**2023-24 Community Homelessness Report:** **Understanding Your Community-Level Data Worksheet**

**What is this worksheet?**

In the Community Homelessness Report (CHR) 2023-24 reporting cycle, question 3.14 refers to a separate worksheet developed to help communities self-assess the comprehensiveness of their person-specific dataset. The worksheet is included in **Annex A** of this document.

Question 3.14 reads:

Under the Outcomes-Based Approach, data comprehensiveness refers to data that reflects community-level homelessness. Compared to other sources of data about homelessness, how comprehensive is the person-specific dataset? Does it accurately reflect community-level homelessness? If not, which population groups may be missing?

Communities are strongly encouraged to use the “Understanding Community-Level Data” worksheet to help them reflect on the comprehensiveness of their dataset.

**What is the purpose of this tool?**

The purpose of this tool is to support communities in self-assessing the comprehensiveness of their dataset, which falls under Step 3 of the Outcomes-Based Approach. For more information about the Outcomes-Based Approach, see the CHR Reference Guide.

By completing this exercise, communities can gain a better understanding of how their dataset compares to other data sources about homelessness in their community. They can then use this information to identify potential gaps that need to be addressed to improve the comprehensiveness of their dataset and, in turn, the accuracy of data that comes from it about people currently experiencing homelessness.

**Who can complete this tool?**

Any community can use this worksheet to help them compare their person-specific dataset to other data sources about homelessness. That being said, the worksheet was developed specifically for communities funded through the Designated Communities or Territorial Homelessness steams, to support them with completing their CHR.

**Instructions for completing this worksheet**

See below for guidance on how to complete this worksheet.

1. Download this worksheet from the Homelessness Learning Hub [CHR reporting tools e-course](https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/library/resources/reaching-home-community-homelessness-report-reporting-tools/).
2. Consider which data sources about homelessness could be comparable to the person-specific dataset (e.g., Point-in-Time Count data). The data should be representative of everyone experiencing homelessness, as much as possible. Some considerations are outlined below:
   1. If the data that you are comparing is **limited to a certain population group** (e.g., only youth or people experiencing chronic homelessness), it may be **less comparable** to sources that include a broader range of people (e.g., all ages and people who have experienced homelessness for a shorter period of time).
   2. If the data that you are comparing is **limited to a certain type of homelessness** (e.g., only sheltered homelessness), it may be **less comparable** to sources that include a broader range of types (e.g., unsheltered and sheltered homelessness).
   3. If there are limitations on comparing full data sets, communities can **compare smaller sub-sets** instead (e.g., looking at unsheltered or sheltered data or comparing data for a specific period of time across reports).
3. Gather data (e.g., run reports) for the same (or very similar) time periods. The following data points for homelessness are required:
   1. **Number of individuals or households who were experiencing homelessness.** Data is more comparable if the same unit of measurement is used across reports.
   2. **Where the person/household was staying or living while homeless** (i.e., their “housing type”, which defines the type of homelessness they are experiencing – unsheltered, sheltered, transitional or hidden). Data is more comparable if the same or similar definitions are used to group housing types related to homelessness. It is a good idea to review the definitions for “types of homelessness” as part of this exercise, to confirm that they are comparable.
   3. **Time period for the data.** Data is more comparable if the time periods for the results are the same or similar across reports. People need to be included only once in each report/data source (no duplication).
4. **Optional:** Gather data (e.g., run reports) for the same (or very similar) time periods for specific population groups. For example, the data outlined in #3 (**a)** number of individuals or households who were experiencing homelessness, **b)** where the person/household was staying or living while homeless, and **c)** time period for the data) could be further filtered by:
   1. Household status (e.g., singles, families, unaccompanied youth);
   2. Age groups (e.g., 16-24, 25-64, 65+);
   3. Indigenous identity; or,
   4. Veteran status.

After the worksheet has been completed, communities can record their observations in the CHR (question 3.14). For example, in the response, some or all of the following could be addressed:

* **How does the dataset compare to other data sources that are considered accurate or valid?** 
  + What are the similarities between data sources? What might explain them?
  + What are the differences between data sources? What might explain them?
* **Comparing the dataset against other data sources, does the dataset still seem comprehensive?**
  + If the numbers or proportions of people experiencing homelessness are lower in the dataset for one or more types of homelessness (unsheltered, sheltered, transitional or hidden) or population groups (e.g., Indigenous identity), does that suggest that people might be missing from it? Why or why not?
* **How might the dataset be improved, so that it is more comprehensive and data can be more accurate?**
  + Who might have helpful insights about any differences in numbers or proportions of people in the dataset, compared to other data sources? Is there a provider or partner that you could ask for help with explaining the differences?
  + What would have to be true about your Coordinated Access processes, so that people experiencing homelessness are able to participate? How might processes need to change to make it better and more inclusive?
  + What would have to be true about the dataset for it to be as comprehensive as possible? How might processes need to change to make it better and more inclusive?
  + Is there a provider or partner that could help ensure that everyone experiencing homelessness is included in the dataset, as much as possible? Who might that be? What are some next steps for engaging with them?

**Annex A: The Worksheet**

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| **Community-Level Data Source** | **Time Period** | **Types of Homelessness (just examples)** | | | | **Total** |
| **Unsheltered** | **Sheltered** | **Transitional** | **Hidden** |
| **Person-specific dataset** | N/A | # | # | # | # | # |
| **Example:** HIFIS Unique Identifier List (based on current housing history record) | dates | # | # | # | # | # |
| **Example:** Last Point-in-Time Count | dates | # | # | # | # | # |
| **Example:** Street outreach data | dates | # | N/A | # | # | # |
| **Example:** Shelter data | dates | N/A | # | N/A | N/A | # |
| **Other:** | dates | # | # | # | # | # |
| **Other:** | dates | # | # | # | # | # |

**Notes:**

* For the dataset, data would be a snapshot at one point in time, ideally when the dataset is current (up-to-date).
* For the HIFIS Unique Identifier List, people are counted if they have Explicit consent, at minimum.
* Other data sources could include counts of people who have not yet consented to be on the dataset, if known. For example, in HIFIS, this could be a count of people who were experiencing homelessness and interacted with the homeless-serving system and have Declined Anonymous consent.