Homeless Individuals and Families Information System 4

A comprehensive platform to allow coordinated service delivery

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Overview

- Homeless Individuals & Families Information System (HIFIS) History

- HIFIS 4 Benefits

- Supporting a Coordinated Approach

- Key Considerations to a Successful Implementation

- Related Information & Contacts

Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

- HIFIS is a national homelessness information system that:

  o helps service providers with their day-to-day operations and planning activities through a free platform

  o includes features to track and support the management of some Housing First activities

  o collects data on shelter use to help develop a national portrait of homelessness and community trends

From a data collection tool to a full-scale web-based community platform
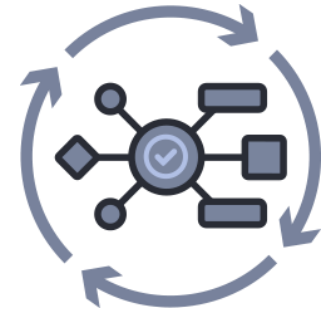
1999	2002	2006	2015
HIFIS 1	**HIFIS 2**	**HIFIS 3**	**HIFIS 4**
A desktop application tool to collect data for the Government of Canada	*A more advanced data collection tool with expanded functionalities*	*Community-driven design, ongoing improvements, and online training*	*Web-based, user-friendly, configurable application for improved service coordination and data management*

A community platform that promotes Coordinated Access amongst service providers.

- Works within a web environment

- Available for service providers across the country

- Designed to support service providers' operational activities and collect real-time anonymized information, including non-identifiable data from Violence Against Women emergency shelters

- Supports coordination among the spectrum of homelessness-related services, including intake and case management

- Captures data into reports, and increases the ability to make business decisions

Supporting a Coordinated Approach

A coordinated approach enables a strong network of support for clients from the combined efforts of service providers.

Benefits for Clients:
- Personal information is not repeated to different service providers within a community
- Effectively prioritized and referred to the right services at the right time

Benefits for Service Providers and Communities:
- Able to share data, leading to more detailed and comprehensive information on clients and on the homeless community at large
- Can access a variety of assessment tools to assist with community-wide client prioritization
- Ability to create reports that give the community an understanding of the contributing factors to homelessness
- Helps to connect service providers to support better communication

Benefits for the Homelessness Sector:
- Provides a national portrait of homelessness that informs decision-making and policy, and identifies potential gaps in the sector
- Allows for research to be conducted on homelessness in Canada

Supporting a Coordinated Approach

COORDINATED APPROACH

Service Provider 1

Service Provider 6

Service Provider 2

Service Provider 5

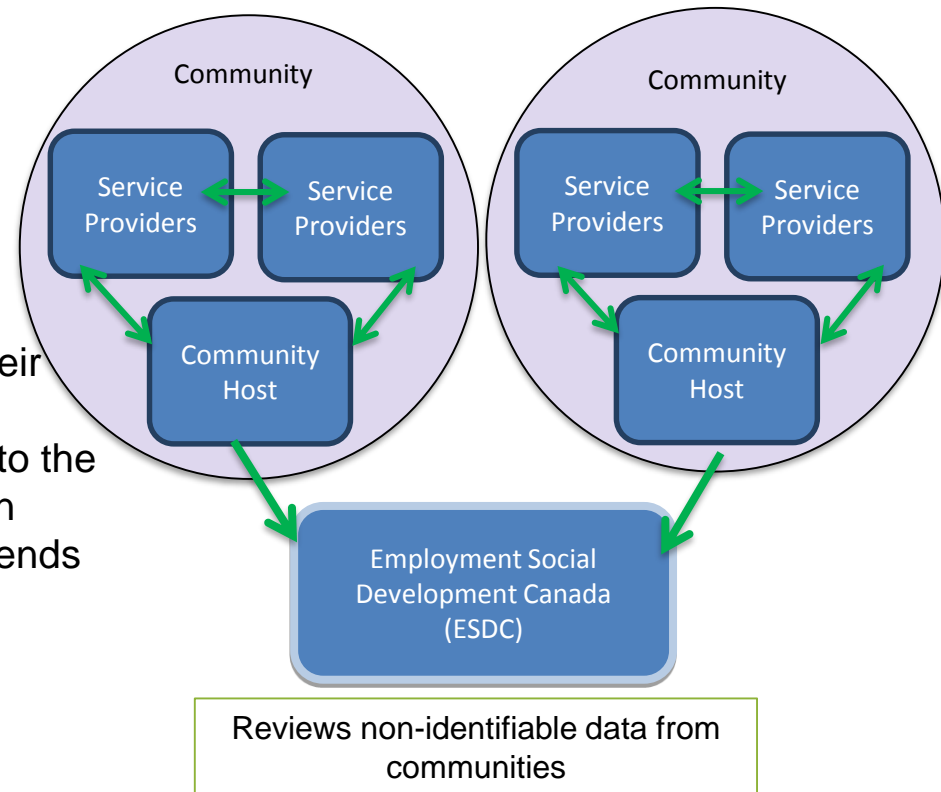CLIENTS

Service Provider 3
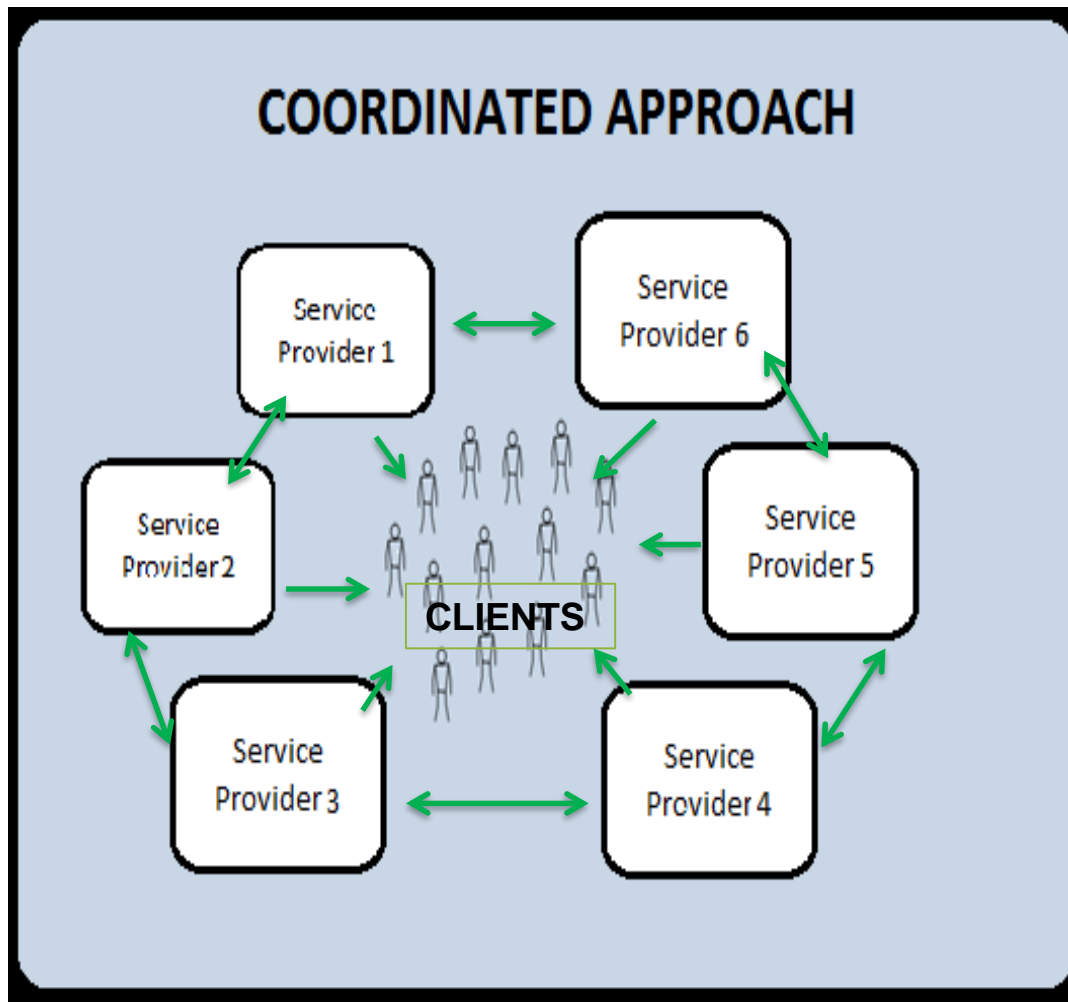
Service Provider 4

- Develop and maintain active lists of clients identified as experiencing homelessness
- Helps clients access the right services at the right time
- Supports coordination among service providers
- Aligns and monitors common standards to achieve best outcomes

Data Sharing

Through a series of legal agreements and user protocols, both communities and service providers can independently decide what data can be shared, when, with whom, and by whom.

Data sharing within a community allows:

- Service providers to work together to collect and compile information to support clients
- Service providers to become more informed about homelessness as well as the needs of their clients
- Service providers to prioritize and refer clients to the right service at the right time without duplication
- ESDC to become more informed on national trends and conduct more advanced research on homelessness in Canada

Community

Service Providers ↔ Service Providers

Community Host

Community

Service Providers ↔ Service Providers

Community Host

Employment Social Development Canada (ESDC)

Reviews non-identifiable data from communities

Key Considerations for a Successful Implementation

The implementation of a community platform is the product of proper governance, project management, planning, good design, and the collaboration of dedicated service providers within a community.

Key considerations for community planning and implementation:

1. Governance
2. Investments
3. Privacy
4. Data conversion
5. Design, Develop, and Test
6. Training, Support, and Go-live

Key Considerations: Governance at the Community Level

For many communities, implementing a web application represents a culture change in how organizations work. Community implementation requires buy-in from service providers and consistent communication to ensure concerns around sharing information are heard.

A governance structure to support implementation include:

- A community Oversight Committee to take key decisions (e.g. endorse the business model, location of the server, develop a communication strategy, determine the HIFIS 4 configuration that best meets the needs and characteristics of the community). This committee could be composed of Service Providers' management representatives.

- A Project Management Committee that could support the Oversight Committee and implement its decisions. This Committee could be composed of representatives from the service provider's staff.

Key Considerations: Investments

HIFIS is a community investment that requires serious commitment from its partners. Sound planning ensures a smooth implementation that contributes to operational success.

Budget activities:

- A Project Manager to coordinate the implementation (e.g. engaging with local service providers to explore collaboration, tasking assignments, documenting, developing budgets and establishing timelines)
- A Business Analyst to configure HIFIS and to determine the features/modules that best represents the community's needs and desired output
- IT resources to implement, maintain, and secure the server
- Legal advice on data-sharing agreements, consent forms, Memorandum of Understanding
- Development of Reports (Crystal Report)
- Communication activities amongst service providers
- Training

Key Considerations: Privacy

A web-based HMIS requires early dialogue with service providers on privacy to ensure compliance with provincial legislation. In order to ensure that the privacy of all clients are respected, a *Privacy Impact Assessment* and a legal framework which includes data-sharing agreements and consent forms (for both the clients and the service providers) need to be established.

A privacy/legal framework should include the following:

- **Data Provision Agreement (DPA)** between Site Coordinators and Government of Canada to allow the use and customization of HIFIS and data sharing (to be provided and signed on receipt of HIFIS)
- **Data Sharing Agreement (DSA)** between Site Coordinators and service providers to guide data-sharing
- **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** between Site Coordinators and service providers to govern platform use and partnerships between shelter and client
- **Consent form** for clients to explain the use of their information

Key Considerations: Data Conversion

Before implementing HIFIS 4, a decision is required regarding how to move forward with service providers' historical data. Options include :

- Covert all HIFIS 3 data to HIFIS 4 via the HPS conversion tool
- Plan which data should be kept under current system versus data to be converted into HIFIS 4 (e.g. all historical data versus active clients only)
- Start new with HIFIS 4 and keep historical data in old system for research purposes

Service providers would also need to agree on data entry standards. Service providers should also consider dedicating resources to develop a data entry protocol in order to avoid duplication of files.

Key Considerations: Design, Develop, and Test

HIFIS 4 allows configuration in order to support community needs both in terms of platform and data protection. The community should make the following considerations:

- A pilot or a progressive deployment to test and validate business processes and functionality (e.g. user rights, data sharing, client consent, etc.)
- Review existing infrastructure to ensure it supports HIFIS 4
- IT Infrastructure and support properly implemented and configured (i.e.: servers, user support, password reset, training)
- Work with IT experts to support configuration and web security
- Review pilot results, and use lessons learned to finalize the configuration and deployment

# **Key Considerations:** Training, Support, and Go-live

ESDC will continue to provide help desk support for HIFIS 4 users, as well as additional support materials such as user and training guides, webinars, and newsletters.

On a continuous basis, communities will need to consider:

- Training that targets different users (case management, intake, etc.)
- Develop a communication strategy to support implementation
- Collect post-launch feedback to improve the user experience
- Identify super users to support other employees using HIFIS 4
- Partner with other organizations to support training and the help desk

What's Next: What to expect this coming year
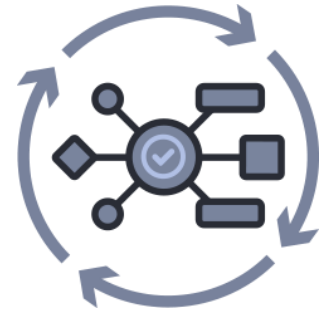
- Alignment with program renewal

- HIFIS Business Transformation

- Establish service standards

- Initiate the transition from HIFIS 3 to HIFIS 4

- Increase knowledge through client profiles

Related Information and contacts

For more information about the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS):

- HIFIS Website: www.hifis.ca
- HIFIS 4 Demo: www.demo.hifis.ca
  - Provides an opportunity to get a hands-on look at what HIFIS 4 can do
- HIFIS Help Desk: 1-866-324-2375 and support@hifis.ca
- HPS Newsletter: Subscribe at NC-HPSINFO-INFOSPLI-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.ca
  - Provides monthly information on HPS, HIFIS, and other homelessness-related issues
- Community Workspace on Homelessness: www.workspaceonhomelessness.ca

Questions?