Community Homelessness Report: HIFIS Report Guide

Version 1 - September 2022

Table of Contents

Purpose

The Community Homelessness Report (CHR): Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Report Guide (HIFIS Report Guide) is intended to help HIFIS Leads, HIFIS Administrators and Coordinated Access Leads benefit from HIFIS' ability to calculate the Reaching Home core outcomes and support HIFIS-using communities to improve their understanding of local homelessness trends using data from their Unique Identifier List (List, otherwise known as a By-Name List). Additional tools include flowcharts that visually demonstrate the calculations and a Frequently Asked Questions document. Resources on the full CHR are available in the CHR Reporting Tools e-course on the Homelessness Learning Hub.

What is the CHR?

The CHR is a Reaching Home reporting tool for communities funded through the Designated Communities stream (outside Québec) and the three territorial capitals funded through the Territorial Homelessness stream. It was designed to support local discussions and decision making, using all of the information about homelessness currently available at the community level. Communities are encouraged to use their CHR data to develop clear plans of action that help them to reach their homelessness reduction targets and to leverage the collective efforts of service providers working across the community, regardless of how they are funded.

Through their CHR, communities self-assess their progress with Reaching Home implementation, which includes the following key components:

- community-level governance and service delivery (Coordinated Access);
- use of a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS);
- the transition to an outcomes-based approach (tracking community-level outcomes using a Unique Identifier List, also known as a By-Name List or, more simply, a List); and,
- collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners.

As identified in the Reaching Home Directives, communities are required to:

- Report on core community-level outcomes through a CHR each year if they are receiving funding from the Designated Communities stream. This requirement has been extended to communities funded through the Territorial Homelessness stream that are also receiving funding to implement Coordinated Access.
- Make a summary of their CHR results publicly available. Communities determine where they will post results online (e.g., a website of their choice).

At the federal level, CHR results may be used to determine where communities might benefit from more targeted training and technical assistance to support the implementation of Reaching Home and/or realize results.

How can the CHR HIFIS Report help communities with their CHR?

The CHR consists of four sections:

- Section 1: Community Context;
- Section 2: Coordinated Access and HMIS Self-Assessment;
- Section 3: Outcomes-Based Approach Self-Assessment; and,
- Section 4: Community-Level Outcomes.

This HIFIS Report helps communities generate data to submit in **Section 4: Community-Level Outcomes** where communities report their outcomes and compare their results against local targets over time.

Communities with a real-time, comprehensive List in place, and data to report, will provide results for the five core outcomes of Reaching Home in Section 4. Annualized data is mandatory and monthly data is optional. Communities also have the option to include additional outcomes as identified in their Community Plan.

What does the CHR HIFIS Report include?

The CHR HIFIS Report consists of six pages.

The first page generates data for each of the outcomes identified in the Reaching Home Directives:

- homelessness overall;
- new inflows to homelessness;
- returns to homelessness (from housing or transitional housing);
- Indigenous homelessness; and,
- chronic homelessness.

The remaining pages provide a demographic breakdown of each outcome by age, gender identity, family status, and veteran status.

How does the CHR HIFIS Report work?

The CHR HIFIS Report uses the Housing Status and Client State functionalities, introduced in HIFIS Version 4.0.59.1, to determine a person's "experience of homelessness" and "active state", both of which are used to calculate the outcomes, as described further below.

Housing Status

Housing status is calculated using housing history and admissions records. More specifically, Housing Status is connected to housing types from the Housing Continuum. There are five options: **Homeless**, **Chronically Homeless**, **Transitional**, **Housed** and **Unknown.**

For greater clarity, see the table below, which organizes the 33 housing types in HIFIS by Housing Continuum categories, which then determines Housing Status.

Table 2 – Housing Continuum Categories and Types					
Housing Status	**Homeless or Chronically Homeless**			**Transitional**	**Housed**	
Housing Continuum Category	**Hidden or Short Term Rentals**	**Unsheltered**	**Sheltered**	**Provisionally Accommodated***	**Housed**	
Housing Type	• Couch Surfing – Staying with Family / Friends / Acquaintances • Hotel / Motel • Hostel	• Abandoned Building • Encampment / Campsite Makeshift / Street • Vehicle	• Emergency Shelter • Violence Against Women – Emergency Shelter	• Correctional Facility • Detoxification Facility • Halfway House • Hospital – Medical • Hospital – Psychiatric • Recovery/Treatment Facility • Residential Care Facility • Violence Against Women – Transition House • Transitional Housing	• Co-op Housing • Foster Care • Group Home • Home Ownership • Housed in Family's House/ Apartment • Housed On-Reserve • Indigenous Housing Provider • Military Housing • Rental at Market Price	• Rental at Market Price with Rent Subsidy • Room in a House • Rooming House • Secondary Suite • Single Room Occupancy • Social/Community Housing • Supportive Housing

Client State

Client State is calculated using the service transactions documented in HIFIS and the maximum number of days that someone can stay on the List without an interaction, as documented in the community's Inactivity Policy. Client State options are: **Active, Inactive, Deceased** or **Archived.**

The table below shows the transactions that keep a client active within HIFIS.

Module	Transaction	Module	Transaction
Admissions	Client is booked into a shelter	Housing Placements	New record (Add Housing Placement) in **Housing Placement List** is created
Assessment	Assessment is conducted (SPDAT, VI-SPDAT, VAT)	Housing Placement	New record (Add Follow-up or Add Housing Placement Attempt) in **Housing Placement Details** is created
Calls and Visits Log	New record (Add Log) in **Call and Visit Log** is created	Housing Loss Prevention	New record Housing Loss Prevention interaction is created
Case Management	New record (Add Case) in **Client - Case Management List** is created	Medication Dispensing	Client is provided medication through Medication Dispensing in **Front Desk – Medication Dispensing**
Case Management	New record (Add Session) under the **Sessions** tab in **Display Case Management** is created;	Service Restrictions	New record (Add Service Restriction) in **Client – Service Restrictions** is created
Case Management	New record (Add Comment) under the **Case Comments** tab in **Display Case Management** is created	Storage	New record (Add Storage Item) in **Client – Storage** is created
Food Banks	New record (Add Food Bank Transaction) in **Client – Food Banks** is created	Survey	Client takes a survey in **Client Management-Survey**
Goods and Services	New record (Add Goods and Services Transaction) in **Client – Goods and Services** is created	**Notes** The following actions do not affect Client State: • Viewing and/or editing client information under Client Information • Identifying a client in a Bulletin or Message.	
Group Activities	Client is identified as an Attendee in a Group Activity		

The CHR HIFIS Report also uses a date parameter, clusters, and consent status to generate data, as described below:

- **Date Parameter**: The Report can be run between **any two dates** (e.g., to generate data for a year, a month or a day). For the purposes of the CHR, a fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31, but it is up to the user to select the relevant dates.
- **Clusters**: The Report calculates data for the cluster for which **the user is logged into**. This cannot be modified.
- **Consent**: The Report **excludes** all clients that have provided **Declined – Anonymous** consent. This also cannot be modified.

How does the Report define each outcome?

Outcome 1: Fewer people experience homelessness (homelessness is reduced overall)

CHR Definition: total number of unique individuals who were homeless for at least one day during the reporting period

HIFIS Definition: total number of people in a cluster that were **Homeless** and **Active** during the selected reporting period.

This means that if, for at least one day over the reporting period, the person had:

- A **Client State** of **Active**; **and,**
- A **Housing Status** of **Homeless** or **Chronically Homeless.**

Relevant Modules: Consent, Housing History, Admissions, and other Service Transaction Modules (e.g., Case Management, Goods and Services)

Additional rules:

- Each person is only counted once.
- Excludes people that had a **Client State** of **Inactive** during the entire reporting period.
- Excludes people that **only** had a **Housing Status** of **Housed** or **Transitional** during the reporting period.
    - For example, if someone only has housing types that correspond to Transitional, they will not be included.
- Excludes people with "Declined – Anonymous" consent.

For examples of this outcome, see Scenarios 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in the HIFIS Report Guide Flowcharts and Scenarios document.

Outcome 2: Fewer people were newly identified (new inflows to homelessness are reduced)

CHR Definition: number of unique individuals who were included on the List for the first time during the reporting period

HIFIS Definition: a person that was a 'new inflow to homelessness' has no previous experiences of homelessness prior to their experience during the reporting period.

This means that the **earliest** date in which the client had a **Client State** of **Active**, and, a **Housing Status** of **Homeless** or **Chronically Homeless** was during the reporting period.

Relevant Modules: Consent, Housing History, Admissions, and other Service Transaction Modules (e.g., Case Management, Goods and Services)

Additional rules:

- Each person is only counted once. Someone can only be newly identified once. Subsequent experiences will be calculated as a 'return' to homelessness (i.e., a return to the List).
- A person can be both 'new' and 'returned' in the same reporting period, if the conditions allow (e.g., the dates capture at least two housing losses, with the first loss being the only documented homelessness episode).
- Excludes people that had a **Client State** of **Inactive** during the entire reporting period.
- Excludes people that **only** had a **Housing Status** of **Housed** or **Transitional** during the reporting period.
  - For example, if someone only has housing types that correspond to Transitional, they will not be included.
- Excludes people with 'Declined – Anonymous' consent.

For examples of this outcome, see Scenarios 3, 5, and 7 in the [HIFIS Report Guide Flowcharts and Scenarios document](#).

Outcome 3: Fewer people return to homelessness from housing or transitional housing (returns to homelessness are reduced)

CHR Definition: number of unique individuals who returned to homelessness from housing or any transitional living situation.

HIFIS Definition: a person has 'returned to homelessness' if they:

- Had at least two **Housing Status** entries of **Homeless** (of which one entry was within the reporting period), **and**, had an entry of **Housed** and/or **Transitional** immediately prior to the **Homeless** entry that was within the reporting period.

Note: Data gaps and Housing Statuses of Unknown will impact the data quality of this outcome, as HIFIS does not have the data to correctly classify a person as returned during the reporting period.

Relevant Modules: Consent, Housing History, Admissions

Additional rules:

- Each person is only counted once, even if they 'return to homelessness' multiple times during a reporting period.
- Excludes people that had a **Client State** of **Inactive** during the entire reporting period.
- Excludes people that **only** had a **Housing Status** of **Housed** or **Transitional** during the reporting period.
    - For example, if someone only has housing types that correspond to Transitional, they will not be included.
- A person can return to homelessness from transitional housing (as a Housing Type) because Transitional is a distinct Housing Status.
- The earlier entry of homelessness, housing or transitional housing can take place before the reporting period starts. The Report looks to see if you returned during the reporting period, not if you were housed then homeless during that same reporting period.
- A client can be both 'new' and 'returned' in the same reporting period, if the conditions allow (e.g., the dates capture at least two housing losses, with the first loss of housing being the only documented homelessness episode).
- If multiple **Housing Statuses** exist in-between the experiences of homelessness, the report will only consider the entry **immediately prior** to the last experience of homelessness that is within the reporting period. The Report counts the most recent return to homelessness Housing Status.
- Periods of Unknown Housing Status will impact the calculation of this data point.

For an example of this outcome, see Scenario 4 in the .

Outcome 4: Fewer Indigenous peoples experience homelessness (Indigenous homelessness is reduced)

CHR Definition: number of unique individuals who self-identified as Indigenous and were homeless for at least one day during the reporting period.

HIFIS Definition: number of people with a **Client State** of **Active**, a **Housing Status** of **Homeless** or **Chronically Homeless,** that identified as **Indigenous** for at least one day during the reporting period.

Indigenous is defined as having an Indigenous Identity of: **First Nations: Off-reserve; First Nations: On-reserve; Inuit, Metis; or Non-Status** according to the Indigenous Status module of the Client Information section or entered when the client was created.

Relevant Modules: Consent, Indigenous Status, Client Vitals, Housing History, Admissions

Additional rules:

- Each person is only counted once.
- Excludes people that had a **Client State** of **Inactive** during the entire reporting period.
- Excludes people that **only** had a **Housing Status** of **Housed** or **Transitional** during the reporting period.
    - For example, if someone only has housing types that correspond to Transitional, they will not be included.
- This data point includes custom values that "roll-up" to any of the Indigenous identities listed above.
- Outcome 4 (Indigenous homelessness) will always be equal to or lower than Outcome 1 (Overall homelessness) and can be considered as a sub-set of Outcome 1 (Overall homelessness).

For an example of this outcome, see Scenario 8 in the HIFIS Report Guide Flowcharts and Scenarios document.

Outcome 5: Fewer people experience chronic homelessness (chronic homelessness is reduced)

CHR Definition: number of unique individuals who, according to the List, experienced chronic homelessness during the reporting period

HIFIS Definition: number of people who had a **Client State** of **Active**, a **Housing Status** of **Chronically Homeless** for at least one day during the reporting period.

Chronic Homelessness is defined using the federal definition and uses a combination of shelter stays from admissions records and entries in Housing History that correspond to a homeless housing type.

The homeless housing types that are included in the calculation of chronic homelessness are:

Couch Surfing – Staying with Family / Friends / Acquaintances	Encampment / Campsite Makeshift / Street
Hotel / Motel	Vehicle
Hostel	Emergency Shelter
Abandoned Building	Violence Against Women – Emergency Shelter

Relevant Modules: Consent, Housing History, Admissions

Additional rules:

- Each person is only counted once.
- Excludes people that had a **Client State** of **Inactive** during the entire reporting period.
- Excludes people that **only** had a **Housing Status** of **Housed** or **Transitional** during the reporting period.
  - For example, if someone only has housing types that correspond to Transitional, they will not be included.

For an example of this outcome, see Scenario 9 in the HIFIS Report Guide Flowcharts and Scenarios document.

How does the Report define the demographic data?

The Report provides more details on each outcome by calculating demographic results for age, family status, and gender identity. For each of these, the total should add up to the same total listed at the top of the page.

Totals that do not align can be attributed to unknown response options. For example, clients with an unknown gender, or unknown Indigenous Status.

Note: Data points that calculate age use the age of the person at the beginning of the reporting period.

Data Point	HIFIS Definition
Identified as Indigenous and experienced homelessness for at least one day	Has an Indigenous Identity of: **First Nations: Off-reserve; First Nations: On-reserve; Inuit, Metis; or Non-Status** according to the Indigenous Identity module of the Client Information section or entered on client creation.
Experienced chronic homelessness for at least one day	Has a **Housing Status** of **Chronically Homeless**.
Identified as a Veteran	Has a **Veteran Status** of: • **Veteran – Canadian Armed Forces;** • **Veteran – Allies;** • **Veteran – Civilian; or** • **Former RCMP** Data Source: Client Information, Veteran Status
Children (0-12)	Has an age between 0-12 from the Client Vitals or client creation.
Youth (13-24)	Has an age between 13-24 from the Client Vitals or client creation.
Adult (25-49)	Has an age between 25-49 from the Client Vitals or client creation.
Older Adult (50-64)	Has an age between 50-64 from the Client Vitals or client creation.
Seniors (65+)	Has an age over 65 from the Client Vitals or client creation.

Unaccompanied Children	Has an age between 0-12 and is not part of any Family. Data Source: Client Information, Family
Unaccompanied Youth	Has an age between 13-24 and is not part of any Family. Data Source: Client Information, Family
Single Adult (25+)	Has an age over 25 and is not part of any Family. Data Source: Client Information, Family
Family Head	Has the **Family Role** of **Family Head** under Client Information, Family section.
Other Family Member	Has a Family Role of: • **Partner;** • **Dependent – Child;** • **Dependent – Extended Family; or** • **Dependent – Roommate / Boarder** Also includes all custom values that roll-up to any of the above.
Male	Has a gender of male under Client Information or at client creation. Also includes all custom values that roll-up to male.
Female	Has a gender of female under Client Information or at client creation. Also includes custom values that roll-up to female.
Gender Diverse	Has a gender of transgender or other. Also includes custom values that roll-up to transgender or other.

How do I get the most out of this Report?

This Report relies heavily on the Housing History and Admissions modules. Incomplete or incorrect housing history data may result in data discrepancies. Data gaps in Housing History introduce unknown Housing Statuses which may result in the Report not being able classify a client as Returned to homelessness.

To support high quality data, consider the following:

- **Complete key fields**: Such as client vitals, housing history, and day-to-day transactions.
- **Make HIFIS data real-time:** Use community policies and protocols to emphasize the expectation of timely data entry.
- **Monitor data quality:** Monitor the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of data entry to avoid and fix common data errors.
  - ○ **Impacts of poor data quality:**
    - ▪ Unknown housing history records, or data gaps within housing history, will create unknown Housing Statuses. Unknown Housing Statuses will result in an undercount of the outcomes.
    - ▪ In addition, poor data quality prior to the reporting period will have under reporting in Outcome 3 (Returns to Homelessness) and Outcome 5 (Chronic Homelessness), as the Report looks before the reporting period for those calculations
- **Ensure comprehensive coverage of service providers:** Include all service providers, or access points to allow for increased data entry.
- **Provide continuous training and coaching users:** Training or coaching is an opportunity to build HIFIS users' general data literacy and reinforce expected data management practices.

Additional Resources

CHR HIFIS Report Guide Materials

- [CHR HIFIS Report Guide Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [CHR HIFIS Report Guide Flowchart and Scenarios](#)

Community Homelessness Report (CHR) on the Homelessness Learning Hub

- [CHR Reference Guide](#)
- [CHR Training Webinar](#)

HIFIS Website

- For more information on HIFIS: http://www.hifis.ca/

HIFIS Demo

- For a hands-on experience with HIFIS: https://demo.hifis.ca/

Homelessness Learning Hub

- To access a wide range of free supporting documents on Coordinated Access, HIFIS, and Reaching Home, visit the Homelessness Learning Hub at www.workspaceonhomelessness.ca

HIFIS Support and Staying Connected

- Contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre by email at support@HIFIS.ca or by phone at 1-866-324-2375 for questions HIFIS. You can also refer to the [HIFIS Toolkit](#).
- To receive the HIFIS Newsletter send a request to sign up by email at info@HIFIS.ca