UNIQUE IDENTIFIER LIST REPORT
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was developed to help communities use the Unique Identifier List Report (the Report) and answer some common questions. This is a companion document to the Unique Identifier List (UIL) Report User Guide available on the Homelessness Learning Hub.

If this FAQ or the UIL Report User Guide does not respond to your question, contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre at support@HIFIS.ca or by phone at 1-866-324-2375.

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A) Using the Report

1. Why does the Report "time out" when I generate it?

By default, HIFIS reports are given one minute to pull information from all sections of the database. When the Report – or any other HIFIS report – cannot be generated within this timeframe, HIFIS displays the following message:

"The requested channel timed out while waiting for a reply after 00:01:00. Increase the timeout value passed to the call to Request or increase the SendTimeout value on the Biding. The time allotted to this operation may have been a portion of a longer timeout"

To avoid this, the individual responsible for the configuration of HIFIS in your community will need to increase the Report's Timeout Value. The steps to do so can be found in *Annex A: Increasing the Report's Timeout Value* the UIL Report User Guide.

2. How can I use this Report to generate community-level data if I have multiple HIFIS clusters in my HIFIS database or if HIFIS is not the only HMIS in my community?

Unique Identifier Lists can only be generated for a single cluster in HIFIS. Specifically, client information for the report is only pulled from the cluster you are logged into (i.e., the cluster where the HIFIS service provider you logged into is from).

To generate a single Unique Identifier List from two or more HIFIS clusters, there are a few steps you need to take:
1. Export each report by cluster into the same format (e.g., Microsoft Excel).
2. Combine the Lists into the same document.
3. Check for duplicate clients and, if duplicates are found, consolidate each client's data (e.g., merge multiple rows of data into one row in an Excel spreadsheet).

In a similar fashion, a community with multiple Homelessness Management Information Systems can combine each source by following similar steps – export each dataset into a common format and check for duplicate clients.

See section *4. Generating the Report* in the UIL Report User Guide for more information on how to export Lists.

> **IMPORTANT:** Communities combining various Unique Identifier Lists should consider developing written protocols to ensure that the process for merging Lists, which would

includes addressing potential duplication of clients, is standardized. Also, communities may wish to create a process of keeping track of how specific client data has been "merged" between datasets, especially if the process will need to be repeated.

3. Should I maintain a history of the Reports that are generated?

Communities are encouraged to maintain historical records using the results of their Unique Identifier Lists to monitor trends over time such as changes to homelessness inflow and outflow dynamics, client demographics or acuity (e.g., the daily number of people experiencing homelessness). This information can then be used to support reporting and decision-making.

To create these historical records, communities will need to either save exported copies of their Unique Identifier Lists to preserve that snapshot in time or create a new spreadsheet where some of the data generated from the Reports can be tracked over time.

Reports generated at different points – even in the same day – may generate different results! For example, let's say a Report is generated at noon and then again at 6pm. In between this time period, a shelter worker books a client into a shelter. As this client had not interacted with the housing and homelessness system in more than a year – resulting in no HIFIS transactions on the client's HIFIS profile for that same period – the client had become inactive for the purpose of the Report as per the community's 90-day inactivity policy. Because of this, the client would not be included in the noon Report. However, with this new service transaction (a shelter booking), the client is now included in the 6pm Report (as long as the client has provided consent and is not housed). Both Reports are accurate for the same day – Reports pulled before the shelter booking transaction would exclude the client, while Reports pulled after this transaction would include the client. See the UIL Report User Guide's *Table 1: Service Table*, p.4, for service making clients active for the UIL report.

> **IMPORTANT:** As Unique Identifier Lists contain personal information about clients, historical record keeping should be safeguarded in accordance with privacy policies and protocols established by the community.

4. What are the age ranges for children, youth, adult and seniors in the Report's list summary?

The bottom of the Report displays several statistics such as the number of number of children, youths, adults and seniors. The age range for each of these groups are:

Children: up to 15 years old
Youth: 16 to 24 years old

Adults: 25 to 64 years old
Seniors: 65 years old and more

The age ranges cannot be modified in the Report unless the .rpt file is downloaded and the report is changed. See question 5. *Can I make edits to the Report to add my own fields or filters for example?*

5. Can I make edits to the Report to add fields or filters for example?

New fields or filters can be *added* to the dataset after HIFIS data is exported from the Report (e.g., Microsoft Excel). For new data fields from a non-HIFIS dataset, all this requires is a way to match them to the right clients using a common unique identifier (like a name).

Once exported from the Report, data can be sorted, filtered or changed. See section *4.Generating the Report* in the UIL Report User Guide for more information on how to export lists.

You can also submit proposed changes to the HIFIS Client Support Centre at support@HIFIS.ca or by phone at 1-866-324-2375.

It is also possible to download the Report's .rpt file by clicking the download button on the right side of the screen in the Reports Manager page to change the code of the Report. Creating a tailored community report from the Report requires skills in Crystal Reports as well as appropriate software. The HIFIS Client Support Centre does not offer Crystal Report code support.

B) Clients in the Report

6. How can I make clients appear or disappear from the Report's List?

Adding or removing a client from the Report can be done by updating the client's HIFIS profile related to three areas. The Report's List includes clients who have each of the following:
1. An active consent (explicit or inherited) in HIFIS. Note: Clients with an expired explicit consent will appear in the Report. When their file is accessed, a new consent will be required before any transactions can occur.
2. Not housed, defined as clients who do not have an active Housing History record of a "housed" type.
3. One or more service transactions since the date parameter selected.

See the UIL Report User Guide, section 5.*Diving into the Report's Content and Calculations* for additional information on these three criteria.

> **IMPORTANT:** Communities will need to maintain real-time data in HIFIS to get the most of the Report. If clients are missing from the Report, their HIFIS information will need to be reviewed carefully pertaining to the three criteria described above, to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date. The same process should be conducted for a client that shows up on the Report, but should not appear on the list.

Another option is to add or remove clients to/from the Unique Identifier List once it is exported into another format, such as Microsoft Excel. For example, some communities will want to remove (filter out) clients on the List who are staying in transitional housing (if this makes them ineligible for housing offers, for example) or clients who are not interested in accepting offers of housing through the Coordinated Access process. *See question 9. Are clients who do not want housing included in the Report?*

7. **How does my community's Coordinated Access inactivity policy impact who is included in the Report?**

Your community's inactivity policy has a direct impact on who is included in the report.

When generating the Report, you must select the "date to calculate service provider interaction". This field represents your community's inactivity policy. The report will only display clients with a service transaction between the date selected and the date that you are running the Report.

For example, a community with a 90 day inactivity policy will set the "date to calculate service provider interaction" at 90 days before the date at which you are generating the Report. Doing so will exclude clients from the Report who do **not** have a service transaction recorded in HIFIS in the past 90 days, even if they are still homeless. See the UIL Report User Guide's *Table 1: Service Table*, p.4, for services making clients active for the UIL report.

8. **How do I make sure families appear in the Report's list?**

To appear in the Report's List, each family member must meet the three criteria (active or inherited consent, not housed, service transaction since the date parameter selected). Any family member that does not meet these criteria will not appear on the Report's List. See the question *6. How can I make clients appear or disappear from the Report's List?*

Family relationships between clients should be entered in HIFIS and kept up-to-date. The Family module keeps track of a client's family members and the role each member has in the family (dependents, family head or partner). When a client is linked to a family, members can be

managed as a family unit for certain activities, such as book-ins. For instructions on how to create a family unit, see the HIFIS User Guide, p.22-23.

C) Coordinated Access Process

9. Are clients who do not want housing included in the Report?

The Report shows all clients that have an active or inherited consent, are not housed and have had a service transaction since the data parameter selected . This may include clients who are not seeking or eligible for housing resources in the Coordinated Access Resource Inventory.

10. How can I identify clients on the Report that have a housing offer in progress?

While the Report does not identify clients with a housing offer in progress, this information can be found in the Housing Placements module in HIFIS.

To match Housing Offers information to the List, there are a few steps you need to take:
1. Export the Report (e.g., Microsoft Excel)
2. Before matching a client to an upcoming vacancy, check in HIFIS if they already have an existing offer. To see this information, access the *Front Desk* tab and click *Housing Placement* under the *Housing* menu.
3. On the List, identify the clients that have a housing offer in progress so that they aren't invited to consider another offer at the same time.

> **IMPORTANT:** Communities should consider developing written protocols to ensure that the process for identifying clients with a housing offer in progress is standardized.

D) Intersections with Other Reports and Initiatives

11. Why is the number of clients in the Report different from our last Point-in-Time Count?

The number of clients in the report and the last Point-in-Time (PiT) count is expected to be different, as the Unique Identifier List Report includes people who have had recent interactions with homelessness services, while the PiT Count is a snapshot of who people experiencing homelessness on a single night, whether or not they have connected with services.

The Unique Identifier List report includes information on clients whose information has been entered in HIFIS, i.e., clients who have been in contact with a homeless serving organization. Clients on the list also meet three criteria: have provided consent; are active (received a service

from the service table); and, are not housed. See the UIL Report User Guide, section 5: *Diving into the Report's Content and Calculations* for additional information on these three criteria.

On the other hand, the Point in Time Count measures homelessness in shelters, transitional housing and unsheltered locations. This means that the PiT Count may include individuals and families that are sleeping rough and have not connected with any homeless service organizations. These people are not included in HIFIS, and, therefore, are not considered in the Unique Identifier List report.

As homelessness evolves over time, another key difference may be explained by when the information was collected. HIFIS, and by extension the Unique Identifier List report, contains real-time information. On the other hand, the Point in Time count, which is conducted in a single day, offers a one-day snapshot of homelessness in a community that is not updated until the next count, often two years later.

12. Can I use the Report to report homelessness inflow and outflow data?

The Report could be used to calculate homelessness inflow and outflow data points, but the results will need to be generated manually by comparing Lists pulled at different point in times (e.g., at the end of each month). See question *3. Should I maintain a history of the Reports that are generated?*

To support communities with their Reaching Home Community Homelessness Report, a HIFIS report is being developed to pull these data points using Housing History and inactivity data elements. The report is expected to be available in 2021 in HIFIS' Reports Marketplace.

13. Can I use the Report to determine chronic homelessness?

The Report's data point "days homeless over the last three years" should not be used to calculate chronic homelessness based on the federal definition. This data point does not meet the federal definition because transitional housing is considered "homeless" for the purpose of the Report.