

## San Diego Homeless Dashboard Methodology, Data Definitions and Technical Specifications

Last updated: May 25, 2017

### 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 Dashboard** provides data from the HMIS to help understand what the homeless system of care looks like in San Diego County. The dashboard is a surveillance tool that can be used to monitor how well the system is working in the effort to end or alleviate homelessness in the region and may be used in conjunction with **San Diego's Homeless System Framework**. 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 (estimated 1,482 clients) 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.

### Technical Specifications

Data Element	Criteria
<b>Data Query Criteria</b>	CoC Code = CA 601 (Homeless-Dedicated Projects) Non-HMIS Providers (Point in Time inventory participants only) excluded Domestic Violence targeted programs excluded
<b>Project Types</b>	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)
<b>Service Length Limits</b>	Day Shelter – one day Street Outreach – 6 months Emergency Shelter – 1 year Transitional Housing – 2 years Safe Haven – 2 years Services Only – 2 years

## Indicator Definitions

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
<b>How Many Unique Clients Does San Diego's Continuum Serve?</b>	
<p><b>Total Number of Clients Served in Quarter</b> The total number of unique clients served by quarter, unduplicated within each quarter.</p>	It is possible that a specific client may be present in more than one quarter. Therefore, it is not possible to sum the number of clients served during each quarter to calculate a grand total of clients served during the year.
<p><b>Total Number of Clients Served in Entire Reporting Period</b> The total number of unique clients served during the entire reporting period, unduplicated across all quarters reported.</p>	Project Types Included Coordinated Assessment (CES) (entry only), 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
<b>How Many Unique Clients Are Being Served by Each Project Type?</b>	
<p><b>Number of Clients Served by Project Type</b> The number of unique clients served by project type during the reporting period, unduplicated within each project type and quarter.</p>	It is possible that a specific client may be present in more than one project type and in more than one quarter. Therefore, it is not possible to sum the number of clients served in each project type or in each quarter to calculate a grand total of clients served.
<b>Client Demographics</b>	
<p><b>Number of Clients Served by Gender</b> The number of unique clients served by gender during the reporting period, unduplicated within each project type and quarter.</p>	Gender is assigned based on most recent service
<p><b>Number of Clients Served by Age</b> The number of unique clients served by age range during the reporting period, unduplicated within each project type and quarter</p>	Age is assigned based on most recent service.
<p><b>Number of Clients Served by Household Type</b></p>	Household type is assigned based on most recent service. Adults: The number of adults served in adult-only households

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
<p>The number of unique clients served by household type during the reporting period, unduplicated within each project type and quarter.</p>	<p>Families: The number of persons served in households consisting of adults and children Unaccompanied Youth: The number of children served in child-only households</p>
<p><b>Number of Adults Served by Veteran Status</b> The number of unique adults served by veteran status.</p>	<p>Veteran Status is only reported for adults. Therefore, the totals for Number of Adults Served by Veteran Status will be lower than the totals from other demographic sections.</p>
<p><b>Prior Location at Entry and Destination upon Exit</b></p>	
<p><b>Project Entries by Prior Location Type</b> Of the total number of service entries into each project type during the reporting period, the number times each prior location type was reported.</p>	<p>All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients are present. The total number of service entries will not be the same as the number of unique client entries.</p>
<p><b>Project Exits by Destination Type</b> Of the total number of service exits from each project type during the reporting period, the number times each destination type was reported.</p>	<p>All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients are present. The total number of service exits will not be the same as the number of unique client exits.</p>
<p><b>Length of Stay among Leavers</b></p>	
<p><b>Average Length of Stay in Non-Permanent Housing Projects among Leavers</b> The average length of time (in days) clients stayed at or were engaged by a project for all clients who exited a non-permanent housing project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients may be present. Minimum, median, maximum length of stay and count of records are also included.</p>
<p><b>Average Length of Stay in Permanent Housing Projects among Leavers</b> The average length of time (in days) clients stayed at or were engaged by a project for all clients who exited a permanent housing project during the reporting period.</p>	<p>All service records are included in this indicator and therefore duplicate clients may be present. Minimum, median, maximum length of stay and count of records are also included.</p>
<p><b>Unique Client Exits by Destination Type</b></p>	

Indicator Definition	Additional Details
<p><b>Number of Unique Client Exits to Permanent Housing</b> The number of unique clients who exited a project to a permanent housing destination during the reporting period.</p>	<p>All unique clients with an exit during the reporting period are included - not only if it was the client's most recent service.</p> <p>It is possible that a specific client may have returned and exited in sequential quarters, or that a specific client may have been exited by another service provider in a sequential quarter. Therefore, it is not accurate to sum the number of permanent exits by quarter to calculate the grand total of permanent exits during the year.</p> <p>It is also possible that a specific client exited from two different project types during the quarter and is not accurate to sum the number of permanent exits by project type to calculate the grand total of permanent exits across all project types.</p>
<p><b>Number of Unique Client Exits to Other Destinations</b> The number of unique clients who exited a project to a non-permanent housing destination during the reporting period.</p>	<p>See list of non-permanent housing destinations below.</p>
<p><b>Percent Exits to Permanent Housing</b> Of all unique clients who exited from a project to any destination during the reporting period, the percent who exited to a permanent housing destination.</p>	<p>Permanent housing is defined as one of the following: (1) a final destination to a permanent location owned by the client (with or without subsidy), (2) a rental by client (with or without subsidy), (3) living with family or friends permanently, or (4) permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (including HOPWA permanent housing).</p>

## Data Element Definitions

Data Element	Definition
<b>Project Types</b>	Source: HMIS Project Descriptor Data Elements Manual
<b>Homelessness Prevention</b>	
<b>Homelessness Prevention</b>	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.
<b>Non-Housing Projects</b>	
<b>Street Outreach</b>	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.
<b>Day Shelter</b>	A project that offers daytime facilities and services (no lodging) for persons who are homeless.
<b>Services Only</b>	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.
<b>Other Project Type</b>	A project that offers services, but does not provide lodging, and cannot otherwise be categorized as another project type, per above.
<b>Temporary Housing Projects</b>	
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	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.
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	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.
<b>Safe Haven</b>	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

Data Element	Definition
	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.
<b>Rapid Re-Housing Projects</b>	
<b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>	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.
<b>Permanent Housing Projects</b>	
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing</b>	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.
<b>Permanent Housing - With Services</b>	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.
<b>Permanent Housing - Housing Only</b>	A project that offers permanent housing for persons who are homeless, but does not make supportive services available as part of the project.
<b>Coordinated Assessment</b>	
<b>Coordinated Assessment (CES)</b>	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.
<b>Populations</b>	
<b>All Clients</b>	All individual clients served by a homeless-dedicated project within the HMIS.

Data Element	Definition
<b>Veterans</b>	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.)
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	Clients meeting HUD's definition of chronic homelessness at time of project entry.
<b>Families</b>	Individual clients that are served as part of a household with at least one adult and one child at time of project entry.
<b>Unaccompanied Youth</b>	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

<b>Continuum of Care (CoC)</b>	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.
<b>Continuum Project</b>	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.
<b>Project Geocode</b>	Refers to the location of the project (provider) that served the client.

### Data Terms

<b>Unduplicated Count</b>	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.
<b>Permanent Housing Destinations</b>	Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH



Data Element	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</li> <li>Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy</li> <li>Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons</li> <li>Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</li> <li>Rental by client, with VASH subsidy</li> <li>Rental by client, with GPD TIP subsidy</li> <li>Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy</li> <li>Staying or living with family, permanent tenure</li> <li>Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Non-Permanent Housing Destinations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher</li> <li>Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility</li> <li>Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)</li> <li>Long-term care facility or nursing home</li> <li>Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center</li> <li>Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility</li> <li>Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility</li> <li>Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)</li> <li>Deceased</li> <li>Foster care home or foster care group home</li> <li>Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria</li> <li>Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher</li> <li>Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)</li> <li>Safe Haven</li> <li>Place not meant for habitation</li> <li>No exit interview completed</li> <li>Client doesn't know</li> <li>Client refused</li> <li>Data not collected</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>

## Changes to Content, Definitions and Technical Specifications

Date	Change
<b>7-1-16</b>	<p>July 2016: Version 1 to Version 2 Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique clients are now reported through deduplication within subcategories rather than by most recent service. This means that all client services are represented in unique client totals by category type (i.e. project type, geocode, etc.). The first version of the dashboard deduplicated clients by counting only the client's most recent service in any time period.</li> <li>• Day Shelter service records with an entry date that occurred before the start of the reporting period are now excluded. The first version of the dashboard included Day Shelter services in the category of Services Only and included client services prior to the reporting period that did not have an exit date under the assumption that they were still being served. This can overestimate the number of clients served because exit information is infrequently entered for Day Shelter clients.</li> <li>• Internal data cleaning resulted in the reclassification and archiving of several projects.</li> </ul>
<b>9-1-16</b>	<p>September 2016: Version 2.1 to Version 2.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoC Code and Continuum Project classification assigned to service providers was reviewed and updated in the HMIS (see technical specifications).</li> <li>• Service length limits were placed on multiple project types (see technical specifications).</li> <li>• Additional archived projects were added.</li> </ul>
<b>5-23-17</b>	<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>
<b>5-23-17</b>	<p>Client data for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) is added to certain indicators on the dashboard (for clients with entries to CES only)</p>