



Waterloo Region By-Name List Scorecard Scoring Rationale for Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) August 2017

* Note, the “housing stability system” includes all programs where 50% or more of their activities are focused on supporting people to find, establish and/or keep their housing (e.g., street outreach, emergency shelters, housing help centers, diversion programs, transitional housing, rapid re-housing programs, housing first programs and permanent supportive housing)

1. List all known individuals

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Scoring Rationale:

Our Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) list currently includes all known single adults, youth and families with medium (4-7) and high (8+) acuity according to VI-SPDAT, including:

- Those living unsheltered/in a place not meant for human habitation (*street outreach in Cambridge piloting mapping hotspots and establishing a regular schedule of visits and Kitchener-Waterloo Street Outreach primary focus on downtown areas with some hotspot checks based on street intel and areas otherwise brought to their attention*).
- Those in shelters (*all six homeless shelters funded through the Region make referrals*), seasonal or overflow beds (*no seasonal shelters*), or motel (*those paid by the Region through referral protocol*).
- Individuals in transitional housing (*Marillac transitional housing for young pregnant and parenting women funded by Region make referrals*).
- Individuals on the list who are entering an institution, e.g. jail or hospital, where they will remain for 90 days or fewer; if stay exceeds 90 days, their status will be changed (*when known by housing stability system that they have entered an institution*).
- Individuals experiencing hidden homelessness (provisionally housed individuals, couch surfing) (*when they make a connection with the housing stability system*).

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Implement HIFIS 4 across the housing stability system to have a By-Name List of everyone experiencing homelessness (including those with low acuity and those not yet assessed) that is updated with greater frequency (even more real-time).
- Establish written protocols for housing stability system street outreach works together with mental health street outreach and Sanguen Health Centre van program to map hot spot areas and establish a regular schedule of visits and referrals across the entire Region. Ensure all those living in unsheltered/places not

meant for human habitation are counted for list (without any identifying information).

- Establish written protocols with time-limited/transitional housing programs outside the housing stability system (i.e., St. Monica House, Saginaw/Ancora, mental health respite, Withdrawal Management, and residential treatment programs) are making referrals directly or through street outreach when someone has a history of homelessness.

2. Implement an inactivity policy

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Scoring Rational:

Our community has established a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to specify the number of days of inactivity at which an individual or household's status will be changed to inactive. This SOP also details the regular efforts of outreach to seek out individuals who are approaching the 90 days of inactivity to prevent removal where the individual remains actively homeless. The inactivity policy has been included in Appendix A.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Review and update the SOP at least annually.
- Continue to improve system capacity to implement the policy.

3. Track status changes

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Scoring Rational:

The PATHS list tracks the "homeless status," or what we label "most recent sheltering status," of all people experiencing homelessness using the following categories: unsheltered/camping, emergency sheltered, incarcerated, in hospital/treatment, and couch surfing. Additionally, an individual's status is changed to indicate when they are permanently housed and when they become inactive. The date of last update is changed to reflect any updates made to the most recent sheltering status.

Note: for the purposes of ensuring data accuracy and balanced data, when someone is removed from the list for permanent housing for any month other than the present month, the removal date should be the date they moved into housing. Any data tracking documents we have should reflect that change, as should our 20K Homes reporting (20K Homes should be notified of the retroactive change in data). Additionally, there should be a caveat made when reporting data publicly that the data can shift and change based on when information is received that affects in-flow and outflow for months previous.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Review and update the SOP at least annually

4. Coordinate outreach coverage

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Our community geographic area is 75-89% covered by street outreach. The Cambridge team has begun to operate in a documented and coordinated way including some hot-spotting of areas with a high concentration of individuals experiencing homelessness with the goal of covering the geographic area 100%. In Kitchener-Waterloo and surrounding areas, efforts are not as coordinated or systematic but outreach appears to be operating very effectively. For example, when we get calls about individuals experiencing homelessness in an area of the city, outreach staff always seem to already know about that person and are connected with them. Following the housing first program redesign in the Region, the intention will be to implement a documented and coordinated outreach system.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Work towards 100% coordinated, systematic, and documented coverage by street outreach in coordination with other community services.

5. Maximize provider participation

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As the Service Manager, we fund all providers with the mandate of ending homelessness within our Housing Stability System. As such, 100% of providers are reporting data into PATHS. Additionally, we are in the early stages of waitlist planning with other sectors (e.g. Mental Health and Addictions, Violence Against Women) that interact with the Housing Stability System because of the common individuals we serve.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Coordinated waitlists and access to housing support services with other sectors (e.g., Mental Health and Addictions, Violence Against Women, Developmental Services etc.) where we are serving common clients and/or there are overlapping mandates.

6. Include unique identifier

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PATHS includes a unique identifier to both prevent duplication of records and to protect the privacy of those on the PATHS list. Once PATHS moves into HIFIS, this practice will continue through a HIFIS ID being assigned to everyone on the BNL. The current Excel-based unique identifier consists of the first two letters of the person's first and last name followed by the month and year of their birth (e.g. John Smith with DOB of March 31, 1989 would have a unique identifier of JoSm0389)

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Migration of By-Name List into HIFIS 4 and system-wide implementation of HIFIS 4.

7. Track newly identified individuals

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PATHS tracks the total number of newly identified individuals by categorizing them as “new” (as opposed to “returned” to list) and ensuring their date of addition to the PATHS list has been entered. These two steps (new and date of addition) allow the list to be filtered for those individuals assessed and added to the PATHS list for the first time in that month.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Migration of By-Name List into HIFIS 4 and system-wide implementation of HIFIS 4.

8. Track without a full assessment

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Within privacy legislation, we are able to track only those who consent to being on our By-Name List. Those currently refusing to complete an assessment (VI-SPDAT or SPDAT) are still added as long as they have provided consent to be added to PATHS - indicated as “documented refusals” on PATHS.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- The system-wide implementation of HIFIS 4 will allow us to better track everyone regardless of whether they have completed an assessment (who has provided consent to be added in HIFIS).
- Work towards 100% coordinated, systematic, and documented coverage by street outreach in coordination with other community services.
- Continue to include people on PATHS who have not yet completed an assessment.
- Continue to increase system capacity to complete assessments.

9. Track chronic homelessness after initial assessment

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Our PATHS list tracks chronic homelessness in two different ways: 1) chronic at addition to PATHS; and 2) chronic while on PATHS (auto-calculated based on date of addition to PATHS and current date, plus the length of the current episode as of the date added). For example, if someone is added to PATHS with a current episode lasting 3 months, based on the auto-calculation they would flip to chronic 3 months after addition to PATHS.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- HIFIS will automatically provide the calculation for chronic status. Migration of By-Name List into HIFIS 4 and system-wide implementation of HIFIS 4.

10.Track returns to list

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The PATHS list tracks individuals experiencing homelessness who returned from inactive to active by adding them back onto the list for reason returned – reengaged. Individuals who return to the list after being housed are added back onto the list for reason returned – lost housing. Individuals who return to the PATHS list for unknown reasons are added back onto the list for reason returned – don't know. The differences between these three reasons for returning to the list are helpful for systems improvement, e.g. returns to homelessness for those who have housed themselves from the list.

For the purposes of ensuring data accuracy and balanced data, it is imperative that when someone is added back onto PATHS at least 30 days following their removal, that the date of addition to PATHS is changed to reflect the date they are added back onto the list.

Areas for Further Quality Improvement/Sustainability:

- Ensure we are entering data into HIFIS 4 (once implemented) in such a way as to capture this information.

Total Score

10/10

Appendix A: Inactivity Standard Operating Procedure

 Region of Waterloo	Housing Services Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS)	Section #	Policy #
		Approval Date:	Revision Date:
Title:	Inactivity		
Responsibility:	Region Housing Services PATHS Planner		
Applies to:			

Policy Statement:

The Inactivity Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is critical to ensuring the Prioritized Access to Housing Support (“PATHS”) list remains a real-time priority list, and that the matching and housing support agreement processes are able to be completed as quickly as possible.

Background:

To end an episode of homelessness as quickly as possible, it is important to ensure that Outreach, Emergency Shelter providers and Transition Workers have the ability to connect with individuals and families as soon as a vacancy is available. Without an inactivity SOP, the Coordinated Access System can experience delays in the matching and housing support agreement processes because of the time spent searching for individuals and families in the community, and the difficulty in determining whether they are still in need of housing. In some situations, individuals and families may have self-resolved their housing crisis or relocated to another community.

Operating Details:

A conscious effort is made to identify and reach out to all individuals and families approaching the 90-day inactivity threshold. If an individual or family has had no contact with Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Transition Workers or any other Housing Stability System access points for 90 days, and they have had no shelter stays in HIFIS for the past 3 months, the individual or family will have their status changed to inactive. If an individual or family who has been removed from the PATHS list makes contact with the Housing Stability System including Outreach, Emergency Shelter, and/or Transition Workers, they are added back onto the PATHS list for “returned – reengaged.”