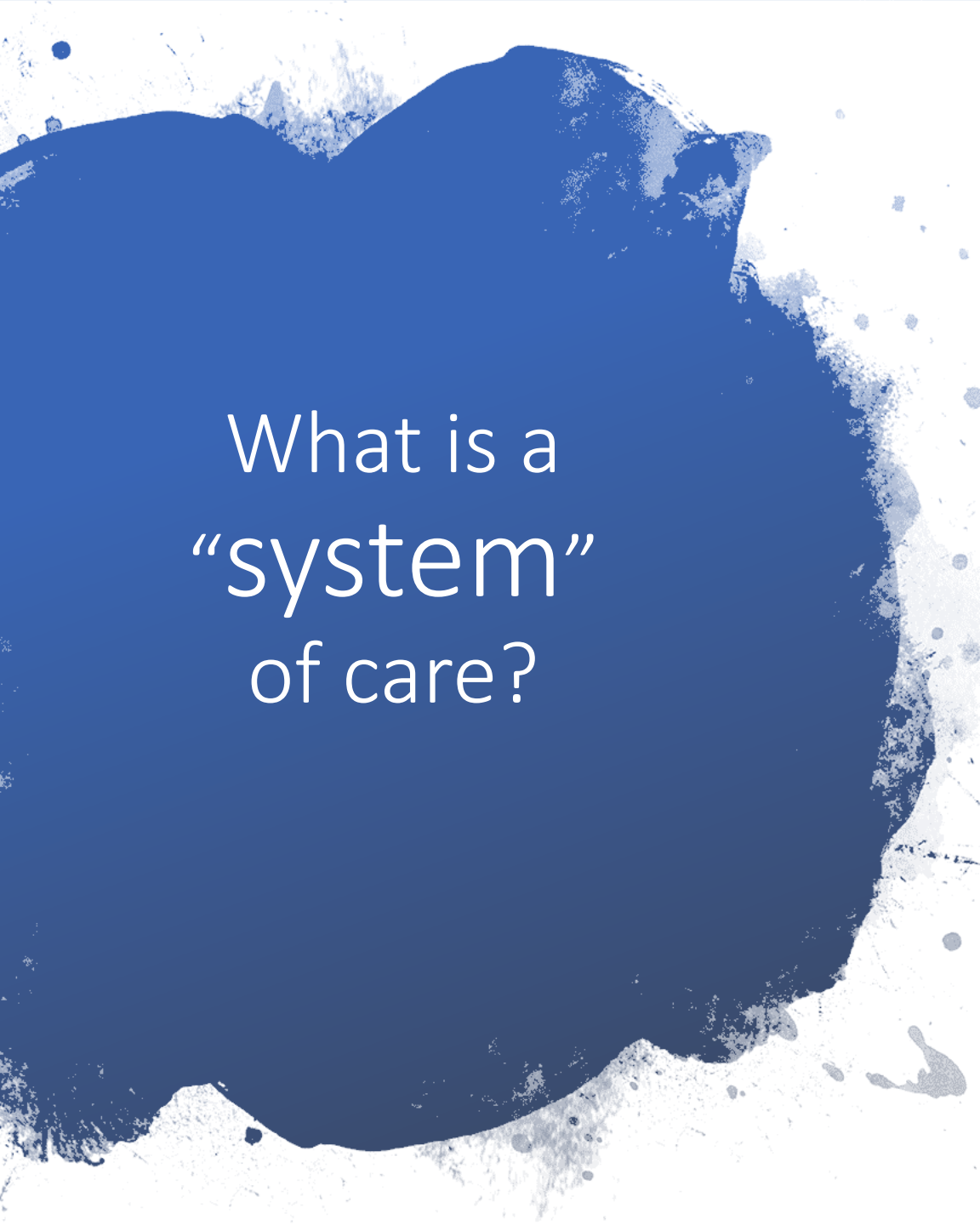# Using Data for Program and System Performance Improvement

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What is a "system" of care?

An organizational philosophy and framework that involves collaboration across agencies and community stakeholders for the purpose of improving and expanding the array of coordinated community-based services and access to these services.

A "Systems" Approach to Homelessness:

To end **homelessness**, a coordinated **systems approach** is needed.

This **approach** requires using local data to inform decisions about how to most effectively allocate resources, services, and programs to best address the needs of those experiencing **homelessness** in the community.

A Coordinated Systems Approach - Key Elements

To address homelessness, communities have moved from a collection of individual programs, to a community-wide response that is strategic and data-driven.

Coordinated Entry – Identify and move those in greatest need to housing faster

Planning – Bring providers, CoC lead, local government, and funders together

Shared Data System – Benefit from a common data system (HMIS)

Collect and Examine Local Data to Inform Decision-Making

Performance Measurement and Evaluation - SPMs

Many communities that have adopted this approach have found that coordination and the use of local data have had a positive impact in their efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

Goals to Improve Data and Performance

1. Communities use their data to optimize systems of care through making ongoing system performance improvements and determining optimal resource allocation.

2. Communities operate data systems that allow for accurate, comprehensive and timely data collection, usage and reporting.

3. Federal government coordinates to receive and use data to make informed decisions in coordination with other data sets, across and within agencies.

STRATEGY 1:

Improve the capacity of people setting up, operating, and benefitting from data systems

Characteristic: Expert Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Leads and System Administrators		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ Software provider: HMIS Leads are entrusted by CoCs to manage software provider contracts/ relationships, and act as fiduciary on behalf of the CoC ▪ End User: HMIS Leads support all end users and administrators meet DQ standards (Strategy 2) ▪ CoCs: HMIS Leads ensure data is high quality for use in planning/ review and ranking	▪ Software provider: HMIS Leads monitor software providers to the terms of the contract, or are provided with accreditation by software providers ▪ End User: HMIS Leads have developed training curricula to meet the unique needs of beginner, intermediate, and advanced users ▪ CoCs: HMIS Leads support data literacy across CoC planning	▪ Software provider: HMIS Leads conduct frequent monitoring of software providers and have access to all programming specs/ logic, terminology assumptions, and report generation functionality ▪ End User: HMIS Leads collect data from end users pre- and post-training, and use the results to enhance training curricula and delivery ▪ CoCs: HMIS Leads provide/manage/ merge and de-duplicate high quality data to support cross-system care coordination and planning efforts
Characteristic: CoCs have data-driven leaders		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ CoC has a data subcommittee	▪ CoC shares a vision to end homelessness ▪ CoC supports culture of performance	▪ CoCs are engaged with and sharing data and performance metrics across systems of care

STRATEGY 2:

Data systems collect accurate, comprehensive and timely data

Characteristic: Bed Coverage across Continuum (funded and unfunded)		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ 100% required providers and less than 100% non-required providers contribute to HMIS	▪ 100% all homeless service providers contribute to HMIS	▪ 100% homeless providers and non-homeless service providers contribute to shared data environment
Characteristic: Quality data = Timely Accurate Comprehensive		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ 100% complete ▪ Less than 100% accurate ▪ No timeliness standard	▪ 100% accurate ▪ 100% complete ▪ Projects directly enter data within 2 hours for crisis response and project start/ project exit ▪ PSH projects directly enter data within 24 hours	▪ 100% accurate ▪ Customized local data elements are limited to information needed to report, serve and house clients. ▪ 100% complete ▪ Timeliness meets Coordinated Entry placement and referral needs

STRATEGY 3:

Continuums and stakeholders use data to improve efforts to end homelessness

Characteristic: Continuum of Care (CoC) uses data for system planning		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ Using project-level performance data to make rating and ranking decisions and set local performance goals	▪ Aligning homeless system resources to meet needs of people experiencing homelessness	▪ Using all data sources (including data from non-homeless systems of care) to prevent and end homelessness
Characteristic: Continuum of Care (CoC) uses data for coordination of care		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ Multiple homeless providers coordinating to provide housing and services to individuals (or groups of individual)	▪ All homeless providers removing systemic barriers to housing and services	▪ Homeless providers and non-homeless systems of care coordinating to remove systemic barriers to housing and services
Characteristic: Continuum of Care (CoC) uses data to prioritize existing resources for neediest clients		
Current status (or near-term)	**Majority of CoCs in 3-5 years**	**Advanced CoCs in 3-5 years**
▪ HUD defines vulnerability (to what) and communities are using all available resources for most vulnerable persons	▪ Homeless system uses RRH for progressive engagement and 100% of PSH is highly targeted	▪ Data from non-homeless systems of care is used to prioritize highly vulnerable persons, plus highly targeted prevention (based on local evidence)

Using a Regional By-Name List as a System Driver

Is the geographic coverage of your outreach clearly mapped out, informed by your data and regularly assessed to ensure you reach all unsheltered individuals within your community?

Have you coordinated your outreach, ensuring that your teams are deployed at locations and at times mostly likely to effectively engage unsheltered homeless individuals, while minimizing duplication between providers?

Do you have a documented outreach policy that clearly states how your outreach teams will be deployed and how they work with each other to swiftly connect individuals to housing?

Difficult to Track Populations

People cycling in and out of homeless and institutional settings such as hospitals, treatment centers, or jail. (Most commonly street homeless use ER)

People living in cars, or other highly transient street homeless that move from location to location.

People relocating from other regions and presenting as homeless here.

SPM
System Performance Measures:
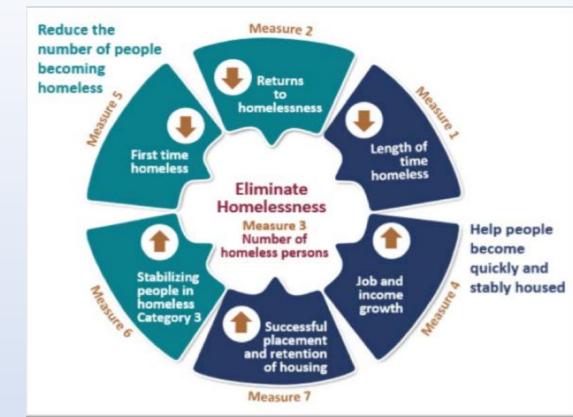### Helping us understand the effectiveness of our system

The Big 3:

1. Measure 1 – Length of time homeless

2. Measure 2 – Returns to homelessness

3. Measure 7 – Successful placement and retention of housing

SPM
System Performance Measures
Measure 1: Length of time people remain homeless

Goal:

Reduce the average and median length of time that clients remain homeless in ES, SH, TH.

Data Quality Assessment:

Failing to exit clients will have the biggest negative impact on this measure.

Inaccurate entry of 'Approx Date Homelessness Started' information can significantly impact this measure.

System Improvement Strategies	Length of Time Homeless (Measure 1)
1. Enhance Coordinated Entry	
Prioritize Vulnerable Households	✓
Right-size Assistance	✓
Incorporate Diversion Practices	✓
Streamline Admissions and Lower Barriers	✓
Link to Effective Outreach and In-reach	✓
Target Prevention Assistance	
2. Strengthen Housing-Focused Practices	
Housing Focused Case Management	✓
Policies and Procedures to Promote Housing Stability	
Housing Navigation	✓
3. Scale Permanent Housing Interventions	
Recruit Private Landlords	✓
Leverage Mainstream Housing and Services	✓
Reallocate Resources	✓
Build Rapid Re-Housing Capacity	✓

SPM
System Performance Measures
Measure 2: Returns to homelessness

Goal:

Reduce the % of returns to homelessness after exits to permanent housing destinations.

Data Quality Assessment:

Misidentifying exit destinations as permanent can have a negative impact on this measure.

Failure to enter entry and exit dates accurately can impact this measure.

System Improvement Strategies	Returns to Homelessness (Measure 2)
1. Enhance Coordinated Entry	
Prioritize Vulnerable Households	
Right-size Assistance	✓
Incorporate Diversion Practices	✓
Streamline Admissions and Lower Barriers	
Link to Effective Outreach and In-reach	
Target Prevention Assistance	✓
2. Strengthen Housing-Focused Practices	
Housing Focused Case Management	✓
Policies and Procedures to Promote Housing Stability	✓
Housing Navigation	✓
3. Scale Permanent Housing Interventions	
Recruit Private Landlords	
Leverage Mainstream Housing and Services	✓
Reallocate Resources	
Build Rapid Re-Housing Capacity	✓

SPM
System Performance Measures
Measure 7: Successful placement/retention
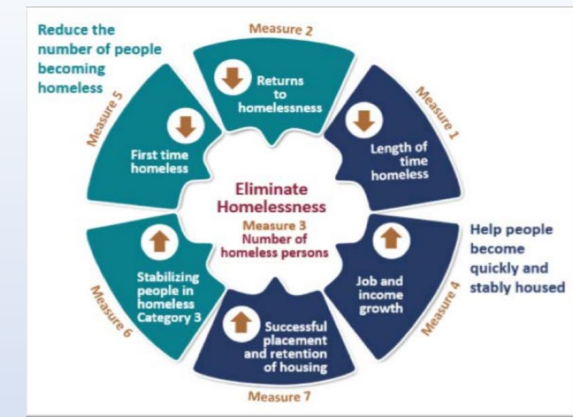
Goal:

Increase the % of people who exit to a sheltered or permanent destination, or stay in permanent housing.

Data Quality Assessment:

Misidentifying exit destinations will have a negative impact on this measure.

HUD recognizes that certain project types will have greater success in moving people to permanent destinations than others.

System Improvement Strategies	Successful Placement and Retention of PH (Measure 7)
1. Enhance Coordinated Entry	
Prioritize Vulnerable Households	✓
Right-size Assistance	✓
Incorporate Diversion Practices	✓
Streamline Admissions and Lower Barriers	✓
Link to Effective Outreach and In-reach	✓
Target Prevention Assistance	✓
2. Strengthen Housing-Focused Practices	
Housing Focused Case Management	✓
Policies and Procedures to Promote Housing Stability	✓
Housing Navigation	✓
3. Scale Permanent Housing Interventions	
Recruit Private Landlords	✓
Leverage Mainstream Housing and Services	✓
Reallocate Resources	✓
Build Rapid Re-Housing Capacity	✓

System Improvement Strategies for the 3 Key SPMs

System Improvement Strategies	System Performance Measures		
	Length of Time Homeless (Measure 1)	Successful Placement and Retention of PH (Measure 7)	Returns to Homelessness (Measure 2)
1. Enhance Coordinated Entry			
Prioritize Vulnerable Households	✓	✓	
Right-size Assistance	✓	✓	✓
Incorporate Diversion Practices	✓	✓	✓
Streamline Admissions and Lower Barriers	✓	✓	
Link to Effective Outreach and In-reach	✓	✓	
Target Prevention Assistance		✓	✓
2. Strengthen Housing-Focused Practices			
Housing Focused Case Management	✓	✓	✓
Policies and Procedures to Promote Housing Stability		✓	✓
Housing Navigation	✓	✓	✓
3. Scale Permanent Housing Interventions			
Recruit Private Landlords	✓	✓	
Leverage Mainstream Housing and Services	✓	✓	✓
Reallocate Resources	✓	✓	
Build Rapid Re-Housing Capacity	✓	✓	✓

- **Fully implement Coordinated Entry.**
- **Provide immediate supports to solve housing crises and promote housing stability.**
- **Optimize local resources and expand permanent housing options.**

Local Trends Related to Data Tracking/Performance

The good…

- Veterans, youth, families with children, domestic violence, street homeless

The bad…

- Aging adults, single females, re-entry, motel stayers, first-time homeless, relocating from other areas, at-risk of homelessness

The ugly…

- Average length of time people experience homelessness (trauma)

- Retention rates of Vietnam-era veterans and severely disabled street homeless

- Acceptance of housing/services (street, motel stayers)

Measuring Outcomes
(Veterans and Chronic Homeless)

INFLOW (monthly)

- People becoming homeless for the first time

- People returning to homelessness after temporary institutional stay

- People returning to homelessness after being permanently housed

- People that were missing but now found to be still homeless, or became homeless again

OUTFLOW

- People exiting homelessness through a program referral or intervention

- People exiting homelessness on their own (most commonly to live with family/friends)

- People entering an institution for extended periods of time (i.e. 6 year prison sentence)

- People becoming inactive/missing after 90 days of unknown whereabouts

- "Functional Zero" (veterans, chronic homeless)

INFLOW → OUTFLOW TRACKING

System vs. Project
Performance Evaluation at Macro and Micro Level

- Understanding system performance is a broader task than the CoC merely running a SPM report annually.

- A CoC must regularly evaluate project-level performance by looking at individual outcomes such as exits to and retention of permanent housing, length of stay in the project, length of time to housing move-in, increases in income, and of course, overall HMIS data quality.

- Assessing performance at the system level is important and necessary, but to identify what needs improvement, communities must continue to evaluate project performance.

Evaluating HMIS Data for Improved System Outcomes

HMIS Project Level Assessment

SPM	Desired System Outcome	HMIS Project Type	Project-level /HMIS Assessment
#1	Reduce the length of time people remain homeless	ES, SH, TH	Ensure client homeless history is accurately reported in the HMIS at time of program intake. (Approximate Date Homelessness Started)
		PSH, RRH	Ensure client housing move-in is entered accurately and timely. (Permanent Housing Move In Date)
		ES, SH, TH	Who are the longest stayers and why? (Length of Stay)
#2	Reduce Returns to Homelessness	SO, ES, SH, TH, PSH	Honest and accurate reporting of client exit setting at program discharge. (Destination)
#4	Increase in earned income and non-employment income	SO, ES, SH, TH, PSH	Accurate entry and timely updates of client income and income sources. (Monthly Income; Monthly Income Sources)
#7	Increased housing placements and retention	SO, ES, SH, TH, PSH	Honest and accurate reporting of client exit setting at program discharge. (Destination)

Questions?

Resources

HUD Exchange
www.hudexchange.info

HUD Continuum of Care Program
www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/

HUD Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/

HUD System Performance Measures
www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/#guidance

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
www.usich.gov