

San Francisco's 2009 Homeless Count Needs You!

Save the date! San Francisco's next bi-annual count of homeless persons will take place on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 from 7pm to 12am. A one-hour training takes place from 7-8pm. The homeless count is a volunteer-driven, community-wide effort coordinated by the San Francisco Human Services Agency (H.S.A.). Volunteers are needed to assist with several different aspects of the count (see "roles" below).

Why does San Francisco count its homeless, and how will this information be used? All cities and counties receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for the homeless are required to conduct a bi-annual count of homeless persons living in the street and in shelters and other programs during the final week of January 2009. This information helps the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. Locally, the homeless count helps inform the allocation of resources for services to help the homeless, and provides a means of measuring the impact of homeless programs and services.

What will happen during the count? On the night of the count teams of volunteers will cover assigned routes, counting homeless individuals observed on the street across the city. Depending on the area, some volunteers will walk, and some will drive.

There is a role for everyone. Four volunteer dispatch centers located centrally throughout the city to make volunteering for Homeless Count easy! Volunteers will be needed for a number of different roles:

- ***Enumerators*** will count and record homeless persons observed on the street based on assigned routes. Both walkers and driving enumerators with their own vehicles are needed. Come alone and be matched with a team, or bring your own team of co-workers or friends. All enumerators will receive training. Volunteers will count in teams of 2-3 people. Approximately **500** enumerators are needed.
- ***Team Leaders*** are volunteers identified as having prior experience and training in working with homeless persons. Team leaders will be paired with less experienced volunteers and will also be assigned to routes known to contain "hotspots" (encampments, high concentrations of homeless persons). Approximately 100 team leaders are needed.
- ***Dispatch Center Volunteers*** will coordinate the dispatch of enumerators at one of our four dispatch centers, distributing materials and collecting information. Dispatch volunteers must have good problem solving and customer service skills. This is a great way to volunteer for people who cannot volunteer for the entire evening. Approximately 12 dispatch center volunteers are needed.
- ***Data Entry Volunteers*** will collect the tally sheets collected from volunteers as they return to their dispatch centers and enter the information into a database.

Only available during the day? Volunteers are also needed to conduct interviews with homeless persons at soup kitchens and other service sites during the day on a date still to be determined. Let us know if you are interested in this aspect of the Homeless Count.

To Volunteer for Homeless Count 2009: Please call (415) 558-2346 or e-mail HomelessCount@sfgov.org All volunteers will receive a personal follow-up call to further discuss options for volunteering.