

Community Revises HMIS to Evaluate and Plan

Positive Stories / Lessons Learned from HPRP: *Community Success Story*

HPRP Grantee:	Cincinnati and Hamilton County
CoC Name and Number:	OH-500 Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC

Latest CoC Point-in-Time Count:

Total persons in ES:	513	Total persons in TH:	693
Total persons in Safe Haven:	0	Total unsheltered persons:	66
Total persons, sheltered and unsheltered:	1,275		

Cincinnati and Hamilton County's HMIS lead agency, The Partnership Center, customized HMIS to track HPRP rapid re-housing participants' housing stability after assistance ended. They compared exit destinations with returns to homelessness to learn at which points follow-up assistance is needed the most, and this data will also help them compare HPRP's outcomes with other programs to inform further housing initiatives.

Rapid re-housing programs move participants quickly from shelter to permanent housing, but their goal is also for participants to maintain housing after exit. Individuals in emergency shelter are directly referred to Cincinnati and Hamilton County's rapid re-housing program, while families are screened by their central call center before being placed in shelter, where case managers begin working with low-barrier families within 48 hours of shelter entry. Individual and family case managers help participants find housing, move in, and pay for housing-related expenses, then support participants' stabilization for the next year through case management and supportive services.

The majority of participants exited to "permanent destinations" (59%), most commonly, an unsubsidized rental unit (44%); a third exited to "temporary destinations" (35%), usually to family or friends (27%). Only five percent of all participants exited to emergency shelter. Since the community has full HMIS coverage of every emergency shelter and street outreach program, they configured their HMIS to track contact with these programs post-exit to find out if and when participants became homeless again. Continuous housing stability – measured by no returns to homelessness – was maintained for two years after exit by more than 88%. The Partnership Center also created HMIS reports on the lengths of time between HPRP exit and shelter entry or street outreach contact, and learned that the most rapid re-housing participants who returned to homelessness did so within thirty days after exit (27%) or between six to twelve months after exit (33%). Those who exited to a hotel/motel they paid for or to emergency shelter were the most likely to become homeless again (100% of the two hotel/motel exits and 33% of emergency shelter exits). Exiting to stay with family or friends coincided with the lowest rates of return to homelessness – 4% who stayed with family, and none who stayed with friends.

After The Partnership Center's customization, Cincinnati and Hamilton County's HMIS is not only a record of the successes of their rapid re-housing program, but also a tool to learn about the housing vulnerabilities of their former clients. The community knows which exit destinations have the highest recidivism rate and when individuals are most likely to lose their housing stability, simply from clicking a Run Report button in their HMIS. They are now comparing outcomes and characteristics of participants from rapid re-housing with those of other transitional and permanent supportive housing programs, and will use their analysis of trends and program effectiveness as they move forward with program realignment under HEARTH.

**Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

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