method as given an unbiased estimate of the total number of service users during 28-day periods centered around February, making some assumptions that overall patterns of service use are fairly constant throughout the month.

This is intended to be our primary method. The potential drawback of this method would be if the pretest finds too many people who are just starting to use services after a long absence, resulting in too many large weights. Limited research from 1990 census evaluation projects suggests that this should not be a problem. However, if this turns out to be a problem we would either use the Method 2 or use Method 1 with a 7-day "window" instead of a 28-day "window".

METHOD 2: The weight will be inversely proportional to the number of days in the last week the client used a shelter (for the shelter sample) or soup kitchen (for the soup kitchen sample), and likewise for other types of programs. This is the procedure used in the 1987 Urban Institute study. We will ask this question for comparability with that survey. This approach has two disadvantages. First, even if the questions are answered accurately, the method has a mathematical bias unless each person has the same pattern of service use each week. Second, it is not reasonable to ask a person for his/her average shelter use for an entire month, so the method cannot give direct estimates for the total number using services during a period longer than a week.

METHOD 3: *Capture-recapture*. We are not using capture-recapture estimation. It would require selecting the sample independently each day, so that there would be a chance that a person or small shelter might come into sample numerous times.

The Urban Institute and the Census Bureau developed the survey design. As part of Joint Statistical Agreements between the Urban Institute and the Census Bureau, the following operational papers and references were developed. Each are available from the Census Bureau on request.

Joint Statistical Agreement 91–30

- -Developing a Provider List-
- November 27, 1991
- —Methodological Issues and Options— November 27, 1991
- —Options for Evaluating Coverage in
- Urban Areas—December 10, 1991
- —Ranking of Data Items by Federal Agencies—December 10, 1991

Joint Statistical Agreement 92–01

—Draft Questionnaire and Agency Data Needs—March 26, 1992

- —Developing Provider Lists for a National Homeless Survey—March 26, 1992
- —Proposed Methodology for a National Homeless Survey—March 26, 1992
- —Questions for Unduplicating and for Estimating a Month-Long Point Prevalence and Annual Prevalence— March 26, 1992
- -Developing Estimates of the Number of Service Providers in Different Strata-April 10, 1992
- —Options for Evaluating Survey Coverage in Urban Areas, and Preliminary
- —Information on Rural Areas—April 10, 1992

Joint Statistical Agreement 92–04

- —Mechanics of List Development and Additional Field and Survey Procedures—August 14, 1992
- —Estimates of Service Providers and Users in Non-MSA Areas, and Options for
- —Evaluating Survey Coverage in These Areas—August 4, 1992

List of References

- 3. Methods to Maximize Response
- a. Survey Frame for Client Interviews

New research indicates the greatest improvement in coverage of the homeless population is through sampling this population over time, (e.g., soup kitchens and shelters) and outreach programs during a four-week period. The NSHAPC survey design uses a service-based methodology. A "service user" is anyone who uses generic services or shelters, soup kitchens, or other services for the homeless. The survey frame will include shelters, soup kitchens, outreach programs, and possibly other programs. A "non-service user" is anyone who does not use any of these services.

According to the 1987 Urban Institute study, the shelter frame covers homeless people who use shelters, which may be 35 to 40 percent of the homeless on any given night, and about 50 percent over the course of a week. If conducted on a one-night basis, the shelters' sampling frame taken by itself will miss many homeless who use shelters infrequently, homeless service users who do not use shelters but do use soup kitchens and other services, and homeless people who do not use any services. If data collection involves repeated samples from the same shelters over the course of a week or a month, a considerably higher proportion of the homeless (perhaps as high as 70 percent) is likely to be captured through a methodology based on shelters.

The soup kitchen sampling frame, taken by itself over the course of a week, will capture a proportion of very poor people residing in conventional dwellings who may turn out to be at imminent risk of hopelessness. According to the 1987 Urban Institute study, 43 percent of soup kitchen users are not literally homeless. When shelter and soup kitchen frames are combined during the course of a week, the shelter and soup kitchen frames will probably cover about 70 percent of the literally homeless and a small but unknown proportion of the service-using at-risk population. When data collection covers a month (as planned for the national survey), the coverage will be even greater-perhaps as high as 85-90 percent of the literally homeless.

In many cities, the array of services for the homeless include one or more outreach programs. These programs may be operated by a shelter, soup kitchen, drop-in center, health care center, neighborhood center, or other service facility. Their target population is homeless people who do not routinely use shelters or soup kitchens. The outreach programs typically distribute food, and sometimes blankets or warm clothing. Outreach teams typically follow a route that covers the known locations frequented by homeless street people, or where homeless street people assemble at the time they know the "food wagon" will come by. Including outreach programs in a design as a sampling frame allows one to maintain the control and efficiency associated with sampling service programs and their users, while still reaching the "reachable" proportion of the street homeless population. Outreach programs are probably the best single source of information about the hidden street population and the most cost effective opportunity to make contact with the street population. Additional enumeration of street locations and encampments yields little overall coverage improvement when shelters, soup kitchens, and outreach programs are interviewed over time.

The NSHAPC is designed to cover as much of the literally homeless population as possible and still meet the cost considerations of the sponsors. From previous research, it appears that up to 90 percent coverage of the literally homeless population is achievable with the shelter/soup kitchen/outreach programs methodology conducted during a winter month. This servicebased methodology will be considerably cheaper and easier than implementing a street enumeration to attempt to get the last 10 percent. In addition, even if the resources were committed to achieve