical outliers by Service Planning Area (SPA). Thus the number of homeless people projected to the remaining census tracts reduced the potential to overestimate the homeless population throughout the Los Angeles CoC and by SPA.

c. Accuracy in the process to count homeless persons in unsheltered locations on the nights of the homeless count was increased. Improvements in training, auditing, and re-counting questionable tally sheets led to more accurate numbers in 2007. Building on the experience of 2005, volunteer and paid worker training was improved, with more sessions in more facilities across Los Angeles County and by deploying Site Coordinators who would ultimately oversee street count operations on the nights of the count. This resulted in immediate identification of unusual counts on tally sheets. Tally sheets deemed questionable or where enumerators didn't adequately explain findings, tracts in question was recounted that or the subsequent night. Twenty (approximately 4%) of the census tracts enumerated, were re-enumerated for reasons noted above.

- d. **More complete data from shelters and institutions was collected.** The Shelter and Institution count is intended to find homeless people in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as in other facilities. Shelters and institutions were asked to report those people physically present in shelters, voucher motels and transitional housing that meet the HUD definition of homelessness. While the HUD Definition does not include homeless persons found in emergency rooms, alcohol and drug treatment centers and jails; these people were counted and a separate total with these individuals has been provided to better inform planning efforts.

2007 improvements to the Shelter and Institution Count included:

- a more thorough inventory of sites to include in the study;
- more extensive training of shelter and institutions staff to ensure as complete and accurate a count as possible; and,
- an improved the response rate (receiving 97% of tally sheets) of Shelter and Institutions by extensive follow-up with agencies and cross-referencing the inventory database with Homeless Count tally sheets.

- e. **An improved Homeless Demographic Survey was created and implemented.** Improvements in the survey instrument, sampling strategy, and data collection procedures led to more representative survey results.

- LAHSA collaborated with City and County stakeholders, homeless service providers, and academic experts to enhance the **survey instrument**. In addition, LAHSA pilot tested the demographic survey in December at Project Homeless Connect.
- **Data collection procedures** in 2007 were improved by providing a separate, in-depth training for volunteers participating in the Demographic Survey. In addition, 32 homeless persons were hired through an extensive selection and training process. As with the street count tally sheets, LAHSA reviewed all returned surveys. The project statistical consultant conducted a final review to ensure the surveys did not have duplicated respondents (the same person responding to two surveys). The improvements in the Demographic Survey process led to more representative findings for the homeless population in the Los Angeles CoC.

- f. **Counting of the “hidden homeless” improved with a better Telephone Survey instrument and process.**

This year, as in 2005, the homeless count estimate incorporated the results of a telephone survey to obtain a count of the hidden homeless (homeless people staying on private property). Improvements in the telephone survey instrument and a professional review of the telephone survey instrument by academic statisticians led to higher confidence in the 2007 telephone survey results.

- The **telephone survey instrument was improved** by filtering respondents using HUD’s strict criteria for identifying homeless people living on private property. LAHSA worked closely with ASR and academician consultants to develop an instrument capable of capturing the true “hidden homeless” and not the “precariously housed”, including Dr. Martha Burt of the Urban Institute.

In addition, two, **independent, academic consultants reviewed and provided valuable insight into the telephone survey methodology and results.** The improvements in the telephone survey process provide LAHSA with higher confidence in the statistics produced from this research method. Individuals consulted include William D. Kalsbeek, Ph.D, Fellow of the American Statistical Association, Professor of Biostatistics and Director of the Research Survey Unit, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and Bruce G. Link,

Ph.D., Professor of Epidemiology and Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University Dr. Kalsbeek is an internationally known biostatistician and Dr. Link has published on statistical methods in rare events and populations.

Methodology

The 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count was performed by using HUD-recommended protocols for counting homeless persons and estimating the number of people who are homeless at a particular point in time and over the course of a year. The Homeless Count has three primary components: (1) the enumeration of homeless people in carefully selected areas and randomly selected areas; (2) the extrapolation of enumeration data to uncounted areas of the County; and (3) a survey to obtain demographic information about Los Angeles's homeless population.

1. The **enumeration** of homeless people was accomplished primarily over a three-night period on January 23, 24, and 25, 2007, in 505 of the 1,886 census tracts that lie within the Los Angeles CoC. Two hundred thirty-five (235) of the selected tracts had been designated "must enumerate"⁶, known for their high concentrations of homeless people (based on input from policymakers, advocates and other stakeholders). The remaining 270 tracts were randomly selected from the remaining census tracts throughout the County within the Continuum. Homeless people in these 505 tracts were counted from approximately 10:00 pm to 1:00 am, as people are more likely to be stationary during this period. The enumeration consisted of three components:
 - **The Unsheltered Street Count:** a visual enumeration of unsheltered homeless people. Census enumerators, paired into teams of two (in most cases, one community volunteer or service provider and one homeless guide), walked through an assigned census tract and conducted a physical count of all the homeless people they encountered. . They counted individuals observed in streets, vehicles, around abandoned buildings, parks and campgrounds, wilderness areas and makeshift shelters. Additionally, special youth enumeration teams consisting of homeless youth and formerly homeless youth were utilized to conduct a physical count of unaccompanied homeless youth. Homeless youth are often difficult to find, since they typically do not mingle with the adult homeless population. The youth count took place during mid-day hours.
 - **The Shelter and Institution Count:** an enumeration of sheltered homeless people. This count was done on the same nights as the Street Count to avoid duplicate counting. All 600+ shelters (emergency and transitional) and institutions (detention centers, hospital emergency rooms, residential alcohol and drug treatment centers, and motels that accept homeless vouchers) in the Los Angeles CoC were asked to report their occupancies for the night their Service Planning Areas were enumerated (or if not in an enumerated area, for one of the three nights of the count). There was an overall participation level of 97% from shelters and institutions.
 - **The "Hidden" Homeless Count:** a General Population Telephone Survey of 1,000 randomly selected Los Angeles CoC residents was utilized to find homeless people who would not have been identified by the above methods, because they were not on the

⁶ "Must Enumerate" Census Tracts were census tracts throughout the Los Angeles Continuum of Care with a high probability of a large unsheltered homeless population. The list of must enumerate census tracts was compiled from data that the LAHSA collected on homeless encampments from LAHSA's Emergency Response Team program database, homeless service providers and outreach teams in Los Angeles County, law enforcement, California Highway Patrol, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

street, but living in places not intended for human habitation (e.g., cars, unconverted garages, sheds, etc.). The telephone survey instrument employed HUD's strict criteria for identifying homeless people living on private property, and the entire telephone survey component of the Homeless Count was carefully developed and deployed to ensure the outcomes resulted in meaningful census data. The survey took place in April and May of 2007.

2. The results of the Unsheltered Street Count and the Hidden Homeless Count described above were then **extrapolated** using multi-level statistical analysis methods to project a homeless count into non-enumerated census tracts. Sample-based estimation theory was applied. SPA-specific sample averages and standard deviations were used to produce tract estimates that roll up to SPA and countywide totals, together with their standard errors of estimation⁷. The extrapolated census tract numbers were added to the actual Shelter and Institutions Count numbers by SPA to arrive at total numbers of homeless people in the Los Angeles CoC.
3. Homeless Count volunteers also conducted a face-to-face **Homeless Demographic Survey** of over 3,300 unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals between February 15 and March 31. Using open-ended, closed-ended and multiple choice questions, the survey elicited demographic information about the Los Angeles CoC population, including gender, physical and mental health status, family status, military service history, length and causes of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, and access to services.⁸

Conclusion

The 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count provides important data that illustrates the magnitude and complexity of the challenges we all face in or work to end homelessness in Los Angeles County. The information included in this report will support the City's and County's efforts to craft and implement plans to end homelessness by providing follow-up data to the baseline numbers from 2005 regarding the distribution of homelessness throughout the County, as well as the prevalence of sub-populations, including youth and veterans, and the wide-ranging nature of their needs. This report reaffirms findings from the 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, such as the poor health conditions of this population, including a high incidence of mental and physical disability. It also provides continued documentation of the high rate of unemployment and extreme poverty experienced by people who are homeless. Above all, the information in this report should help policymakers and providers alike sharpen their focus on meeting the needs of homeless persons, and bring to the forefront the urgent need to end homelessness for all populations.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) would like to thank our partners, the County and City of Los Angeles for declaring January 22nd – 26th Homeless Count week and for their generous financial support in funding the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.

⁷ Specifically, the average count in the sampled tracts in a SPA was used to predict the count in the unsampled tracts in that SPA. The sample average is extrapolated to the tracts and combined with the enumerated tract totals to produce an estimate for each SPA. Residual uncertainty in the form of the standard error is determined as the number of tracts in that SPA times the standard deviation of the sample average of enumerated tracts. The margin of error is decreased with the thorough and accurate identification of homeless "hot spots" and an understanding of how those "hot spots" may change during the time directly prior to the sample selection process.

⁸ In order to avoid duplicate surveys without compromising respondents' anonymity, the instrument requested respondents' initials and date of birth. A post-survey verification process then eliminated all potentially duplicative surveys. Over 3,230 survey responses were verified in this manner.