

## Contra Costa HMIS Data Collection Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help define and clarify certain questions that are asked on our HMIS forms. Definitions were taken from HUD's final rule dated Dec. 5, 2011 for programs under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the HEARTH Act.

### Intake Questions

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**Client Name** – Ask client for the spelling of their full legal name (first, middle and last name). If possible, verify with documentation available (i.e. driver's license, etc.).

**Intake Date** – Definition varies by program. For residential programs, this is usually the first night the client(s) stayed at the program. Please defer to your supervisor/program manager.

**Who Referred You** – The referral source immediately preceding the current program intake. For example, if a client is referred to your shelter by an outreach worker, and later on is moved to a Transitional Housing program, the referral source for the second intake should be Emergency Shelter and not Outreach Worker.

**Date of Birth** – Record the client's date of birth. If the client cannot remember the year of birth, ask for the person's age and calculate the approximate year of birth. If client cannot remember the month and/or day of birth, record an approximate date of January 1<sup>st</sup>.

**'How many children in household' and 'Household Size'** – This means how many children are currently living, or will be living with you, in the program.

**Chronically Homeless Individual** – A homeless individual that is: (1) unaccompanied, (2) has a disabling condition, and (3) has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years." The term "homeless individual" is defined as "a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets, for example) OR living in a homeless emergency shelter."

**Chronically Homeless Family** – A homeless family in which the head of household fits criteria (2) and (3) above.

**Housing Status** - Determine the appropriate response according to the definitions below. A client cannot be in multiple categories.

**(1) Literally Homeless** - client currently lives in an emergency shelter or place not meant for habitation, OR client stayed in a hospital or other institution for up to 30 consecutive days (180 for HPRP programs) and was sleeping in an emergency shelter/place not meant for habitation prior to entering the hospital or other institution. Persons who are **literally homeless** include people who at program entry or program exit are in one of the following:

- Places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and *transitional housing for homeless persons*);
- A hospital or other institution, if the person was sleeping in an emergency shelter or other place not meant for human habitation (cars, parks, streets, etc.) immediately prior to entry into the hospital or institution;
- Fleeing a domestic violence situation.

**(2) Imminently losing their housing** – client is being or has been evicted, kicked out, or discharged from an institution (where they have been a resident for more than 30 consecutive days). Additionally, no appropriate housing options have been identified and client lacks the resources needed to obtain housing or remain in their existing housing. Persons who are **imminently losing their housing** include people who at program entry or program exit:

- Are currently housed and not literally homeless, per above definition;
- Are imminently losing their housing, whether permanent or temporary;
- Have no subsequent housing options identified; **and**
- Lack the resources or support networks needed to retain current housing or obtain temporary or permanent housing.

Examples of imminent housing loss include:

- Being evicted from a private dwelling unit (including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations);
- Being discharged from a hospital or other institution;
- Living in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer considered meant for human habitation;

**(3) Unstably housed and at-risk of losing their housing** - client is currently in their own housing or doubled up with friends/relatives but are at-risk of losing their housing due to high housing costs, conflict, or other conditions. Additionally, client lacks the resources needed to maintain or obtain housing. However client is not in immediate danger of becoming literally homeless. Persons who are **unstably housed and at-risk of losing their housing** include people who at program entry or program exit:

- Are currently housed and not literally homeless or imminently losing their housing, per above definitions;
- Are experiencing housing instability, but may have one or more other temporary housing options; **and**
- Lack the resources or support networks to retain or obtain permanent housing.

Housing instability may be evidenced by:

- Frequent moves because of economic reasons;
- Living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
- Being evicted from a private dwelling unit (including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations);
- Living in a hotel or motel not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable Organizations;
- Living in severely overcrowded housing;
- Being discharged from a hospital or other institution; or
- Otherwise living in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

**(4) Stably Housed** - client is in a stable housing situation and is not at-risk of losing this housing.

**Last Permanent Address** - The apartment, room or house where the client last lived for 90 days or more (does not include time spent in prison, hospitals, treatment facilities or other institutions). If client does not remember the full address, record at least the City and Zip Code.

**City living in when you lost your housing** – Where the client last lived. May not have necessarily stayed for 90 days or more.

**City Slept In Last Night** – Where the client slept the night prior to program entry.

**Living Situation Prior to Entering Program** – Where the client stayed the night prior to program entry. If client stayed there less than 30 days, answer follow-up question “Where did client stay prior”.

**Veteran Status** – Has the client ever served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. Client may or may not have served in a war zone.

**Military Era** - Which military service era did the client serve. In identifying the military service era served by the client, programs are encouraged to begin with the most recent service era and proceed in descending order through the various eras. Allow clients to identify multiple service eras and branches of the military.

**Ethnicity** – The self-identified hispanic or latino ethnicity of the client. Staff observation should not be used to determine ethnicity. The definition of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or Spanish culture of origin, regardless of Race.

**Race** – Select the appropriate box(es) according to client’s self identification. Staff observation should not be used to collect information on race.

- American Indian or Alaska Native is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, including Central America, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- Asian is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.
- Black or African American is a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
- White is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.

**Disabling Condition/Disability** – must satisfy at least one of the following:

- (1) a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act;
- (2) a physical, mental, or emotional impairment which is
  - (a) expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, **and**
  - (b) substantially impedes an individual's ability to live independently, **and**
  - (c) of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions;
- (3) a developmental disability as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act;
- (4) the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiological agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome;
- (5) a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury.

**Is client employed** - Record the client’s employment status. If employed, how many hours they worked in the previous week and the tenure of the employment. If not employed, document whether or not the client is looking for work. Seasonal employment is work that can, by the nature of it, ordinarily only be performed during a certain season in the year. Temporary employment is work for a limited time only or for a specific piece of work and that work will last a short duration. Permanent employment is work that is contemplated to continue indefinitely.

**Income** - Enter the dollar amount of the client’s monthly income on the day he/she entered the program, and check all sources of that income. An income source should not be assigned to more than one person in the same household. As a general rule, income is assigned to a household member if the income source/amount leaves the household upon the departure of that member. For TANF, child support, alimony or other spousal support income, the responses should be assigned to the adult member of the household who is issued the income payment. For SSI received on behalf of a minor child, income source/amount should be assigned to the minor child. However, if it is not possible to discern which

minor child the SSI benefit is intended for, the SSI benefit should be assigned to the child's parent or legal guardian.

**Non-Cash Benefits** – Determine if the client has received any non-cash benefits in the last 30 days. For households with more than one member, non-cash benefits should be assigned in HMIS to all members of the household for whom the benefit is intended. For example, if an entire family is enrolled in Medicaid, the “Non-cash benefits received from any source in the past 30 days” question would be assigned as “Yes” for all household members and the “Source of non-cash benefit” would have Medicaid selected for all household members.

**Released as a result of California AB 109** – often called the “Criminal Justice Realignment” bill. California Assembly Bill 109 allows non-violent, non-serious, and non-sex offenders to serve their sentence in county jails and other alternative programs (parole) instead of state prisons.

## Update Form Questions

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*\* HUD requires that all programs update these 4 domains at least once annually. However certain programs are **required to update this information in real-time** (within 48 hours of the change) in order to be counted in the continuum's Performance Measures and Outcomes reports. Please check with your program manager to determine the best way to capture and reassess this information.*

**Changes in employment status** – record changes in employment status as well as the date of the change (effective date).

**Changes in income/non cash benefits** – record changes in client's cash/non-cash income as well as the date of the change (effective date). As good practice, have the client's intake form in front of you when filling out the update form. Income sources indicated on the Intake form BUT NO LONGER indicated on the update form will be assumed to have ended, and will be marked as “ended” in the HMIS by your HMIS data entry person.

**Changes in housing status** – record changes in client's housing status. For non-residential programs, move-in date into PH is a required question.

**Changes in disability status** – record changes in client's disability status as well as the date of the change (effective date). As good practice, have the client's intake form in front of you when filling out the update form. Disabilities indicated on the Intake form BUT NO LONGER indicated on the update form will be assumed to have ended, and will be marked as “ended” in the HMIS by your HMIS data entry person.

**Date of Change** – the date the change became/becomes effective (this could be the intake date). If it is the intake date, your HMIS data entry person will change the information that was previously indicated on the intake paperwork.

## Exit Questions

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**Exit Date** – Definition varies by program. Please defer to your supervisor/program manager.

**Reason for Leaving** - Identify the reason why the client left the program. If a client left for multiple reasons, record only the primary reason. Please defer to your supervisor/program manager to determine the best answer for specific exit scenarios.

**Discharge Destination** - Determine the response value that best describes where the client will be staying after they leave the program. For clients who will be staying with family or friends, select the response that describes the expected tenure of the destination, permanent or temporary. (If a client has been given permission to stay for a finite number of days, please mark 'temporary'. If unsure about tenure, please assume that it is temporary). For rental by client and owned by client, select the response that includes the type of housing subsidy, if any, the client will be receiving. A housing subsidy may be tenant-, project- or sponsor-based and provides ongoing assistance to reduce rent burden. This includes either a housing subsidy provided through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program or other housing subsidy. Other housing subsidies may include a HUD-funded subsidy (e.g., public housing, Housing Choice Voucher or “Section 8”) or other housing subsidy (e.g., state rental assistance voucher).

**Move-in Date into Permanent Housing Situation** – This question is required for non-residential programs only.

**Employment at Exit** – Record client's employment status at exit.

**Income and Non-cash Benefits at Exit** – Record client's income/benefits status at exit. As good practice, have the client's intake form in front of you when filling out the exit form. Income sources indicated on the Intake form BUT NO LONGER indicated on the exit form will be assumed to have ended, and will be marked as “ended” in the HMIS by your HMIS data entry person.

**Disabilities at Exit** – Record client's disability status at exit. As good practice, have the client's intake form in front of you when filling out the exit form. Disabilities indicated on the Intake form BUT NO LONGER indicated on the exit form will be assumed to have ended, and will be marked as “ended” in the HMIS by your HMIS data entry person.

## Other Clarifications

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**Don't Know, Refused, and Other Response Categories** – “Don't know” means that the client does not know the answer. “Refused” means that the client refused to answer the question. “Other” means the answer is not listed as one of the choices and none of the choices can be applied in that situation.