



Santa Cruz HMIS News January 2024

Welcome to the Santa Cruz 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?
- HMIS Training Update
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- Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count: Next Steps
- Report Spotlight: Helpful Reports to Review Your Data for the PIT/HIC



Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

Housing for Health - HMIS Workgroup

Monday, February 26 | 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | Register [HERE](#)

This monthly virtual meeting provides a regular opportunity for sharing related to HMIS implementation among all HMIS Leads and users. In this meeting, we discuss specific solutions to system issues end users may be experiencing, along with community-wide initiatives. We would love to have you join us! ***Please note that this meeting is required for HMIS Agency Leads.***

Clarity Human Services Office Hours

Tuesday, February 27 | 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. | Register [HERE](#)

We host office hours every fourth Tuesday of each month. Drop-in for as long or as short as you'd like to ask any and all questions related to HMIS or Clarity Human Services. All users are welcome. Please join us within the first 15 minutes or we will assume nobody will be joining us for Office Hours and we will close out the Zoom meeting.



Announcements

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.

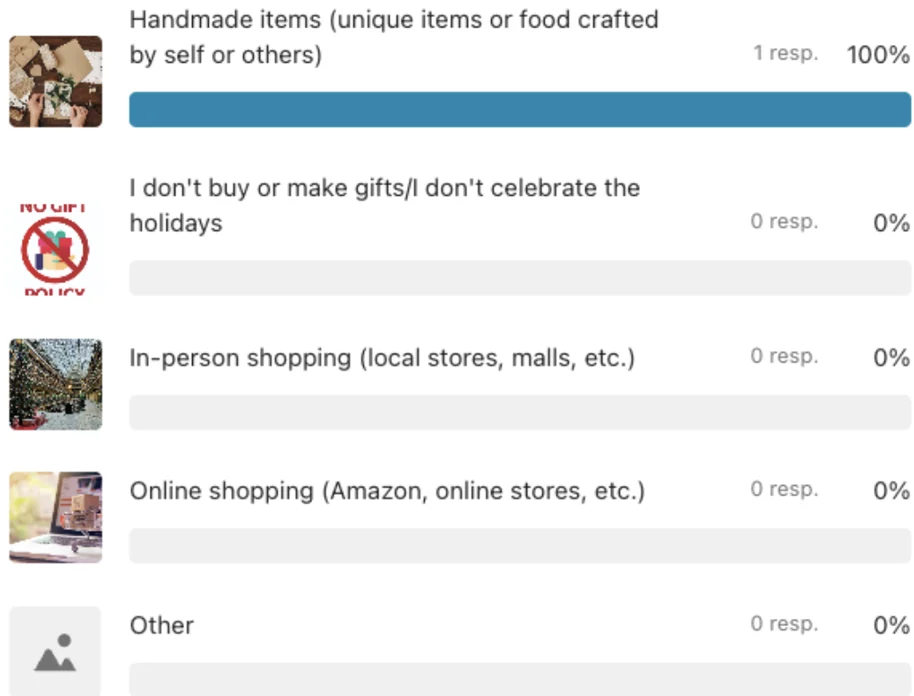


[Take the poll!](#)

Here are the results from last month's poll. Thanks for taking the time to respond!

1 If you shop for holiday gifts, what's your preferred shopping method?

1 out of 1 people answered this question



Updates

HMIS Training Update

In-Person General HMIS Trainings

General HMIS Module #2 trainings have begun and will be held through the end of February before switching to a once-a-quarter cadence. Links for registering for these trainings can be found below. As this is a required training, please make sure to register for one of the classes. *Please note that space is limited so register early to ensure you are able to secure a seat in the training you are interested in taking.*

[Continue reading](#)



News

Understanding Chronic Homelessness in the HMIS

Understanding a participant’s **chronic homeless status in the HMIS** is a very complicated, and often confusing, topic. The Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) describes individuals as being “**chronically homeless**” when they meet the following conditions:

A chronically homeless person:

- Has a disabling condition; **AND**
- Currently lives in a place not meant for human habitation (on the streets, in an encampment, in a vehicle, etc) or in an emergency shelter; **AND**
- Has been homeless *continuously for at least 12 months*;
 - **OR** has been homeless *on at least 4 separate occasions for a combined total of 12 months in the last 3 years.*

Chronic homelessness status is collected in the HMIS by 2 data elements on the program enrollment screen: all of the Prior Living Situation fields and the Disabling Condition field. Entering accurate information for these fields will help prioritize the provision of housing services to the clients with the greatest need.

PRIOR LIVING SITUATION: WHERE DID THE CLIENT STAY OR SLEEP THE NIGHT BEFORE ENROLLING INTO THE PROJECT?

Type of Residence Select

HOW LONG HAS THE CLIENT BEEN SLEEPING/STAYING IN THIS SITUATION?

Length of Stay in Prior Living Situation Select

DISABLING CONDITIONS: DOES THE CLIENT CURRENTLY HAVE A DISABLING CONDITION?

Disabling Condition Select

A break in homelessness is defined by:

- 7 consecutive nights of being housed (which includes “couch surfing,” temporarily staying with friends or family, and motels paid for by the participant)
- 90+ days in an institution (e.g. jail, hospital, residential treatment program, psychiatric institution, etc.)

At the most recent HMIS Workgroup on 1/22/24, we did a training on understanding a participant's chronic homeless status. We encourage you to check out the recording and meeting slides to further your understanding of chronic homelessness in the HMIS.

- [Click here to watch the meeting recording](#)
- [Click here to check out the presentation slides](#)



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.



Training

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

This year, Santa Cruz County's sheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) occurred on January 24, 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 24, 2024 as part of this annual count of households experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz 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 (1/24/24).

What you need to do by February 2, 2024

Please ensure that all clients served by your projects during January 24, 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 be doing 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 Santa Cruz County sheltered Point-in-Time Count occurred on the night of January 24, 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 24, 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 24, 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.

[Continue reading](#)

Questions? Your HMIS Administrator is happy to help.

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