Santa Cruz HMIS News

January 2025

Welcome to the Santa Cruz HMIS January 2025 newsletter!

In this edition you'll find the following:

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Updates

Happy New Year and Welcome Back

As we step into 2025, we're excited to embark on another incredible year together. We hope your holidays were filled with joy, relaxation, and special

moments with loved ones. Here's to a fantastic year ahead! Thank you for being such an essential part of our journey. Let's make 2025 our best year yet!

News

Welcome to your Community Poll

Check Out This Fun Poll:

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

Take the poll!

Results from last month's poll: 1 Person Prefers In-Person Shopping. Thanks for taking the time to respond!

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

In-Person Shopping	1 resp.	100%

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

Housing for Health - HMIS Office Hours

Housing for Health and Bitfocus host office hours every **fourth Monday of each month** (in lieu of HMIS Workgroup meetings). Drop in for as long or as short as you'd like to ask any and all questions related to the HMIS. All users are welcome. Please join us within the first 15 minutes or we will assume nobody will be joining us for Office Hours.

Please register for the next Office Hours below.

- Monday, February 24 | **Register HERE**

Announcements

Special Announcements: New Quarterly Assessment Policy Changes

Upcoming Changes

To make it easier for HMIS users to know when their client's assessments are due, the quarterly assessment policy was recently updated. As of **February 1, 2025** Current Living Situation Assessments (CLS) and Status Update Assessments have shifted from being required every 90-days starting from the program enrollment date to **now** being **required** during each of the four newly designated assessment months – **February, May, August, and November.**

In other words, **beginning February 1, 2025** users will no longer need to track the dates that assessments are due because of the different client enrollment dates.

Starting February 1, 2025

Users are required to submit assessments for ALL clients, *regardless of when they were enrolled*, **four times** in a year during these months:

- February
- May
- August
- November

New Quarterly Assessment Policy

- CLS and Status Update assessments are due for every client, who is enrolled in a participating HMIS program, during the months of **February, May, August**, and **November**
- Annual assessments are still due every year at the annual anniversary of their enrollment

Months	Enrollment	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Current Living Situations (CLS)	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Status Updates	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

When to do CLS and Status Updates

Months	Enrollment	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Example #1 Enrolled: 6/7/2024	Yes CLS No Status update	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Example #2 Enrolled: 1/27/2025	Yes CLS No Status update	No*	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

*Annual Assessments are due at enrollment anniversary

How to Stay on Track

To assist in this, Housing for Health has created an ***Annual, CLS, and Status Assessment Report*** that can be found in HMIS using the Data Analysis tab, in Santa Cruz Clarity System Reports, located right underneath custom reports.
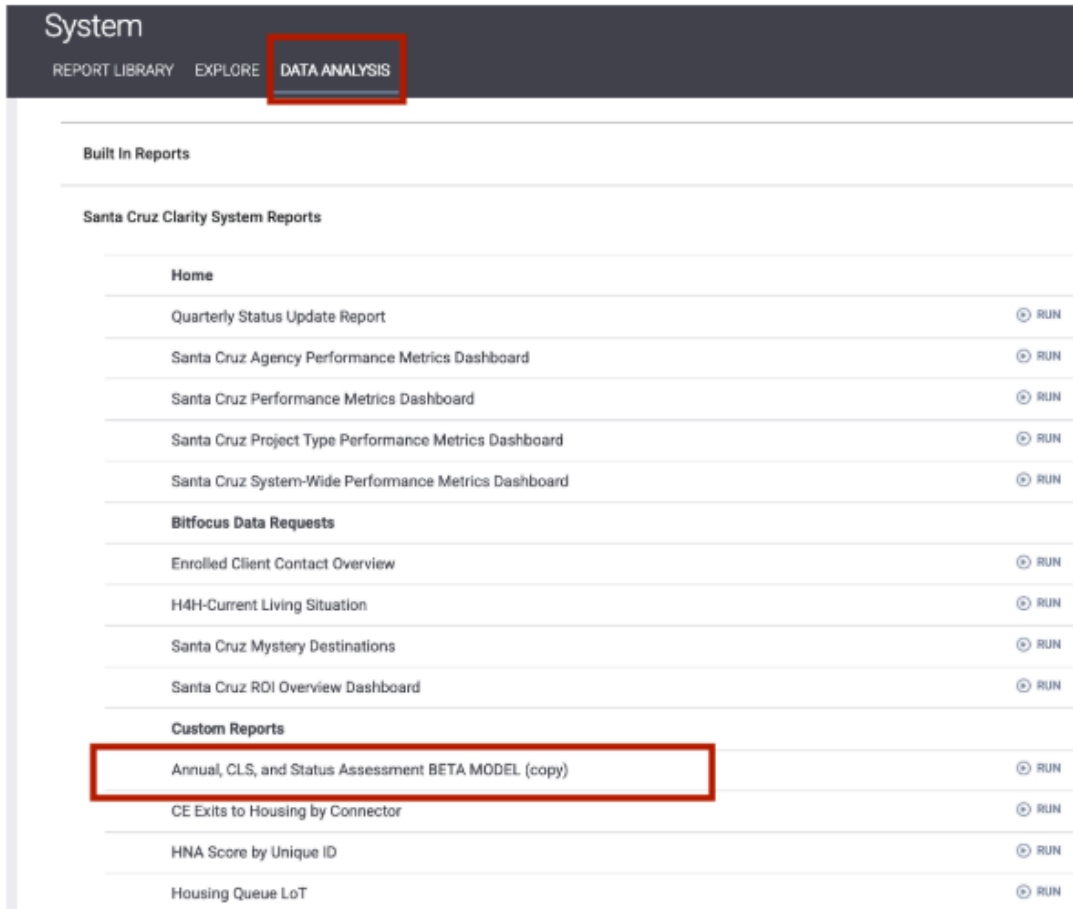
This is an example of what you'll see when the report is ran.

Note: This will only be available for users with Managers' licenses or additional Looker/Data Analytics access.

What's NOT Changing?

Please note this policy change will not impact Annual Assessments, as this is a HUD requirement.

- **Annual Assessments** will still need to be completed every year on the client's enrollment anniversary.

If you have any questions on the policy change, please reach out to the Santa Cruz County HMIS Lead Loren White at **loren.white@santacruzcountyca.gov**.

Announcements

The LSA is Submitted - Thank You!

We're thrilled to share that the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) has been finalized and submitted to HUD! A huge thank you for your collaboration. Your time and prompt responses made all the difference. We especially enjoyed working closely with many of you during this process!

LSA Recap

The **LSA** is an annual report generated from a Continuum of Care's (CoC) **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**. It provides critical information for HUD and the CoC about how people experiencing homelessness use their system of care.

The LSA is essentially a large export of the information in HMIS and includes:

- **Demographics**: Age, race, gender, veteran status, etc.
- **Homelessness trends**: Length of time homeless and system usage patterns.
- **Special populations**: Insights on veterans and people/households experiencing chronic homelessness
- **Housing outcomes**: Results for those exiting the homeless services system.

It also tracks system usage patterns leading up to an exit, the types of destinations clients move to, and details about re-engagement or returns to homelessness, including the time between exit and re-entry into continuum projects.

Thank you again for your support in making this important submission a success!

Announcements

Data Quality Dashboard and Report Content

Please see the pictures below for the agency-level data quality dashboard and report content updates. This is updated monthly - check it out!

Check out the PDF!

Announcements

PIT/HIC Updates & Next Steps

The **Annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count** is a one-night snapshot of people experiencing homelessness. This year, **Santa Cruz County** conducted a **sheltered count on January 29, 2025, and an unsheltered count in the early morning hours of January 30, 2025**, along with the required **Housing Inventory Count (HIC)**, which tracks emergency shelter beds and specific types of housing units.

Check out this visual aide to better understand the similarities and differences

between the PIT and HIC report.
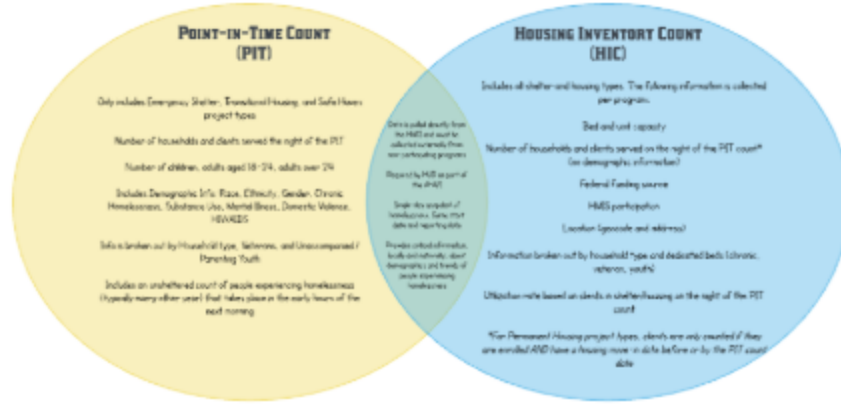
See the visual aide

Report Spotlight

PIT Count Information

The data for this count comes exclusively from HMIS. It's essential that all emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing projects in HMIS reflect accurate enrollments, exits, and night-by-night services for January 29, 2025. Any of these program types that do not enter client data in the HMIS must be externally collected for PIT and HIC reporting. This ensures a complete count of households experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County.

Do permanent housing projects count? Yes, but in the HIC only!

HUD requires reporting the total number of people served in shelter and permanent housing programs on January 29, 2025. This includes all Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Safe Haven (SH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH) projects. Non-HMIS participating programs and DV programs are also included. To ensure data quality, agencies must verify and update all client records (profiles, enrollments, and exits) for accuracy.

What to do by February 3, 2025:

Verify that all clients served on January 29, 2025, are accurately reflected in HMIS.

- Ensure demographic, enrollment, and exit data are complete.
- Confirm accurate bed night services (for night-by-night shelters).
- Check and update household move-in dates for permanent housing projects if missing.
- Enter move-in dates for a date before January 29, 2025.

For all projects please let us know if the number of available beds, units, or vouchers has changed in the past year.

- Please complete **this form** by February 3, 2025, to provide updates on your Bed and Unit Inventory.

Report Spotlight

Review Your Data for the PIT/HIC

Review Your Data for the Point-In-Time Count
To double-check your data we encourage you to run the following reports as soon as your **January 29, 2025** enrollments (including housing move-in dates), exits, and services are entered.

To Review Data Quality:
Run the **[HUDX-225]** HMIS Data Quality Report to check the quality of your program data. You can find this report in the "HUD Reports" section of the Report Library.

To Review Client-Level Data:

Run the **[GNRL-220] Program Details Report** to review all client-level data for your program (s). This report is located in the "Program Based Reports" section of the report library

This report generates a spreadsheet with all client profile, enrollment, and exit data for your programs, along with housing service start and end dates.

- **For Night-by-Night Shelters**

  ○ Focus your PIT count efforts on clients with a housing service recorded for the specific night.

- **For All Shelter/Housing Project Types:**
  - Check for and update any missing data
  - Ensure the relationship to the head of household is correctly indicated
  - Verify that birthdates are accurate

To Review All Enrollment, Exit and Housing Move-In Dates:

Run the **[GNRL-106] Program Roster** to check all enrollment, exit, and housing move-in dates for your program(s). This report is located in the "Program Based Reports" section of the Report Library.

To Review Bed Occupancy:

Run the **[HSNG-108] Housing Census Report** for **January 29, 2025**, to verify occupancy. You can find this report in the "Housing" section of the Report Library.

- The Housing Census Report shows how many beds your project is set up to provide in HMIS and how many people were served on a specific night.
- If the numbers don't match up, you may have an explanation, like the program just opened or had some units offline for repairs.
- However, if the issue is due to missing entries or exits, make sure to enter them right away and backdate them to ensure they're included for the PIT/HIC count.
- You can check who is missing by using the drill down in the report.

Updates

Everyone's Role in Accurate HMIS Data

Myth-Buster: Is it your Job to To Fix Client Data?
Some users may feel hesitant about updating client data they didn't originally enter even when they know it's wrong. Some may even think it's not their responsibility to fix data entered by another program or agency.

Let's clear this up: Keeping client data accurate and up-to-date is a shared responsibility for *all* HMIS users. We're all keepers of client data, and it's everyone's responsibility to ensure it accurately reflects each client's identity

and situation.

Here's What You Should Do:

- Always double-check the **Client Profile** and **Program Enrollment** for accuracy.
- If you're confident your information is correct (and verified with the client), you should feel empowered to update it.

Key Data to Check/Update:

- **Gender, Race, and Ethnicity**: Data Standard Updates on 10/1/23 expanded these categories to be more inclusive. Verify that these reflect how the client identifies.
- **Pronouns**: Please be sure they accurately reflect your client's personal pronouns.
- **Address & Contact Info**: A client's address and contact information may change frequently. Housing for Health staff expect that HMIS users are regularly verifying and updating this information from the **Contact** and **Location** tabs on the client profile.
- Disability Information, Income, Benefits, and Health Insurance: Ensure updates are made within active program enrollments.
- **Deceased Clients**: If a client has passed away, mark the "Deceased" field ON in the client profile and exit them from any active programs.

What If You See Incorrect Data?

If you spot inaccurate information in another program or agency, use the **HMIS Secure Messaging feature** to notify the appropriate user.

- **For Example:** if a client is enrolled in a Permanent Housing program but you know for a fact they are no longer housed and are now living on the streets or in a shelter, send a secure message to the Care Team member for that program. Together, we can ensure HMIS data remains a reliable and accurate resource for everyone.

How-to

Clarity Toolbox: How Do I Remove a Program Exit?

Sometimes a client or household is *unintentionally* exited from a program enrollment. Maybe you thought you were exiting out of your web browser and accidentally hit "exit" (see image below) not realizing you were exiting a client from the program. We know this actually happens quite often! Don't worry it's an easy fix.
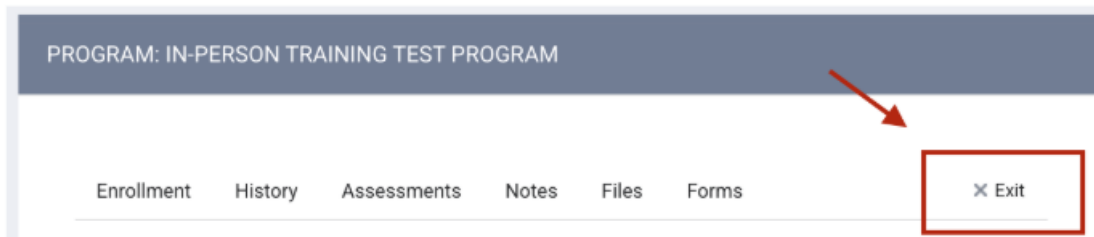
Note: *The Reopen Client Program button is **NOT** available to users attempting to remove an exit date for an **inactive** program*

Do NOT use this process for clients returning to the program **to re-enroll**. In those cases, create a new program enrollment.

Continue reading

Questions? Your HMIS Administrator is happy to help.

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