Rural Homelessness Data Collection and Utilization 201

Southern Conference on Homelessness and Housing

Chris Pitcher, Senior Technical Specialist
Heather Dillashaw, Technical Specialist

November 15, 2018
3:45-4:45
Night Reef I

Learning Objectives

- Identify the challenges and solutions of HMIS participation and coverage in rural CoC and HMIS.

- Identify data analysis opportunities presented by the coordinated entry process.

- Identify data analysis opportunities presented by the HUD System Performance Measures.

ICF

Rural Homeless:
Data Collection and Utilization

The Rural Context

- HMIS Participation and coverage is difficult in rural communities:
  - Agencies have varied missions, not just ending homelessness

  - Prevalence of faith-based providers

  - Shelter is provided in hotel/motel or dedicated to DV

  - SSVF providers cover vast areas and can even cross state lines

  - Homelessness is often hidden or does not meet HUD definitions

  - "We take care of our own"

The Rural Context

- HMIS participation is critical to accurate for a CoC to understand the nature and scope of homelessness
    - Reporting to the federal partners

    - Participation in the LSA

    - Score on the CoC Application

    - Proper CES operation (close side doors)

ICF

The Rural Context

- Strategies to Increase participation and coverage:
  - Take the willing convince the unwilling
  - Show the value of data
  - Demonstrate success (CES houses people quicker)
  - Be persistent
  - Use data at all CoC and committee meetings to support the activities being discussed
  - Engage varied stakeholders to expand HMIS reach beyond traditional providers
  - Diversify HMIS funding and offer non-participating agencies reduced costs or free access
  - Problem Solving: Provide a technological solution to their issues
  - Talk, meet and go out of your way
  - Provide support and customer service

ICF

Rural Homeless:
Coordinated Entry System Analysis

Coordinated Entry System Context

- **Data is critical to CES operation**
  - Access
  - Assessment
  - Prioritization List management
  - Referral and Placement

- **Data management will assure success**
  - HUD does not require you to share data for CES
  - How can CES be successful without managing your data in a shared environment?

- **CES Data is new and underused**
  - Use the data you have: are your access points consistent, does the assessment tool meet your needs, what is the average wait

Monitoring: Data Management

- Monitoring data management practices (specifically the data quality related to timeliness, accuracy, and completeness) streamlines the data collection and referral processes, and ensures that households are quickly referred to appropriate housing resources.

- **Questions to consider:**
  - Is intake and assessment data entered in a complete, timely, and accurate manner?
  - Is consent obtained and documented prior to sharing household data within the Coordinated Entry System?
  - Are necessary trainings completed by appropriate staff prior to managing or supporting various components of the Coordinated Entry System, including:
    - Privacy
    - Security
    - Data Quality
    - Coordinated Entry operating policies and procedures, as necessary

Types of Evaluation

- **Process Evaluation**
  - Demonstrates of the System is working as intended
    - Are wait times reduced for the most vulnerable households?
    - Is access to services simplified and streamlined?

- **Outcomes Evaluation**
  - Demonstrates improved outcomes for households served by the System
    - System Performance Measures
    - Appropriateness of project referrals

- **Impact Evaluation**
  - Demonstrates how processes impact outcomes and measures system-level change
    - Provides basis for policy changes (Medicaid to support PSH services)
    - Provides basis for funding decisions (reallocation, implementation of new program models)

Evaluation: Access Points

- Evaluating access points can determine if the Coordinated Entry System provides full coverage across the CoC, if adequate capacity exists at each access point to quickly and accurately assess households, and if the access points effectively support assessment and referral processes for all sub-populations.

- **Questions to consider:**

  - Do access points administer the standardized assessment tool with fidelity and collect valid and reliable results across sub-populations and across various access points?

  - Do households entering the system from various access points experience the same or different rates of:
    - Referral attainment
    - Returns to homelessness

Evaluation: Standardized Assessment Tool

- **Assessment tools and processes should be designed to:**
  - Collect the information necessary to determine severity of service needs
  - Determine eligibility for housing and related services
  - Provide meaningful recommendations to housing options

- **Questions to consider:**
  - Does the assessment tool return valid and reliable results across sub-populations and across various access points?
  - Is the assessment tool reflective of the available housing interventions in the community?
  - Does the assessment tool complement other data collection processes in order to reduce the need for households to provide information?
  - Are households that are diverted, or referred to prevention services, experiencing re-entries into the System?

Evaluation: Referral Process

- **Evaluating the referral process can identify system capacity needs, and inform levels of involvement and responsiveness across participating providers.**
- **Questions to consider:**
  - Is there variation in terms of length of time on wait list or referral attainment in terms of age, race, household composition (size, number of children, age of children, etc.), sexual orientation, gender identity or other factors?
  - How long do households wait to receive assistance following assessment by project type?
  - Does additional information need to be collected to ensure appropriate referrals to providers and projects?

Evaluation: Performance Measurement

- Coordinated Entry Systems provide communities with input, output, and outcome data about the nature and extent of homelessness that has not previously been available.

- **Provides communities with performance data in addition to System Performance Measures:**

  - Length of time persons remain homeless
  - Returns to homelessness
  - Number of homeless persons
  - Employment and income growth
  - First time homeless households
  - Successful PH placement from street outreach

- **Questions to consider:**

  - Are the most vulnerable households with the most severe service needs and longest histories of homelessness quickly connected to permanent housing resources?
  - Are households accessing housing faster after CES implementation?

Evaluation: Systems Change

- Evaluating community-level systems change can inform ongoing stakeholder planning, facilitate linkages to mainstream resources, and leverage additional federal, state, and local funding to support housing options for homeless households.

- **Questions to consider:**
  - How does descriptive data that is collected about households (demographics, prioritization score/determination) and performance data (number of intakes, length of time from assessment to permanent housing enrollment) inform changes to:
    - Coordinated Entry process and protocols
    - Policies and procedures
    - Resource allocation
  - What are the types and frequencies of overlap between the CoC and:
    - Correctional systems and Hospitals and physical health providers

Rural Homeless:
HUD System Performance Measure Analysis

What is System-level Performance?

- CoCs are charged with designing a local **"system"** to assist people experiencing homelessness in their area
- The McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the HEARTH Act, is **broadening the federal performance paradigm**
- System performance creates **accountability** for how well the **entire CoC** serves people experiencing homelessness

ICF

Purpose of System Performance Measures

- Ensure common understanding of system intent and goals, along with the projects that make up the CoC's system
- Focus on measuring the cumulative impact of programs, not just their individual impact
- Help CoCs gauge their progress toward preventing and ending homelessness
- Identify areas for improvement
- Meet HEARTH requirements

HUD System Performance Measures

- **Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless**
- **Measure 2a: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to PH Return to Homelessness (6-12 months)**
- **Measure 2b: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to PH Return to Homelessness (2 years)**
- **Measure 3: Number of Homeless Persons**
- **Measure 4: Employment and Income Growth for Homeless Persons in CoC-funded Projects**
- **Measure 5: Number of Persons who Became Homeless for the First Time**

ICF

HUD System Performance Measures

- ~~Measure 6: Homeless Prevention an Housing Placement of Persons Defined by Category 3 of HUD's Homeless Definition~~
- ~~Measure 6a: Preventing Returns to Homelessness within 6-12 months among this subset of Families and Youth~~
- ~~Measure 6b: Preventing Returns to Homelessness within 24 months among this subset of Families and Youth~~
- ~~Measure 6c: Successful Housing Placement Among This Subset of Families and Youth~~
- **Measure 7a: Successful Placement from Street Outreach**
- **Measure 7b: Successful Placement in or Retention of PH**

ICF

HUD System Performance Measures

- **When working to make Data Quality a central part of the CoC and HMIS efforts, consider the impact that poor data quality has on the HUD System Performance Measures**
  - Has your CoC carefully reviewed the SPM data submitted this year?
  - Were there any problem issues with your data that may have lead to inaccurate reporting?
  - Have you considered if you will resubmit the data?

ICF

HUD System Performance Measures

- **CoC and HMIS Lead should work together to identify and resolve any potential data quality issues related to:**
  - Project set up
  - Client de-duplication across the system
  - Client project enrollment data (entry/exit dates, destination, residential move-in date

ICF

HUD SPM Analysis

- **Length of time persons remain homeless**
  - Reduced LOS in ES, SH and TH
- **Homeless re-entries following exits to PH**
  - Measured over 6-12 month or 12-24 month timeframes
- **Change in employment income, cash and non-cash income**
- **Change in exits to permanent housing destinations**

ICF

HUD SPM Analysis

- Implement diversion practices to address the number of folks becoming homeless for the first time (Metric #5 a)

- Implement diversion practices to address the increase of total persons in Emergency Shelter (Metric #3 b)

- Incorporate diversion practices into Coordinated Entry System protocols for every access point with a phased assessment process that identifies households seeking shelter who are eligible for diversion services

ICF

HUD SPM Analysis

- Increase street outreach programs to have an impact on the low amount of exits from street outreach programs (Metric #2 b)

- Increase street outreach program coverage and coordination through the Coordinated Entry System

- Identify creative funding sources that can support street outreach efforts in rural areas and may need to consider a co-located service model

ICF

HUD SPM Analysis

- Increase permanent housing through the implementation of the housing mitigation fund and deployment of the rural or state-level landlord program (Metric #2 a)

- Improve HMIS data quality and CoC-wide HMIS coverage to increase confidence in the system performance measure data that will provide more consistent and confident data for system-level analysis

- Focus on common data challenges such as missing exit date or housing move in date.

ICF

HUD SPM Analysis

- Develop CoC-wide practices for increasing earned and non-earned income through the identification of programs that are performing highest on this measure (Metric #4 a b) and replicate their program model

- Dialogue with programs regarding connection to mainstream resources including the SOAR program

- Identify and target the top 5 longest stayers and focus coordinated entry system and case conferencing efforts on permanently housing the longest stayers to bring down the average and median length of time homeless (Metric #1 a b c)

ICF

Questions, Comments and Discussion

ICF

- **Chris Pitcher**
  chris.pitcher@icf.com
  (202) 374-3380

- **Heather Dillashaw**
  heather.Dillashaw@icf.com
  (828) 424-0455