

Focus Group Moderator Guide

Soup Kitchen Enumeration

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Start time: ____ AM / PM End time: ____ AM / PM

Moderator: _____ Notetaker: _____

Section 1: Introduction and Icebreaker	10 mins
Section 2: Getting familiar with their organizations	10 mins
Section 3: Enumeration ideas for soup kitchens	40 mins
Section 4: Other Places to Enumerate	5 mins
Section 5: Soup Kitchen Definition	20 mins
Section 6: Wrap up	5 mins

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION, RULES, AND ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)

[*MODERATOR: AS PARTICIPANTS JOIN, PLEASE ASK THEM TO USE THEIR CAMERAS (THEIR NAMES SHOULD ALREADY BE ON THE SCREEN):* Hello, welcome. We ask that you turn your camera on during the focus group, thank you.]

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Thank you for volunteering to participate today. We know your time is valuable, so we really appreciate that you are taking these 90 minutes of your day to help us.

My name is [MODERATOR NAME] and I will be guiding today's discussion. I work for the Census Bureau. My colleagues from the Census Bureau are also here with me today, including a note taker and observers who would like to hear the conversations. Today, we will be talking about your organizations and how the Census Bureau may best count people that use your services to inform our 2030 Census plans.

We'll be recording our session today so that we don't miss anything important.

You signed a consent form for the session ahead of time. Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

Okay, I'll start the recording now.

[START RECORDING]

RULES

First, let's go over a few basic rules.

- **Please keep what everyone says here private.** During the group conversation, we use first names only. We keep what you say entirely confidential, and I ask that you do not repeat or share what others say today. Your names will not be used in any reports.
- **Don't identify your clients by name.** If you tell us about the experiences that you had with surveys or censuses and a client, please don't share their names or any other information that could identify them.
- **I will be asking questions and there are no right or wrong answers.** We just want your honest opinions. We don't need to have everyone agree. In fact, if you have a view different from others it is especially important for us to hear it because you may be the only person who is representing a different point of view here today. It is important we hear from you since different facilities may have different needs based on the size, location, and so forth.
- **Be respectful of other people's comments.** It is fine to disagree with each other's comments, but please do so politely. We are interested in listening to everybody's opinion in a respectful manner.
- **Only one person speaks at a time, and we'd like everyone to get a turn.** Please speak up and let us know what you are thinking. We want to encourage everyone to share their thoughts equally throughout the discussion. I may call on people from time-to-time to help make sure we hear everyone's thought.
- Due to **limited time**, I must move the discussion along and may sometimes have to interrupt to do so. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding. We will leave a few minutes at the end of the discussion if there is anything else you'd like to share with us that you did not have time to say.
- **Please keep your camera on.** It helps the conversation and is more engaging. With cameras on it is easier to tell who wants to speak next or who hasn't had a chance yet to talk.

ICEBREAKER

Let's go around and have each one of you tell us briefly:

- Your first name or nickname
- What state you are calling in from and
- Your favorite hobby

I'll go first. My name is...

Now I'll have [NOTETAKER] introduce themselves.

[FACILITATE INTRODUCTION FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP]

BACKGROUND

Thanks for telling us a little bit about yourself. Now we are ready to begin.

The U.S. Census Bureau wants to ensure everyone is counted in the census, including people who do not have conventional housing or who may be experiencing homelessness. Previously, to help count people who may be experiencing homelessness, we had staff go to places like soup kitchens or regularly scheduled mobile food vans on one scheduled day to count people who received services there. We collected basic information from people using these services, such as their name, date of birth, sex, race and ethnicity, and an address or location where they usually live or stay.

Today, we'd like to hear more from you about ways we may better count this population. But first, I'd like to get some more information about your organizations.

SECTION 2: GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE ORGANIZATIONS (10 minutes)

1. Please tell me a little about what services your facility or organization provides.
 - a. How does meal service work in your facility?
 - i. What times are meals provided?
 - ii. When do clients tend to arrive or leave?
 - iii. Does your service occur indoors or outdoors?
 - iv. How many staff members or volunteers do you have working on a given meal distribution?
2. What is important for us to know about your clients?
 - a. Do your clients tend to come regularly, or do you have clients that drop-in from time-to-time?

SECTION 3: ENUMERATION IDEAS FOR SOUP KITCHENS (40 mins)

Now, we will talk more about how to collect information about clients who regularly visit soup kitchens for the Census count.

1. In the past, the Census Bureau would schedule a day to come to your organization. Census Bureau interviewers would ask questions one-on-one to the clients that showed up to receive services that day. The interviewer asked clients their first and last name, date of birth, sex, race and ethnicity, and the address or location where the client usually lives or stays.

- a. What benefits can you see to having Census Bureau staff come to interview your clients?
 - b. What challenges or concerns might you have about Census Bureau staff interviewing your clients?
2. What other ways can you think of for the U.S. Census Bureau to get this information from your clients? [If needed: As a reminder, the information we collect is their name, date of birth, sex, race and ethnicity, and whether they have an address or location where they usually live or stay.]
- a. [MODERATOR: Use the following probes to facilitate conversation as needed for ideas that the group may generate]
 - i. What do others think of this idea?
 - ii. What types of advantages do others see for this idea?
 - iii. What types of disadvantages do other see for this idea?
 - iv. Do you think this idea would be feasible in your facility? If not: what challenges do you see with this idea as it relates to your facility?
 - b. Probe if conversation slows: Are there any additional ideas people have for how the U.S. Census Bureau may get information from your clients?

[MODERATOR: Use the following scenarios if they have not been mentioned in the open brainstorming section. If they are mentioned during the open brainstorming section above, please use the probes to solicit more information from the group.]

Probes for Allow Clients to Fill-out Paper Forms:

- c. Another idea for counting people who use soup kitchen services would be to drop off paper forms for your clients to fill out themselves. Then Census Bureau staff would come pick up the filled-out forms. What are your thoughts about this approach?
 - i. Do you think your clients would be willing and able to fill out a paper form for themselves? [If needed: This questionnaire would include questions for their name, date of birth, sex, race and ethnicity, and an address or location where they usual live or stay.]
 1. It is important to the Census Bureau that each piece of information is filled out on the form. Are there any questions you think your clients would skip because they are too sensitive?

- ii. What types of challenges do you think clients may encounter in filling out this information themselves?
 - 1. Would your clients have any literacy or language barriers that may prevent them from filling out the forms on their own?
- iii. Do you think your clients would prefer to fill out a paper form versus having someone from the Census Bureau interview them?
- iv. If clients were unable to complete this paper form on their own, would you or your staff be able to help them do so?
- v. Do you think your clients would be interested in having a Census Bureau employee there to help them fill out a form?
- vi. It is important to the Census Bureau that everyone is counted. How difficult do you think it would be for you to make sure each of your clients have filled out a form?

Probes for Allowing Clients to Choose Paper Forms or an Interview:

- d. What if we gave your clients an option to fill out a paper form or to be interviewed by a Census Bureau employee on the day of the scheduled count? What is your opinion of offering clients an option for how to respond?
 - i. What advantages do you see with offering this option to people/clients?
 - ii. What challenges do you see?
 - iii. It is important to us that everyone is counted. In your opinion, would giving clients the option of filling out the paper form or being interviewed make it easier or more difficult to make sure everyone has been counted at your location?

Probes for electronic data collection:

- e. We could also send a U.S. Census Bureau employee on a scheduled day to collect information from your clients using a laptop or other electronic device. The Census Bureau employee would ask the Census questions to your clients off to the side as your clients came to receive services that day. If your facility has people come to help clients fill out documents for benefits, this might work like that.
 - i. What are your thoughts on this option?
 - ii. How feasible would this be in your facility? Would there be enough room available in your facility to have a place for a Census Bureau employee to sit with a client to fill out this information?

SECTION 4: OTHER PLACES TO ENUMERATE (5 mins)

The U.S. Census Bureau is also interested in other locations that we could count people who do not have conventional housing, including those who may be experiencing homelessness. In the past we have counted people at places, such as shelters, regularly scheduled mobile food van stops, soup kitchens, and pre-identified non-sheltered outdoor locations.

1. Are there places in your community that provide other types of services for people without conventional housing or who are experiencing homeless that we should consider visiting to count?

SECTION 5: DEFINITIONS OF SOUP KITCHEN AND OTHER SERVICE-BASED FACILITIES (20 mins)

Next, we'd like to show you the definitions the Census Bureau uses for places that people experiencing homelessness may visit, such as shelters or soup kitchens. We want to make sure these definitions are clear and easy for people to understand. These definitions may be used to help us decide how to count people at particular locations during the census. It is important that people like you can place their organization or facility in the correct category.

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 1].

Soup Kitchens

Places that offer meals, organized as food service lines or bag or box lunches, for people experiencing homelessness.

1. Here is the definition for Soup Kitchens. What is your opinion about this definition as it relates to your facility?
 - a. Is there anything about this definition that does not accurately describe your facility?
 - b. What might you change in this definition?
 - c. What might be missing that you think should be added?
2. What does "experiencing homelessness" mean to you?
 - a. What about the terms "unhoused" or "unsheltered"?
 - i. Are you familiar with those terms?
 - b. In your opinion, does experiencing homelessness, unhoused, and unsheltered mean the same things or do they have unique meanings?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANT(S) SAY UNIQUE MEANINGS:** Can you explain what homelessness, unhoused, and unsheltered mean to you?
 - c. Are there better terms or phrases that we could use to describe people who do not have a place to live and may seek services from soup kitchens?

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 2]

Soup Kitchens

Places that offer meals, organized as food service lines or bag or box lunches, for people experiencing homelessness.

This category does not include food pantries.

3. We are currently planning to add a statement to the soup kitchen definition that says this category does not include food pantries.
 - a. How familiar are you with food pantries?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANT(S) ARE FAMILIAR:** How would you describe food pantries to someone who may be unfamiliar with them?
 - ii. **IF PARTICIPANT(S) ARE FAMILIAR:** How are food pantries different from soup kitchens?
4. We are thinking about adding a statement that soup kitchens do not include pop-up outdoor locations where charitable organizations may sometimes serve food. [IF NEEDED: An example is an organization that hands out bagged lunches monthly at an area where people experiencing homelessness may spend time.]
 - a. How familiar are you with these type of pop-up outdoor locations?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANT(S) ARE FAMILIAR:** In your opinion, how might these pop-up outdoor locations be different from a soup kitchen?

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 3]

Soup Kitchens

Places that offer meals, organized as food service lines or bag or box lunches, for people experiencing homelessness.

A soup kitchen is a physical building where food is cooked and served, as opposed to pop-up outdoor locations where charitable organization may sometimes serve food.

- b. **IF PARTICIPANT(S) ARE FAMILIAR:** Here is some language we've drafted to describe some differences between a soup kitchen and pop-up outdoor locations that may serve food.
 - i. Do you think this addition is helpful or confusing?
 - ii. What concerns do you have about including this type of language?

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 4]

Soup Kitchens

Places that offer meals, organized as food service lines or bag or box lunches, for people experiencing homelessness.

This does not include the types of food insecurity services that deliver meals to private residences, such as the “Meals on Wheels” program.

5. We are also considering whether to add a statement to the definition that says the Soup Kitchen category does not include the types of food insecurity services that deliver meals to private residences, such as the “Meals on Wheels” program.
 - a. How familiar are you with these types of these services?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** In what ways are these services similar or different from a soup kitchen?
 - ii. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** What is your opinion on adding this information?
 - iii. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** Do you see any potential issues with adding this?
6. Let’s talk about Day Centers or Drop-in Centers. How familiar are you with day centers or drop-in centers?
 - a. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** How would you describe a drop-in center or a day center?
 - b. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** How would you say drop-in center and day centers are similar or different from soup kitchens?
 - c. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** Would it make sense to you to include day centers or drop-in centers in the same category as soup kitchens?
 - i. **IF TIME PERMITS:** Do you have any advice for how to prevent Day Centers or Drop-in Centers from being confused with elder care day centers?
7. Are there any other types of organizations we haven’t talked about already that provide meal services as part of their activities and might be confused with a soup kitchen?
 - a. **[PROBE AS NECESSARY]:** How would you describe this type of organization?

[MODERATOR: IF TIME PERMITS ASK THE FOLLOWING SET OF QUESTIONS FOR RSMFVs.]

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 6]

Regularly Scheduled Mobile Food Van Stops

Street locations where mobile food vans regularly stop to provide food to people experiencing homelessness

8. Next, we'd like to get your feedback on the definition the Census Bureau uses for **Regularly Scheduled Mobile Food Van Stops**. Please take a moment to review the definition on the screen. How familiar are you with these types of mobile food van services?
 - a. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** Do you think it is necessary to clarify that this category excludes food trucks where people pay for the food?

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 7]

Regularly Scheduled Mobile Food Van Stops

Street locations where mobile food vans regularly stop to provide food to people experiencing homelessness.

This does not include the types of food insecurity services that deliver meals to private residences, such as the "Meals on Wheels" program.

- a. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR WITH FOOD STOPS AND WERE PREVIOUSLY FAMILIAR WITH MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAMS:** We are also planning to add a statement to this definition that says this category does not include the types of food insecurity services that deliver meals to private residences, such as the "Meals on Wheels" program. In your opinion, how are mobile food van stops and meal delivery services like Meals on Wheel similar or different?
- a. There may also be outdoor locations where charitable organization may regularly go for a few hours to serve food to people experiencing homelessness that do not have a van or truck from which to serve food. Are you familiar with these types of locations?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** How would describe these types of outdoor locations in your own words?
 - ii. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** What similarities or differences are there between these outdoor locations and mobile food van stops?

[MODERATOR/NOTETAKER: SHOW SLIDE 8]

1. Emergency and Transitional Shelters (with Sleeping Facilities) for People Experiencing Homelessness

2. Soup Kitchens

3. Regularly Scheduled Outdoor Food Distribution Location

- iii. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** We are thinking about combining mobile food van stops with these types of outdoor locations that serve food, but not from a van or truck. This would change the category to “Regularly Scheduled Outdoor Food Distribution Location”. What are your thoughts on this change?
- b. Are you familiar with mobile medical vans for people experiencing homelessness?
 - i. **IF PARTICIPANTS ARE FAMILIAR:** Do you think it would make sense to include these types of vans or services in the same category as mobile food vans?

SECTION 6: WRAP UP (5 mins)

1. Is there anything else that you'd like to mention that you haven't had a chance to talk about or something you'd like to share that you weren't able to previously?
2. Do you have any questions about what we discussed today or is there anything you'd like to ask me?

Thank you for your feedback.