

System Performance Measures Overview

I'm passionate about ending homelessness in the US by 2020. Every decision we make here at SNAPS is guided by that goal, but we need your help to achieve it. To help us track our work, we have designed seven measures that examine different parts of your community's performance, based on the requirements first laid out in the 2009 HEARTH Act. The measures cover:

1. The length of time people REMAIN homeless;
2. The extent to which people RETURN to homelessness;
3. The total NUMBER of homeless people in your community;
4. INCOME GROWTH for homeless people;
5. The number of people who become homeless for the FIRST time;
6. Extent of returns to homelessness plus successful housing placements for people who are Category 3 (which we'll explain); and
7. Successful HOUSING PLACEMENTS from homeless projects.

Each of the seven measures tells a different piece of the story, and all seven together will help communities make informed and balanced choices. As our core outcome of ending homelessness, we directly measure a community's progress by counting the NUMBER of people experiencing homelessness... both at a point in time and over the course of a year. The other measures all help communities understand how well they are doing the things necessary to REDUCE the number of people who become homeless and help those who DO become homeless return to stable housing.

The performance measures are all interrelated and, when you analyze them relative to each other, they can provide a pretty complete picture of system-level performance. For example, the length of time homeless measure encourages communities to QUICKLY re-house people, while measures on returns to homelessness and successful housing placements encourage communities to ensure that those placements are also STABLE. Taken together, these measures allow communities to dig deeper into the factors that will ultimately contribute to ending homelessness.

We've prepared short video clips, each featuring one of the seven measures, that explain why the measure is important, how it is calculated, and how you might consider using it locally. Before we get to those, I'm going to provide a quick overview of some key concepts that are relevant to all the measures. I'll also talk a little bit about how we plan to use this information here at HUD... and how you can use the information locally.

First, we understand that these measures are new, and I want to assure you they will be rolled out on a timeline that allows for the reports to be programmed by your vendors and for communities to start tracking performance BEFORE HUD starts collecting data. HUD's intent is for you to use existing data sets you're already required to collect, which is the PIT Count and HMIS. Each measure pulled from HMIS sources will cover the reporting period October 1st through September 30th each year – which is aligned with the federal fiscal year. We do this because we're looking across programs... at your SYSTEM as a whole. So for these measures we

System Performance Measures Overview

won't be relying on the APR data, which all have different reporting years and only cover individual project performance.

I'll also note that most of these measures look at your system more broadly than just the CoC Program-funded projects. A critical aspect of the HEARTH Act is a focus on viewing the local homeless response as a coordinated system as opposed to projects and funding sources that all operate independently. Each measure is limited to specific project TYPES – and we'll get into that more in each video – but usually all the projects of that type in your continuum are included regardless of their funding source. There are a few exceptions and we'll note those in the individual measures.

One last general note about these measures: for you to be able to accurately assess your progress using these measures, you must ensure that your HMIS data are as complete and accurate as possible, from data entry to report generation. Data quality is critical here! That means that all homeless projects are reporting in HMIS, regardless of funding source, AND for projects in HMIS, they should be recording as much data as possible.

[take a beat; shift body position or camera angle]

So, how will we be using these measures? First, as described in the HEARTH Act, HUD will use the data as part of the selection criteria to award projects under future NOFAs. We'll carefully consider which performance measure data is most appropriate and constructive as selection criteria for awarding grants under the CoC program. We'll also evaluate how CoCs are IMPROVING their performance from year to year and take into account their unique circumstances and conditions.

Second, these measures give YOU the tools to evaluate and improve your system's performance. Because these are system-level measures, they can reveal significant information about how well your homelessness assistance programs are functioning as a whole and where improvements are necessary. In the following series of videos, we'll describe the BASICS of each measure, but we'll also provide you with some ideas about how to dive deeper into the data and analyze how the system is working for different subpopulations and project types. HUD isn't requiring these deeper analyses, but we strongly encourage you to use the system performance measures to inform system planning in whatever way possible.

When you do start to use these measures: remember to consider the populations you are serving when evaluating performance and potential system changes. Populations such as youth, victims of domestic violence, and people experiencing chronic homelessness have unique circumstances, so when you're setting performance targets at the local level, take the population you're serving into account in thinking about what a reasonable target looks like.

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We hope you find the following set of video illustrations informative. In addition to the videos, the Department has developed several resources, including a System Performance Measures Introductory Guide. HUD has also

System Performance Measures Overview

developed technical reporting specifications for HMIS vendors. All these resources are available on the HUD Exchange. Please explore the guides, watch the video series, and work closely with your vendors to understand the new reports!