

# 2013 Youth Count! Survey

## Volunteer Training & Management Plan

Billings Metro VISTA Project  
& Tumbleweed Program, Inc.

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*AmeriCorps VISTA member*



## **2013 Youth Count! Survey**

### **Logistical Guidelines & Training Manual**

A big **THANK YOU** for your dedication and willingness to take part in the 2013 *Youth Count!* survey. As a result of your efforts, Yellowstone County, the City of Billings, and Tumbleweed Program, Inc. will be provided with crucial data regarding youth who are experiencing homelessness and their needs—essential to further strengthen the social services provided for this vulnerable population.

***The survey will be administered July 12-14, 2013.***

#### **General Guidelines:**

- The times for the count shifts are as follows:  
**9:00am to 12:00pm; 4:00pm to 7:00pm; 7:00pm to 10:00pm**
- Five zones to canvass: **Zone 1:** *The Heights*; **Zone 2:** *Rimrocks-Westside/North Downtown*; **Zone 3:** *Central Downtown*; **Zone 4:** *I-90/Lockwood*; **Zone 5:** *Southside*.
- Volunteers will be paired in twos or groups of three to administer the survey
- Volunteers must **check in** with the *Youth Count!* headquarters and count leader when you begin your shift, and **check out** with them when your shift ends. If you can't locate the count organizers or count leaders, find or contact Joshua, Chelsia, or Emily via phone; Joshua: (406) 694-7251, Chelsia: (909) 728-8730, Emily: (715) 383-4436, or *Youth Count!* headquarters: (406) 259-2558.
- Turn in completed surveys as soon as your shift ends. Please place completed surveys in their respective folders and deliver to the *Youth Count!* headquarters at Tumbleweed ASAP. **Please place the sealed folders in one of the two GREEN drop boxes at the front desk.**

*City of Billings Police Department:* (406) 657-8460. Keep this number in your cell phone.

#### ***Youth Count! Headquarters***

***Tumbleweed Program***

505 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street

(406) 259-2558

# Youth Count! Survey Zones Summer 2013

### Locations Survey Zone

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

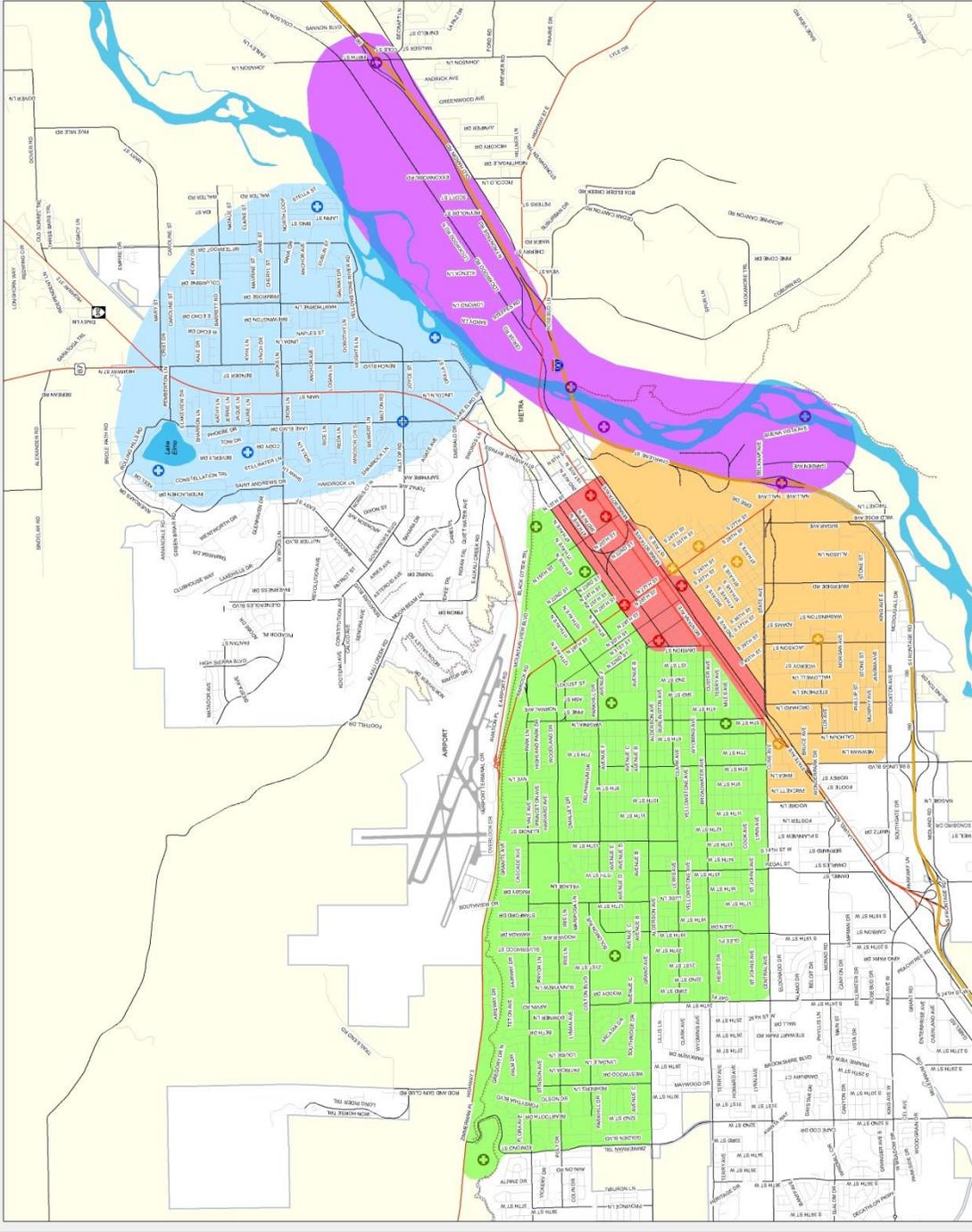
### Survey Zones

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- Yellowstone County
- Railroads
- Rims



Map Date: 10/15/2013  
Map Document: \\gis\arcgis\GIS\Projects\GIS\Projects\YouthCount\Map\_Series\YouthCount\_Series\_2013.mxd



## PLEASE REMEMBER:

When approaching someone for the count, please keep in mind the following:

1. Be courteous and ask if you can have 60 seconds of their time.
2. Inform the subject that you are conducting a simple survey.
3. As a result of their participation, Tumbleweed Program, the City of Billings, and local social service organizations will be provided with important information to better fund and expand services for youth experiencing and at-risk of homelessness.
4. Participation is **voluntary, completely anonymous, and confidential**. Therefore youth **DO NOT** have to answer any questions they deem invasive; no personal information will be used to link the participant to the survey.

## YOUTH TO BE COUNTED

For the purposes of the Youth Count! project, VISTA members used the following as a baseline for survey development: youth ages 13 to 21 who are precariously housed, who are sheltered and unsheltered or living in places unfit for human habitation. Couch-surfers will also be enumerated as their living condition is neither adequate nor fixed. *The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act* (42 U.S.C. 11431) definition of homelessness will be the marker for determining eligibility for the survey.

**Homeless:** *The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act* definition of a homeless youth is any child or youth under the age of eighteen who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. For example, youth who reside in: runaway/homeless youth shelters; transitional housing; doubled-up in housing with other families or friends; couch-surfing; hotels or motels; shelters with family members; and campgrounds. The definition also includes those living in places unfit for human habitation, including cars, abandoned buildings, lots, parks, alleyways, uninhabitable trailers, or the streets.

**Precariously Housed:** Youth who are unaccompanied and on their own including those: in foster care and juvenile justice custody; who have left the system without a place to live; or placed into transitional housing including group homes, treatment centers and shelters.

**At Risk:** Youth who are in danger of becoming precariously housed or homeless due to inadequate financial stability, lack of a sustainable family or support structure, etc.

## Completing the Survey Instrument

**At the bottom of the first page:**

Volunteer's name(s):	<i>Jane Doe &amp; John Smith</i>
Date:	Date of survey administration
Location:	i.e. Lake Elmo in Zone 1, Rimrocks in Zone 2, DT Alleyway in Zone 3, etc.
Unique Identifier:	Initial of first and last name, age, day of birth, and gender; either M for male, F for female, or T for Transgender.

A unique identifier was created for each respondent to avoid counting a youth more than once. Structure of the unique identifier includes the following:

<i>Initials: First and Last Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Day of Birth</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Unique Identifier</i>
BR	21	23	M	BR2123M

**NOTES FOR SURVEY QUESTIONS:**

## QUESTIONS & IMPORTANT INFO

- *What do I do when I encounter youth that do not want to participate in the survey?*

Please remember, this survey is completely voluntary and they do not have to participate. **DO NOT** force any youth to participate or to give up information if they decline to do so. If they decline to participate, thank them for their time and move on to the next area or person.

However, if they decline and you are **confident** that the youth is homeless, please use your best judgment and record their gender, age, and ethnicity on a separate sheet of paper. **LEAVE THE REST OF THE SURVEY BLANK.**

If you notice that the survey respondent is getting anxious or losing focus on the questions, skip to the **ten highlighted questions in red.**

Recording a small amount of information is better than not having any information at all.

- *What do I do in the case of an emergency?*

Use your best judgment and common sense regarding the situation. Please call 911 if it's an emergency, or call the Billings Police Department at (406) 657-8460 to report the incident. Then call the *Youth Count!* headquarters at Tumbleweed or count organizers Chelsia, Emily, or Joshua to inform them of the situation.

For informational and safety purposes, the Billings Police Department and the Yellowstone County Sherriff's Office will be notified about our survey administration prior to the count; they will be aware of our presence in the city surveying youth.

- *What do I do after I finish the count or my shift ends?*

Turn in completed surveys as soon as your shift ends. Please place completed surveys, as well as unused surveys, in their respective folders and deliver to the *Youth Count!* headquarters at Tumbleweed ASAP. Please place the sealed folders in one of the two **GREEN** drop boxes at the front desk.

Make sure to check out with count leader or organizers when you finish. Report any problems or issues you encounter, as well as uncanvassed areas, to count leader or count organizers.

## SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Common sense should be used when administering the survey. If you feel uncomfortable with any situation or enter a place that feels or appears to be unsafe, go with your gut. Don't continue. Turn around and move on. **Your safety is more important than the count.**
- **DO NOT** enter any buildings or areas known for illegal activities such as drug use. You are not expected to enter such places. Make a note and please inform count organizers **ASAP** of any problems or such situations and places during your canvass.
- **DO NOT** carry any valuables or personal belongings—such as a purse, wallet, keys, etc.—with you when administering the survey. **ONLY** keep your cell phone and ID on you at all times.
- At least one count member in each group should have a cell phone on their person. Leave your cell phone number with the count organizers or count leader.
- Volunteers will be paired in twos or groups of three to conduct the survey. Always stay with your count group; do not stray away from the group or go on your own.
- One count member should administer the survey, while the other(s) keep an eye out on the area.
- Make sure to remain calm and deescalate any situations that are tense or threatening.
- Maintain appropriate/comfortable distance from survey responder, and be aware of your surroundings; stay out of tight, small, and enclosed spaces.
- When administering the survey, do not touch the survey responder, or try and wake them up if sleeping, invade their space, etc.
- Though your heart is in the right place, please **DO NOT** offer rides or give out money. Instead, explain the services that Tumbleweed provides for youth, etc.
- Make sure to dress appropriately for the survey; wear comfortable clothing and comfortable shoes. T-shirts will be given to volunteers and must be worn so that survey respondents, as well as the public, will know who we are.
- Make sure to stay hydrated and to eat before you begin administering the survey.

**Your safety is extremely important to us, so remember; your safety is more important than the count. Use caution and follow these guidelines so that we may all have a safe and successful *Youth Count!***

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

**Volunteer agrees to not disclose to any other person (unless required by law) or use for personal gain any confidential survey information, up to and including youth they may know personally while administering the survey, at any time during or after the survey administration. In addition, volunteer will use her/his best efforts to prevent any such disclosure.**

**I have read Tumbleweed's policy on confidentiality and the Statement of Confidentiality presented above. I agree to abide by the requirements of the policy and inform my count leader(s) or count organizer(s) immediately if I believe any violation (unintentional or otherwise) of the policy has occurred. I understand that violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action per Tumbleweed's policies, up to and including termination of my volunteer work as survey administrator for Tumbleweed.**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_**