

**HUD HMIS System Performance Measures:
a consideration on agency use.**

February 2017



HUD HMIS System Performance Measures

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Disclaimer

This document describes to what extent each system performance measure can be modified and run at an agency level. The system performance measures are complex and proscribed by HUD for reasons having to do with theories and pragmatic aspects of data collection. In many cases the measures COULD be modified to run at an agency level but would fundamentally lose some or all of the quality that defines the measure and makes them valuable to HUD.

For those measures, because the nuance of the measure is hard to grasp, and because disaggregating at the agency level fundamentally does not make it so that changing the agency level measure affects the COC level measure in a way that seems intuitive, we have recommended against running the measures at an agency level, although it may be technically possible.

Introduction

For System Performance Measures, the system in question is the Continuum of Care. The point of system measures is that they apply at the continuum level. And, while they reflect the efforts of all the agencies in the continuum, they are not the simple product of those efforts.

System Performance Measures capture a quality called emergence. Think of the classic saying, *the whole is more than the sum of its parts*. Each agency does its work, but ideally system measures capture how agencies work together in the continuum. The system is more than just the agencies.

An example of emergence is how you can't sum up all the counts of clients at each agency to get an accurate count of how many people were served in the system.

“A critical aspect of the amended Act is a focus on viewing the local homeless response as a coordinated system of homeless assistance options as opposed to homeless assistance programs and funding sources that operate independently in a community.”

From HUD HDX: “The act codified into law the Continuum of Care (CoC) planning process, a longstanding part of HUD’s CoC application process to assist persons experiencing homelessness by providing greater coordination in responding to their needs. A critical aspect of the amended Act is a focus on viewing the local homeless response as a coordinated system of homeless assistance options as opposed to homeless assistance programs and funding sources that operate independently in a community. To facilitate this perspective, the Act now requires communities to measure their performance as a coordinated system, in addition to analyzing performance by specific projects or types. Therefore, the purpose of the System Performance Measures are to encourage CoCs, in coordination with ESG Program recipients and all other homeless assistance stakeholders in the community, to regularly measure their progress in meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness in their community and to report this progress to HUD.

For further information regarding the system performance measures please refer to the System Performance Measures Introductory Guide.” [In reference to the Hearth Act.](#)

The system performance measures tell a story. People experience homelessness for the first time. (Measure 5) Number of First Time Homeless. Then how many people experience homelessness and how long do they stay that way? (Measure 3) Number of Homeless Persons and (Measure 1) Length of Time Homeless. Over the course of their homelessness does their economic condition change and do they go somewhere with an expectation they will stay? (Measure 4) Employment and Income Growth and (Measure 7) Successful Placement. Finally, do they experience homelessness again. (Measure 2) Return from Permanent Exit. In theory these numbers tell the whole story of homelessness.

There may be related concepts they don't capture, but the hope is that in these numbers we get the basic story straight.

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Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless.

Metric 1a: This measure is of the client’s entry, exit, and bed night dates strictly as entered in the HMIS system.

	Previous FY Universe	Current FY Universe	Previous FY Average LOT Homeless	Current FY Average LOT Homeless	Difference	Previous FY Median LOT Homeless	Current FY Median LOT Homeless	Difference
Persons in ES and SH								
Persons in ES, SH, and TH								

Metric 1b: This measure includes data from each client’s “Length of Time on Street, in an Emergency Shelter, or Safe Haven” (Data Standards element 3.17) response and prepends this answer to the client’s entry date effectively extending the client’s entry date backward in time. This “adjusted entry date” is then used in the calculations just as if it were the client’s *actual* entry date.

	Previous FY Universe	Current FY Universe	Previous FY Average LOT Homeless	Current FY Average LOT Homeless	Difference	Previous FY Median LOT Homeless	Current FY Median LOT Homeless	Difference
Persons in ES and SH								
Persons in ES, SH, and TH								

What does this mean?

Metric 1a measures how many days the person was being served on average by emergency shelter in line one and either emergency shelter or transitional housing in line two. It establishes a first day of service for the person in the year, then considers when that term started even if it was before the start of the report. It establishes a last day of service or uses the end of the period if they did not end service. Then it counts the days between the two dates.

Metric 1b does the same thing but adds on a measure for how long they were on the street before they entered service.

This measure returns 16 distinct values.

Official Definition:

The length of time individuals and families remain homeless. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating a reduction of the average and median length of time persons enrolled in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or safe haven projects experience homelessness.

Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless.

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

No. A key feature of this measure is that it moves among various programs and even program types to get a holistic sense of how long people experience homelessness in the community. Running Measure 1 at the agency level will result in a smaller number than when it is run at the CoC level.

What does this mean at the agency level?

If measure 1 is run at the agency level it will miss the interaction of programs, often legitimately, working together to move a person or family to a more stable situation. The sum of the times a client is in service will be less than the whole of the time the client is served across multiple agencies.

If your agency wants to run this measure at the agency level, it will return the average length of stay per client in your agency. If that is useful for your agency's internal planning, please feel free to do so.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

A community can best reduce 1a by investing in case management and interagency cooperation to see to it that clients exit to the best possible situation and in the most immediate possible course. Having clients moving from program to program or exiting and re-entering at a later date will not reduce measurements of time homeless, as they did in past years.

1b can be reduced by accentuating efforts to identify and intake persons and families experiencing street homelessness.

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Measure 2a and 2b: The Extent to which Persons Who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness within 6 to 12 months (and 24 months in a separate calculation).

Measure 2: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness									
	Total Number of Persons who Exited to a Permanent Housing Destination (2 Years Prior)	Number Returning to Homelessness in Less than 6 Months (0 - 180 days)	Percentage of Returns in Less than 6 Months (0 - 180 days)	Number Returning to Homelessness from 6 to 12 Months (181 - 365 days)	Percentage of Returns from 6 to 12 Months (181 - 365 days)	Number Returning to Homelessness from 13 to 24 Months (366 - 730 days)	Percentage of Returns from 13 to 24 Months (366 - 730 days)	Number of Returns in 2 Years	Percentage of Returns in 2 Years
Exit was from SO									
Exit was from ES									
Exit was from TH									
Exit was from SH									
Exit was from PH									
TOTAL Returns to Homelessness									

What does this mean?

This measure is calculated by looking at the year beginning 3 years prior to the end date of the report and ending 2 years prior to the end date of the report. Of that population, consider the subset who exited to a permanent destination. Of those people, consider the number exiting from each program type and how many of those people returned to homelessness during the 730 days following their exit.

This measure returns 56 distinct values, of which 9 will be blank because we have no Safe Havens.

Official Definition:

The extent to which individuals and families who leave homelessness experience additional spells of homelessness. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating a reduction in the percent of persons who have left homelessness (i.e., exited continuum projects into permanent housing destinations) who return to homelessness (i.e., return to continuum projects for which homelessness is an eligibility criterion).

Measure 2a and 2b: The Extent to which Persons Who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness within 6 to 12 months (and 24 months in a separate calculation).

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

No. Any agency level calculation would only include the clients exiting and returning to the same program.

What does this mean at the agency level?

A measure may be calculable looking agency by agency at exiting populations as the measure breaks out program types, then seeing if they return to any state of homelessness in the community. Any action would then be focused on exits from 2 to 3 years prior. This does lead to useful community solutions.

Instead, this measure should be seen as a system wide assessment of the capacity of the supportive services to keep permanently placed clients in stable housing.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

While it may seem tempting to reduce the value by refusing service to clients who had prior exits to permanent housing, placing the onus on the admitting agency, the most impactful long term strategy for this measure is to focus on the quality of the data pertaining to exit destinations.

The initial measure, of clients exiting to permanent destination, is often a measure at the discretion of the case manager. The inclusion or exclusion of a client in this pool, by the discrepancy between *doubled up permanent* and *doubled up temporary* can move the score significantly.

Also, any action that can be taken to follow up with clients in the months following exit to permanent housing in order to offer support and case management can return positive results.

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Measure 3: Number of Homeless Persons.

Metric 3.1: This measures the change in PIT counts of sheltered and unsheltered homeless person as reported on the PIT (not from HMIS).

	Previous FY PIT Count	Current FY PIT Count	Difference
Universe:			
Total PIT Count of sheltered and unsheltered persons			
Emergency Shelter Total			
Safe Haven Total			
Transitional Housing Total			
Total Sheltered Count			
Unsheltered Count			

Measure 3.2: This measures the change in annual counts of sheltered homeless persons in HMIS.

	Previous FY	Current FY	Difference
Universe:			
Unduplicated Total sheltered homeless persons			
Emergency Shelter Total			
Safe Haven Total			
Transitional Housing Total			

What does this mean?

This is the count of unique individuals served in the community, broadly and in each program type.

Metric 3.1 is the point in time count from the last Wednesday in January.

Metric 3.2 is the count of unique individuals served with each program type across the scope of the report period. An individual may be seen in multiple program types, and so may appear in multiple places in the report.

This measure returns 30 distinct values, of which 6 will be blank because we have no Safe Havens.

Official Definition:

Overall reduction in the number of homeless individuals and families. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating a reduction in the number of homeless individuals and families identified in the Point-in-Time (PIT) sheltered and unsheltered counts and annual sheltered data within the CoC over time.

Measure 3: Number of Homeless Persons.

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

Yes, with conditions.

What does this mean at the agency level?

Any count of the clients served at each agency will lead to numbers that cannot be summed to equal the number of persons served in the community, because clients will often be served at multiple agencies in multiple program types over the course of the year.

3.1 is available at the agency level in the Housing Inventory through HUD HDX.

3.2 is available at the agency level from the AHAR through Service Point.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

This measure is the “big number”. This is moved through the whole cooperative work of community development, the availability of truly -affordable housing, the job market and its willingness to include marginalized populations, the mental health services system, the health care system, addiction counseling and recovery, and criminal justice as well as education and continuing adult education like HiSET or community college and a myriad other element.

Statistically, though, the most important factors related to this number are bed counts and macro-economic trends at the national level. We can do little about the second factor, but adjusting the availability of the right kinds of programs in a dynamic and responsive way that prioritizes permanent supportive housing over other program types will have a positive effect.

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Measure 4: Employment and Income Growth for Homeless Persons in CoC Program–funded Projects.

<p><i>Metric 4.X:</i> This measures the change in ^{earned or non-employment cash} income for adult ^{leavers or stayers} during the reporting period.</p>			
	Previous FY	Current FY	Difference
Universe: Number of adults (system stayers)			
Number of adults with increased earned income			
Percentage of adults who increased earned income			

What does this mean?

This measure does not consider people who are in emergency shelter. It only looks at the populations who are in transitional housing, permanent housing and rapid rehousing. There are 6 versions of this measure. It divides between leavers and stayers, 3 of each. Then, employment income, non-employment income and total income within those groups.

Leavers are people who exited during the reporting period. Stayers are people who were in at the end and were in for at least a year.

For each of those six groups, there are three numbers for the previous year, three for the current year and three measures of the difference. This measure returns 54 distinct values.

Official Definition:

Jobs and income growth for homeless individuals and families. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating that the percent of homeless adults being served in CoC Program projects increase their earned (i.e., employment) income and/or other income between their enrollment in the system and their exit (or follow-up assessment).

Measure 4: Employment and Income Growth for Homeless Persons in CoC Program–funded Projects.

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

Yes. Report 703 will run at the agency level for COC-funded programs. It will not run for non COC-funded programs.

NOTE:

Any agency wanting to run this measure will need to verify with ICA that their COC funding status is up to date in HMIS.

What does this mean at the agency level?

There is some logic to doing so.

Before calculating any measure at the agency level there must be a clear understanding of how to interpret any results in light of the level of analysis.

If there is a clear expectation that agencies will aid in securing all sorts of income for clients, then this may be applicable.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

Employment income is subject to the availability of employment in the community. While this measure can be run for a single agency, it is more informative at the CoC level, interpreted in conjunction with material describing the local economy and the availability of low level employment.

Non-employment income is a broad category. If case managers are expected to assist clients in acquiring 'mainstream' income sources, then this measure may be a useful tool for interpreting success.

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Measure 5: Number of Persons Who Become Homeless for the First Time.

<i>Metric 5.1:</i> This measures the change in active persons in ES, SH, and TH projects with no prior enrollments in HMIS.			
	Previous FY	Current FY	Difference
Universe: Person with entries into ES, SH or TH during the reporting period			
Of persons above, count those who were in ES, SH, TH or any PH within 24 months prior to their entry during the reporting year			
Of persons above, count those who did not have entries in ES, SH, TH or PH in the previous 24 months. (i.e., number of persons experiencing homelessness for the first time)			
 <i>Metric 5.2:</i> This measures the change in the number of persons entering ES, SH, TH, and PH projects with no prior enrollment in HMIS.			
	Previous FY	Current FY	Difference
Universe: Person with entries into ES, SH, TH or PH during the reporting period			
Of persons above, count those who were in ES, SH, TH or any PH within 24 months prior to their entry during the reporting year			
Of persons above, count those who did not have entries in ES, SH, TH or PH in the previous 24 months. (i.e., number of persons experiencing homelessness for the first time)			

What does this mean?

Of the clients entering service during the report period, how many were not seen in the system in the 24 months prior to their entry.

This measure is counted separately for Emergency and Transitional, then for those projects in conjunction with Permanent Supportive Housing. There is no separate measure for Permanent Supportive Housing.

For those two groups, this report returns the count of people entering service, the number seen previously, and the difference. This is done for the previous and current year. Then the difference is calculated for each. This measure returns 18 distinct values.

Official Definition:

Success at reducing the number of individuals and families who become homeless. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating a reduction in the number of persons experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Measure 5: Number of Persons Who Become Homeless for the First Time.

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

No.

What does this mean at the agency level?

The measure compares each agency to the clients seen in the broader population to determine first-time status. At the agency level we would only know if the client was receiving services from this provider for the first time, with no knowledge of whether they had been seen elsewhere.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

The portion of the homeless population that is experiencing homelessness for the first time is a reflection of the overall economy. A higher number of first time homelessness indicates broad economic instability.

It also indicates opportunity for prevention and diversion in the form of landlord relations. If the community has high or increasing first-time homelessness it may be worth exploring the capacity of the CoC to facilitate landlord relations to keep people housed.

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Measure 6: Homeless Prevention and Housing Placement of Persons Defined by Category 3 of HUD's Homeless Definition in CoC Program-funded Projects.

What does this mean?

Category 3: Homeless under other Federal statutes,

NO HMIS CURRENTLY TRACKS CATEGORY 3 HOMELESS

(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with Category 3 children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

- (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
- (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
- (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
- (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers

Does not apply to any programs

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Measure 7: Successful Placement from Street Outreach and Successful Placement in or Retention of Permanent Housing.

<i>Metric 7a.1:</i> This measures the change in exits from street outreach to acceptable destinations.			
	Previous FY	Current FY	% Difference
Universe: Persons who exit Street Outreach			
Of persons above, those who exited to temporary & some institutional destinations			
Of the persons above, those who exited to permanent housing destinations			
% Successful exits			
<i>Metric 7b.1:</i> This measures the change in exits to permanent housing destinations.			
	Previous FY	Current FY	% Difference
Universe: Persons in ES, SH, TH and PH-RRH who exited			
Of the persons above, those who exited to permanent housing destinations			
% Successful exits			
<i>Metric 7b.2:</i> This measures the change in exit to or retention of permanent housing.			
	Previous FY	Current FY	% Difference
Universe: Persons in all PH projects except PH-RRH			
Of persons above, those who remained in applicable PH projects and those who exited to permanent housing destinations			
% Successful exits/retention			

What does this mean?

Successful placement is a quality specific to each program type. For outreach, it may mean getting the client to go to shelter. For shelter, it may mean getting a client into housing or into transitional programming. For permanent housing it may mean retention or independent stability.

This measure tracks outreach separately, emergency, transitional and rapid rehousing are clustered for destination, then rapid rehousing and permanent housing are reported for retention. Numbers are given for this year and the previous year and the difference is calculated.

This measure returns 30 distinct values.

Official Definition:

Successful placement from street outreach. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating an increase in the percent of persons served in street outreach projects who exit to emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, or permanent housing destinations.

Successful housing placement to or retention in a permanent housing destination. Meeting this criterion will be based on demonstrating an increase in the percent of persons served in emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, or rapid re-housing projects exit to permanent housing destinations and persons served in permanent housing projects who retain permanent housing or exit to permanent housing destinations.

Measure 7: Successful Placement from Street Outreach and Successful Placement in or Retention of Permanent Housing.

Can this be calculated on an agency level?

Yes. Report 706 will run at the agency level.

What does this mean at the agency level?

At the agency level it tells the portion of each exiting population that is being exited to acceptable destinations.

What actions will most likely affect this measure?

Generally, so long as exit interviews are being completed, which they are not in some program types, the destination is a good field. There is some need to be dubious of the distinction between exiting to "Staying or living with family, permanent tenure" or "Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure" which are considered permanent destinations versus exiting to "Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)" or "Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)" which are considered temporary destination. There is good cause to think the distinction among these destinations is not adequately made.