

HIFIS 4.0.60.1

Reference Guide

Version 1.1 – November 2023



Homeless Individuals and Families Information System

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About HIFIS version 4.0.60.1

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) 4.0.60.1 Reference Guide is intended to assist HIFIS Leads, HIFIS Administrators, HIFIS users, and Coordinated Access Leads utilize the new features and enhancements included in this version of HIFIS.

HIFIS version 4.0.60.1 contains a number of new features, including a new Diversion module to add diversion attempts, as well as several outreach features such as the addition of the ability to capture service locations for Goods and Services transactions and Group Activities, as well as a new Encampments module for recording encampment locations. These new features are outlined in detail in this guide.

This Reference Guide begins with information and instructions on the new Diversion module and the Outreach features included in this new version of HIFIS. This is followed by additional information on several other important changes to HIFIS, including changes to the Reaching Home Housing Continuum and Housing Status, the new racial identity field, and the addition of Coordinated Access Data Points to client profiles. The guide concludes with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section and an Annex.

HIFIS version 4.0.60.1 contains a number of other enhancements, including:

- The addition of the following VI-SPDAT assessments:
 - Adult V3
 - Family V3
 - Youth V2
- Accessibility improvements
- Improvements to the speed of the Coordinated Access module

When your community is ready to download version 4.0.60.1, or if you have any questions about HIFIS, contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre at support@hifis.ca or by phone at 1-866-324-2375.



Change Log

Document Version	Document Release Date	HIFIS Release	Changes
1.0	October 2023	4.0.60.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document published.
1.1	November 2023	4.0.60.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corrected instructions in the Diversion section.



Glossary

Term	Definition
Diversion	An intervention that helps people who are seeking access to emergency shelter to explore other safe and appropriate alternatives.
Outreach	An intervention that helps people to address their housing challenges (e.g., help with a housing plan and related service navigation) and meet immediate, basic needs (e.g., access to food and supplies) wherever they are in the community, including encampments.
Public Institution	<p>A Housing Status that refers to people living in public institutions. This specifically includes the following Housing Types in HIFIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional Facility • Hospital – Medical • Hospital – Psychiatric • Detoxification Facility • Recovery / Treatment Facility <p>Clients with the Public Institution Housing Status may be identified in HIFIS as Homeless or Housed depending on the local configuration.</p>



Diversion

Shelter diversion is a process intended to identify safe housing options for individuals or families experiencing homelessness seeking entry into emergency shelter. It is an important part of the Coordinated Access process, and its main objective is to prevent a shelter stay by finding a safe and appropriate alternative.

The Diversion module added to this version of HIFIS enables users to record diversion attempts. The module offers both a standard form option and a workflow option. The workflow option provides HIFIS users with a script that can be read to clients explaining the diversion process. In addition, this script can be customized by HIFIS administrators according to the community's needs.

Diversion Workflow ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 End Diversion

Introduction

Our aim is to learn more about your specific housing situation right now and what you need so that together we can identify the best possible way to get you a place to stay tonight and to find safe, permanent housing as quickly as possible. That might mean staying in shelter tonight, but we want to avoid that if possible. We will work with you to find a more stable alternative if we can.

Client Name ★

Family Members + -

Date and Time 📅 ⌚

Caseworker ★

Program + -

➡ Next ✖ Cancel

Figure 1: Diversion Workflow

Diversion: Instructions

How to view diversion attempts for a specific client

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Clients.
2. Using the search function or the client list, click on the name of the client whose diversion records you need to see.
3. From the Client Management menu, select Diversion.
4. The Client - Diversion List page displays the diversion attempts recorded for this client. If applicable, diversion attempts for the specific client can be recorded from this page.



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How to add a diversion attempt using the standard form option

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Diversion.
2. Click Add Diversion Attempt.
3. If applicable, use the Anonymous toggle to indicate whether the client wished to remain anonymous. If the client does not wish to remain anonymous, go to step 4. If they wish to remain anonymous, indicate their age group, gender and, if configured in your HIFIS instance, whether the client is presumed to be Indigenous or has an observed disability. Go to step 6.
4. Enter the client's name.
5. If applicable, enter the client's family members included in the diversion attempt.
6. If applicable, enter the date and time of the diversion attempt.
7. Select the Reason for Service.
8. If applicable, select where the client was referred from, where they were referred to, and use the toggle to indicate whether the client was housed safely last night. Using this toggle to select Yes will allow you to add a Housing History record using the Add Housing button, if applicable. This will automatically update the client's Housing History records.
9. Select the Caseworker.
10. If applicable, enter the number of minutes expended on the diversion attempt, select the program(s) associated with the diversion attempt, and use the toggle to indicate whether any financial assistance was provided. Using this toggle to select Yes will allow you to add an Income record using the Add Income button.
11. If applicable, click the Housing Loss Prevention button to add a Housing Loss Prevention record.
12. Select the expected diversion destination.
13. If applicable, record next steps for the client or worker.
14. Enter a scheduled follow-up date.
15. If applicable, record the client's diversion story, add comments, and use the dropdown to select the Diversion Result.
16. Click Save. You will be directed to the Edit Diversion page, where you can record information regarding Contact(s), Contributing Factors, and Goods and Services, if applicable.

How to add a diversion attempt using the workflow option

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Diversion.
2. Click Add Diversion Workflow.
3. Enter the client's name.
4. If applicable, enter the client's family members included in the diversion attempt, as well as the date and time of the diversion attempt.
5. Select the Caseworker.
6. If applicable, select the program(s) associated with the diversion attempt.
7. Click Next.
8. Select the Reason for Service.



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9. If applicable, indicate where the client was referred from, and begin to record the client's diversion story.
10. Click Next.
11. If applicable, record the client's Housing History using the Add Housing button. This will automatically update the client's Housing History records. If applicable, update the client's diversion story.
12. Click Next.
13. If applicable, record the individuals in the client's network using the Add Contact button. If applicable, update the client's diversion story.
14. Click Next.
15. If applicable, record the client's barriers to housing using the Add Contributing Factor button. This will automatically add a Contributing Factor record to the Various Factors module. If applicable, update the client's diversion story.
16. Click Next.
17. If applicable, record the client's Incomes, Expenses, Assets, and/or Debts. This will automatically update the client's Financial Profile. If applicable, update the client's diversion story.
18. Select the client's Expected Diversion Destination from the dropdown.
19. If applicable, indicate where the client was referred to.
20. If applicable, record any goods and services provided to the client using the Add Good and/or Add Service buttons.
21. If applicable, use the toggle to indicate whether financial assistance was provided to the client.
22. If applicable, use the Add Housing Loss Prevention button to add a Housing Loss Prevention record.
23. If applicable, record any next steps for the client or worker.
24. Record the Scheduled Follow-up date.
25. If applicable, enter the number of minutes expended on the diversion attempt.
26. If applicable, add comments.
27. If applicable, use the dropdown to record the Diversion Result.
28. Click End Diversion.

How to customize the diversion workflow steps

1. From the Administration menu, select Diversion Workflow steps.
2. On the Diversion Workflow Steps page, identify the step you wish to modify and click the Edit button.
3. If applicable, update the Name and the Description of the step in both English and French. The Description refers to the script that HIFIS users will see in each step of the diversion workflow option.
4. Click Save.



Outreach Features

Service providers using HIFIS often deliver services, through outreach, to people experiencing homelessness who are disconnected from other parts of the homelessness response system, including emergency shelters.

To support HIFIS users providing outreach services, several new features have been added to HIFIS. First, a new Encampments module enables HIFIS users to add and edit encampments, as well as record clients located in these encampments. Second, HIFIS users can now capture the service location of Goods and Services transactions, as well as Group Activities. HIFIS users can capture these locations using the following methods:

- Automatically capturing the user's current location
- Choosing their location on a map
- Entering coordinates

The location of these transactions and activities can be viewed on a map in the new Outreach module, which can be accessed from the Front Desk menu.

Encampments: Instructions

From the Encampments module, HIFIS users can add and edit encampments, and record clients located in these encampments.

How to add an Encampment

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Encampments.
2. On the Encampments page, click the Add Encampment button.
3. Select the Encampment Location from the dropdown.
4. Enter the Encampment Name.
5. Record the Start Date of the encampment, and if applicable, its End Date.
6. If applicable, record the encampment's Geographic Region.
7. If applicable, enter a description of the encampment.
8. If applicable, capture the encampment location using one of the three methods below:
 - Get current location
 - Choose on map
 - Coordinates
9. Click Save.

How to add clients to an encampment

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Encampments.
2. On the Encampments page, click the Edit button next to the Encampment you wish to add clients to.
3. On the Manage Encampment page, select the Clients tab.



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4. In the Client Name(s) field, type the name of the client(s) you wish to add to the encampment.

Note: A client profile must already exist in HIFIS to add a client to an encampment.

5. Select the client(s) you wish to add to the encampment.
6. Click the Add button next to the Client Name(s) field. HIFIS will automatically save your selection.
7. If applicable, use the toggle to indicate whether the client is present in the encampment.

How to add anonymous clients to an encampment

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Encampments.
2. On the Encampments page, click the Edit button next to the encampment you wish to add clients to.
3. On the Manage Encampment page, select the Clients tab.
4. In the Anonymous Clients field, enter the number of anonymous clients you wish to record.
5. Click the Add button next to the Anonymous Clients field. HIFIS will automatically save your entry.
6. If applicable, record the demographic information of the anonymous clients in the Demographics tab and click Save.

How to remove clients from an encampment

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Encampments.
2. On the Encampments page, click the Edit button next to the encampment you wish to remove clients from.
3. On the Manage Encampment page, select the Clients tab.
4. Find the client you wish to remove from the encampment and click the Remove button.

How to Edit an Encampment

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Encampments.
2. On the Encampments page, click the Edit button next to the encampment you wish to edit.
3. On the Manage Encampment page, click the Edit button.
4. On the Edit Encampment page, you can edit the existing information or add any additional information.
5. Click Save.

Outreach: Instructions

From the Outreach module, users can view transactions recorded in the Goods and Services module and Group Activities module, either using the standard list view or a map view.



Note: Goods and Services transactions and Group Activities will appear in the map view if users have captured the service location when adding the transaction or activity.

Users can display, edit, and manage these transactions from the Outreach module.

How to view the location of Goods and Services transactions and Group Activities in the Outreach module

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Outreach.
2. On the Outreach page, click the Map View button. The Goods and Services transactions and Group Activities listed in the Outreach module are now displayed on the map.

How to display, edit, and manage Goods and Services transactions and Group Activities from the Outreach module

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Outreach.
2. On the Outreach page, click the Display, Edit, or Manage button beside the Goods and Services transaction or Group Activity you wish to review.

Updates to the Reaching Home Housing Continuum in HIFIS and Housing Status

Reaching Home Housing Continuum

The Reaching Home Housing Continuum has been updated in HIFIS to include a new housing continuum category called Public Institution. This category includes the following housing types:

- Correctional Facility
- Hospital – Medical
- Hospital – Psychiatric
- Detoxification Facility
- Recovery/Treatment Facility

Note: The Housing Types listed above were previously part of the Transitional housing continuum category.

By default, clients with a Housing Type in the Public Institution continuum category will be considered Homeless. However, the HIFIS Administrator can change the continuum category roll-up value to Housed, if desired. Once this setting is configured according to your community's requirements, it is recommended to leave the setting unchanged because switching it back and forth may cause data quality issues.

How to view the Reaching Home Housing Continuum

1. From the Administration menu, select Housing Continuum.
2. Navigate to the Reaching Home / Vers un chez-soi housing continuum.
3. Select the Display button next to the housing continuum.

How to configure the roll-up value of the Public Institution housing continuum category

1. From the Administration menu, select Housing Continuum.
2. Navigate to the Reaching Home / Vers un chez-soi housing continuum.
3. Click the Manage button.
4. Locate the Public Institution housing continuum category and click the Edit button.
5. From the dropdown menu, select Housed / Logé or Homeless / En situation d'itinérance, depending on your community's requirements.
6. Click Save.

Housing Status

In HIFIS, the Housing Status feature classifies people by their current housing type based on a Housing Continuum. In previous versions of HIFIS, these statuses were:



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Homeless, Chronically Homeless (a subset of Homeless), Transitional, Housed, and Unknown.

In HIFIS version 4.0.60.1, the Housing Statuses are now:

- **Homeless:** This Housing Status indicates that a client has an active shelter stay or an active Housing History record with a Housing Type that is categorized as Homeless.
- **Transitional:** This Housing Status indicates that a client has a Housing History record with a Housing Type that is categorized as Transitional. This Housing Status can be configured to roll up to either Homeless or Housed. Days spent with this Housing Status do not count toward the federal calculation of chronic homelessness.
- **Housed:** This Housing Status indicates that a client has a Housing History record with a Housing Type that is categorized as Housed.
- **Public Institution:** This Housing Status indicates that a client has a Housing History record with a Housing Type that is categorized as Public Institution. This Housing Status can be configured to roll up to either Homeless or Housed. Days spent with this Housing Status do not count toward the federal calculation of chronic homelessness.
- **Unknown:** A Housing Status of Unknown indicates that the client does not have an active Housing History record or shelter stay.

For a complete list of the Housing Types in each category of the Reaching Home Housing Continuum in HIFIS, see [Annex A](#).

Chronic Homelessness

In HIFIS version 4.0.60.1, HIFIS will identify whether a client meets the federal definition of chronic homelessness regardless of their current Housing Status (see Housing Status changes above).

Note: Chronic homelessness refers to persistent or long-term homelessness where people experience:

- **Acute chronicity:** homelessness for at least 180 days at some point over the course of a year (not necessarily consecutive days); and/or,

- **Prolonged instability:** recurrent episodes of homelessness over three years that total at least 18 months.

In order to view this information for the client you are serving, navigate to their profile and you will now see a label in the Client Summary Box for Chronically Homeless and an indicator of Yes or No.



Racial Identity Field

Racial identity has been added as a new mandatory field in HIFIS, and it is one of the non-directly identifiable pieces of client information exported quarterly to Infrastructure Canada.

Why is Infrastructure Canada collecting this information?

Collecting demographic data regarding the racial identity of people experiencing homelessness sheds light on inequalities in the homeless-serving sector, and informs policy, analysis, research, and evaluation regarding homelessness in Canada. Communities can use this data locally to identify and begin to eliminate service inequities based on race.

What information is being collected?

When adding a new client in HIFIS, users will be required to ask the client whether they identify with any of the racial identities listed in HIFIS, including:

- Arab
- Asian – South-east
- Asian – East
- Asian – South or Indo-Caribbean
- Asian – West
- Black – African
- Black – Afro-Caribbean or Afro-latinx
- Black – Canadian/American
- Latin American
- White
- Not listed

If the client does not identify with any of these racial identities, HIFIS users can indicate that the client declined to answer, does not know, or identifies as Indigenous only.

For existing clients whose racial identity has not yet been recorded, HIFIS will display a banner in the client's profile indicating that this information is missing. HIFIS users will be able to update this information by clicking on the hyperlink in the banner.

Tips for collecting this information from clients

Collecting racial identity data is critical for data-driven decision and policy-making. The way this data is collected is also important – doing so through a person-centred approach ensures that clients feel comfortable and confident in responding to the question.

Here are some tips on how to do so:

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- Create a safe space: Ask the person if they feel comfortable answering some personal questions where they are. If they prefer, move somewhere quieter.
- Be transparent: HIFIS users should explain to clients why the data is being collected, and how it will be used. Repeat what you hear so that the person knows you are accurately recording their answers.
- Provide choice: HIFIS users must ask whether the client identifies with any of the racial identities mentioned above, but identifying with these identities is voluntary.
- HIFIS users should emphasize to clients that their response will not prevent them from accessing services, but it may highlight services they didn't know they were eligible for.
- Give the client a moment to think: Have a printout ready that lists the options. Let the person read them, and give them an option to point to it instead of saying it out loud if they wish.
- Promote self-identification: HIFIS users must not make assumptions when entering racial identity data. If they choose to identify with the racial identities listed above, clients are to self-identify.
- Be aware: There are many factors that may influence someone's reaction to the question and willingness to participate.
- Be ready: Be prepared to provide further information on culturally-specific resources that the person may be eligible to receive, if applicable.

Coordinated Access Data Points

In HIFIS version 4.0.60.1, users can view a summary of a specific client's information that would appear on the Unique Identifier List in the Coordinated Access module without having to access the module.

How to view the Coordinated Access Data Points

1. From the Front Desk menu, select Clients.
2. Select the client you are serving from the Client List or search for the client using the Client Search bar.
3. From the Client Management Menu, select Coordinated Access. This will take you to the Coordinated Access Data Points page.

There are three tabs available for viewing:

- **Client Information:** Displays demographic information as it would appear on the Unique Identifier List
- **Housing History:** Displays the client's current housing history information as it would appear on the Unique Identifier List
- **Service Planning:** Displays recent interactions with the client, as well as their income and assessment information, as they would appear on the Unique Identifier List

The Coordinated Access Data Points page summarizes the information that is captured on the Unique Identifier List for a particular client, but **does not** confirm that this client is on the list. To determine which clients are on the Unique Identifier List, it is necessary to generate the list in the Coordinated Access module. For a client to appear on the list they must:

- Have a Client State of Active
- Have an active Coordinated Access consent record
- Have a Housing Status of Homeless, Unknown, Transitional*, or Public Institution*

*Clients with Transitional or Public Institution Housing Statuses will only appear on the Unique Identifier List if the roll-up value for these categories is configured to Homeless.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Implementing HIFIS version 4.0.60.1

Why should my community implement HIFIS version 4.0.60.1?

By updating to the most recent version of HIFIS, you ensure that your community is able to utilize the latest features, enhancements, and fixes in HIFIS. Please note that all enhancements and fixes from previous versions of HIFIS are included in this version. For more information on previous versions of HIFIS, see the [HIFIS Release Notes](#).

Who do I contact with questions about this version of HIFIS?

For questions about HIFIS version 4.0.60.1, contact support@hifis.ca.

Housing Status

Do the new Diversion and Encampment modules affect a client's Housing Status?

The Diversion and Encampment modules do not affect a client's Housing Status **except** when adding/editing Housing History records in the workflow option of the Diversion module. Housing Statuses are assigned in the same way as HIFIS version 4.0.59.

I do not see Chronically Homeless as a distinct Housing Status in HIFIS version 4.0.60.1. Does HIFIS still calculate chronic homelessness?

Yes. Although Chronically Homeless was removed as a subset of the Homeless Housing Status, HIFIS still automatically calculates chronic homelessness based on a client's housing history records. A new row titled "Chronically Homeless" has been added to the Client Summary Box on each client's Client – Vitals page, which indicates whether a client is chronically homeless.

Will clients with a Housing Status of Public Institution appear on the Unique Identifier List?

Clients with a Housing Status of Public Institution will appear on the Unique Identifier List if the roll-up value of this housing continuum category has been configured to Homeless, and if the client meets the other criteria for being included on the Unique Identifier List.

How will I know whether clients with a Housing Status of Public Institution are considered by HIFIS to be Homeless or Housed?

In order to verify whether your community has configured the roll-up values of the Public Institution housing continuum category to be Homeless or Housed, contact your HIFIS Administrator.

Client State

How do activities in the new Diversion and Encampment modules affect Client State?

Recording diversion attempts and adding clients to encampments does not affect Client State.

Annex A: Reaching Home Housing Continuum in HIFIS

Housing Continuum Category	Homeless	Housed	Transitional	Public Institution
Housing Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makeshift / Street • Vehicle • Abandoned Building • Encampment / Campsite • Emergency Shelter • YMCA / YWCA • Hostel • Hotel / Motel • Couch Surfing – Staying with Friends / Family / Acquaintances • Violence Against Women – Emergency Shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-op Housing • Foster Care • Housed in Family’s House / Apartment • Home Ownership • Housed On-Reserve • Military Housing • Rooming House • Single Room Occupancy • Social / Community Housing • Rental at Market Price • Group Home • Indigenous Housing Provider • Rental at Market Price with Rent Subsidy • Room in a House • Secondary Suite • Supportive Housing • Residential care Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional Housing • Violence Against Women – Transition House • Halfway House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional Facility • Hospital – Medical • Hospital – Psychiatric • Detoxification Facility • Recovery / Treatment Facility