

## **US CENSUS BUREAU'S THREE-DAY OPERATION TO COUNT THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

The US Census Bureau has the Constitutional mandate to count everyone, once every ten years, regardless of their immigration and citizenship status and whether they live in a mansion or a cardboard box. The three-day operation is called Service-Based Enumeration, which is designed to provide an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to be included in the census. A related operation is called Transitory Locations Enumeration.

### **SERVICE-BASED ENUMERATION**

Service-Based Enumeration will occur in pre-identified places for people without a usual place of residence. The Census Bureau will conduct this enumeration during the evening over a three-day period, March 29 – March 31.

The locations for SBE include:

- Shelters for people experiencing homelessness
- Soup kitchens
- Regularly scheduled mobile food vans
- Targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations

The Census Bureau has designated:

- March 29 as the one day to enumerate shelters for people experiencing homelessness
- March 30 to enumerate soup kitchens and regularly scheduled mobile food vans
- March 31 to enumerate targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations

### **TRANSITORY LOCATIONS ENUMERATION**

Transitory Locations Enumeration is designed for people whose “usual home” at the time of the census is mobile. Locations for this special count include:

- RV parks
- Campgrounds
- Hotels and motels
- Marinas
- Racetracks
- Circuses and carnivals

This enumeration is especially important for people displaced by the hurricanes and the home foreclosure crisis. Transitory locations are identified by address canvassing and local knowledge and will take place between March 19 and April 12, 2010.

### **ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS THAT CAN COUNT PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

Be Counted/Questionnaire Assistance Centers (BC/QAC):

- The Be Counted (BC) program provides individuals who believe they did not receive a questionnaire an opportunity to use a Be Counted Form (BCF) to be enumerated during the 2010 Census. It is also an opportunity for people without conventional housing to complete a questionnaire and be included in the final census count.

- The Integrated Communications Programs will coordinate the establishment of Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) where individuals can obtain the assistance they need to fill out their questionnaires.
- BC sites include libraries, local post office, community gathering points, gas stations, etc.
- Enumeration at Transitory Locations (ETL)
- The Enumeration at Transitory Locations field operation enumerates individuals at occupied units at transitory locations who do not have a Usual Home Elsewhere (UHE). These occupied units count as housing units, but may enumerate people traditionally considered to be experiencing homelessness.
- The ETL operation is designed to enumerate eligible populations that inhabit transitory locations such as Recreational Vehicle (RV) parks, campgrounds, hotels, motels (including those on military sites), marinas, racetracks, circuses, and carnivals. In this operation, a transitory location may not have a house number or street name address.

People experiencing homelessness are also included in a variety of other living arrangements and will be enumerated during other 2010 Census operations, including:

- Living with friends or family in a traditional housing unit
- Emergency and transitional shelters
- Halfway houses, jails, group homes, or worker dormitories

#### **HOW ACCURATE IS THE CENSUS BUREAU'S COUNT OF THE HOMELESS?**

Because of the difficulty in enumerating this population, the Census Bureau has developed special procedures to provide all people the opportunity to be included in the Census. This count is of people without conventional housing, i.e., those who may be missed in the enumeration of typical housing units and group quarters. Using the results of this specialized count as a measure of the number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. would be inaccurate, especially because the definition of homelessness varies and can include factors such as weather conditions, administrative and law enforcement practices, availability of shelters, length of stays, and different definitions of living arrangements.

#### **HOW CAN CENSUS TAKERS WHO CONDUCT SERVICE-BASED ENUMERATION BE IDENTIFIED?**

They will wear reflective vests, carry flash lights, have a black bag with the Census logo, and they will have a Census Identification card.