



Reaching Home Community Homelessness Report: Questions and Answers

May 17, 2021

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Questions and Answers

Introduction

Where did these questions come from? These questions were identified by communities either during a CHR training webinar (on May 6 or May 17) or through their Service Canada representative.

Have an outstanding question? Reach out to your Service Canada representative for help.

Is this document up to date? This version of the CHR Q&A document was last updated on May 17, 2021 and includes 16 questions. This document will be updated to reflect new questions and answers over time. To access a current copy, please see the [CHR Reporting Tools](#) e-course on the Homelessness Learning Hub.

General CHR Questions

1. What do CHR and CE stand for?

CHR stands for Community Homelessness Report.

CE stands for Community Entity.

2. When is the CHR due?

Your first CHR is due to Service Canada on June 30, 2021 and will cover the first two years of the program: April 1, 2019 through to March 31, 2021 (two fiscal years).

3. Does the Community Advisory Board (CAB) need to approve the CHR prior to submission?

Yes, the CAB will need to approve the CHR before it is submitted to Service Canada.

4. Are CEs permitted to attach an appendix or addendum at the end of their CHR?

Yes, communities can submit an annex or addendum as a separate Word document with their CHR if their answers in the CHR template are too long for the question's corresponding comment box.

During the review process, ESDC officials will adjust the CHR template so that answers fit in each comment box. The finalized version sent back to the CE from Service Canada will be the adjusted version.

5. Are CEs receiving funding only from the Indigenous Homelessness stream required to complete a CHR?

No, only communities receiving funding from the Designated Communities (DCs) or the Territorial Homelessness streams are required to complete a CHR. If a community only receives funding from the Indigenous Homelessness funding stream, a CHR is not required.

6. Who was invited to attend the CHR webinars?

All CEs from the DC, Territorial Homelessness, Indigenous Homelessness and Rural and Remote funding streams received an invitation to the CHR webinar on May 6 and the follow-up Q&A session on May 17. Our email distribution list reflects the most recent contact information we have for each CE.

A recording of the CHR training Webinar is available on the [Homelessness Learning Hub](#) in English. A French version of the training webinar will be made available as soon as possible.

7. How does ESDC define "new DCs"?

DC stands for Designated Communities. There are six new DCs that joined the Reaching Home program in April 2020 and received one year of funding for this CHR reporting period. These six communities are:

- Abbotsford, BC
- Chilliwack, BC
- Cowichan Valley, BC
- Lambton County, ON
- Cochrane District (Timmins), ON
- Kenora, ON

These six new DC CEs should request a modified CHR template from their Service Canada representative that has only one fiscal year of reporting (2020-21).

8. It was mentioned during the May 6th CHR webinar that a revision was made to question 2.4 of the CHR template. When will the revised CHR template be available? Can you highlight the change so we know if we need to get the newer version?

The revised CHR template was posted to the e-course on March 22. It is available to download through the Homelessness Learning Hub’s CHR e-course by selecting “Download File 2”:

<https://www.homelessnesslearninghub.ca/library/resources/reaching-home-community-homelessness-report-reporting-tools>.

The change that was made to question 2.4 clarifies that all DCs and Territorial Homelessness funded communities – except those with an existing, equivalent HMIS in place when Reaching Home launched in April 2019 – are expected to use HIFIS.

Here is a screen shot of the revised question 2.4:

2.4	a) Does your community have an HMIS to manage individual-level data and service provider information for Coordinated Access?	Select one
	b) In your community, is HIFIS the HMIS that is being used or will be used ?	Select one
	c) Which HMIS is being used?	
	c) *name*	
	d) When was it implemented?	
	d) *date implemented*	

No changes were made to the CHR Reference Guide. No additional changes have been made to the CHR template since March 22 and no further changes will be made to the CHR Reference Guide or CHR template for this reporting period.

9. What parts of the CHR must be released publically? Are communities required to make this information public using a specific online platform?

As communities complete the questions in the CHR template, the Summary tab automatically pulls over any information that need to be made publically available. Communities do not edit their CHR Summary tab directly.

Once the CHR is finalized by ESDC officials, a PDF version of the CHR Summary will be generated and sent back to the CE.

The requirement is that the information in the CHR Summary is made available to the public; communities choose how this is done (e.g., posting online).

Specific CHR Questions

10. Do questions 1.1 and 1.2 refer to only the impact of Reaching Home funded projects or does “community context” refer to the sector?

The purpose of Section 1 is to provide an opportunity for communities to share information about their local context.

More specifically, question 1.1 is about highlighting any efforts and/or issues related to the work that your community has done to prevent and/or reduce homelessness over the last two years and question 1.2 is about efforts and/or issues related to the work of increasing access to safe, adequate housing in your community over the last two years.

Local context can reflect the broader homeless-serving sector, not just the impact of Reaching Home. That being said, if communities are able to qualify that some of their answers are related specifically to Reaching Home and federally-funded projects, they are encouraged to do so.

11. For question 2.4, in BC we are still in the process of getting access to HIFIS. Can we use Excel to generate our unique identifier list (List) in the meantime?

Communities that don't yet have a List won't have any data to report on for their first CHR.

For communities that are still in the process of implementing HIFIS, generating a List (otherwise referred to as a By-Name List or BNL) using a data collection tool like Excel is a good, interim option. Once HIFIS has been implemented, communities can transfer data from the List to their HIFIS database.

12. Our community has documented our triage and assessment process and our vacancy matching and referral process in the form of local policies and protocols, all of which have been approved by our governance group. When our Coordinated Access Lead is hired in a few weeks, work will begin with implementing these processes.

Given this status, are we “Under Development” or “Yes” (completed) for questions 2.11 and 2.13?

If these process documents have been developed and approved by March 31, 2021, that meets the minimum requirement for question 2.11, which is that they are “documented”. We recommend identifying your status as “Yes” (completed).

If the documentation happened after March 31st (e.g., in April or May 2021), we recommend identifying a status of “Under Development” for your first CHR and identifying “Yes” for your next CHR. You could highlight the work that your community and governance group did related to these processes in Section 1 over the last two years, given that these are key milestones related to the implementation of Coordinated Access.

13. Which communities have to report data in Section 3 and Section 4?

All Designated Communities (DCs) report on Section 3 of the CHR if they have a List that meets the four minimum characteristics with any data from one or both fiscal years. If you only have data for the most recent fiscal year, it does not have to be for the full year. This is documented in Step 1 and Step 2 in Section 3 of the CHR template.

If it is not possible to generate annualized, unduplicated data for your first CHR, two options are available:

- For Section 3: You can enter “Not Available” in Step 3 if you do not yet have the capacity to generate unduplicated data for the year.
- For Section 3 and Section 4: You can use the last month of data in each fiscal year (e.g., March 2020 and March 2021), for example using your Built for Zero-Canada (BFZ-C) data, which is also reported monthly.

Monthly reporting is an interim, optional measure which would enable communities to share results in their first CHR, recognizing that there would be an expectation to shift to annualized, unduplicated data reporting once data from the HMIS can be generated.

If communities choose to report monthly data, we would ask that they indicate this in question 2.19 (in the comments), in question 3.7 (the date range for data) and in questions 4.12 to 4.16 (in the comments).

14. In Section 3 of the template, questions 3.9.5 and 3.9.9 refer to inflow and outflow from an “unknown” status. We are currently implementing

Coordinated Access using HIFIS. We want to make sure our new intake form aligns with HIFIS and that we have clear definitions for everything captured there.

Our question is about the term “unknown”. When would agencies record “unknown”? Should we include this as a response option on the intake form?

Page 27 of the CHR Reference Guide has definitions for inflow and outflow:

- Inflow into homelessness refers to all the possible pathways to homelessness, as documented by the List of people experiencing homelessness in a community. People may be added to the List if they have no permanent address and they have transitioned from any form of housing or they are staying in or have been discharged from a public institution or a transitional housing program.
- Outflow from homelessness to housing refers to all the possible pathways from homelessness to permanent housing, as documented by the List. People are removed from the List when they transition to any form of permanent housing, become inactive or if they are deceased.

For questions 3.9.5 and 3.9.9, the option of “Unknown” is used when housing history is not known. For example, in question 3.9.5, communities report on the number of people who returned to homelessness from an unknown status. In this situation, data would be included for people that were homeless in the past, but it is not known where they were staying before the current episode of homelessness.

Similarly, in question 3.9.9, communities are asked to report on the number of people whose status changed from homeless to unknown. This would include situations where people are no longer staying somewhere that signifies their status as homeless, such as an emergency shelter, but it is not known where they went.

HIFIS uses the Housing History module to calculate the data in questions 3.9.5 and 3.9.9. It is recommended that communities align their intake forms with the housing history continuum in HIFIS, including adding an option of “Unknown”. In the local HIFIS training, staff could be instructed to only select “Unknown” if it is not possible to confirm the client’s actual housing history type.

As communities improve their data practices over time, the use of “unknown” status should decrease.

15. A new CE took over administering DC funding in our community within the reporting period. What are the expectations with respect to the CHR for these communities? Would they only be required to complete the most recent year since they have taken over as the CE?

For Section 1, ideally the CE would have transitional and historical information to offer, given that the context questions in this section are mainly about highlights of key issues or efforts, which the new CE may already know about.

For Section 2, the questions are about status updates on implementation. Communities should answer these questions with respect to the status of implementation as of March 31st, 2021.

For Section 3 and 4, new CEs may have the data from the List related to the previous year, but in cases where they do not, they could either enter “Not Available” in the cell, request the missing information from the previous CE or provide whatever is readily available for the most current fiscal year only.

HIFIS Questions

16. Which CEs are required to use HIFIS?

Under the Reaching Home Directives, there is a Directive specific to HIFIS implementation which states that: “the use of HIFIS will be mandatory in all Designated Communities where an equivalent Homelessness Management Information System is not already being used.”

As such, HIFIS implementation is mandatory for all DCs where an equivalent HMIS was not in place as of April 1, 2019.