

Kentucky Statewide Victimization Survey- Sampling Among the Commonwealth's Homeless Population

Marjorie L. Stanek

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center

Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet



Background

- ▶ As in previous efforts, the target population for the Kentucky Statewide Victimization Survey is all individuals ≥ 18 years who reside in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
- ▶ During planning, the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (CJSAC) recognized that each of the five previous editions of the Statewide Victimization Survey had overlooked those without stable residences.
- ▶ A decision was made to plan the coming survey in a way that would allow us to reach these individuals.
- ▶ A multi-phased approach that would include a sample of individuals without a permanent residence was decided upon.

How to define Homelessness?

- ▶ There are two major federal statutory definitions of homelessness (see [nche.ed.gov/downloads/defin_chart.doc](https://www.nche.ed.gov/downloads/defin_chart.doc)), both from the McKinney-Vento Act:
 - ▶ Education definition in Subtitle VII-B
 - ▶ Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition in Section 103 of Subtitle I
 - ▶ The HUD definition includes those living in:
 - ▶ unsheltered public or private places not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for humans (e.g. car, park, abandoned building, etc.)
 - ▶ publicly and privately operated shelters and/or temporary living arrangements
 - ▶ hotels and motels (*in certain situations*)
 - ▶ those staying with others (*in certain situations*)

Who is Homeless?

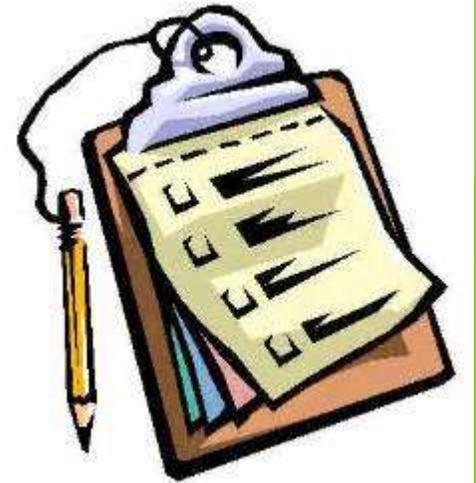
- ▶ According to the HUD definition, Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act, **homeless** means:
 - 1) An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
 - 2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence.
 - 3) Unaccompanied youth or families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long period without living independently, who have experienced persistent instability, and who can be expected to continue in this status because of one or more barriers to employment (e.g. substance abuse, disabilities, histories of abuse/violence, etc.).
 - 4) An individual or family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or other dangerous or life threatening conditions that relate to interpersonal violence.

How did we decide on a Sampling Frame?

- ▶ We consulted the annual *Point in Time Count* information from the past several years to estimate the number of adults that were likely to be housed in emergency shelters on a given day.
- ▶ The CJSAC decided to solicit participation from all organizations that are affiliated with the Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness (KICH). Doing so would allow us to reach homeless and/or transient individuals throughout the state.
- ▶ There are about 2,150 beds available in KICH affiliated shelters within the Commonwealth of Kentucky, but these are not all occupied on any given day.
- ▶ Participating agencies include faith-based organizations, detox and drug treatment facilities, shelters for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, and more traditional overnight shelters.

Designing the Survey

- ▶ CJSAC staff worked with the University of Kentucky's Evaluation Center to review the existing research literature on a variety of related topics.
- ▶ Whenever possible, existing questions from the previous versions of Kentucky's victimization surveys, the National Crime Victimization Survey, or other statewide victimization surveys, were reworked and adapted. Items were sometimes specifically created to address the issues that were unique to various marginalized groups, e.g. the homeless and transient populations.
- ▶ Drafts of the instrument, the *Kentucky Statewide Victimization Survey* (KSVS), were reviewed by staff at the Bureau of Justice Statistics at various points in the process.



Reviewing the KSVS

- ▶ Each item on the KSVS was reviewed for its research precedent to support the relevance to the concepts under study.
- ▶ An item matrix was created for each of the survey items to assess the validity of the content and to ensure that all components were firmly embedded in the research literature.
- ▶ The KSVS was reviewed for measurement quality using a Rasch validation analysis procedure, which assumes invariance across populations.
- ▶ The initial draft of the KSVS was piloted among a group of law enforcement officers. Content was added to address gaps and items were revised based on the information that was provided during this process.

Tweaking Items for the Homeless Context

- ▶ Language was evaluated and adjusted as necessary to ensure it adequately captured the experiences of those with and without stable housing.
 - ▶ “Break into your home” vs. “Break into a place you are staying”
 - ▶ The question was added, “Do you have a permanent residence?”.
 - ▶ Questions were added regarding substance use.



Gathering Buy-in

- ▶ Staff from the CJSAC reached out to the Kentucky Housing Corporation, an agency which oversees and distributes many of the HUD funding streams within the Commonwealth, carries out the annual Point in Time Count (K-Count), and also coordinates the KICH meetings to gather support and identify ways in which the project could benefit stakeholders.
- ▶ Several months before the surveys were distributed, a letter was sent to each agency describing the project and providing shelter staff with contact information to answer any questions.
- ▶ CJSAC staff attended face-to-face meetings where stakeholders were likely to be present (e.g. sexual assault and domestic violence coalition, coordinating councils, etc.) to describe the project and answer questions when possible.

Distributing the Surveys

- ▶ CJSAC staff gathered information about each of the KICH affiliated shelters, including their location and the number of beds.
- ▶ An appropriate number of KSVS packets, which included a cover letter, contact information for CJSAC staff and a mental health professional who could provide telephone based crisis assessment and referrals to appropriate services within the community, a copy of the survey, and a postage paid return envelope, were provided to each shelter. Whenever possible, the delivery was made in person by CJSAC staff. A description of the distribution process was also included for shelter staff.
- ▶ Shelter staff were asked to provide the CJSAC with the number of surveys which were handed out on the given date.

Questions?

Marjorie L. Stanek

Research Coordinator

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center
Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet

125 Holmes Street

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

502-564-8295

marjorie.stanek@ky.gov