

San Diego Homeless System Framework Methodology, Data Definitions and Technical Specifications

Last updated: February 28, 2018

Introduction / Methodology

Information is collected from homeless service providers throughout the year about San Diego's population experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. San Diego's **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** is the data collection tool used by the majority of homeless-dedicated service providers in San Diego County.

San Diego's **Homeless System Framework** provides data from the HMIS to help understand how homeless individuals move through San Diego's homeless system of care. The System Framework complements **San Diego's Homeless Dashboards** by presenting indicators within a framework that helps visualize and understand client pathways for unique homeless populations in San Diego County.

The System Framework is a surveillance tool that can be used to model San Diego's homeless system of care and monitor how well the system is working in the effort to end or alleviate homelessness in the region. It does not provide direct programmatic or policy recommendations. However, the data may serve as an indication of the strengths, weaknesses, successes and challenges in the system, from which actionable recommendations may be developed.

It is important to note that while the HMIS accounts for the majority of individuals receiving homeless services in San Diego, it does not account for **all** individuals experiencing homelessness in the region. Individuals experiencing homelessness and do not use homeless services from providers who regularly report to HMIS are not accounted for. The 2016 Point-in-Time Count revealed that 30% of the unsheltered count did not have a previous service history in the HMIS (based on those providing identifiable information), and that 552 sheltered clients were served by providers that do not regularly report to the HMIS.

See **Technical Specifications** (below) for information on the criteria applied to the HMIS data used for this reporting. See the [RTFH Data Completeness reports](#) for information on project level data completeness in the HMIS.

Indicator Definitions

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
ENTRIES	

Entry Type Categories

All client numbers are deduplicated and based on the client's first entry within each reporting period, project type, and geocode category.

New to the System (New to the HMIS)

At time of entry, client has not been served by any homeless-dedicated project in the HMIS within the previous five years.

Client may have been served by a homeless-dedicated project within the HMIS more than five years prior to the entry date or may have been served by homeless services outside of those entering client information into the HMIS.

Previously Permanently Housed

At time of entry, client was permanently housed by a project within the HMIS within the previous five years.

See definition of Permanently Housed below

Previously Served - Not Permanently Housed

At time of entry, client has been served by a homeless-dedicated project in the HMIS within the previous five years and was not permanently housed during that time (five years prior to project entry).

Total Unique Clients with Entries

The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an entry into a homeless-dedicated project in the HMIS during the reporting period.

Includes clients entering into permanent housing projects, temporary housing projects, homelessness prevention and non-housing projects.

SERVED

Project Type/Served Categories

All client numbers are deduplicated within each reporting period, project type, and geocode category. Includes clients with entries into or exits from a project, as well as those that were continuously served throughout the reporting period. Clients may have been served by more than one project type during the reporting period. A deduplicated overall count is provided in Total Unique Clients Served.

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
<p>Clients with Entry to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) The total number of unique (unduplicated) with an entry to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) during the reporting period (all clients with an entry date for CES during the reporting period).</p>	<p>Clients are “assessed,” or complete the Common Assessment Tool (CAT), including the VI-SPDAT, upon entry into the CES. Only clients with an entry into CES during the reporting period are counted as “Served.” Exit information is not provided for CES at this time.</p>
<p>Clients Served in Homelessness Prevention Projects The total number of unique (unduplicated) clients served during the reporting period by Homelessness Prevention projects.</p>	
<p>Clients Served in Services Only Projects The total number of unique (unduplicated) clients served during the reporting period by projects that only provide services (non-housing).</p>	<p>These projects include Day Shelter, Street Outreach, Services Only and Other projects.</p>
<p>Clients Served in Temporary Housing Projects The total number of unique (unduplicated) clients served during the reporting period by Temporary Housing projects.</p>	<p>These projects include Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Safe Haven projects.</p>
<p>Clients Served in Rapid Re-Housing Projects The total number of unique (unduplicated) clients served during the reporting period by Rapid Re-Housing projects, with or without a housing move-in date.</p>	
<p>Clients Served in Permanent Housing Projects The total number of unique (unduplicated) clients served during the reporting period by permanent housing project, with or without a housing move-in date.</p>	<p>These include Permanent Supportive Housing, Permanent Housing with Services, and Permanent Housing – Housing Only.</p>
<p>Total Unique Clients Served The number of unique (unduplicated) clients served by a homeless-dedicated project in the HMIS during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Includes clients with entries into or exits from a project, as well as those that were continuously served throughout the reporting period.</p>

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
<p>Average Household Size The average household size at time of project entry for all clients who were served by a project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients may be present in the calculations.</p>
EXIT DESTINATION	
<p>Exit Destination Categories Clients may have exited from more than one homeless dedicated project during the reporting period. If this occurs, and the exit destinations are different, the client may be counted in multiple exit categories. Unique exits (persons) are found at the bottom of the column.</p>	
<p>Clients with Exits to Permanent Housing without Subsidy The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to a permanent housing destination without subsidy during the reporting period.</p>	<p>These destinations include: Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy; Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy; Staying or living with family, permanent tenure; Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure.</p>
<p>Clients with Exits to Permanent Housing with Subsidy The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to a permanent housing destination without subsidy during the reporting period.</p>	<p>These destinations include: Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy; Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons; Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons; Rental by client, with GPD TIP subsidy; Rental by client, with VASH subsidy; Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy; Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy; Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH.</p>
<p>Clients with Exits to Temporary Housing Projects The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to a temporary housing project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>These destinations include: Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher; Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth); Safe Haven; Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH.</p>
<p>Clients with Exits to Institutions or Other Temporary Housing The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to an institution or other temporary housing, including staying with family or friends on a temporary basis, during the reporting period.</p>	<p>These destinations include: Foster care home or foster care group home; Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility; Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher; Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility; Long-term care facility or nursing home;</p>

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
	Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility; Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria; Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house); Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house); Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center; Deceased.
<p>Clients with Exits to Place Not Meant for Habitation The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to a place not meant for habitation during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>Clients with Exits to Data Not Available The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit during the reporting period in which the exit destination is not available or not specified.</p>	This includes the following exit destination responses: Client Refused, Client Doesn't Know, Data Not Collected, and No Exit Interview Completed.
<p>Clients with Exits to Other Destination The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit to another destination type during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>Total Unique Clients with Exits The number of unique (unduplicated) clients with an exit from a homeless-dedicated project in the HMIS during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>Average Length of Stay The average length of time (in days) clients stayed at or were engaged by a project for all clients who exited a project during the reporting period.</p>	All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients may be present in the calculations.
HOUSING	
Exits to Permanent Housing	Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
<p>The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that exited from a project to a permanent housing destination (with or without subsidy) during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (prior to HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017) Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons (after HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017) Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy Rental by client, with VASH subsidy Rental by client, with GPD TIP subsidy Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy (after HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017) Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy Staying or living with family, permanent tenure Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH</p>
New Entries to the System	
<p>The following indicators apply to only clients that are new to the HMIS system (the New to the System “bubble” in the main System Framework). Each indicator contains data for the client’s first entry into the HMIS system (within five years).</p>	
PRIOR RESIDENCE	
<p>Prior Residence Categories The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported each prior residence category upon entry into a project during the reporting period. This indicator uses the same data field as Project Entries by Prior Location Type on the Homeless Dashboard (“Residence Prior to Project Entry”). However, the dashboard reports prior residence for each entry (each service record) and this indicator reports prior residence reported by unique client.</p>	
<p>Prior Residence: Permanent Housing with Subsidy The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Permanent Housing with Subsidy upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (prior to HUD Data Standards changes on 10/2017) Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons (after HUD Data Standards changes on 10/2017)</p>

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental by client, with GPD TIP subsidy (HUD) Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) Rental by client, with VASH subsidy (HUD) Rental by client, with other housing subsidy (including RRH) (after HUD Data Standards changes on 10/2017)
<p>Prior Residence: Permanent Housing without Subsidy The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Permanent Housing without Subsidy upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy (HUD)
<p>Prior Residence: Temporary Housing Projects The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Temporary Housing Projects upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher (HUD) Interim Housing Safe Haven (HUD) Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth) (HUD)
<p>Prior Residence: Institutions or other Temporary Housing The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Institutions or other Temporary Housing upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster care home or foster care group home (HUD) Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility (HUD) Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher (HUD) Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility (HUD) Long-term care facility or nursing home (HUD) Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility (HUD) Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria (HUD) Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center (HUD)
<p>Prior Residence: Staying or Living with Family or Friends The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Staying or Living with Family or Friends upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house (HUD) Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house (HUD)

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
<p>Prior Residence: Place not meant for habitation The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Place not meant for habitation upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>Prior Residence: Other The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Other upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>Prior Residence: Data Not Available The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported a prior residence of Data Not Available upon entry into a project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Client doesn't know (HUD) Client refused (HUD) Data not collected (HUD)</p>
LENGTH OF STAY AT PREVIOUS PLACE	
<p>Length of Stay at Previous Place The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported each length of stay category at the previous place of residence, by Prior Residence Category.</p>	<p>Categories are merged as follows from the HUD definitions: One night or less (one night or less); One week or less (One week or less; two to six nights); Less than one month (One week or more, but less than one month); Less than 90 days (one month or more, but less than 90 days); Less than one year (90 days or more, but less than one year); One year or longer (one year or longer); Data Not Available (Client doesn't know, Client refused, Data not collected, Unknown).</p>
POINT OF ENTRY	
<p>Point of Entry The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that entered into each project type category during the reporting period. See Project Type Categories under "Served" above for more information.</p>	
Exits from the System	

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
System Framework	
EXIT DESTINATION	
<p>The following indicators apply to all clients with an exit from a project in the HMIS during the reporting period. Each indicator contains data connected to client exits.</p>	
<p>Exit Destination Categories See Exit Destination indicator description for System Framework above</p>	
<p>Exit Destination Detail The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported each exit destination within the reporting period, by exit destination category.</p>	<p>This indicator provides a breakdown of the exit destination categories provided in the System Framework. See complete list of exit destinations in Data Element Definitions below.</p>
<p>Reason for Leaving The number of unique (unduplicated) clients that reported each reason for leaving within the reporting period, by exit destination category.</p>	<p>Reasons for leaving include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed program Criminal activity / violence Death Disagreement with rules/persons Left for housing opp. before completing program Needs could not be met Non-compliance with program Non-payment of rent Other Reached maximum time allowed Unknown/Disappeared

Data Element Definitions

Data Element	Definition
Project Types	Source: HMIS Project Descriptor Data Elements Manual
Homelessness Prevention	
Homelessness Prevention	A project that offers services and/or financial assistance necessary to prevent a person from moving into an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation.
Non-Housing Projects	
Street Outreach	A project that offers services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and provide urgent, non-facility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.
Day Shelter	A project that offers daytime facilities and services (no lodging) for persons who are homeless.
Services Only	A project that offers only stand-alone supportive services, to address the special needs of participants, such as child care, employment assistance, and transportation services.
Other Project Type	A project that offers services, but does not provide lodging, and cannot otherwise be categorized as another project type, per above.
Temporary Housing Projects	
Emergency Shelter	A project that offers temporary shelter (lodging) for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless. Requirements and limitations may vary by program, and will be specified by the funder.
Transitional Housing	A project that provides temporary lodging and is designed to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families into permanent housing within a specified period of time, but no longer than 24 months. Requirements and limitations may vary by program, and will be specified by the funder.

Data Element	Definition
Safe Haven	A project that offers supportive housing that (1) serves hard to reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who came from the streets and have been unwilling or unable to participate in supportive services; (2) provides 24-hour residence for eligible persons for an unspecified period; (3) has an overnight capacity limited to 25 or fewer persons; and (4) provides low demand services and referrals for the residents.
Rapid Re-Housing Projects	
Rapid Re-Housing	A permanent housing project that provides housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.
Permanent Housing Projects	
Permanent Supportive Housing	A project that offers permanent housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability (individuals with disabilities or families in which one adult or child has a disability) to live independently.
Permanent Housing - With Services	A project that offers permanent housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons to live independently, but does not limit eligibility to individuals with disabilities or families in which one adult or child has a disability.
Permanent Housing - Housing Only	A project that offers permanent housing for persons who are homeless, but does not make supportive services available as part of the project.
Coordinated Assessment	
Coordinated Assessment (CES)	A project that administers the continuum’s centralized coordinated assessment using a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. CES provides referrals of individuals and families seeking housing or services based on the assessment score and other factors.
Populations	
All Clients	All individual clients served by a homeless-dedicated project within the HMIS.

Data Element	Definition
Veterans	Clients age 18 or older with self-reported or verified Veteran status; does not include non-Veteran household members. If a Veteran household was placed in permanent housing, only the Veteran(s)'s permanent housing placement would be reported in this analysis, not non-Veteran household members.)
Chronically Homeless	Clients meeting HUD's definition of chronic homelessness at time of project entry.
Families	Individual clients that are served as part of a household with at least one adult and one child at time of project entry.
Unaccompanied Youth	Individual clients under age 18 that are served as a member of a household with only children at the time of project entry.

System Terms

Continuum of Care (CoC)	A community with a unified plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. HUD funds many homeless programs and HMIS implementations through Continuums of Care grants.
Continuum Project	Refers to all projects within the Continuum of Care that provide lodging and/or services for homeless persons. A continuum project is not limited to those projects funded by HUD and should include all of the federal partner projects and all other federally or non-federally funded projects functioning within the continuum.
Project Geocode	Refers to the location of the project (provider) that served the client.

Data Terms

Unduplicated Count	The number of people who are homeless within a specified location and time period. An unduplicated count ensures that individuals are counted only once regardless of the number of times they entered or exited the homeless system or the number of programs in which they participated.
Permanent Housing Destinations	Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH

Data Element	Definition
	<p>Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</p> <p>Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy</p> <p>Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (prior to HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017)</p> <p>Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons (after HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017)</p> <p>Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</p> <p>Rental by client, with VASH subsidy</p> <p>Rental by client, with GPD TIP subsidy</p> <p>Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy (after HUD Data Standards update on 10/2017)</p> <p>Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy</p> <p>Staying or living with family, permanent tenure</p> <p>Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure</p>
<p>Non-Permanent Housing Destinations</p>	<p>Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher</p> <p>Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility</p> <p>Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)</p> <p>Long-term care facility or nursing home</p> <p>Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center</p> <p>Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility</p> <p>Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility</p> <p>Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)</p> <p>Deceased</p> <p>Foster care home or foster care group home</p> <p>Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria</p> <p>Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher</p> <p>Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)</p> <p>Safe Haven</p> <p>Place not meant for habitation</p> <p>No exit interview completed</p> <p>Client doesn't know</p> <p>Client refused</p> <p>Data not collected</p> <p>Other</p>

Technical Specifications

Data Element	Criteria
Data Query Criteria	CoC Code = CA 601 (Homeless-Dedicated Projects) Non-HMIS Providers (Point in Time inventory participants only) excluded Domestic Violence targeted programs excluded
Project Types	Homelessness Prevention Street Outreach Day Shelter Emergency Shelter Transitional housing Safe Haven Rapid Re-Housing Permanent Supportive Housing Permanent Housing - With Services Permanent Housing - Housing Only Services Only Coordinated Assessment (CES)
Service Length Limits	Day Shelter – one day Street Outreach – 6 months Emergency Shelter – 1 year Transitional Housing – 2 years Safe Haven – 2 years Services Only – 2 years

Data Completeness and Data Quality Notes

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless monitors the HMIS to ensure data completeness and high data quality. Data entry must occur at point of service or within 3 business days.

Many indicators in the System Framework and data dashboards include data elements that may be more challenging to monitor at the system level, such as the timely entry of project exits. The RTFH is constantly working with providers to ensure timely and accurate data entry. However, from time to time the data that is reported in the dashboards may change between publications as historical data is entered or existing data is modified in the HMIS.

Changes to Content, Definitions and Methodology

Date	Change
2-28-19	<p>2017 Data Standards updates are applied: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/</p> <p>The distinction between Rapid Re-Housing projects with and without move-in date was removed due to HMIS data quality issues resulting from the 2017 Data Standards updates related to Housing Move-In Date.</p> <p>In Need of Permanent Housing estimates were removed due to HMIS data quality issues resulting from the 2017 Data Standards updates related to Housing Move-In Date.</p>
2-22-17	<p>Entry type categories were modified to be mutually exclusive (only the client's first entry during each reporting period* is included).</p> <p>Previously, if a client entered one project as New to the System, and then entered another project during the same reporting period*, the client would be counted in both New to the System and Previously Served. With the update, the client would only be counted as New to the System.</p> <p>This change also means that if a client enters into a project, is permanently housed, and then re-enters during the same reporting period*, only the first project entry would be counted and the return to homelessness after being permanently housed ("previously permanently housed") would not be recognized. The return to homelessness would be recognized, however, when looking at a shorter reporting period that did not include the first entry.</p> <p>*reporting period/project type/geocode combination</p>
2-22-17	<p>"Other" category is added to Exit Destination; previously included in "Data Not Collected." The "Other" category has an accompanying text field in ServicePoint, which allows the service provider to enter the destination when it does not fall into one of the set categories.</p>

Date	Change
2-22-17	<p>"Non-Housing Projects" category title under "Served" (Street Outreach, Day Shelter, Services Only) is changed to "Services Only Projects" to be more descriptive.</p>
5-23-17	<p>Coordinated Entry System (CES) client data is added to the System Framework. Data was added for clients with an entry into the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and completion of the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) during each reporting period (included in the totals for Entries and Served). This caused the total number of clients with entries and total number of clients served to increase because some clients that entered the CES had not been served by any other project in the HMIS during the reporting period.</p> <p>Adding CES also affected the entry type category totals for all project types (new to system, previously served, previously housed), which are based on the client's first entry during the reporting period. With the addition of CES, the proportion of clients classified as new to the system increased and the proportion of clients classified as previously served decreased. This is because many clients entered the system for the first time through CES. In previous versions, clients who first entered the HMIS system through CES (as new to the system) and then entered into another project (as previously served) during the same reporting period were classified as previously served.</p> <p>Exit data is not currently captured for CES.</p>
5-23-17	<p>Average Length of Stay is added to Exit Destination Tooltip (System Framework)</p>
5-23-17	<p>Average Household Size is added to Served Tooltip (System Framework)</p>
5-23-17	<p>Exit Destination percentage calculation is modified and included only in Tool Tip. Original calculation: # unique clients with exit destination XXX/sum of unique clients within each exit destination category (percentages add up to 100%). New Calculation: # unique clients with exit destination XXX/# of total unique clients with exits. Note: with the new calculation, the percentages don't add up to 100% (due to client duplication across exit destination categories), but the numbers more accurately represent the proportion of unique clients exiting to each housing type out of total unique clients with exits.</p>
5-23-17	<p>Continuum Project = Yes (Continuum Projects) removed from filter criteria. The data field "Continuum Project" is no longer being used to indicate that a project is homeless-dedicated.</p>