



# REACHING HOME

CANADA'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

## Reaching Home Community Homelessness Report: Questions and Answers

October, 2022

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# Questions and Answers

## Introduction

This document was created to support Community Entities (CEs) with the second Community Homelessness Report (CHR) reporting cycle (2021-22). 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.

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

## 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?**

The second cycle of CHRs are due to Service Canada on October 7th, 2022 and will cover the third year of the program: April 1, 2021 through to March 31, 2022 (one fiscal year).

This new submission date is only for the 2021-22 reporting cycle. Following the 2021-22 cycle, the CHR submission date will return to May 30th each year.

### **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, INFC 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. Where can CEs find the new 2021-22 CHR reporting tools?**

A revised CHR template and Overview document were shared with Service Canada and CEs by email on June 3, 2022. A revised CHR Reference Guide was also shared on August 5.

A modified CHR template and Overview document for communities in British Columbia (BC) were shared with Service Canada in the Western Territories, and BC CEs by email on August 3, 2022.

All CHR tools, including webinars can also be accessed through the [Homelessness Learning Hub's CHR e-course](#).

**7. Why was a modified CHR template developed for communities in BC?**

A modified CHR template was developed for communities in BC, recognizing the unique context in the province that is impacting the implementation of Reaching Home, including the implementation of a Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

**8. What training is available on the 2021-22 CHR reporting cycle?**

For the 2021-22 CHR reporting cycle pre-recorded training webcasts were developed to provide communities with additional support to complete this reporting cycle's template. Training webcasts can be accessed on the [Homelessness Learning Hub's CHR e-course](#) and include the following:

- A webcast providing an overview of the CHR, including some CHR basics, new elements for this year and roles and responsibilities.
- Webcast for each of the four sections of the CHR that provide a tour of the questions and some tips for completing the template.

- A separate webcast for communities in BC, given a modified CHR template has been developed for them recognizing the unique context in the province.

**9. What parts of the CHR must be released publicly? 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 publicly available. Communities do not edit their CHR Summary tab directly.

Once the CHR is finalized by INFC officials, a PDF version of the CHR Summary will be generated and sent back to Service Canada to share with 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). Communities identify where the CHR summary is to be posted in Section 1 of their CHR.

**10. Did the Homelessness Policy Directorate receive feedback on the 2019-21 CHR reporting tools and process?**

Yes, the Homelessness Policy Directorate received informal feedback about the first reporting cycle from Service Canada regions, CEs, and national partners (e.g. CAEH). This feedback informed changes to the second reporting cycle.

Some changes were made to improve clarity and reflect lessons learned from the first cycle, such as offering additional guidance where communities may need more support with the reporting tools.

Based on feedback received from the first reporting cycle, training for the second cycle focuses more on CHR data and the steps to generate community-level outcomes using a unique identifier list (sometimes referred to as a By-Name List).

**11. In the next reporting cycle, will the review for clarity and completeness take as long as the first cycle?**

No, INFC officials acknowledge that the first CHR cycle has been a learning experience. The 2021-22 reporting process was updated to reflect these lessons learned.

To support a more efficient review process, a two-week turn around time will also be implemented for Service Canada and for the Homelessness Policy Directorate to conduct their reviews for completeness and clarity.

## Specific CHR Questions

- 12. Is reporting specific to the April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> timeline for the 2021-22 reporting cycle? What if there has been a significant amount of work that has been accomplished after the end of the reporting cycle?**

The 2021-22 reporting cycle is for community updates from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. This means that any developments that take place after March 31, 2022 will need to be included in the next CHR reporting cycle, which will make it possible to show an accurate picture of changes year-to-year.

- 13. New guidance for questions 1.1, 2.19 and 3.27 in the CHR asks that communities provide additional information related to encampments. What is the time period that answers should apply to?**

The Homelessness Policy Directorate is interested in learning about community experiences related to encampments more generally as part of the responses to these questions. Response can highlight information related to any period of time, including the 2021-22 fiscal year, summer and fall 2022, and/or the near future (e.g., preparations for winter 2023). In the response, please be specific as to when each comment applies.

- 14. What is the expected timeline of the HIFIS crystal report?**

The HIFIS report was released on September 23, 2022. Contact your local HIFIS Lead for access to this report.

- 15. Since the HIFIS crystal report was released September 23, 2022, are CEs expected to back date CHR to 2019-20 & 20-21?**

There is no expectation that CEs will **re-submit** previously submitted CHRs.

That being said, since Section 4 of the CHR includes a year-over-year comparison of homelessness data back to the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years, communities are asked to submit data for previous years (annual and/or monthly), as generated from the HIFIS report, to the extent possible.

For greater clarity, data should be provided in Section 4, if a real-time, comprehensive List has been in place for long enough to generate baselines for any time period since April 2019 (annual and/or monthly). For example, to report **annual** data for 2020-21, the List would need to be in place **since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020** and to report **monthly** data for March 2021, it would need to be in place **since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021**.

We recognize that, by using the HIFIS report, numbers reported in previous years may have changed. Communities can adjust their outcome data and targets from previous years in their 2021-22 CHR to reflect these updates, and are asked to use the comment boxes in Section 4 to explain this change.

The functionality to allow HIFIS to be used to support CHR reporting was introduced in HIFIS 4.0.59, which was released in December 2020. Prior to when a community updated to version 4.0.59, HIFIS was only able to use admissions records to determine if a HIFIS client was experiencing homelessness and HIFIS clients needed to be manually changed to “inactive”.

Given the above, the date in which a community updated to version 4.0.59 impacts calculations of the data points in the HIFIS report. With version 59, HIFIS is now able to make HIFIS clients “inactive” after a certain time period has past without a documented service interaction (e.g., after 90 days with no updates to their file). In addition, with version 59, Housing History is used to track Housing Status, which has four categories (Homeless, Housed, Transitionally Housed, or Unknown).

**16. Will CEs also receive access to the HIFIS crystal report in communities where the HIFIS coordination sits with a different organization?**

CEs should contact their local HIFIS Lead for access to this report.

**17. Where can CEs send updates about their contact information?**

If a community would like to change who gets information from Service Canada or the Homelessness Policy Directorate, please email the changes to your Service Canada representative and they will update our files accordingly.

If a community would like to be added to the Reaching Home newsletter distribution list, please email us at: [HPD.RH.Info-Info.VCS.DPML@info.gc.ca](mailto:HPD.RH.Info-Info.VCS.DPML@info.gc.ca)

If a community would like to be added to the HIFIS newsletter distributions list, please email us at: [info@hifis.ca](mailto:info@hifis.ca).

**18. Because of the situation in BC related to the implementation of HIFIS, some communities may feel they don't have much progress to show on the CHR related to the implementation of Reaching Home. What should a community do in this situation?**

We heard from CEs last year that they wanted a space to provide more narrative updates about their work in BC. To meet this need, we added optional comment

boxes to most of the Coordinated Access self-assessment questions in Section 2 to the CHR template for BC. These comment boxes are only for communities that indicate they have at least **started** to work on a particular aspect of Coordinated Access. It gives communities an opportunity to share the updates that are meaningful to them, including any preparations or planning that has been done (e.g., reviewing existing policies that may be in use or planning meetings).

In Section 2, we've removed the HMIS self-assessment questions in the 2021-22 CHR template for BC.

**19. Our community has had comprehensive data for chronic homelessness since 2019. However we are still working to expand our dataset to include all individuals experiencing homelessness. Can we just provide data for Outcome #5?**

Since the List is not yet comprehensive, the community would answer “No” to question 3.21, meaning they would not assess their List as comprehensive as of March 31, 2022. In this situation, no outcome data is reported in Section 4.

**20. Our community has had a real-time, comprehensive List in place since April 2018. It is currently contained in Excel and is balanced and closed-out each and every month. We do not have a way to de-duplicate clients month-over-month in a report. Should we complete the monthly or yearly data sets in Section 4?**

In question 3.23 and 3.24, communities determine if annual and monthly data can be reported from their real-time, comprehensive List, respectively.

In this situation, since the community's real-time, comprehensive List has been in place since April 2018, they should answer “Yes” to question 3.23a, 3.23b, 3.23c, 3.24a, 3.24b and 3.24c. However, since they are currently unable to de-duplicate data to provide an annual number, they should indicate “N/A” for each of the annual outcomes in Section 4 of their CHR. They should also add a comment that clarifies why annual data is not available. The community will be able to submit monthly data for March of each fiscal year.

Monthly reporting is an optional measure which enables communities to share results in their CHR, recognizing that there is an expectation to shift to annualized, unduplicated data reporting once data from the HMIS can be generated. It is expected that all communities will be able to report annual community-level outcomes using their List within the terms of their current agreement (i.e. in their 2023-24 CHR), if not before.