



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2023 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update (Q1 and Q2) (HSC23076) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

N/A

INFORMATION

This information report provides the Ending Chronic Homelessness system performance measure results currently available for the first half of 2023. These results represent a first step towards sector-wide data reporting as the Housing Services Division works towards comprehensive program performance measurement within the homeless-serving sector.

Background

On March 23, 2023, the Ending Chronic Homelessness (HSC23021) Report prepared by the Housing Services Division in the Healthy and Safe Communities Department provided an update on the current state of homelessness in Hamilton. Included in the report was a section called Measuring Results that outlined core performance measures for reporting back on the progress towards ending chronic homelessness. The Housing Services Division committed to reporting back on the progress towards ending chronic homelessness for the January – June 2023 timeframe, and annually thereafter.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

The chosen set of measures illustrate the performance of programs across the housing continuum and begin to demonstrate:

- How much did we do (quantity);
- How well did we do it (quality); or
- Is anyone better off (effectiveness)?

These measures align with the goal of managing coordinated access for a diverse range of housing-based supports as identified in Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework and the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. The Housing Services Division continues to engage in continuous quality improvement activities to improve reporting and make progress toward including more measures of outcomes and effectiveness of the programs providing services to people experiencing homelessness in the City of Hamilton using a results-based accountability approach. See Appendix "A" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Monitoring Framework.

The results are presented as totals across the homeless-serving sector and contain no personally identifying information. All data collection, management, and reporting is done in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act.

Relevant Consultation

The results have been provided or reviewed and confirmed by representatives from the individual reporting programs and/or organizations through email communications, the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) 4.0 Super User Group, and virtual Question and Answer sessions. See Appendix "B" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Consultations for a list of programs engaged for this reporting and engagement opportunities provided by the City of Hamilton.

The monitoring measure definitions are in alignment with data reporting best practices and consistent with Reaching Home Results reporting and homelessness data reporting approaches in other municipalities. For more information on the federal Reaching Home program see the companion report Reaching Home: Canada's Homeless Strategy Community Homelessness Report 2022-23 (HSC21044).

The expertise of people with living experience is invaluable to shaping programs, facilities, and policies in the emergency shelter sector. Positive client outcomes are a critical accountability measure, but more than that, people with living experience know how the system works, they know what their needs are, and experience the system at work every day. They can bring to light perspectives that may be unknown or unknowable at the staff or Senior Leadership level. Future reporting will endeavour to bring this perspective into identifying meaningful measures and the interpretation of the results.

Analysis

The current results represent new routine reporting and mostly represent new baselines and benchmarks for interpreting future results.

Preliminary findings suggest:

- Prevention programming within the City of Hamilton reached 6505 people at-risk of becoming homeless with program supports and financial supports. This program reach is greater than other intervention types and is in alignment with the goal of shifting focus from emergency response to preventative and longer-term homelessness solutions, but it is still below the recommended target of 9500 identified in the Coming Together to End Homelessness: Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework (July 2019).
- While most programs have a finite operational capacity (e.g. a set number of beds available or caseload spots), we continue to see high demand with most intervention types reporting increases in program reach between Q1 and Q2. The largest increases between quarters were for prevention, drop-in and emergency shelter programs.
- A substantial proportion of individuals reached by housing support programs were placed into more stable housing. Housing support programs, including transitional living, rapid rehousing, and intensive case management programs have supported 784 clients to obtain and sustain stable housing in the first two quarters of 2023 and 408 of these clients have maintained this housing when discharged from the program.

Overall, the data shows trends of increasing outreach and assistance across various programs aimed at preventing homelessness, providing emergency shelter, and assisting individuals in finding stable housing. However, some programs are below their targeted levels, while others are on track to meet or exceed the intended program reach outlined in Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework. Monitoring the performance of these programs is vital to ensuring continued progress in addressing homelessness.

See Appendix "C" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Table and Appendix "D" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Dictionary for the data results and more information about the measures.

Data Reporting Improvement Plan

To further support the implementation of a comprehensive program performance measurement within the homeless-serving sector the following actions are underway.

- 1. Work with staff at local programs to improve and support data entry into the HIFIS 4.0, particularly for drop-in, housing-focused street outreach, case management, and transitional living programs.**
 - Timeline: Q4 2023 and ongoing
 - To more fully transition drop-in and transitional living programs onto HIFIS 4.0 the City of Hamilton will be engaging with these service providers to develop data standards and data entry workflows to enhance our ability to capture information about unique clients across the homeless-serving sector inclusive of these programs.
 - To improve the completeness, coverage, and accuracy of information contained within the HIFIS 4.0 database overall the City of Hamilton will be initiating and implementing a proactive data validation and verification program and further develop data entry guidance documentation and annual training opportunities.

- 2. Evaluate the planned HIFIS 4.0 fall upgrade for local implementation to potentially take advantage of new proposed features including a diversion module and improved client demographic fields.**
 - Timeline: Q4 2023 – Q2 2024
 - The release of HIFIS version 4.0.60.1 scheduled for October 31, 2023. Enhanced features in this proposed upgrade include a new diversion module to record diversion efforts, accessibility enhancements for screen readers, a new mandatory racial identity question, an expanded gender identity question, and other bug fixes or improvements. The City of Hamilton will evaluate this upgrade both from a technical and data integration perspective to make a recommendation for local implementation. If the upgrade is recommended, an implementation plan will be developed including resources and training to staff at local service provider programs for any new data collection processes.

- 3. Implement an annual reporting cycle to Council through communication updates with focused improvement aimed at identifying performance measures that begin to shift toward demonstrating client outcomes and incorporate the voice of those with living experience.**
 - Timeline: Q2-3 2023 and ongoing
 - To support the commitment to ongoing data reporting, an annual reporting cycle will be developed. Measures will be reviewed with the aim of shifting to more meaningful performance measure within a results-based accountability approach. Improvements to the public-facing Housing and Homelessness dashboard will be identified and implemented as applicable.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Monitoring Framework

Appendix "B" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Consultations

Appendix "C" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Table

Appendix "D" to Report HSC23076 - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Dictionary