

DOCUMENTING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

2016 Summit on Ending Homelessness

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Learning Objectives

- At the end of this session, you will be able to:
 - Understand HUD's definition of chronic homelessness
 - Be able to effectively document chronic status in accordance with HUD's documentation standards
 - Understand how to use HMIS to verify chronic homelessness
 - Understand best practices in gathering a client's housing history and documenting chronic homelessness

Why This Session?

- HUD implemented a new definition of chronic homelessness effective January 15, 2016
- HUD will implement new data standards on October 1, 2016 combining Data Elements “3.9 Residence Prior to Project Entry” and “3.17 Time on Streets, Emergency Shelter or Safe Haven” into a single element with two components.
- Community’s have goals of ending chronic homelessness
- Targeting PSH resources
- Understanding importance of HMIS in documenting chronicity

Summary of What Was Changed

- Four occasions of homelessness must total at least 12 months
- “Occasion” of homelessness is defined by a break of at least 7 nights not on the streets, in a shelter, or staying in a place meant for human habitation
- Stays in an institution less than 90 days do not count as a break and do count toward total time homeless

Chronically Homeless Means:

A homeless individual with a disability who:

- Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, an Emergency Shelter, or a Safe Haven; AND
- Has been homeless (as described above) continuously for at least 12 months, OR on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months;

A individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition **before** entering that facility; or

A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Chronically Homeless Means (con't):

- In sum, the basic criteria that need to be considered in order to determine if a person is chronically homeless
 - Criteria #1: History of homelessness / Current Living Situation
 - Criteria #2: Occasion/Length of Time Homeless
 - Criteria #3: Disability
- Families may be chronically homeless as long as the head of household meets all of these criteria

Criteria #1: Current Living Situation / History of Homelessness

- HUD will implement new data standards on October 1, 2016 combining Data Elements “3.9 Residence Prior to Project Entry” and “3.17 Time on Streets, Emergency Shelter or Safe Haven” into a single element with two components
- The merge elements will be labeled “3.917 Living Situation”

Criteria #1: Current Living Situation / History of Homelessness

- Example interview
- It is necessary to document where the person is currently residing
- Detroit and MCAH implemented standardized forms for this documentation, which other CoCs are welcome to use

Documentation Order of Priority

- **First level:** 3rd party documentation and/or HMIS records
- **Second level:** Intake worker observation (with documented attempts to get 3rd party)
- **Third level:** Self-certification (with documented attempts to get 3rd party or observation)
 - At least 9 months of the 12 months must be documented by something other than self certification

Detroit CoC Standardized Forms

- Chronic Homelessness Form
- Shelter Verification Form
- Outreach/Unsheltered Verification Form
- Self-Certification Form
- Verification of Disability
- HMIS Homeless Verification Form

Documenting Length of Time for 12 Months Continuous Homelessness

- Start by reviewing HMIS record
- If not 12 months in HMIS, document from other sources
- If there is evidence of 12 months continuous, do not need to ask about breaks in homelessness
- Only streets, shelter, or a Safe Haven count
 - Time in an institution may count in some circumstances

Documenting Length of Time for Occasional Homelessness

- Four (4) occasions over past three (3) years, if those occasions total at least 12 months
 - If a person is homeless 1 day in a month, that entire month can count...unless there is evidence of a break in that month

Documenting Length of Time for Occasional Homelessness

- Start with HMIS
- If not all in HMIS, document from other sources
- Review with client their homeless and housing history to identify any breaks in homelessness
- Must be at least 4 occasions that total at least 12 months in past 3 years

Documenting Breaks in Homelessness

- All breaks in homelessness may be based on client self-report
- There is no need for 3rd party documentation of breaks

Documenting Institutional Stays

- Discharge paperwork from the institution or written or oral referral from appropriate person in that institution that states the beginning and end dates of the time in the facility
- When above is not available, may use written record of attempt to get such documentation AND client's self-certification that they are exiting institution where they were there less than 90 days

MCAH Standardized Forms

- ROI (review the outreach sharing plan piece from attached document)
- Chronic Verification Report
- Documentation Spreadsheet

QUESTIONS?
