



SAN DIEGO Regional Task Force on the Homeless

2018 San Diego Point in Time Count Recreational Vehicle Count

Regional Task Force on the Homeless Point in Time Count Changes

Based on best practice in other communities and a conversation with HUD the RTFH asked enumerators to separately identify RVs from all other vehicles on our census tract forms for the 2018 WeAllCount.

In determining how to categorize and count RVs in HUD's methodology, the RTFH used guidance from emails from William Snow at HUD and Joe Colletti at Hub of Urban Initiatives and additional HUD guidance from the April 2018 webinar. RTFH leadership also determined that our count process does not provide enough interaction with those in RVs to make a determination if they meet the definition of 'literally homeless' or 'precariously housed.' In the email exchange is an ask for clarification that if someone is sleeping on the streets in a larger vehicle like an RV, should they be considered unsheltered homeless? The response was that there is not a single standard for a RV, and that discretion is needed by each Continuum of Care when determining how to classify a sleeping arrangement. HUD states you need to determine they are homeless first and does the RV meet habitability standards. HUD does not have a formula and there is no national formula for determining how many individuals are potentially sleeping in an RV. HUD states that as a community, you need to assess an individual's circumstance by knocking on windows/doors and engaging those in RVs. By doing so the determination can be made if the sleeping arrangement meets general habitability standards. This determination does not occur with our visual count of vehicles, but it can be a determination is made by enumerators as vehicles are easier to visually determine if someone is sleeping in the interior and under HUD definition would be homeless. HUD has stated without engagement it is "very, very hard to determine if anyone is homeless in RVs."

San Diego County does not engage people living in RVs like we do those living in their vehicle during the WeAllCount. For the PITC this year, we surveyed all three Dreams for Change safe parking lots, and due to this increased outreach of those that sleep in their cars, we determined our multiplier of 2.03 people sleeping in each car that was counted. This multiplier is approximately 20 percent higher than the past several years due to this increased outreach. Without the same engagement applied to those sleeping in RVs it does not make sense to utilize a multiplier. A review was done of census tracts that had four or more RVs counted. The censuses were categorized as: areas with the highest overall homeless count, industrial areas, Dreams for Change safe parking lots, and residential areas. We then reviewed the residential census tracts with the aid of Google Maps to determine if the RVs belonged to the home owners in the area or looked like it was a homeless situation. This is an imperfect process but based on this research we counted 164 RVs. If you applied the vehicle multiplier of 2.03 it would total 333 homeless individuals who slept in an RV the night of the PITC.



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The decision to not count the RV numbers as unsheltered in the PITC annual report was based on our inability to determine if those in RVs are homeless as HUD requires or if those in RVs consider themselves in need of assistance. It is with full intent that the RTFH will develop a new baseline for the methodology for the PITC moving forward. This year was not a HUD mandated year for the PITC, making it an ideal opportunity to make improvements to our methodology. As part of this process for 2019, we have requested a HUD TA to help us develop a new baseline that matches their requirements and our region's needs.

We intend to propose a similar approach to the RVs challenge of counting as has been adopted for the youth count. The youth focused count allows for engagement and counting over a longer period of time and allows a CoC for planning purposes to include in that data those who are doubled up or precariously housed. We are asking for a HUD TA to help determine if this is an acceptable approach and how to categorize those in RVs as unsheltered or sheltered, literally homeless or precariously housed. This is the guidance we are seeking.

We do believe there is a need for a more focused outreach to better understand if those in RVs consider themselves housed and are experiencing parking/law enforcement issues, are unstably housed, or are unsheltered homeless and will work to create an dedicated outreach effort for this purpose.