

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. Additional information around HUD-required questions can be found in HUD's HMIS Data Dictionary and Data Standards Manual, which can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/>.

Intake Questions

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.).

Social Security Number (SSN) - Ask client for their full SSN. If only a partial or unknown SSN is provided by the client, please use x's for any digit that is unknown (ex: xxx-xx-6789, 123-xx-6789, etc.). Please note that the Social Security Administration does not issue SSN's beginning with the number "9".

SSN Data Quality – Report the quality of the SSN response. Use **Approximate/Partial** if the client only gave you a partial SSN, **Full SSN Reported** if the client gave you their full SSN, **Client Prefers Not to Answer** if they refused to give you their SSN, **Client doesn't know** if the client doesn't know or client doesn't have an SSN.

Intake Date – Definition varies by program. For residential programs, this is usually when the client is accepted into 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 a CE access point, and later on is moved to a Transitional Housing program, the referral source for the second intake should be Emergency Shelter. All PSH and RRH referrals would be reported as Coordinated Entry referrals. Another way to determine referral source is the referring program's funding source. If the program is funded by AB109, the referral source would be AB109.

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 1st. Note: If no date of birth is indicated, the HMIS data entry screen may require a placeholder DOB to appropriately reflect the client as an adult or child.

Date of Birth Data Quality - Report the quality of the Date of Birth response. Use **Approximate/Partial** if the client only gave you a partially correct Date of Birth, **Full** if the client gave you their full Date of Birth, **Client Prefers Not to Answer** if they refused to give you their Date of Birth, **Client doesn't know** if the client doesn't know their Date of Birth.

Age - Record the client's age at time of intake.

Gender – Record the gender of the client based on the client's identification with the provided options: Man (Boy if child), Woman (Girl if child), Culturally Specific Identity (e.g., TwoSpirit), Transgender, Non-Binary, Questioning, Different Identity, Client doesn't know, Client prefers not to Answer.

Sexual Orientation – Record the client's sexual orientation based on the client's identification with the provided options: Straight/Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Questioning/Unsure, and Client Prefers not to Answer.

Race and Ethnicity– Select the appropriate box(es) according to client's self-identification. Staff observation should not be used to collect information on race/ethnicity.

- **American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous** is a person who identifies with any of the original peoples of North, Central, and South America. Examples include, but are not limited to Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Tlingit, etc.
- **Asian or Asian American** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Examples include, but are not limited to Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, Vietnamese, or another representative nation/region.
- **Black, African American, or African** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, including Afro-Caribbean. Examples include, but are not limited to, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, and Somali.
- **Hispanic/Latina/e/o** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South American, and other Spanish cultures. Examples include, but are not limited to, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, and Colombian.
- **Middle Eastern or North African** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups with origins in the Middle East and North Africa. Examples include, but are not limited to, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, and Israeli.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or another Pacific Island.
- **White** is a person who identifies with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Europe. Examples include, but are not limited to German, Irish, Polish, English, French, and Norwegian.

Have you ever served in the US Military – 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. If client stated "Yes" complete the entire section including Year entered military service, Year separated from military service, Branch of Military, Theater of Operations (Circle Yes or No for each one), and Discharge status.

Theater of Operations - 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.

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 where the combined occasions total at least 12 months. A housing stay of 7 days or less (or an institution stay of 90 days or less) does not constitute a break in an episode. (Note: 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.

What best describes your living situation last night (prior to entering this program) [*Please choose one of the three following situations and only answer the questions within that column*]: Literally homeless, Institutional situation, Transitional & Permanent housing. This is the 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”. For more information around the different living situation response options, please see appendix.

Housing Status - Determine the appropriate response according to the definitions below. A client cannot be in multiple categories. This should align with the living situation prior to entering the program.

(1) Category 1 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 habilitation 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.

(2) Category 2 At imminent risk of losing 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) Category 3 Homeless only under other federal statutes - unaccompanied youth (under 25) or families with children and youth who do not otherwise qualify as homeless and are defined as homeless under another federal statute, have not had permanent housing during the past 60 days, have experience persistent instability, and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time

(4) Category 4 Fleeing domestic violence - any individual or family who is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking

(5) At-risk of homelessness - 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.

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

Length of living situation prior to entering this program - Based on the living situation, record the length of time client was in that situation prior to enter this program.

Approximate date this episode of homelessness started – Ask the client when they believe this episode of homelessness began and record an approximate date. It does not have to be exact.

If homeless, number of times you have been homeless on the streets/shelter in the past three years including today -Select the option that describes the number of times the client has been homeless in the last 3 years. Note that if the **Approximate start date of homelessness** (previous question) is over 3 years ago, then number of times should be “One time”.

If homeless, total number of months homeless in the past three years- Record the number of months client has been homeless in the last three years, If the client specifies a number of years, breakdown the years into months. Note: Any single day or part of a month spent homeless should be counted as 1 month. Add the number of unique months

What is your current or most recent mailing address? Currently staying there? - 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.

Cause of housing crisis? Check all that apply. For prevention programs, this refers to the cause for potential homelessness.

Formerly a ward of the child welfare/foster care? – Ask the client if they were formerly a ward of the child welfare/foster care system and select Yes or No.

(RRH/PSH Use Only) Permanent Housing Move-In Date: Enter the date the client moved into permanent housing.

(RRH/PSH Use Only) City where permanently housed? Enter the city where the client found permanent housing.

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.

If homeless, is this your first time experiencing homelessness (being without housing) - Record Yes or No based on the clients answer

Total length of time client has been homeless (without housing) in lifetime – Calculate the number of years and months client has been homeless in their entire life.

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.

Provided a Yes or No answer for each disabling condition and whether it is long term or substantially impairs Independence.

Do any of the above disabling conditions substantially impair your ability to work and get or maintain housing? – If the client reported having a disabling condition above then record yes, if the client does not report having a disabling condition then report no.

Survivor of domestic violence? Is the client a survivor of domestic violence, if yes, answer the two subsequent questions, **Last Occurrence** (when was the last time they experienced domestic violence) and **Are you Currently Fleeing** (yes or no answer).

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.

Housing Move-in Date must be recorded on the “Enrollment” screen anytime a household is placed into housing under a PH, PSH, or RRH project. The VA requires that SSVF project track Housing Move-in Date at exit as well, anytime a household exits to a permanent housing destination.

Update Form Questions

** 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/health insurance – record changes in client’s income/benefits/health insurance, 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 and benefit sources indicated on the Intake form BUT NO LONGER indicated on the update form will be presumed to have ended and will be marked as “ended” in the HMIS by HMIS data entry staff.

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

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.

Exit 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).

Rental Subsidy Type - For the ‘Rental by client with ongoing subsidy’ destination, a followup question of Rental Subsidy Type is required. Select the response corresponding to the housing subsidy, if any, the client will be receiving. A housing subsidy may be tenant-, project- or sponsor-based, and/or provides wrap-around services (Permanent Supportive Housing). It may also be housing subsidies provided through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, VA Grant and Per Diem Transition in Place (GPD TIP) program, or other housing subsidies. Other housing subsidies may include a HUD-funded subsidy (e.g., public housing, Housing Choice Voucher or “Section 8”) or other housing subsidy.

Housing Move-in Date must be recorded on the “Enrollment” screen anytime a household is placed into housing under a PH, PSH, or RRH project. The VA requires that SSVF project track Housing Move-in Date at exit as well, anytime a household exits to a permanent housing destination.

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, Non-cash Benefits, Health Insurance 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 and benefit 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

Don't Know, Client prefers not to answer, Data not collected, and Other Response Categories – “Don't know” means that the client does not know the answer. “Client prefers not to answer” means that the client refused to answer the question. “Data not collected” means the agency did not ask the client the question and did not collect the data.

APPENDIX

Living Situation and Exit Destination Options

Permanent Destinations	Explanation	
Owned by Client, no housing subsidy	The unit the client is living in is owned by him or her and has no ongoing housing subsidy attached to it.	
Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	The unit the client is living in is owned by him or her and has an ongoing housing subsidy (mortgage payment support) attached to it.	
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	The unit the client is renting is not supported by any government or private subsidy.	
Rental by client with ongoing subsidy	The unit the client is renting has an ongoing housing subsidy (rent payment support) attached to it. Examples are:	
	Permanent Supportive Housing	The unit the client is renting is being subsidized by a homeless funding source and wrap around services are being provided. Examples include: Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), or a local source of subsidy restricted strictly for homeless persons. (CoC, HOPWA, etc....)
	VASH subsidy	A HUD/VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) subsidy.
	Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy (HUD)	The client is in a rapid re-housing program and has moved into a rental unit
	GPD TIP subsidy	The unit the client is renting is being supported by a VA Grant per Diem subsidy
	HCV voucher (tenant or project based, not dedicated)	The client has moved into a rental where they are using a Section 8 voucher or other housing choice voucher
	Public housing unit	The client has moved into a VHA-subsidized property where the subsidy is attached to the property, not the client (e.g., if the client moves to another apartment, their rent will no longer be subsidized)
	Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy (HUD)	The client is in a rapid re-housing program and has moved into a rental unit
Housing Stability Voucher		

	FUP Voucher	Family Unification Program voucher
	FYI Voucher	Foster Youth to Independence Initiative voucher
	Rental by client with other ongoing housing subsidy	The unit the client is renting is being supported by another subsidy type not listed. Please specify.
Staying or Living with Friends – Permanent Tenure	The client has moved into a room, apartment or house occupied by a friend and is intending on living there. Use “permanent” if the client has NOT been given a specific time limit in which he/she needs to leave or if exit destination is short term but leads to a permanent destination such as doubled up for two weeks until an apartment is ready. Includes clients who leave for Job Corps, college, Military or National Guard training.	
Moved from HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH	The client has exited to a Permanent Housing project funded by HOPWA	

Temporary Destinations	Explanation
Emergency shelter, (including hotel or motel) paid for with voucher	The client has exited to an Emergency Shelter, including a hotel or motel, Domestic Violence shelter or Mission paid for with an emergency shelter voucher.
Transitional Housing for homeless persons (including youth)	The client has exited to a Transitional Housing program for the homeless (including Youth transitional housing programs). <i>Does NOT include an exit to substance abuse treatment facility.</i>
Staying or Living with Family – Temporary Tenure	The client has exited to a room, apartment or house occupied by a family member and is intending on staying there only a short time. Use “temporary” if client is given a time limit in which he/she needs to leave or if the Case Manager has knowledge that the destination is meant to be very short term and/or is lacking stability, such as overcrowding (more than 1.5 persons per room).
Staying or Living with Friends – Temporary Tenure	The client has exited to a room, apartment or house occupied by a friend and is intending on staying there only a short time. Use “temporary” if client is given a time limit in which he/she needs to leave or if the Case Manager has knowledge that the destination is meant to be very short term and/or is lacking stability, such as overcrowding (more than 1.5 persons per room).
Place Not Meant for Habitation	The client has returned to the streets, or any place not meant for human habitation (for example, a vehicle, abandoned building, bus/train/subway/airport station, chicken coop, campsite, or anywhere outside).
Safe Haven	A HUD demonstration project that was discontinued in 2009. As defined in the Supportive Housing Program, is a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who come primarily from the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in housing or supportive services. (Contra Costa does not have any Safe Haven projects)
Host Home (non-crisis)	An arrangement to stay in a third party’s home, no homeless criteria required. Often a program for clients aging out of the foster care system
Hotel or motel, paid for by client	The client has exited to a hotel or motel and is paying for it themselves (no voucher).
Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria	The client moved into a publicly owned facility or reintegration facility that does not have a homeless requirement for entry.
Moved from HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH	The client has exited to a Transitional Housing project funded by HOPWA

Institutional Settings	Explanation
Foster Care Home or Foster Care Group Home	The client has exited to an adult or child foster care home or foster care group home.
Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility	The client has exited to a psychiatric facility or psychiatric hospital, or psychiatric unit of a local hospital.
Substance Abuse Treatment facility or Detox Facility	The client has exited to a substance abuse treatment program, detox program or other substance abuse residential facility.

Hospital (non-psychiatric) or other medical facility	The client has exited to a hospital for any reason other than psychiatric. Includes any residential care involving a medical need (hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation center).
Jail, Prison, or Juvenile Detention	The client has been arrested and is residing in a local jail, prison (state or federal) or juvenile detention facility.
Long term care facility or nursing home.	The client has exited to an extended stay nursing home or other long-term care facility.

Other Destinations	Explanation
Deceased	The client died while in the program.
Other	Some place other than what is available in any of the above fields. Considered null/missing
Client Don't Know	The client exited the program without knowing where they will be staying or refused to tell program staff where he or she was going. Considered null/missing
Client prefers not to answer	The client refused to tell program staff where he or she was going. Considered null/missing
No exit interview completed	The client left the program before an exit conversation. Considered null/missing.