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Homeless Count to Kick Off Tuesday

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By Lookout Staff

Homeless officials this week are launching the nation's largest count of people living on the streets of LA County, including Santa Monica.

As part of the countywide census by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), teams of two or more "enumerators" will count homeless individuals and families currently living on the streets and other outdoor locations.

Additionally there will be a count of people in shelters, in motels that accept vouchers and in institutions such as hospitals, jails, and in alcohol and drug residential treatment centers, LAHSA officials said.

For eight weeks following the count, a representative sample of homeless residents will be surveyed throughout the County to gather more in-depth information, which will be used as the benchmark for planning and funding programs.

The most recent census taken two years ago counted an estimated 90,000 homeless on the streets of LA County in a one-night tally. Of those, 1,192 homeless individuals were counted in Santa Monica. (see story)

Based on the actual count, as well as on statistical estimates, there may be as many as 1,991 homeless living in Santa Monica, according to the research firm that crunched the data for LAHSA.

Annually more than 220,000 people experience homelessness in Los Angeles County, according to estimates by LAHSA.

Beginning Tuesday, as many as 1,500 volunteers will be deployed from 28 centers throughout the County. The teams will canvass the streets on foot or by car, and tally all homeless persons in each defined area.

The data from the street count will be supplemented by a survey of more than 3,300 homeless persons and a general population telephone survey, both to be conducted from February to April 2007.

Final results of the count will be published in a report scheduled to be issued in June.