

HIFIS DATA SHARING PROTOCOL

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is a database that stores information collected by Service Providers within the Housing Stability System in the Region of Waterloo.

The HIFIS Data Sharing Protocol applies to all HIFIS Users in the Region of Waterloo.

Data Sharing Principles:

The HIFIS Data Sharing Protocol is built upon the following guiding principles:

- Sharing information increases service system and agency accountability.
- Sharing information provides opportunities to more effectively serve clients. For example, it may help to identify gaps in services.
- Access to client information is based on a client's informed consent and legal restrictions among Service Providers.
- Staff only access client information on a need-to-know basis – staff will not access it unless it is necessary for the performance of their work. Service Providers will ensure that their staff understand these limits.
- Clients have the right to personal privacy without fear of reprisal, discrimination or the withholding of services.
- Service Providers are committed to reviewing data collection and data sharing practices on an ongoing basis to ensure that these practices do not undermine the principles of accountability, service effectiveness and benefit to the client.

Summary of Service Provider Responsibilities:

General:

- All HIFIS Users must comply with the protocols described in the HIFIS Data Entry and Administrator Guide.
- One representative from each organization will attend and participate in all Training and Technology Working Group meetings and training. This representative will follow any requirements outlined in the "Training and Technology Working Group Terms of Reference".
- Each Service Provider is expected to continue to be accountable for compliance with all applicable legislation within the HIFIS 4 environment.

Data Collection and Consent:

- All HIFIS Users must complete the Common Intake/Consent Form for any new clients entering the Housing Stability System.
- All HIFIS Users must follow the consent protocols described in the Data Entry and Administrator Guide.
- Service Providers shall not record any information in HIFIS that is outside their legal scope of authority.

Data Management:

- Each Service Provider must assess data integrity on a monthly basis following the protocols described in the HIFIS Data Integrity Guide.

Reporting:

- Internal HIFIS training information (the number of hours and number of people trained) must be sent within the first week of the month to the Social Planning Associate at the Region of Waterloo who is the HIFIS lead for each program area (as identified in the “Training and Technology Working Group Terms of Reference”).
- Additional data, reports, and participation in evaluation activities may be requested from time to time. Programs are required to fulfill these requests.

Privacy:

- Service Providers must adhere to all applicable privacy legislation, including the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Any information shared between Service Providers and the Region about clients will be in de-identified and/or aggregate form in almost all cases. This means that personal, identifying data is not shared with the Region. Exceptions include, billing for motels under the “Emergency Shelter Referral Protocol” or when conferencing about a specific individual or family, for example.

Summary of Region of Waterloo Responsibilities:

- The Region is the Community Coordinator for HIFIS. As such, the Region is responsible for creating and implementing an annual work plan to:
 - Provide training and technical support.
 - Support the most recent version of HIFIS and support Service Providers to transition to new versions, as applicable.
 - Facilitate Training and Technology Working Group meetings.
 - Coordinate the collection of client information.
 - Collect and analyze data to support indicator development related to the local 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.
 - Report outcomes to the community, the HPS Community Advisory Board, the Housing Stability System, and funders.
 - Support research about emerging and promising practices.
 - Use data to inform decision-making regarding policy and program directions.
 - Encourage information sharing and partnership-building within the Housing Stability System.
 - Leverage HIFIS as a tool to better connect with other systems in the community.
 - Share data, learnings, and promising practices with other communities.
 - Regularly test the system to ensure that HIFIS 4 privacy controls are functioning.
- The Region will ensure confidentiality of information. The Region will not share any identifying data without client consent.
- The Region will develop reports to access data that meets local data needs and assists Programs with operations and planning.
- The Region will ensure participant information is stored securely.