

Youth Count! Webinar Series

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE & SENSITIVE DATA COLLECTION

Matthew Morton, Administration on Children, Youth & Families

Eric Rice, University of Southern California

Jama Shelton, City University of New York & True Colors Fund

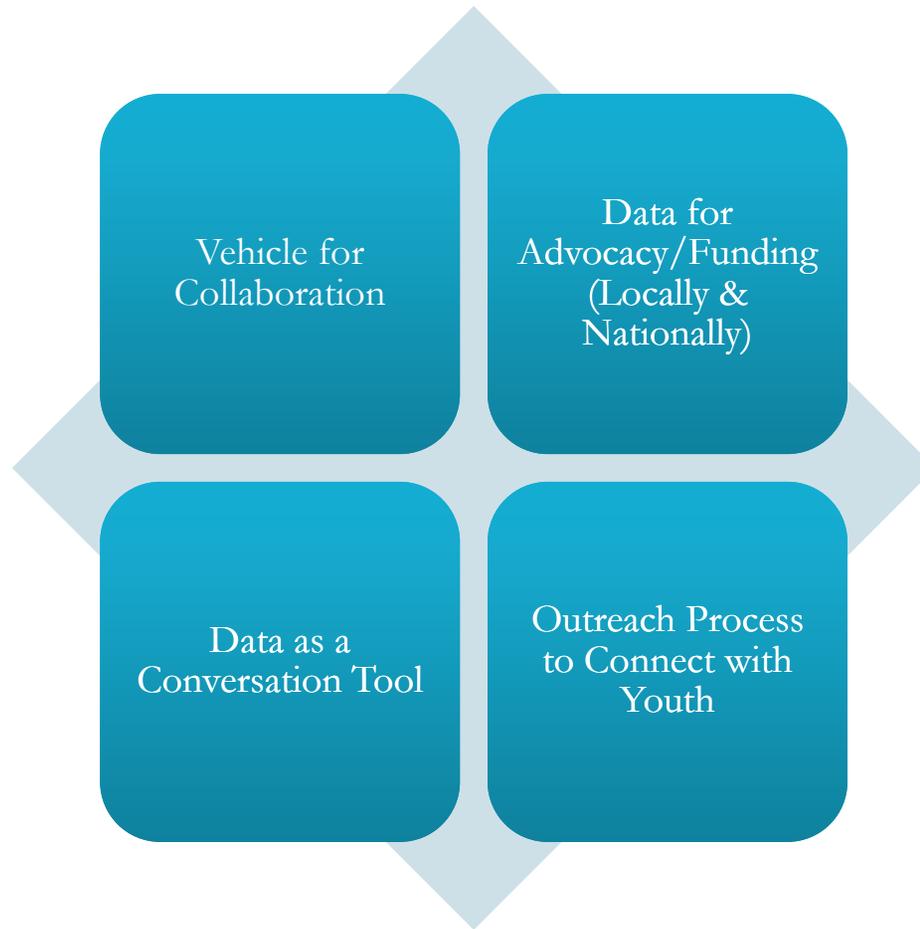
November 28, 2012

Youth Count! Context & Core Data Elements

Matt Morton, D.Phil.
Advisor to the Commissioner, ACYF



Benefits of Local Youth Counts



HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count



- Conducted by all Continuums of Care (CoCs) nationwide
- Best available data source for measuring progress toward ending homelessness
- Annual sheltered count & biannual unsheltered count
- Starting in 2013, all CoCs required to report on the # of persons in each household type by age category (under age 18, 18 to 24, and over age 24)
- BUT, PIT counts in many communities have not adequately reflected **unaccompanied youth homelessness**

HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count



A youth PIT strategy includes:

- **Youth-centered methods** for counting unaccompanied homeless youth
- **Youth involvement** in the count
- **Participation of LEA homeless liaisons & RHY agencies** to identify homeless youth and hard-to-reach youth
- **Specific data** on characteristics of unaccompanied youth

Youth Count! Initiative

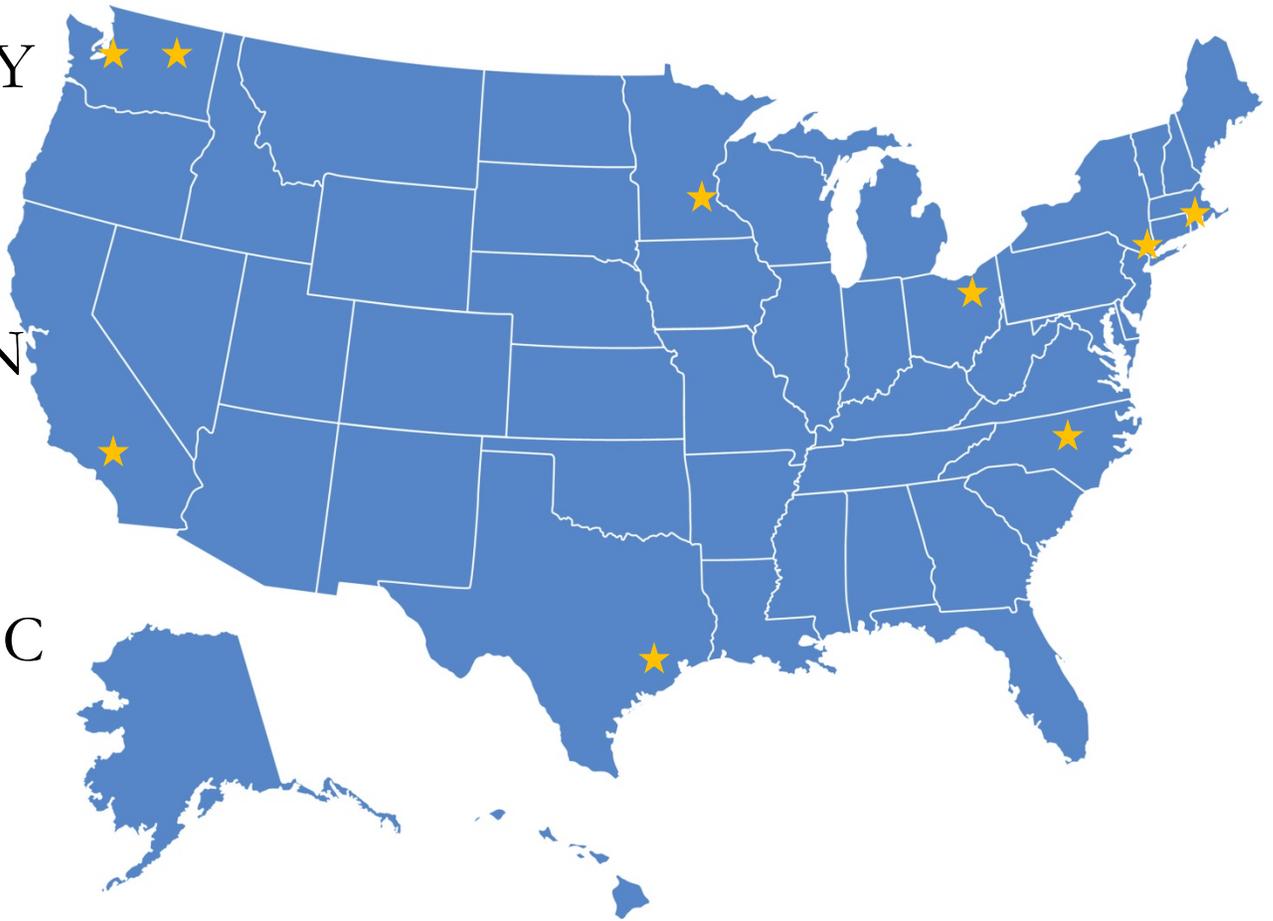


- The goal of this initiative is to learn promising strategies for conducting:
 - **collaborative PIT counts** of unaccompanied homeless youth that engage Continuums of Care (CoC), Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, Local Education Agency (LEA) homeless liaisons, and other local stakeholders; and
 - **credible PIT counts** that gather reliable data on unaccompanied homeless youth.

Youth Count! Sites



- Boston, MA
- New York City, NY
- Cleveland, OH
- King County, WA
- Hennepin Co., MN
- Washington State
- Houston, TX,
- Winston-Salem, NC
- Los Angeles, CA



Youth Count Process



Youth Count! Guidance



- **Collaboration:** CoCs, LEAs, RHY providers + others
- **Youth Strategy:** sampling, training, etc.
- **Rigorous sampling:** mapping youth ‘hot spots’, using social networks, etc.
- **Involvement of youth:** planning, training, counting
- **De-duplication:** Strategy for de-duplicating data between LEAs, CoCs, street counts, etc.
- **Core Data Elements (16):** age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, where staying, reason for leaving, sexual orientation, system involvement, etc.

General Guidance Considerations



- Youth Count! guidance and recommendations are **voluntary**
- Recommendations by non-Federal presenters provide valuable ideas and expertise, but are not necessarily endorsed by the Federal government

Core Data Elements Considerations



- A brief set of 16 data elements providing a basic profile of characteristics of homeless youth
- Can be stand-alone or joined to other surveys (but beware overly-lengthy surveys!)
- Provide more depth and service-relevant info than a count alone
- Recommended for all sites conducting 2013 youth counts, and for all youth included in youth counts
- Suggested phrasing of items chosen from existing major Federal/national youth surveys
 - Well-tested, credible & a lot of previous input

Core Data Elements: Demographics



| Topic | Suggested Question | Responses |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Age | How old are you? | single years |
| Sex | What is your sex? | 0 = Female 1 = Male 8 = Don't Know 9 = Refused |
| Race | What is your race? (check all that apply) | 1 = American Indian or Alaska Native 2 = Asian 3 = Black or African-American 4 = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 5 = White 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Hispanic Origin | Are you Hispanic or Latino? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't Know 9 = Refused |

Core Data Elements: Homelessness



| Topic | Suggested Question | Responses |
|--|---|--|
| Where staying tonight | Where did you stay on [insert date for official night of the count here]? | [1] Family home [2] Foster family home [3] Relative's home [4] Friend's home [5] Home of my boyfriend/girlfriend/person I'm having sex with [6] Group home [7] Shelter (emergency, temporary) [8] Hotel, motel [9] Sober living facility [10] Juvenile detention center, jail [11] Transitional living program [12] Own apartment [13] Street, park, beach, or outside [14] abandoned building or squat [15] Car or bus [16] Other |
| How long at that location | How long have you been staying there? | _ Days _ Weeks _ Months _ Years |
| How long homeless during current episode | In total, how long have you been homeless? | _ Days _ Weeks _ Months _ Years |

Core Data Elements: Education/Employment



| Topic | Suggested Question | Responses |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Enrollment Status | Are you now attending or are you currently enrolled in school? By “school,” we mean an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, a high school, or a college or university. Please include home schooling as well. | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Educational Attainment | What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed? | 1 = 8th grade or less 2 = 9th - 11th grade 3 = 12th grade 4 = some college 5 = 4 year college degree or more 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Employment Status | Did you work at a job or business at any time last week? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |

Core Data Elements: Subgroups



| Topic | Suggested Question | Responses |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Sexual Orientation | Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? | 1 = Gay or Lesbian 2 = Straight (that is, not lesbian or gay) 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else 5 = I don't know/questioning |
| Gender Orientation | When a person's sex and gender do not match, they might think of themselves as transgender. Sex is what a person is born. Gender is how a person feels. Which one response best describes you? | 1 = I am not transgender 2 = Transgender, and identify as a boy or man 3 = Transgender, and identify as a girl or woman 4 = Transgender, and identify in some other way |
| Pregnancy Status | Are you currently pregnant? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Parenting Status | Do you have any of your own children currently living with you? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Ever in foster care. | Have you ever been placed in foster care? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |
| Juvenile/criminal justice involvement | During the past 12 months, did you stay overnight or longer in any type of juvenile detention center, prison, or jail? | 0 = No 1 = Yes 8 = Don't know 9 = Refused |



Ethical Issues in Working with Homeless Youth

Lessons Learned from Fieldwork

Eric Rice, Ph.D.

Presentation Goals



- Ethical issues for volunteers & interviewers
- 3 strategies for consent/assent for homeless youth, particularly minors.
- A few notes on sensitivity



Ethical Issues for Interviewers



- Privacy is a must
 - must keep the confidentiality of the youth.
 - Homelessness is stigmatized
- Maintain personal boundaries
 - Don't give youth money or other things unless part of the protocol
- Do not conduct therapy or try to be motivational
 - Be empathic, kind, and respectful
- Stick to the interview questions and protocols
 - Don't pry into their lives
 - Respect their privacy and their struggles

Not all IRB's are the same!!!



- What you have to do will depend on the orientation of your IRB
- Medical IRB's versus "Main Campus" IRB's
- Private institutions versus public institutions
 - Have they got in trouble recently?
 - Are they trying to streamline?



Three strategies I have used



- Information sheets – no signed consent for over 18 or minors
- Signed consent for over 18, waived parental consent for minors and signed assent
- Signed consent for over 18, “in loco parentis” consent for minors





No signed consent for anyone

- At USC, have done this twice
- Both times, no identifying information is collected
- **Did this for a pilot Point In Time count in Hollywood this fall:**
 - Collected first three letters of first name, first three letters of last name and date of birth
 - Allowed us to not “double count” but no one could be identified by the information
- Basic rationale is that the only identifying information to be collected would be the signature on the consent. You thus protect the privacy of your participants by not getting them to sign.
- Instead you provide a “Information Sheet”

No signed consent for anyone



University of Southern California
School of Social Work
Montgomery Ross Fisher Building
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411

INFORMATION SHEET FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH

Hollywood Homeless Youth Point-In-Time Project

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Eric Rice, Ph.D., at the University of Southern California, you are eligible to participate in you are We are asking Hollywood youth who go to drop-in centers and who are staying on the streets. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. You can keep this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

We are trying to learn more about youth in Hollywood who are homeless or have unstable housing. The study is trying to determine how many homeless youth there are in Hollywood.

Completion and return of the questionnaire will constitute consent to participate in this research project.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey anticipated to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your gender.



No signed consent for anyone

- This involved a “waiver” of parental permission for minors.
- In the past I argued “research indicates that most homeless youth who are minors have been thrown out of or have run away from neglectful and abusive family situations. As such, there is unlikely to be a parent who has the minor’s best interests who can be contacted for parental consent. Moreover, contact with parents may endanger the youth in question.”
- Now USC actually has homelessness as a rationale for not having parental consent

USC's official Language:



24P.3. Parental Permission Waiver:

Check the applicable justification for a waiver of parental permission:

- The research involves no more than minimal risk to children; the waiver would not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the children; the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver; and, if appropriate, participants will be provided with pertinent information after participation.
- Parental permission is not a reasonable requirement to protect the participants in the study (e.g., neglected, abused, or homeless children) and research involves no more than minimal risk to children; the waiver would not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the children; the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver; and, if appropriate, participants will be provided with pertinent information after participation.**

- **“Parental permission is not a reasonable requirement to protect the participants in the study (e.g., neglected, abused, or homeless children) and research involves no more than minimal risk to children; the waiver would not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the children; the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver; and, if appropriate, participants will be provided with pertinent information after participation.”**



Strategy 2:

- Informed consent for over 18
- Waiver of parental consent for minors as before, signed assent for minors.
- Appropriate if you are collecting identifying information, like full names, social security numbers etc.



Strategy 3: In Loco Parentis



- Informed consent for over 18
- “In loco parentis” consent for minors from an adult (usually agency staff), signed assent for minors.
- Appropriate if you are collecting identifying information, like full names, social security numbers etc.
- At UCLA, we did this



What is “In Loco Parentis”



- The idea is that a parent is not available, and even if available may not be appropriate because of histories of abuse and neglect.
- Get a “caring” adult to “serve” as the parent
 - Typically an outreach team member on streets
 - Agency staff member if at drop-in
 - That adult signs for the parent

Sensitivity when obtaining consent



- These are lessons my team has learned the hard way, some may be obvious, but:
 - Tell the youth what this is about, be explicit, but succinct –
 - they really do want to know
 - If you tell them the benefit of the count many will be very eager to participate and helpful
 - Tell them what the sensitive questions are going to be: jail time, sexual identity, what?
 - Stress that their participation is voluntary and will not impact their services



Sensitivity when recruiting

- Do not assume that your volunteers will have any idea what a homeless youth looks like
- Homeless youth are very subtle and “hide in plain sight” – they look like every other 18 year old on the streets
- Make sure youth or experienced outreach workers are part of the teams, so that “hidden” homeless youth are approached on the street
- Youth begging for change, with a pit bull, and a skate board are obvious, but the minority in most communities.
- Try not to call the youth “homeless” it will alienate them

My youth outreach team from 2009



USC School
of Social Work

University of Southern California



DATA COLLECTION WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND
QUESTIONING (LGBTQ) YOUTH

PRESENTED BY: JAMA SHELTON, LMSW

A PROJECT OF THE:



OBJECTIVES

The goals of this webinar are:

- ❑ To explain the importance of counting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth
- ❑ Provide examples of effective strategies for counting LGBTQ youth
- ❑ Provide guidance for asking the proposed survey questions about LGBTQ identity

WHY COUNT LGBTQ YOUTH?



WHY COUNT LGBTQ YOUTH?

“I can’t say who I am unless you agree I’m real.”

Imamu Amiri Baraka

- With current estimates of up to 40% of all homeless youth identifying as LGBTQ, better data will help create more effective programs and more efficient use of scarce resources.

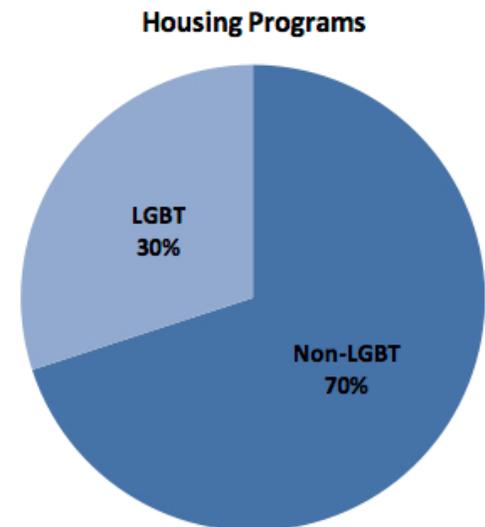
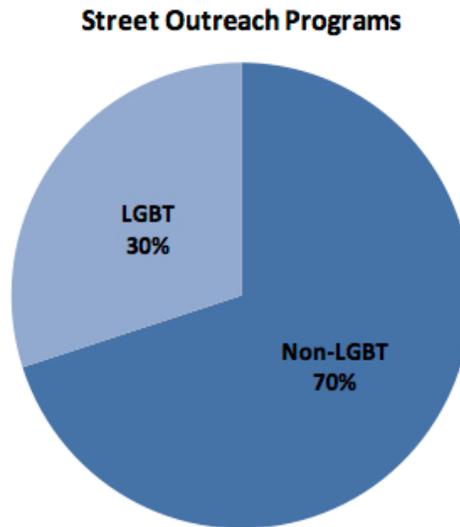
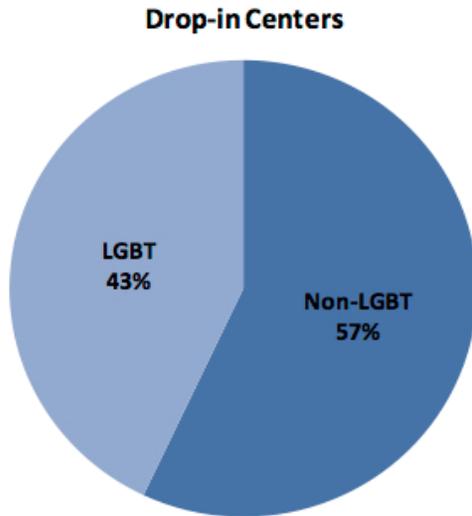
LGBT HOMELESS YOUTH PROVIDER SURVEY

- Conducted Oct. 2011 – March 2012 by the True Colors Fund, The Palette Fund and Williams Institute at UCLA
- 354 agencies across the country providing services to homeless youth
- 94% of respondents said they work with lesbian, gay, bisexual youth
- More than 75% said they work with transgender youth



LGBT HOMELESS YOUTH PROVIDER SURVEY

Percent of Clients Served – LGBT and Non-LGBT Youth



EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Youth Involvement
 - Survey Development
 - Identification of Hang Out Spots
 - Survey Administrators

- Safety: Use a symbol/sticker that communicates support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

SUGGESTED SYMBOLS

The True Colors Fund/Forty to None Project is creating and will provide free of charge a “safety” sticker/sign for you to use in your community.

To order, contact: Gregory Lewis, True Colors Fund, gregory@truecolorsfund.org

Here are some additional suggestions of symbols you could use:



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Context

- When are questions being asked?
- Does the young person know why the questions are being asked?

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

“Now I have a few questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. We would like to know these things because it will help us figure out how to improve services for all youth, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.”

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Privacy

- Where will the survey be administered?
- Will the young person be overheard?

- Confidentiality

- Will the young person be outed?
- Has confidentiality been established?

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: WHAT TO ASK



SEXUAL ORIENTATION: SAMPLE

Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?

1. Gay or Lesbian
2. Straight, that is, not gay
3. Bisexual
4. Something else
5. I don't know/Questioning

GENDER IDENTITY: WHAT TO ASK



GENDER IDENTITY: SAMPLE

Sex is assigned to a person when they're born. Is your sex male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

When a person's sex and gender do not match, they might think of and/or present themselves as transgender. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female and/or dresses or acts in a traditionally feminine way.

Which one response best describes you?

1. I am not transgender
2. I am transgender and identify as a boy or man
3. I am transgender and identify as a girl or woman
4. I am transgender and identify in some other way

RECAP: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- ❑ Establish confidentiality
- ❑ Explain why you're asking
- ❑ Use the terminology
- ❑ Use a symbol/sticker that communicates support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth
- ❑ Don't make assumptions

REFERENCES

Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund.

Badgett, L. & Goldberg, N. (2009). *Best Practices for Asking Questions about Sexual Orientation on Surveys*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute.

GLSEN (2012). *Assessing Transgender Status in Surveys of Adolescents (Research Brief)*. New York: GLSEN.





www.FortytoNone.org

A PROJECT OF THE:



Additional Youth Count! Resources



- **Webinars & resources**
 - Other RHYTTAC Youth Count! Webinars (www.rhyttac.net)
 - National Alliance to End Homelessness (<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/youthcount>)
- **HUD PIT guidance:**
<http://hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewResource&ResourceID=4697>
- **National Center on Homeless Education guidance on Federal Data Collection for Homeless Youth:**
http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_data.php

Presenter Contact Details



Caryn Blitz (for Matthew Morton), ACYF/HHS:
caryn.blitz@acf.hhs.gov

Eric Rice, USC: ericr@usc.edu,
tel: (213) 743 – 4766

Jama Shelton, CUNY: jshelton@hunter.cuny.edu