COALITION FOR HOMELESSNESS INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

HMIS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LAST UPDATED JULY 2024

ANSWERS TO COMMON HMIS USER QUESTIONS

Housing is a human right.

We envision an Indianapolis where everyone has a safe, stable, and affordable home and is embraced by compassionate care and an inclusive community.

Frequently Asked Questions

SHOULD I RE-ENROLL A CLIENT OR CREATE A NEW ENROLLMENT?

Clients should only be re-enrolled when an exit is done in error. Clients should have a new enrollment if they indeed left the program (for any length of time) and were readmitted. This allows each stay to be accurately reflected in the system.

HOW CAN I REQUEST TRAINING OR ASSISTANCE?

If you cannot find a Scribe or Learning Management System (LMS) course for your training needs, please join us for our monthly HMIS User Group (HUG) meetings! At the end of each meeting, we allocate time for HMIS troubleshooting and questions. You can also join the HMIS team at our regular office hours. HMIS Office hours occur every other week on Mondays (10 AM – 11 AM) and Thursdays (3 PM – 4 PM). You can join them virtually or in person at the CHIP Office. If you cannot join the HUG meetings or Office Hours, please contact the HMIS team. We are happy to schedule time to chat and work through any training you need.

If you have technical issues with HMIS, you can submit a Help Desk ticket at any time. Directions for submitting tickets can be found here.

CAN MY ORGANIZATION CUSTOMIZE HMIS FOR OUR PROGRAMS?

Yes! The CHIP team wants to make HMIS work for you! We are happy to customize your HMIS workspace to best suit your needs, be it reorganization or customized reporting. Examples of custom reports we have created include:

- **Average length of enrollment during a grant period**
- **Clients enrolled without a move-in date**
- **Income change over a reporting period**
- **Clients' average length of stay and exit destinations**

These custom reports can be particularly helpful for grant reports! You can submit a request for customized reports here.

ARE SNAP BENEFITS CONSIDERED "INCOME" FOR HMIS ASSESSMENTS?

Nope! SNAP benefits are "non-cash benefits" and should only be entered in the Non-Cash Benefits section of the Financial Assessment Page, titled "Income & Non-Cash Benefits." For more information, see page 37 of the FY 2024 HMIS Data Dictionary.

IF AN ENROLLMENT IS DELETED, ARE CONNECTED SERVICES DELETED?

No. Services tied to an enrollment stay on a client's record even if an enrollment has been deleted. If you delete an enrollment and need services to be deleted, please list the services to delete in a Help Desk ticket. If you delete an enrollment and services are erroneously deleted, please submit a Help Desk ticket to inform the HMIS team of the error.

DO I HAVE TO ENROLL ALL FAMILY MEMBERS?

Nope! You only need to enroll family members if they are actively engaged in your program. This may mean, for example, that a family has 5 members but only 3 are enrolled in your program.

NOTE: please do your best to ensure EVERY family member is accurately enrolled at the beginning. It is possible to add a family member to an existing enrollment later, but this process is very complicated. If you need to add a family member to an enrollment after the fact, please submit a Help Desk ticket.

DO EXIT DESTINATIONS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE TO MATCH?

Not necessarily! HMIS Data Standards allow family members of the same household to have different exit destinations. Depending on unique experiences, family members may exit to different locations. Answers to this question should accurately reflect the exit destination for each client and are tied to individual client records, not households.

NOTE: be sure EVERY family member is exited from an enrollment.

SHOULD A FAMILY MEMBER BE DELETED OR EXITED IF THEY ARE NO LONGER WITH THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD?

Typically, if a family member is no longer living with a head of household, they should be exited to their own unique living situation. Instead of deleting their profile or enrollment, you can update the head of the household's family. This lets case managers know the clients' family status while accurately reflecting everyone's living situation.

CAN I ENROLL FOLKS INTO MY PROGRAM IF THEY CANNOT OR PREFER NOT TO PROVIDE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)?

Yes! Most of the time, you cannot deny shelter or services to a neighbor who does not have or prefers not to provide their SSN. An exception is if an SSN is a requirement to verify eligibility (e.g., Rapid Re-Housing through SSVF grants). In this example, the veteran would need to supply an SSN to verify eligibility, but the veteran's household members can decline to provide one.

WHEN DO I ENROLL A CLIENT IN MY PROJECT?

Please refer to the table below for details on exiting a client from a project.

PROJECT TYPE	
Emergency Shelter	Enrollment dates should signify the beginning of the household's stay in the emergency shelter.
Transitional Housing	Enrollment dates should signify the beginning of the household's stay in the transitional housing facility.
Permanent Housing	PH enrollment dates should reflect the date a client begins working with your organization to receive services/case management.
Services Only	The enrollment date should reflect when a client first began engaging with your organization to receive services.
Diversion	Enrollment date should be when a client first engages in a deliberate way with your organization to receive diversion assistance.
Street Outreach	Typically, clients' date of engagement should be logged on the date a client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan.

WHEN DO I EXIT A CLIENT FROM MY PROJECT?

Please refer to the table below for details on exiting a client from a project.

PROJECT TYPE	
Emergency Shelter	Clients should be exited on their last continuous stay in the project before they (a) transfer to another project or (b) otherwise stop residing in the project.
Transitional Housing	Clients should be exited on their last continuous stay in the project before they (a) transfer to another project or (b) otherwise stop residing in the project.
Permanent Housing	Exit dates from PH should reflect when a client (a) has successfully secured long-term housing, (b) voluntarily leaves or is no longer participating in the project, (c) transfers to another program (e.g., PSH to RRH), or (d) is no longer eligible for services through the PH program and exits.
Services Only	Exits will largely depend on the project and the frequency you interact with clients. CHIP can also set clients to auto-exit after a certain period (e.g., after 90 days of enrollment with no logged services).
Diversion	HMIS exits should occur if a client (a) is successfully diverted and returns to permanent housing without further assistance, (b) voluntarily leaves the diversion program, (c) becomes ineligible for continued assistance, or (d) transitions to another program (e.g., an RRH program).
Street Outreach	Clients should be exited when staff have been unable to locate them for an extended period, informed by the organization's typical cadence of engagement with neighbors.

FOR PERMANENT HOUSING, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MOVE-IN DATE AND THE ENROLLMENT DATE?

The enrollment date should reflect the date a client began working with your organization's staff to receive case management, services, etc. Generally, clients should be entered as soon as possible once they are determined to be eligible and suitable for permanent housing (e.g., if they have been assessed and are a good candidate for an RRH project).

A housing move in date should entered when a household moves into any type of permanent housing, regardless of funding source or whether the project provides the rental assistance. This allows us to differentiate between housed clients and those experiencing homelessness at different points during their enrollment.

NOTE: a housing move-in date cannot be logged before the '"Project Start Date" or after the '"Project Exit Date." Even if a client leaves the permanent housing situation, please do not delete the housing move-in date.

WHY DID MY HMIS ACCOUNT BECOME INACTIVE?

If an HMIS user does not log in for a certain period of time, their account will become inactive. If your account becomes inactive, please email the HMIS team at CHIP to restore your account. We recommend setting a recurring calendar reminder to log into HMIS at least once every 30 days (e.g., log in on the 1st and 15th of each month).

I SEARCHED FOR A CLIENT, AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY HAVE MULTIPLE PROFILES. WHICH SHOULD I USE?

It is common for a client to have multiple profiles erroneously. If you notice this, please submit a Help Desk ticket, and CHIP staff will merge the profiles. It is helpful if you can identify which profile should be maintained (typically the one with the most complete and accurate data).

I THINK A CLIENT IS IN HMIS, BUT WHEN I SEARCH, THEY DO NOT SHOW UP. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

First, try searching with broad conditions. For example, if your client's name is Test Client, try searching just "T" in the first name and "C" in the last name. Then look through the list for a possible match. You can also try searching by them with just their social security number or date of birth.

WHAT SHOULD I SELECT FOR "REASON FOR LEAVING?"

"Reason for Leaving" should reflect as accurately as possible why a client has left your program. The table below can help you determine which to select.

REASON FOR LEAVING	USE WHEN:
Completed Program	• Client successfully completes the program • Successful/accepted referral made • Client no longer requires supportive services, rental subsidy, or additional assistance provided by the program to maintain housing stability
Criminal Activity	Participation ended because of criminal activity or violence that occurred while in the program
Death	Client passed away while in program
Disagreement with Rules/Person	Client decided to leave program because they disagreed with rules or person(s) in the household or at the organization/facility, NOT to go to a different housing option. NOTE: do not use if client is terminated from the program
Left for Housing opportunity before completing program	Client decided to leave the program prior to completion for another housing option. Housing stability is not guaranteed because the client did not complete the program. Does not otherwise indicate why the client chose to leave.
Needs could not be met	Client participation ended because client needed more services and/or assistance than program could provide
Non-compliance with program	Client participation was ended because client was not compliant with rules and/or parameters agreed upon at program entry.
Non-payment of rent	Client participation was ended due to client's denial to follow program guidelines pertaining to rent or fees.
Reached maximum time allowed	Client participation was ended due to time limitation as determined by a grant or agency policy, not because they completed the program and is housing stable. There is usually no stable housing plan identified.
Unknown/Disappeared	Client decided to leave the program without informing anyone as to why they were leaving, or client was unable to be reached to determine the reason.
Other	Client left the program for a reason not previously listed. <u>Only select if truly necessary, and a description of the destination MUST be included in the text box provided.</u>