ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

This report is intended to allow communities in Ontario who receive HPP funding to use HIFIS data to report out on the program participants section of the HPP reporting requirements, which encompass the majority of sections 1 and 2.

Broadly speaking, the report summarizes data about which households received services associated with which Programs. It also determines the first time the household received a service like it, and from that determines whether the client was homeless or at risk of homelessness at the time, and also whether that means the client was new to HPP or a returning household.

Q&A

- What parameters are available for this report?
- What services are included in this report?
- Can you explain the Service Types parameter? Why did you include it?
- What clients are included in this report?
- How do you calculate Program Entry Date?
- How do you calculate who is new and who is ongoing?
- Help, my new and ongoing subtotals add up to more than 100%!
- How do you calculate who is homeless and who is at-risk of homelessness?
- How do you determine who is chronic?
- How do you determine who is part of the Indigenous priority population in this report?
- For the purposes of this report, what is a youth?
- How do you define a household in this report?
- What about the Provincial Transitions Priority Population? How is that captured and measured?
- Okay, but what Discharge Module should I pick when I run the report?
- But we're entering this data in more than one module.
- So how exactly is the Provincial Transitions Priority Population section populated?
- Can a household appear in more than one Program?
- What about Housing Assistance and Supportive Housing, which are supposed to be mutually exclusive?
- These numbers look too high.
- If you know the problem, why don't you address it in this report?

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

[I don't like some of the logic you applied in this report.](#)
[I found an error.](#)
[What about the other components of the HPP reporting requirements?](#)

What parameters are available for this report?

- ***Start Date***
- ***End Date***
- ***Service Providers***
- ***Programs***
- ***Service Types*** - multiple-select drop-down field which includes a list of modules in HIFIS that services are provided in
- ***Discharge Module*** - single-select drop-down field which includes 4 options:
    - Reason for Service
    - Referred From
    - Housing History
    - Life Events
- ***How should Transitional housing status be treated?*** - single-select drop-down field which includes 2 options:
    - Treat transitional as homeless
    - Treat transitional as housed
- ***How should Unknown housing status be treated?*** - single-select drop-down field which includes 4 options:
    - Treat unknown as homeless
    - Treat unknown as housed
    - Leave as unknown
    - Use earliest known status

What services are included in this report?

Services are included in the report (we'll call them **Eligible Services**) if they:

- Are at one of the selected ***Service Providers***
- Are part of one of the selected ***Programs***
- Are one of the selected ***Service Types***
- Started sometime before the report ***End Date***

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

- Are ongoing, or ended sometime after the report ***Start Date***

Can you explain the ***Service Types*** parameter? Why did you include it?

Generally speaking, you'd probably want to select all service types, but we can think of a few reasons why you might not want to select all of them.

One reason is because HIFIS considers some things to be services that, one might argue, are not actually services, things like a *Reservation* for a shelter stay. I would argue that a *Reservation* isn't itself a service, just a record of a promise that a future service would be provided. Likewise, a *Turnaway* might not be a service, nor might be providing *Storage* of belongings for a client, but HIFIS considers these all to be services.

(Side note: since you can't actually attach a Program to a Turnaway or a Storage record, they would be filtered out anyways, because they wouldn't be associated with the Program(s) you select.)

But here's another reason: sections 1.3.1 and 2.3.1 want to know how many participant households that received Housing Assistance were supported with "Long-term housing." You might run this report for your whole system and discover that 100 households received assistance under "Housing Assistance" but you might not know what the breakdown there was of short-term assistance (e.g. a damage deposit) and long-term assistance (e.g. a rent supplement. Potentially, you're issuing damage deposits through Goods & Services, and rent supplements through Housing Subsidies. We're not saying that's the way you should be doing it, but if that's the case, this parameter would be handy for you.

Finally, it was easy to include, and didn't seem like it was hurting anything, so we included it.

What clients are included in this report?

Clients are included in this report (we'll call this the **Client Pool**) if they:

- Received an **Eligible Service**, and
- Had an Active client status at some point between the ***Date Start*** and the ***Date End***

Clients who were not part of this **Client Pool** - which could include children and other dependents - are not factored into priority population groups.

For example, if there was a person in the **Client Pool**, and they themselves were not Indigenous but they had a child who was, but the child either doesn't have a file in HIFIS, or never received any services during the reporting period, or received a service but wasn't active at any point during the reporting period, the household would not be identified as being part of the **Indigenous Priority Population** because the only Indigenous person in that household was not part of the **Client Pool**.

How do you calculate Program Entry Date?

Technically, this is not defined in this report itself. This report pulls the data in the Program Entry Dataset (https://www.acreconsulting.ca/products/179868-Program-Entry-Dataset) that we also created.

The short version is that we take every program and figure out the earliest date that a client started any service associated with that program.

However, for the purposes of HPP, we take it one step further. The HPP program guidelines indicate that you are to report on the earliest date the client participated in ANY service that was funded by the Ontario MMAH, including CHPI or Homes for Youth.

So, we take a step backwards and look at the **Program Type** of a Program, which we recommend you have set to "Ontario HPP Program" or other designation, and then find the earliest date that a client received any service associated with any program that has that Program Type.

Here's an example: you have 4 programs and they are called HPP, CHPI, HPS and Reaching Home. HPP and CHPI both have the same Program Type of "Provincially Funded" and HPS and Reaching Home both have a Program Type of "Federally Funded." If a client received services in all programs, and their data looked like this:

Program	Program Type	First time they received a service
HPS	Federally Funded	September 3, 2020
CHPI	Provincially Funded	December 3, 2021
Reaching Home	Federally Funded	August 6, 2022
HPP	Provincially Funded	June 10, 2023

This report would pick up the **Program Entry Date** for the CHPI and HPP programs as December 3, 2021, and the **Program Entry Date** for the HPS and Reaching Home programs as September 3, 2020.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

How do you calculate who is new and who is ongoing?

We look at the **Program Entry Date**, and then determine if it is between the ***Date Start*** and the ***Date End***. If it is in the reporting range, then that makes the household **New** and if the **Program Entry Date** was before the ***Date Start***, the household is **Ongoing**.

Help, my new and ongoing subtotals add up to more than 100%!

1. Participants At-Risk of Homelessness

New and Ongoing Households

	Overall
# of households that were New in HPP	251
# of households that were Ongoing in HPP	112
Total	**343**

Most likely, this is easily explained. Please refer back to [How do you calculate Program Entry Date?]() and note how we are rolling up the Programs to the Program Type. We find the **Program Entry Date** for each Program Type. When you were generating the report output, did you select Programs that had more than one Program Type?

Program List

Active | Inactive | Admin

Show 10 entries   Filter items

Program Name	Services	Start Date	End Date	Time Unit	Program Type	Action
Emergency Shelter Solutions	6 Services	2017-01-01	- -	Weekly	Provincially Funded	
Housing First - ICM	4 Services	2017-08-18	- -	Monthly	RH-Funded - Housing First	
Reaching Home	8 Services	2014-01-01	- -		RH-Funded	
Shelter Diversion	14 Services	2018-06-14	2025-12-31		Funded	
Street Outreach	Goods and Services	2017-08-18	- -		Funded	

If so, households would have a different **Program Entry Date** for each Program Type, which could result in some households being both New and Ongoing.

Either update the Program Types of your HPP-related Programs, or run the report again but be more careful in your Program selection.

How do you calculate who is homeless and who is at-risk of homelessness?

One really important point we need to clarify here: the HPP reporting requirements clearly state that homeless versus at-risk status is determined **at the time of program entry**. That means we use the **Program Entry Date**, and check to see what their status was at that time.

If the client was homeless or chronically homeless, they are counted under section 2, Participants Experiencing Homelessness.

If the client was housed status, they are counted under section 1, Participants At-Risk of Homelessness.

If the client had transitional housing status, then we use the ***How should Transitional housing status be treated?*** Parameter.

- If you select "Treat transitional as homeless" then clients with transitional housing status are counted under section 2, Participants Experiencing Homelessness.
- If you select "Treat transitional as housed" then clients with transitional housing status are counted under section 1, Participants At-Risk of Homelessness.

If the client had an unknown housing status (i.e. there was no data at the time), then we use the ***How should Unknown housing status be treated?*** parameter.

- If you select "Treat unknown as homeless" then clients with unknown housing status are counted under section 2, Participants Experiencing Homelessness.
- If you select "Treat unknown as housed" then clients with unknown housing status are counted under section 1, Participants At-Risk of Homelessness.
- If you select "Leave as unknown" then clients with unknown housing status are placed in a third group, which is called Participants with Unknown Housing Status. Then you can choose what to do with that information.
- If you select "Use earliest known status" then the report will simply look up what the earliest non-unknown housing status is. Note that there may still be some unknown clients remaining - these would be clients who have no housing data whatsoever, so there is no earliest non-unknown status

available. These will also be placed in a third category called Participants with Unknown Housing Status, but in theory this should be a much smaller proportion.

How do you determine who is chronic?

The report uses the built-in HIFIS calculations to determine chronicity, with all its potential pitfalls. This means it'll be consistent with other aspects of your software and other reports, too. A client is counted under the **Chronic Priority Population** if they were part of the **Client Pool** and had a chronically homeless status at some point between the ***Start Date*** and ***End Date***, inclusive.

How do you determine who is part of the Indigenous priority population in this report?

A client is included in the **Indigenous Priority Population** if they were part of the **Client Pool** and, in the Client Vitals screen, have one of the following values in the Indigenous Status field:

- First Nations: Off-reserve
- First Nations: On-reserve
- Inuit
- Métis
- Non-Status

If you use custom look-up values, ensure that they roll up to an appropriate category. If the roll-up value is one of the listed options above, they will also be included in this indicator.

For the purposes of this report, what is a youth?

If, at the time they were part of the **Client Pool**, a client was 16-25 years of age, they are considered to be part of the **Youth Priority Population**, unless they are also part of a family and not the family head.

How do you define a household in this report?

A household is established by referencing data in the Family module (Client Information > Family). If, at any time from the Start Date of an **Eligible Service** to the End Date of an **Eligible Service**, a client is part of a Family, the Group ID field (unique identifier of the Family) is used to uniquely identify the household. Otherwise, they are considered to be a single and the ClientID field is used to uniquely identify the household.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

The number of households is the number of unique families, plus the number of unique clients who were not in families.

What about the **Provincial Transitions Priority Population**? How is that captured and measured?

That's an excellent question, and is honestly the most difficult part of this whole report. Why? A few reasons.

First, there is no clear place in HIFIS that should always be used in every case to capture the **Provincial Transitions Priority Population**. There are four clear contenders which could be used: Reason for Service, Referred From, Housing History, and Life Events. But, in the absence of guidelines from the government of Ontario, or from a software update that makes the choice easier, communities likely picked the option that was easiest to implement at the time, which would have depended on their current practices.

So, the report cannot know where to look to pull this data, unless you tell it. That's where the ***Discharge Module*** parameter comes in. You tell the report, when you run it, which of those four modules you'd like it to pull data from when calculating who is part of the **Provincial Transitions Priority Population**.

Second, even after you declare what module to use, the report still can't know what values should be counted and which shouldn't. Let's say you're using the Reason for Service field. This field, by default, includes similar options, like "Discharge from Correction / Jail." But these existing options ask about any institutions and do not differentiate between provincial, federal, or even municipal institutions. Because of this, we assume that communities would be forced to modify their drop-down menus and add custom values. Once you're adding custom values, it becomes very difficult for a general-purpose report like this to be able to interpret and say which options to count and which ones not to count. (How would we do it? We don't want to use the roll-up value, because that would include discharges from federal and provincial and municipal facilities, since they would all have the same roll-up value. And we can't really parse the text because you might use text that we didn't account for, or use abbreviations, or name specific facilities that we're not aware of. We have, however, tried our best to highlight relevant values.)

So instead, we provide a list of all the values and count the number of people you'd report on, and assume that you are smarter than a computer. You need to look at the available values and decide which one(s) should count towards the **Provincial Transitions Priority Population**, and report only on the relevant values and ignore the rest. However, we *try* to suggest the ones that might be relevant by highlighting them in yellow. We know that this isn't going to be even close to 100% correct, which is why we list all the possible values and let you choose.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

For example, your data might look something like this:

1. Participants At-Risk of Homelessness

Clients Transitioning from Provincial Institutions

Due to the nature of this data point, HIFIS has no way to determine which clients had a recent discharge from a provincial institution. Therefore, this chart displays relevant information from ***Reason for Service*** *which you can use to report on.*

	Emergency Shelter Solutions	Housing First - ICM	Reaching Home	Shelter Diversion	**All Programs**
Detoxification	0	1	0	0	**1**
Family / Relationship Breakdown	0	1	1	0	**2**
Housing - Eviction by Landlord	1	0	1	0	**2**
Housing - Eviction by Other	0	0	0	1	**1**

You would be able to see the number of households with each value. You'd decide which values to count; in this example you might want to count Detoxification only. Then use the values to report on the **Provincial Transitions Priority Population**, or add up multiple rows if necessary. Note that each household appears in each row one time, but a household could appear in more than one row if they have more than one applicable value.

Okay, but what ***Discharge Module*** should I pick when I run the report?

The short version is: wherever you expect your data to be. And if you think it might be in more than one place, you could run the report for multiple ***Discharge Modules*** but keep in mind that clients could be duplicated if you do that.

If you're instead thinking about the future, and saying, hmm, we were winging it last year but this year we want to be more intentional, we recommend using Housing History.

Why? Housing History is a very versatile, multi-purpose module. It's used to track housing transitions, and figure out who is unsheltered, and discover pathways into homelessness, and calculate chronicity. Because these are all very important, it's likely that you're already encouraging your staff to use it robustly (if you're not, you should be). Also storing this information in the Housing History is just doubling down on an already useful, already utilized part of HIFIS that will result in many cascading benefits.

Reason for Service is another logical place to get this data, particularly because the province wants to know about immediate discharges, so asking "why are you here requiring service" gets to that immediacy. And the Reason for Service field is mandatory for many modules, but not all of them. Case Management and Housing Placements are notable among the modules in which Reason for Service is not mandatory.

The Referred From field is also pretty logical, if you think about it differently: what institution did you recently come from? But this requires you to have an exhaustive list of nearby institutions, and our report would be unable to know which ones are provincial and which are municipal or federal (that's not a problem though; you could figure it out). Furthermore, it's not a mandatory field by default, and there are challenges with making it mandatory - notably, what if the client wasn't referred from anywhere? Also, like Reason for Service, this field doesn't appear in Case Management or Housing Placements, among other modules.

Finally, the Life Events module is also an okay place to get this information - a stay in an institution is certainly a relevant event in the client's life. But it's less commonly used, and less broadly useful than the Housing History module, so you could end up with less complete data.

But we're entering this data in more than one module.

That's probably not a good idea, as is not giving staff guidance on where you expect them to put this information.

Let's say that Ann the staff diligently records that a client has a Reason for Service of "Discharge from Hospital" and thinks that she's done her job well. Meanwhile, Bonny has been told to put everything in the Housing History, including time spent in hospitals. And Carla didn't receive any training on what to do in this situation, so she looks around and sees that there's an option to record time in health facilities as Life Events.

Now let's say you want to approach a local hospital about discharge planning, and your boss tells you to put together a presentation with data to show how many people are being discharged into homelessness… how exactly would you calculate it? You could run a report that summarizes the Reasons for Service, but that would only get the clients Ann served, and not ones that Bonny or Carla helped. You could summarize Life Events, but that would only get Carla's clients… and so on.

Then think about it from the perspective of a front line staff. Carla thinks that this information should be in the Life Events module, so if she gets a client referred to her, she might check the Life Events module only and then incorrectly assume that they weren't recently discharged from a hospital. Or maybe Bonny would see a client that Ann previously assisted and start complaining about other staff not doing their jobs properly.

Recording the same kind of data in the same place every time is a data quality principle known as **Consistency** and it's very important. If people are entering the same sort of data in multiple places, then nobody knows where they should be looking to find the data, and it would appear that there is a lot of incomplete data.

We strongly encourage you to pick one method to enter any given piece of data, and stick with it across the board.

And no, a better solution is not to enter the data in twice (i.e. tell staff to add it as a Life Event AND a Housing History record). You're asking staff to do something redundant and they will notice! In a best case scenario, many staff will diligently enter the data in two different places as you instructed, but you're now doubling the amount of data entry work they have to do, which limits the amount of time they can spend assisting clients (or causes them to work overtime and get burned out more quickly). But in a more realistic scenario, staff are likely to only enter the data in one of the two places (the one that's easier/faster), or look at the requirement and say, "I don't have time for this right now, I'll get to it later" and never do it at all.

But if you've currently got data in more than one module, you could run the report more than once and select a different ***Discharge Module*** each time. However, this will not tell you which clients are being double counted across reports (i.e. this report doesn't tell you how many have a particular Reason For Service and also a particular Housing History record). We suggest you probably keep the numbers that give you the highest values, since this probably is the module with the most complete data, as opposed to adding them together.

So how exactly is the Provincial Transitions Priority Population section populated?

Reason for Service: if the client received an **Eligible Service** with the applicable Reason for Service value.

Referred From: if the client received an **Eligible Service** with the applicable Referred From value.

Housing History: if the client had a Housing History record with the applicable Housing Type value, that ended on the same date that an **Eligible Service** started.

Life Events: if the client had a Life Event record with the applicable Life Event Type value, that ended on the same date that an **Eligible Service** started.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

Can a household appear in more than one Program?

Absolutely. A household, for example, that stayed at an emergency shelter ("Emergency Shelter Solutions" program) could also have received Community Outreach and Support services and also Housing Assistance services quite legally.

The report just looks up to see if there were any **Eligible Services** provided to a particular household within a given program. If they find any, the household will be counted.

What about Housing Assistance and Supportive Housing, which are supposed to be mutually exclusive?

Great question. The short answer is this report allows households to appear in both categories.

Why, you might ask? There's a few reasons. We've given it a lot of thought!

First, the rules are really vague about the mutual-exclusiveness of these two categories. For example, what if a client receives only Housing Assistance for a period of 3 or 6 months, then it doesn't work out, and then they get moved to a Supportive Housing program? We believe that the intent of the reporting rules is that you can't count the *same service* as both Supportive Housing and Housing Assistance. But if the same client or household receives two different types of assistance in the same reporting period, those should both be reported. Otherwise, the interpretation would be something like "if a client has ever received Housing Assistance, they are now ineligible for Supportive Housing services, forever" and vice versa. That doesn't seem right.

Second, we could put in logic checks to say that if a client was in both programs at the same time, only one should be counted. But which one? There's really no way for a standardized report like this one to know the program rules you're applying locally. Should Supportive Housing supercede Housing Assistance, or the other way around? Should the report pull the first program they were enrolled in? How about the one they were in for longer? No hard-and-fast programming rule would be able to correctly handle these situations.

Furthermore, the HPP rules apply to those issuing the services, so to a large extent, the onus is on individual service providers to indicate which program a given service was funded through. If a service provider enters some data incorrectly, or attributes a service to the wrong program, it's not up to the report to sort that out. The report accurately summarizes and reflects the data that has been entered into HIFIS, which may or may not accurately reflect the real world.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

These numbers look too high.

Ah, yes. We thought you might say that.

Some communities have a data quality challenge where staff are frequently forgetting to - or not being asked to - close off long-term services. In particular, these include Case Management, Housing Placements, Housing Loss Prevention, and Housing Subsidies. If you open a Case file in 2021, for example, and it has no end date, then it looks like the service continues into 2022 and 2023. This would be counted as a client that you served in 2022 and also a client that you served in 2023. Similarly, Housing Placements and Housing Loss Prevention records are open until someone records a Final Follow-Up, which is something that not all staff do regularly.

If you know the problem, why don't you address it in this report?

We are addressing it, to a certain extent, by filtering out clients who were inactive during the whole reporting period. See [What clients are included in this report?]

Why aren't we doing more, though? A couple reasons.

First, because this is supposed to be a general report that works for many communities. By virtue of it being a general report, we have to make assumptions about how the software is being used. In particular, we assume that the software is being used as intended. And, the intended use of the software is to open a Case file when you begin case management with a client and close the case file when you stop providing case management services to the client.

The second reason is because it's really hard to apply a different logic that does account for ongoing services. For example, instead of using the Case Management open and close dates, we could look up whether any Sessions were provided during the reporting period instead, to decide whether the Case Management file should be included. But some providers use Case Comments instead of Case Sessions, or they keep their notes in a software program outside of HIFIS and only use HIFIS to track whether the case file is open or closed. So there's no better solution that works in a higher percentage of cases. Similarly, there's not much activity that usually happens within a Housing Placement or a Housing Loss Prevention file, and there's actually no activity that happens within a Housing Subsidy, so we don't have a better proxy to use in either of those cases.

Therefore, we are going with a clear rule that supports the way the software is intended to be used.

ACRE Consulting's Unofficial HPP Report

Program Participants

I don't like some of the logic you applied in this report.

Not everyone is going to agree with every interpretation in this report, so we're not surprised to hear you say that. We tried here to balance making a versatile report that would have broad applicability across many communities with one that's easy enough to understand where the data is coming from and also with keeping the runtime manageable.

But if the end result isn't satisfactory to you, we're happy to make a version specifically tailored to your community. Please get in touch with us to discuss what you'd like to see done differently!

I found an error.

Oh no, we're sorry to hear that! We tested this report extensively and *believe* that it works properly, but it's always possible we missed something. Please send an email to ali@acreconsulting.ca and inform us what is wrong. We might need to get in touch with some follow-up questions. If there is an error in the report, we'll fix it and provide you with a new version at no additional cost.

However, please note that the issue you see may not actually be the result of an error, just a difference in logical assumptions (see I don't like some of the logic you applied in this report), or the result of your community's data entry practices. By all means reach out and tell us what the issue is, but if it's not actually an error on our part (i.e. the report is working as we intended, just not how you prefer), then we might not consider it something that needs fixing. However, we're happy to make a version specifically tailored to your community. Please get in touch with us to discuss what you'd like to see done differently!

What about the other components of the HPP reporting requirements?

Check out https://www.acreconsulting.ca/hpp-ontario to see what else we have to offer!