

Standard for Public Good Evaluation and Reporting in Rapid Exits

Rule # PROS-HOUD-Mi-504

This Public Good Measurement and Reporting Standard is issued by the Public Regional Outcomes Standards Board.

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Objective

The PROS Board issues these regional standards on rapid exit strategies to increase the likelihood that clients are presented with adequate housing problem solving strategies options before partaking in more resource-intensive services such as occupying space in shelters, receiving case management or emergency medical services. This standard involves exclusively reporting on people who are newly homeless and therefore a target demographic for diversion strategies. If newly homeless individuals can be rapidly exited at a higher rate, it will not only lead to better outcomes for those individuals, but it may also free up resources for people experiencing chronic homelessness, who are the primary target for most funding in homelessness emergency services.

Intended Regional Effects of Issuing This Standard

The balanced set of metrics included in this standard will create increased transparency through standardized reporting. The standardization of reporting on diversion will allow for more strategic allocation of funding from funders who care about diversion and are interested in seeing effective diversion strategies that lead to rapid exits from their grantees. Organizations who report in accordance with this standard will produce reports which demonstrate the efficacy of their efforts to divert newly homeless individuals.

Similarly, organizations in scope should be able to use this balanced set of metrics to make strategic and operational decisions about diversion efforts. Specifically, these balanced metrics will help organizations in scope to identify areas of strong performance for potential increased focus to build on what works. These metrics will help organizations identify areas of weak performance to decide if, in the event the area of weak performance is internal, whether operational improvement is necessary.

Other Regional Purposes Outside the Focus of This Standard

Diversion strategies are often grouped together with prevention efforts, which are efforts to prevent individuals and households at risk of homelessness from falling into homelessness. This standard addresses diversion separately from prevention as they are separate services with different target audiences. Furthermore, data on diversion/housing problem solving/rapid exits and proxies thereof are more accessible because diversion/housing problem solving efforts/rapid exits are directed towards people who are at the point of a housing crisis and for whom data can be collected.

Standards of Public Good Accounting and Reporting

Scope and Scope Exceptions

These standards apply to emergency shelters or organizations working with individuals in an unsheltered setting.

These standards apply to organizations that are big enough to be conducting services or programs that assist a person before they spend a night at a shelter, in a motel with a voucher, or in a place not meant for human habitation. The PROS Board recognizes that, due to differences in the types of services required to effectively rapidly exit a client, some clients experience an episode of homelessness while awaiting completion of procedural matters. Organizations that continue to work with the client with the ultimate goal of utilizing the client's personal network to accomplish a rapid exit are in scope. Any organization where someone who is newly homeless can present themselves are in scope.

Organizations excluded from these standards are those who engage with persons experiencing homelessness but do not intend to build trusted relationships with them in the aim of ending their homelessness condition permanently. For instance, an organization solely dedicated to research on homelessness does not fall within the scope of this standard; while that organization may have the opportunity to build trust, that is not their stated intention. Furthermore, a law enforcement organization would be outside the scope of this standard if its main purpose in its engagement with persons experiencing homelessness is enforcement of local rules and not trust building or subsequent referral to services or housing. Finally, a street medicine outreach team without any service coordination component is not in scope.

Key Terms

Diversion: Diversion strategies and practices assist people to resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living. This typically occurs at the point people request emergency services, such as entry into emergency shelter, or could take place in a day center or through outreach before a person spends a night unsheltered. Diversion is not a process of turning people away or declining to provide needed services. Rather, diversion offers a valuable service that helps people avoid the experience of being in shelter or unsheltered. ([United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#))

Prevention: Homelessness prevention strategies represent a wide array of efforts to prevent housing crises from occurring and to prevent people who face such crises from experiencing homelessness. Prevention strategies are described in Home, Together as falling into the following categories:

1. Activities that reduce the prevalence of risk of housing crises within communities;
2. Activities that reduce the risk of homelessness while households are engaged with or are transitioning from systems; and
3. Activities that target assistance to prevent housing crises that do occur from escalating further and resulting in homelessness. ([United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#))

Rapid Exit: Rapid exit strategies are appropriate after a household has entered emergency shelter or has stayed in an unsheltered setting, and rapid exit strategies serve to help them move as quickly as possible back into housing with the support of services and a minimal level of financial assistance. ([United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)). Rapid exits are designed to help someone exit the system as rapidly as possible. Individuals who receive housing through a CES referral are not considered as rapidly exited. Additionally, rapid rehousing is not a rapid exit definitionally, though they sound similar.

Exit Destination: Any exit destination listed by HUD or in HMIS is considered a valid exit destination. Please refer to the HUD exit destinations list [here](#) for more information.

Recognition – Initial and Subsequent Measurement

Organizations in scope shall initially and subsequently recognize an exit as a rapid exit if the client secures housing through their own resources and network and no longer requires continuous services for more than 6 months.

Organizations in scope shall demonstrate a good faith effort by documenting, for every enrolled client not in permanent housing, a “Rapid Exit Report” (RER) within their own system at a minimum at the time of exit from their program and no more than ninety days since the previous RER, with the information that will assist any future provider with their provision of services. The Rapid Exit Report should follow this structure.

In the header:

Start and end with the words “Rapid Exit Report” in the Title section;

The date of the “Rapid Exit Report” in the Date section;

In the body, the numbering of each section is REQUIRED:

1. The name of the individual
2. Where the individual came from and where the individual is going(or planning to go)
3. How the individual began experiencing homelessness and why
4. Type of rapid exit solution (temporary or permanent)
5. The length of time in which the individual experienced homelessness
6. Demographic information
7. Unique ID from HMIS (only if the individual is enrolled)

The Rapid Exit Report must stand on its own but can build off of the previous RER. That is, referring to a previous Rapid Exit Report or requiring possible future case managers to search through historic reports does not demonstrate good faith effort. Copying and pasting previous entries and updating the necessary section(s) does demonstrate good faith effort. A Rapid Exit Report is to be performed for all clients when sufficient information is gathered. The RER must be stored internally as HMIS is not made to house this information. If an organization is unable to store this information internally then it can report that a RER is not feasible and the steps that the organization will be taking to be able to accommodate it in the future.

Presentation on Performance or Financial Reports

In the Notes of Financial Statements

Organizations in scope shall report conspicuously in the notes of any financial statements the following measurements for that date and relevant periods of concern of the financial statements:

1. The number of newly homeless persons or households serviced;
2. The proportion of individuals and households included in item 1 who had a rapid exit to each possible exit destination in HMIS:
 1. Within 1 day,
 2. Between 1 day and 7 days,
 3. Between 7 days and 30 days,
 4. Over 30 days
3. If feasible, the amount of funding expended for these services, not including staff time

In Any Performance Reporting

If an organization in scope publishes publicly available performance reports, like in an annual report, separate from financial statements, then the organization shall present the information in the previous subsection.

Disclosure Requirements

When reporting pursuant to this standard, the organization must disclose the methods by which it determined such measurements, and when independently audited or reviewed, the auditor or reviewer should make an evaluative statement whether those methods meet the intent of this standard.

Of note, this standard does not specify exactly where within reports or which notes on financial statements an organization must provide the information or disclosures required in this standard. See Appendix B for example applications of this standard.

Effective Date and Transition

This standard shall be effective 1 July 2023.

Organizations whose fiscal years end between 1 July 2023 and 31 October 2023 may wait for their subsequent fiscal year to begin to effect this standard. For any reports issued between 1 July 2023 and the beginning of an organization's fiscal year, the organization should minimally disclose its intention to transition to this standard in its following fiscal year.

Appendix A: Background Information

Basis for Conclusions

Focus on Newly Homeless Clients

Because the majority of funding for homelessness services is targeted toward people experiencing chronic homelessness, transparency around clients who are newly homeless can help funders identify opportunities for efficiencies. Transparency can be beneficial both as it relates to the total population served and the outcomes of clients in that population.

Focus on Exit Destination

The PROS Board and working groups opted to focus on clients' exit destination as opposed to either process measurements or longer-term outcome measurements. This is because the goal of rapid exit efforts is to resolve clients' homelessness efficiently, meaning quickly and using as few resources as possible. Clients who are newly homeless are much more likely than other clients to secure permanent housing, meaning that there would be very little variation if organizations in scope were to report on longer-term outcomes. Additionally, long-term outcomes of newly homeless clients cannot be attributed to rapid exit efforts that occurred early on in a clients' time experiencing homelessness.

What HMIS does not collect

The PROS Board was informed by the working groups that HMIS does not allow for records to be collected on rapid exits for clients who are remaining in a services only program or for those diverted prior to entry into the HMIS. HMIS also does not allow for a housing exit destination to be inputted unless a client is exited from the system and as a result valuable information is lost. The PROS Board believes this standard can help bridge this gap for providers and funders.

Alternative Views and Risk Areas That May Need Addressing in Future Revisions

Some stakeholders have expressed uncertainty about focusing on newly homeless clients, as the bulk of funding for homelessness services is targeted toward people experiencing chronic homelessness. Stakeholders have expressed concerns about this standard possibly creating uncertainty or perverse incentives for service providers to focus their efforts and resources on newly homeless clients in order to inflate data reported in accordance with this standard.

Currently, there are no defined reporting practices and reporting measures on rapid exits. Once service providers are able to implement these systems then the PROS Board may revisit this standard and optimize it for better and more in-depth reporting practices.

Appendix B


Example Specific Applications of this Standard

Service Providers

At a minimum, service providers should detail the information pursuant to this standard in their audited financial statements and any annual performance reports.

A Rapid Exit Report Example

1. This is how the overview of a RER and what it should look like in the system

 Used Data	me	Jul 18, 2022 me	—	⋮
 1/1/2023 RER (Example) 	me	8:30 AM me	1 KB	⋮

2. This is what the RER should look like when it is completed

Official Standard

Rapid Exit Report

Date: 1/1/2023

1. Danny B
2. Danny was previously staying with some friends. He would like to be able to live by himself.
3. Danny's friends kicked him out because he was no longer able to pay rent
4. We were able to facilitate a conversation with his friends to let him stay for one more month (temporary)
5. He has been experiencing homelessness for 4 days
6. 23 year old male
7. N/A

|

It is crucial that each of these sections starts with the corresponding number and is recommended to use a list feature that is available in any word processor.

While this method does take more time to maintain structure, there is consensus that the added time will lead to a greater net positive for the region since previous steps taken to get documents and or services will be recorded. This will help prevent case managers from performing rework and allow for other case managers to pick up where the previous left off.

Some methods that have been suggested to help make this principle easier to follow are to have this general structure in the Notes app so that it can be more easily copied and pasted over.

Illustrative Examples for Reporting Possibilities

Year	# of newly homeless persons or households serviced	Proportion of individuals and households that had a rapid exit within 1 day	... Between 1 day and 7 days	... Between 7 days and 30 days	... Past 30 days	Amount of funding expended for rapid exits	
2022	100	5	4	3	2	\$10,000	

1

1

Number of newly homeless persons or households serviced: 20

Proportion of individuals and households included in item 1 who exited to each possible exit destination in HMIS: 15/20

HPS available: Bus tickets, family/friend counseling, miscellaneous. fees payment assistance

Appendix C

Notes to Help Readers of Performance or Financial Reports Following This Standard

Potential Investors in a Service Provider

When considering initial or further investment in a service provider, there are several variables that an investor might consider. Investors should consider the extent to which organizations' efforts are focused on serving newly homeless clients and the outcomes for those clients. Investors interested in contributing toward effective rapid exits for newly homeless clients might want to contribute funding toward organizations in scope with stronger outcomes for newly homeless clients as those outcomes could indicate superior performance serving clients who are newly homeless. Private funders or investors might be particularly interested in these metrics as this standard relates to an area not heavily subsidized by public funders, meaning that there is a gap left for private funders to fill.

Board Directors or Executives of a Service Provider

When considering strategic or operational decisions, there are several pieces of derivable information that a board director or executive could use. Executives may be interested in looking at the sheer number or proportion of clients who are newly homeless in order to understand the population to which the organization may cater. Executives might also be interested in the outcomes of newly homeless clients, as this could shed light on the organization's efficacy in conducting housing problem-solving strategies.