

Homeless Services Terminology

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):

- HMIS is an information technology system that captures data about clients served in the regional homeless services system. It is a federal requirement to use a system like HMIS.
- HMIS holds information about how people interact with the homeless services system, including the enrollments and exits from all programs.
- It is used to provide aggregate-level data about the effectiveness of the system or to provide client-level data to service providers who are assisting that client.
- HMIS does not capture the number of people experiencing homelessness in our region.

Exits to or Maintained Permanent Housing:

- Success is defined as a person leaving the homeless services system and moving into permanent housing (an “exit to permanent housing”).
- For a chronically homeless person, success is also defined as remaining housed in a permanent supportive housing unit and accepting supportive services (a “maintenance of permanent housing”).
- HSD follows national standards for data capture and performance measure calculation.
- Exits are captured for each project type (Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Emergency Shelter, for example) in HMIS. One exit does not equal one household in HMIS. An exit represents an activity of a household in HMIS.
- For this reason, in the count of total exits to permanent housing, there may be duplicated households. This duplication would occur, for example, when one household uses the services of outreach, shelter, and rapid rehousing to find permanent housing and exit the system. This example would result in three exits, from three project types, for one household.
- HMIS cannot currently support de-duplicating households in the number of total exits to permanent housing.

Rate of Exits to Permanent Housing:

- To determine how effective a project type is in connecting clients to housing, HSD looks at the rate of exits to permanent housing.
- HSD calculates this measure, in accordance with national standards set by HUD, by dividing the number of exits to permanent housing from a project by the total number of exits from the same project.
- For example, there were 934 households exits from prevention projects in 2017. Of those, 859 exited prevention projects to permanent housing. Therefore, the prevention project type has a success rate of exiting 92% of households to permanent housing in 2017.

Remaining Performance Standards:

- The remaining four performance measures help HSD determine whether the system is efficient, providing good services, and helping the most in need.

Performance Measure (by Project Type)	What does it tell us about the Project Type?
Average Length of Stay in Days	Length of time it takes clients to exit the project type
Return Rate to Homeless System	Are clients finding sustainable permanent housing or are they returning to the system?
Entries from Homelessness	Are clients entering the project from unsheltered places. i.e. from literal homelessness?

ATTACHMENT A: Homeless Services Terminology

Utilization Rate	Are the beds/housing units/service slots being used every day to help people exit homelessness?
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Project Types:

Homelessness Prevention

- **Prevention:** Prevention services are used to assist people who are currently housed but face an imminent risk of becoming homeless. Prevention programs help people remain in their homes, with the use of one-time financial assistance or case management. A person successfully exits a prevention program when he remains in housing and doesn't become homeless.

EMERGENCY: Shelter and Connection to Housing

- **Outreach & Engagement:** Outreach & Engagement programs include both street outreach to people living unsheltered and housing case management. Outreach workers connect unsheltered people to resources within the homeless services system and housing case managers work with people prioritized by Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) for housing to help them to prepare to move into permanent housing. A person successfully exits an outreach program when she has used outreach services to find and move to a permanent home.
- **Basic Shelter:** Basic shelters tend to have limited hours and provide services focused on basic needs and respite from being outdoors, like mats on the floor and a restroom. A person successfully exits a shelter program when they have left the shelter to move to a permanent home.
- **Enhanced Shelter:** Enhanced shelters have extended or 24/7 hour service and provide many services such as meals, hygiene services, storage, and staffing to support leaving shelter for permanent housing. A person successfully exits a shelter program when they have left the shelter to move to a permanent home.
- **Day and Hygiene Centers:** Day and Hygiene Centers provide a place to rest during the day and a place to tend to basic needs like using the restroom, showering and doing laundry.
- **Permitted Village/Encampment:** Permitted villages offer outdoor, temporary accommodations for people who are living unsheltered in conditions that threaten their health and safety. Villages offer tiny house-like living structures, community kitchens, hygiene services and case management to clients that have lived outside for extended periods of time or for whom traditional shelter may not be a good fit. A person successfully exits a village when he leaves the village to move to permanent housing.
- **Transitional Housing (TH):** Transitional Housing assists homeless individuals who need more intensive services before moving into permanent housing. Transitional Housing offers housing and supportive services for up to two years. It best serves young adults, people in recovery, and people fleeing domestic violence. Residents in transitional housing programs are still considered homeless by federal definitions but are no longer eligible for other homeless housing programs. A person successfully exits transitional housing when they leave TH within 2 years and move to permanent housing.

ATTACHMENT A: Homeless Services Terminology

HOUSING: Permanent Housing

- **Diversion:** Diversion services offer people experiencing homelessness one-time financial assistance or services to bypass shelter and move directly to housing. Diversion is offered to people who are homeless but have not yet or have just entered the shelter system. These programs offer financial assistance and/or case management to find creative solutions to the difficulties a person faces. Diversion can help people reunite with family, mediate with a landlord, or pay rent for a short time. Diversion services are available from outreach programs, shelters and Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) Regional Access Points. A person successfully exits a diversion program when she uses one-time assistance to bypass shelter and move directly to housing.
- **Rapid Rehousing (RRH):** Rapid Rehousing assists individuals to quickly exit the homeless services system and move to permanent housing. Rapid Rehousing offers rental assistance and supportive services for up to 1 year. A person successfully exits a rapid rehousing program when he is living in permanent housing without a subsidy.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Permanent Supportive Housing pairs affordable housing with comprehensive supportive services. Residents receive housing and services permanently. Permanent Supportive Housing serves primarily single adults who are chronically homeless and have a disabling medical condition. A person successfully exits PSH when they leave the permanent supportive housing unit for another permanent home and also when they maintain a permanent housing unit and continue to receive supportive services.