

# Homelessness Counts

## January 2007

### Appendix B: Methodology Supplement

This report summarizes and tabulates data from 463 CoC point-in-time studies conducted in 2005. Each year, CoCs submit these data to HUD in the Exhibit 1 table of the SuperNOFA application. We obtained the data in electronic form from Abt Associates with permission from HUD.

### Methodology

In the 2005 SuperNOFA application the Exhibit 1 table was accompanied by a methodological narrative supplied by the CoC. The narrative describes their methods for collecting point-in-time data. Research staff from the Homelessness Research Institute the National Alliance to End Homelessness read through each methodology, entering key variables into a database. This information helped us understand how the sites collected the data. There are limits to this approach – most notably that the narratives open-ended and often leave out key information. Nevertheless, the methodological narratives are the only widely available information on how the data were collected we are including them in this report.

**We summarized what we culled from the methodological narratives in Appendix B-Supplement 1. The data are provided in two excel worksheets. The first provides variable definitions and the second provides local CoC methods.** For more information on how the data were collected, local Continuums of Care should be contacted.

### Data Cleaning

We took a number of steps to ensure the data were as accurate as possible. We adjusted the data for three types of errors: (1) data entry errors; (2) summation errors; and (3) outliers or data inconsistencies. For the first two types of errors, we adjusted to the total. For the third type of adjustment, there were two outliers in the data set that we adjusted: Hidalgo Continuum of Care (TX-506) and Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CA-600). Hidalgo CoC reported 40,816 homeless people in 2005. This number is significantly higher than the number Hidalgo reported in 2004. Further investigation revealed that the number was in fact an unscientific estimate and we adjusted the total to reflect the actual number of homeless people counted in 2005 (this number is listed in the methodological appendix) instead of the extrapolation that was originally included in Hidalgo's Exhibit 1 report. Los Angeles reported 83,347 total homeless people. This number, however, includes an estimated 23,058 homeless people who are doubled up and were counted through a phone survey based on a sample of 1,000 respondents. HUD's definition of homelessness does not include individuals or families that are doubled up, so we adjusted Los Angeles' estimate to reflect only the number of homeless people who met HUD's definition.

### **Data Adjustments**

We made the follow adjustments to the total.

**804,212 Unadjusted Total**

**744,313 Adjusted Total**

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**Difference= 59,899**

Percent of the CoCs that were Adjusted 22%

Adjusted for Data Entry Inconsistencies 13%

Adjusted for Data Summation Inconsistencies 9%

Inaccurate Outliers .1%

Total CoCs=463

### **Outlier Adjustments**

- Hidalgo reported 40,816
- Adjusted 4,910
  
- Los Angeles Reported 83,347
- Adjusted 60,289

### **Data Entry or Summation Error Adjustments**

For a list of the CoCs that had data entry inconsistencies or data summary errors, please see Appendix B Supplement 2.

For methodological questions, please contact Mary Cunningham at [mcunningham@naeh.org](mailto:mcunningham@naeh.org)