



Marin County HMIS News January 2024

Welcome to the Marin County HMIS January 2024 newsletter!

In this edition you'll find the following:

- Upcoming Events
- Check out this fun poll: What do you think is the least kept New Year's Resolution?
- LSA is Done: Thank You!
- Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count: Next Steps
- Report Spotlight: Helpful Reports to Review Your Data for the PIT/HIC
- Collective Responsibility of HMIS Data: Fixing Client Data
- Reminder: Help Desk Support
- NEW Reporting Dashboards Available



Upcoming Events

HMIS Agency Leads Meeting*

Wednesday, March 20, 2-3 p.m. | *Agency Leads Only: Register [HERE](#)

We are asking the designated HMIS Agency Leads and Security Officers to join this meeting on a bi-monthly basis. Of course, if you absolutely cannot make it, please send a representative. Workgroup participants will support communications between the county, Bitfocus and agency staff with regards to community initiatives, training, privacy, security, program and data management.



News

Check out this fun poll:

What do you think is the least kept New Year's Resolution?

Click on [this link to complete the poll](#) and check out the newsletter next month to see what your colleagues said! Please note that your individual response is anonymous.

Unfortunately, there were no responses on last month's poll, so there are no results to share with y'all. We hope you like this poll question better!



Take the poll!



Updates

LSA is Done: Thank You!

The Longitudinal System Analysis, better known as the LSA, is finally done and submitted to HUD! Thank you so much for your collaboration with us; we really appreciate your time and your prompt responses to us. We really enjoyed getting to work more closely with some of you!

As a recap, the LSA is an annual report produced from a Continuum of Care's (CoC) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and provides HUD and the CoC with critical information about how people experiencing homelessness use their system of care. The LSA is essentially a massive export of the information within the HMIS, and includes:

- Demographic data such as age, race, gender, veteran status, etc.
- Length of time homeless and patterns of system use
- Information on special populations, such as veterans and people/households experiencing chronic homelessness
- Housing outcomes for those who exit the homeless services system

The LSA also provides information about patterns of system use prior to exit, destination types, and, for those who were served again later by continuum projects, lengths of time between exit and re-engagement or returns to homelessness.



Announcements

Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count: Next Steps

This year, Marin County's sheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) occurred on January 22, 2024. Check out [this visual aid](#) to better understand the similarities and differences between the PIT report and HIC report.

HIC Count:

Data for this count comes exclusively from HMIS. It is critical that all emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing projects in the HMIS reflect accurate enrollments, exits, and night-by-night services for the night of January 22, 2024 as part of this annual count of households experiencing homelessness in Marin County.

Permanent housing projects too? Yes!

HUD requires us to report the unduplicated number of persons served on the night of the PIT count in the beds that we report on the HIC, which includes all Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Safe Haven (SH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH) projects. The HIC also includes non-participating HMIS programs and DV programs. In order to provide the best quality data to HUD from our community, agencies must review and ensure that all relevant client records (profiles, enrollments, and exits) are up-to-date and complete for the PIT count date (1/22/24).

What you need to do to by February 2, 2024

Please ensure that all clients served by your projects during January 22, 2024 are accurately represented in the HMIS. This includes all available demographic data, all enrollment/exit data, and accurate housing bed night services (for night-by-night emergency shelters). If there are household move-in dates that you haven't recorded yet in your clients program enrollments, you must make sure the move-in dates are entered accurately for a date *before* the PIT count. See report spotlight section below for more information on reviewing your data.

For all projects, please let us know if the number of available beds, units, and/or vouchers have changed over the past year. We will be following up with this information in an email as well, but we ask that you **please complete [this form](#) to let us know of any changes to your Bed and Unit Inventory by February 2, 2024.**

Want more information?

If you are interested in learning more about the PIT count and HIC processes, see [HUD's announcement regarding the 2024 PIT/HIC count](#).

Lessons Learned from the LSA: An Important Note on the HIC

As we wrapped up the 2023 LSA, we have a couple suggestions we would like to share with you that relate to the PIT/HIC data and on-going data quality in general.

- 1. The number one thing your agency and staff can do to stay on top of your data quality is to enter all client and enrollment information into HMIS in a timely fashion, particularly when it comes to household move-**

in dates. The purpose of a housing move-in date is to distinguish between housed and homeless status within an enrollment. So if a client was housed through one RRH program, but then transferred to another RRH or PSH program for longer-term support (with no break in their “housed” status), the enrollment and move-in date of the second RRH program would be the day after their exit from the first RRH program. This is how you would avoid an issue with overlapping enrollments as well.

2. Communicate with us, your Bitfocus Team, when your program inventory changes! It is important to update your inventory to reflect true utilization when something changes. If your shelter or housing program’s capacity to serve individuals decreases - for example, due to construction, maintenance, or repairs, which lowers the maximum number of people you can serve - or if your capacity to serve individuals increases - for example, your contract was expanded and you are able to serve more people in your program - you would want to decrease or increase the inventory to reflect these changes. Please reach out to us whenever the number of available beds, units, and/or vouchers increases or decreases. We would be happy to make the appropriate changes to your program’s HMIS inventory.



Report Spotlight

Helpful Reports to Review Your Data for the PIT/HIC

The Marin County sheltered Point-in-Time Count occurred on the night of January 22, 2024. This means that you will need to make sure your shelter, transitional housing, and/or permanent housing program has complete and up-to-date data for the night of January 22, 2024, and make sure it's entered accurately into the HMIS no later than February 2, 2024. To check your data, we encourage you to run the following reports as soon as your January 22, 2024 enrollments (including housing move-in dates), exits, and services are entered.

To Review Data Quality:

Use the [\[HUDX-225\] HMIS Data Quality Report](#) to review data quality for your program(s). This report can be found in the “HUD Reports” section of the Report Library.

REPORT LIBRARY	
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Favorite Reports	1 report(s) ▾
Data Quality Reports	6 report(s) ▾
Service Based Reports	13 report(s) ▾
Program Based Reports	23 report(s) ▾
Assessment Based Reports	4 report(s) ▾
Profile Screen Reports	1 report(s) ▾
Housing	5 report(s) ▾
HUD Reports	8 report(s) ▾
Community and Referrals	9 report(s) ▾
Agency Specific	1 report(s) ▾
Agency Management	4 report(s) ▾

Continue reading



How-to

The Collective Responsibility of HMIS Data

Myth-Buster: To Fix or Not to Fix Client Data?!

The HMIS User Survey that we conducted last year brought to light that some users feel nervous or uncomfortable about updating client data in the HMIS that they didn't enter for clients, even if they know it's incorrect. Some users felt that it's not their responsibility to update client data if it was entered by another agency or program.

We are here to dispel that misconception! **Ensuring client data is kept up to date is a *collective responsibility that all users share*, regardless of the program(s) or agency(ies) that they support.** Think of it this way: we are the keepers of

client data, and it is everyone's responsibility to do their part to ensure that it is an accurate representation of the client's identity and situation.

Always be sure to double-check the elements on the **Client Profile** and the client's **Program Enrollment** for accuracy. As long as you are confident in the information you have (be sure to always double-check with the client!), then you should feel empowered to update client profile data and your own program data in the HMIS.

As you are reviewing client data, keep in mind:

- The data standards updates on 10/1/23 expanded **Gender and Race and Ethnicity** response options to be more inclusive. It is especially important to verify that these elements still accurately represent how your client identifies.
- **Pronouns** are a relatively new field on the client profile. Please be sure they accurately reflect your client's personal pronouns.
- **Address & Contact Information** can change often. Always pay special attention to these fields on the client profile (or in the Contact and Location tabs).
- **Disability information** can change, and must be updated within the bounds of an active program enrollment.
- If a client passes away, be sure to toggle the **Deceased** field on the client profile ON, and ensure the client is exited from any active programs.

If you see client data in another program or agency that you know is incorrect, you can use the **HMIS Secure Messaging feature** to send the user a message and let them know! For example, maybe you see that a client is enrolled in a Permanent Housing program, but you know for a fact that they are no longer housed and currently living on the streets or in a shelter. This is a perfect opportunity to send a secure message in the HMIS to the user assigned as the Care Team member for the Permanent Housing Program.



News

Reminder: Help Desk Support

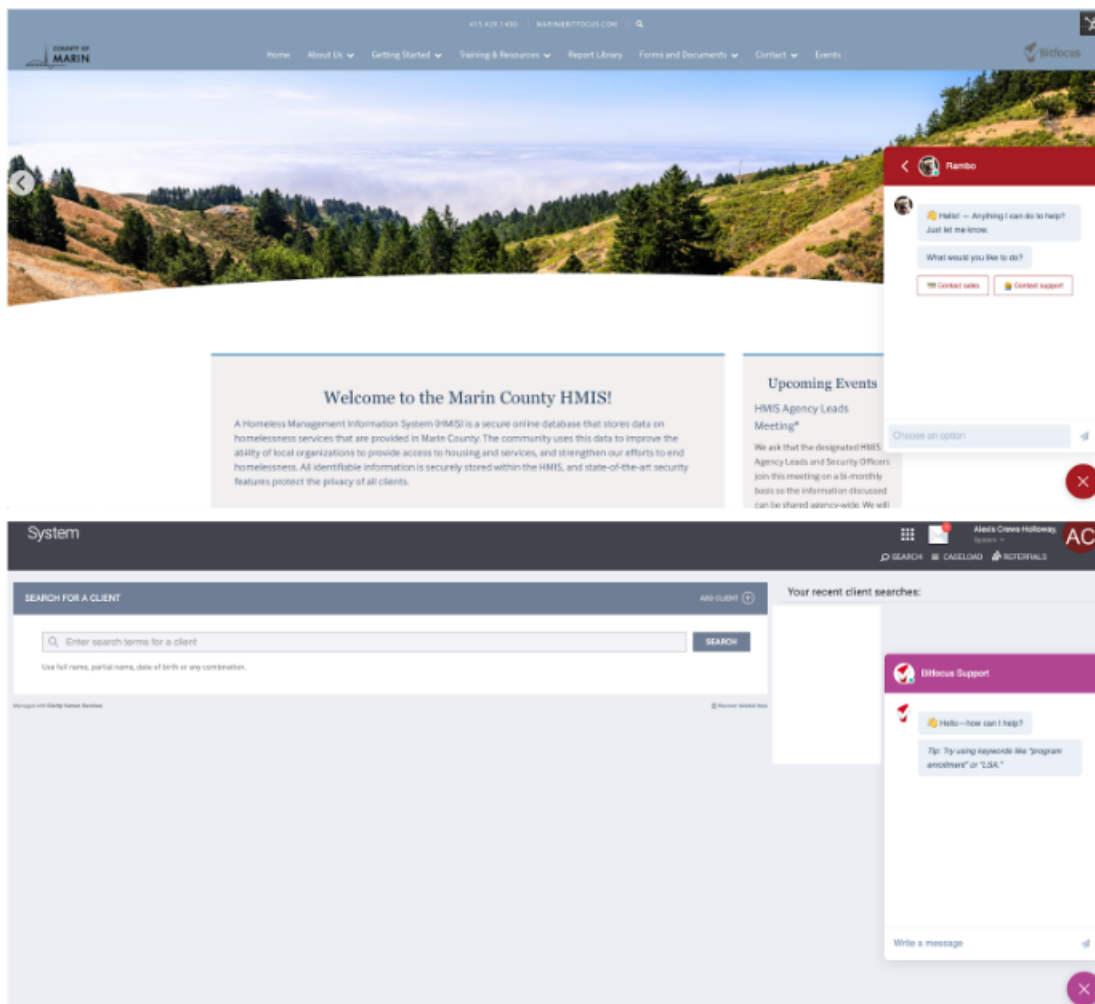
The Help Desk is a skilled support team that can provide you with 1:1 technical assistance for many different things related to the HMIS. If you forgot how to do something in the HMIS, the Help Desk can help!

They can assist with:

1. Managing households
 2. Creating and managing program enrollments
 3. Completing Current Living Situation Assessments, Annual Assessments, and/or Status Update Assessments
 4. Updating Client ROIs
 5. Merging duplicate client records
 6.and so much more!
- Forgot how to add a household member to an enrollment? Help Desk knows!
 - Say you don't understand what "Prior Living Situation" or any other field in the HMIS is referring to, or are unclear on what the response options mean. Help Desk knows!
 - Maybe you are trying to find the best report to run from the Report Library, but you don't know which one is best to capture the information you are looking for. Consult the Help Desk!

There are a variety of options for you to get in touch with the Help Desk:

 **CHAT** on the [website](#) or directly within your HMIS account



 **Call 415-429-1400**

 **Email marin@bitfocus.com**

Pro-tip: You may always request to meet with them via Zoom to screen-share. This can be especially helpful when troubleshooting any issues you might be having with the HMIS.



Updates

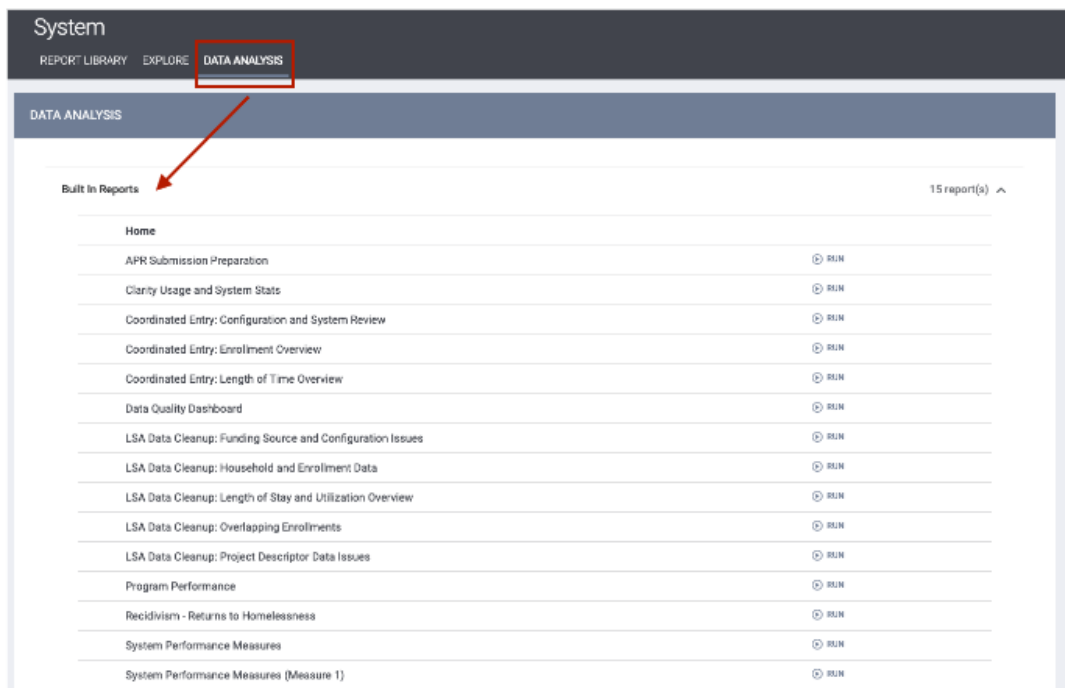
NEW Reporting Dashboards Available*

***For HMIS users with access to data analysis**

The following reporting dashboards are now available within the “Data Analysis” tab (under the “Built In Reports” section) for HMIS users with access

to data analysis. The list below includes hyperlinks to Help Center articles for each reporting dashboard.

- [APR Submission Preparation](#)
- [Clarity Usage and System Stats](#)
- [Coordinated Entry: Configuration and System Review](#)
- [Coordinated Entry: Enrollment Overview](#)
- [Coordinated Entry: Length of Time Overview](#)
- [Data Quality Dashboard](#)
- [Program Performance](#)
- [Recidivism - Returns to Homelessness](#)
- [System Performance Measures](#)



Questions? Your HMIS Administrator is happy to help.

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