City of Hamilton
Report for Information

To:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
Date:	April 9, 2025
Report No:	HSC23076(a)
Subject/Title:	2024 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update
Ward(s) Affected:	(City Wide)

Recommendations

1) That Report HSC23076(a) respecting 2024 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- This information report provides the Ending Chronic Homelessness system performance measure results currently available up to September 2024.

- There continues to be variation from year to year in homelessness population outcomes influenced by changes in data collection and other factors such as shelter capacity and housing options.

- Program monitoring results show steady demand across various programs aimed at preventing homelessness, providing emergency shelter, and assisting individuals in finding stable housing.

- Each quarter a substantial proportion (i.e. over 60%) of individuals reached by rapid rehousing and intensive case management programs were placed into more stable housing and/or are receiving ongoing housing stability support. Housing support programs have supported 480 clients to obtain stable housing from January 2024 to September 2024.

- Ongoing efforts are needed to reduce homelessness.

Financial Considerations

This report provides information only and there are no budget impact(s) or costs associated with the recommendation.

Background

This information report provides the quarterly Ending Chronic Homelessness system performance measure results currently available up to September 2024.

On March 23, 2023, the Housing Services Division in the Healthy and Safe Communities Department committed to annual reporting on the progress towards ending chronic homelessness (HSC23021) and presented results based on the chosen measures for Q1 and Q2 of 2023 in December 2023 (HSC23076).

These measures align with a results-based accountability approach and illustrate the performance of programs across the housing continuum and demonstrate:
- How much did we do (quantity);
- How well did we do it (quality); or
- Is anyone better off (effectiveness)?

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

Analysis

The cyber security incident impacted the City of Hamilton and the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4.0) in February 2024. With significant support and collaboration between the City of Hamilton Information Technology Services, the Housing Services Division, the local agencies and organization using HIFIS 4.0, and HIFIS National, the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System database was restored on August 8, 2024, to the latest version available at that time (4.0.60.3). Since the restoration, reporting programs and/or organizations worked diligently to update the database and successfully complete this reporting as much as possible for the period of the outage. Some information remains unavailable or modified for reporting this year.

There are ongoing efforts to improve the HIFIS 4.0 application performance, functionality, and user resources for the system. To improve data entry into HIFIS 4.0, particularly for drop-in, housing-focused street outreach, and transitional living

programs, new HIFIS 4.0 user resources for participating partners available from the Housing Services Division include:

- HIFIS Data Entry Expectations
- HIFIS 4.0 User Manual
- Client common intake forms
- HIFIS User Access and Rights Policy
- 2025 HIFIS User Training Plan

The current results represent a continuation of routine reporting that begin to illustrate trends. The key findings from this reporting period are:

- There continues to be variation from year to year in homelessness population outcomes, influenced by changes in data collection, methodology, and other factors such as shelter capacity and housing options (e.g. outflow). While some indicators show improvement (e.g. new to homelessness), other indicators (like overall homelessness and chronic homelessness) are not meeting targeted goals. Ongoing efforts are needed to reduce homelessness, especially chronic homelessness.

- There were several enhancements and modifications made to prevention-related supports in 2024 that have impacted the performance results. In August 2024, the City established a Tenant Support Program providing new support to tenants via direct outreach and legal assistance to improve knowledge of tenant rights and prevent bad faith evictions. Additionally, the former Housing Stability Benefit and Rent Ready programs were streamlined into the Housing Emergency Fund, with modified eligibility requirements aimed more directly at eviction prevention and housing stabilization. Given these extensive changes to prevention focused programs, as well as other program implementation delays and results reporting challenges, further monitoring of trends is required in 2025 to ensure these programs are functioning optimally.

- The increased local investment in low-barrier drop-in programming has led to a significant increase in service interactions intended to provide support with basic needs such as accessing indoor spaces and accessing washroom/showers, food, clothing, toiletries, transportation, laundry, etc. These programs support both the homeless population and housing loss prevention and stability among the housed population locally.

- A significant number of individuals experiencing homelessness continue to access emergency shelters. Each quarter over 1000 unique individuals were provided with emergency shelter bed. These numbers are expected to grow with the ongoing expansion of the emergency shelter system in 2024-2025, including the transition of beds from temporary to permanent funding status, the addition of 192 new temporary shelter beds, and operationalization of the 80-bed temporary Barton Tiffany Shelter.

- Each quarter a substantial proportion (i.e. over 60%) of individuals reached by rapid rehousing and intensive case management programs were placed into more stable housing and/or are receiving ongoing housing stability support. Housing support programs, including transitional living, rapid rehousing, and intensive case management programs have supported 480 clients to obtain stable housing from January 2024 to September 2024.

It should be noted that this information represents snapshots in time, and that transitions to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness are not often linear. In particular, individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, living unsheltered/in encampments, or those with high acuity needs may interact with services multiple times before connecting with needed supports and successfully moving along the housing continuum. Intermittent service use can also be further interrupted by periods of instability for individuals, including those related to hospitalization for physical or mental health issues, incarceration, or interactions with other systems intricately connected with homelessness.

This reporting period includes interactions with individuals experiencing co-occurring needs who may face barriers to accessing services and sustainable housing, as well as those new to the emergency system. As a result, this information can be an underestimation of the actual outcomes of this group who have yet to realize positive supports or housing outcomes.

Overall, the data shows steady demand across various programs aimed at preventing homelessness, providing emergency shelter, and assisting individuals in finding stable housing. However, some programs intervention types are below the targeted reach 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 "A" to Report HSC23076(a) - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Table. A reporting data dictionary outlining all the reporting definitions and data collection methods is available upon request.

As next steps, the Housing Services Division will continue to review and improve the annual reporting cycle to Council with focused development aimed at identifying performance measures that begin to shift toward demonstrating client outcomes and incorporate the voice of those with lived or living experience. The 2025 data improvement plan includes implementation of the following:

- **Implementation of new policy guidance within HIFIS 4.0**
  - Timeline: Q1-3 2025
  - Includes updates and changes to the HIFIS 4.0 configuration to align with the new policies released by the Housing Services Division in 2024 including the HIFIS User Access and Rights Policy, Service Restriction

Policy for Emergency Shelters, Housing-Focused Case Management Policy – Intensive Case Management & Rapid Rehousing Programs, and Housing-Focused Case Management Policy – Shelters.

- **Implementation of a new Data Sharing Partnership Agreement and client consent process**
  - Timeline: Q1-2 2025
  - Includes revisions to the HIFIS 4.0 data sharing agreements and client consent processes to ensure they are aligned with best practices and clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of Coordinated Access and HIFIS participating partners and the uses of client information collected in HIFIS 4.0.

- **Ongoing implementation of a comprehensive HIFIS 4.0 data quality improvement initiative**
  - Timeline: 2025 and ongoing
  - To improve the completeness, coverage, and accuracy of information contained within the HIFIS 4.0 database overall the City of Hamilton continues to implement a proactive data validation and verification program and provide scheduled annual training opportunities.

Alternatives

This report provides information only and there are no alternatives for consideration with the recommendation.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

These results represent an ongoing commitment to sector-wide data reporting as the Housing Services Division continues to work towards comprehensive program performance measurement within the homeless-serving sector. Performance measurement fosters transparency and is essential to understand the effectiveness of interventions, as well as a community's overall progress towards reducing homelessness.

Previous Reports Submitted

- [Ending Chronic Homelessness (HSC23021) (City Wide) REVISED](#)
- [2023 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update (Q1 and Q2) (HSC23076) (City Wide)](#)

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 Q&A sessions. See Appendix "B" to Report HSC23076(a) - 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.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Table

Appendix B: Ending Chronic Homelessness Consultations

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