

NUTS AND BOLTS OF SURVEY RESEARCH

Obtaining Informed Consent

Obtaining informed consent means someone's knowing permission to survey them without using dishonesty, threats, or force. Sufficient information must be presented so that the person can make an informed decision about participation.

- Obtaining a youth's verbal consent will be sufficient for obtaining informal consent for *Youth Count Texas!*
- State up front that participation in *Youth Count Texas!* is voluntary and is not a requirement to access any services. Share information about any incentives provided in your area.
- State up front that some questions may be personal. Youth may ask you to skip those questions if they are not comfortable answering them.
- Ask if they want to take the survey and do not proceed unless they want to.

Protecting Confidentiality

Protecting confidentiality means only using information that youth share with you for the purpose of this count. Confidentiality is important because it respects youths' privacy and keeps youth and volunteers safe from harm.

- Youth who are homeless might be very shy about talking to you, or they may tell you more than you wanted to know.
- Stay neutral, respectful, and do not share their private information.
- Do not ask youth for identifying information such as their name or share their personal information with others unless they ask you to do so.
- Let your Team Leader know if a youth needs immediate help or resources.
- You may need to explain what confidentiality is to the youth you survey. You can say something like *"All of your responses are completely confidential. We will not share your name with anyone, and what you tell us will only be used for the purposes of this survey."*

Preventing Duplication

"Duplication" is when the same person is surveyed more than once. Duplication skews survey results and reduces the integrity of the data.

Prevent duplication by sticking to your assigned area (including your side of the street), only canvassing each area once, and asking each potential respondent if he or she has completed the survey already.

Youth Count Texas!

