



Documenting Chronicity Policy

Definition

HUD defines chronic homelessness as: an individual or head of household who is 1) currently residing on the streets, in an emergency shelter or Safe Haven; 2) has either been continuously homeless for one year or more, OR has had at least four separate episodes of homelessness in the past three years, AND 3) has a disabling condition. In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must meet all three of the criteria.

Note that the first of the three criteria describes what is defined as being “literally homeless”.

Part 1 – Participant Intake Interview

CoC intake workers will conduct the initial interview by asking all data standard questions as part of their regular workflow process.

1. Diagnosable Disability Questions:

Ask the participant if they have any:

- physical, mental, emotional, or developmental disabilities,
- HIV/AIDS,
- or a diagnosable substance use issue,

that is expected to be of long duration and substantially limits the participant’s ability to live on their own.

If the answer was yes to any of the above, intake worker should ask if the participant is receiving Social Security Disability or Disability Benefits from the Veterans’ Administration currently.

NOTE: Add ROI/Lock Record if necessary – in the case of a phone screening (HARA call center) verbal confirmation can be obtained and a client will sign ROI at the first in person meeting.)

2. Homeless History Questions:

A. Ask the participant where they have been sleeping/staying before this interview and determine if the answer qualifies as “the streets”, places unfit for human habitation, emergency shelter, or Safe Haven (NOTE: Michigan only has one remaining Safe Haven in the Detroit area, it is unlikely to encounter many persons fitting this category.)

B. If the place they described fits the literally homeless definition, ask them how long they have been staying in that location. Follow up by asking where they stayed before this current place.

- i. If the answer is still a place that qualifies as literally homeless, repeat this questioning, gathering place and timeline until the place they answer with is a housed or at-risk of

homelessness location where they stayed at least seven nights or an institutional stay of at least 90 days.

ii. When the answer is a housed location longer than seven nights, or institutional stay longer than 90 days, enter the date or approximate date that location ended as the start date of the homelessness.

C. If the determined start date for homelessness is 12 months ago or longer, check HMIS to determine if there is documentation for each of the 12 most recent months. One shelter or street outreach record per month is sufficient documentation for that whole month.

D. If there is not 12 months of continuous homelessness documentation in HMIS but participant reports they were homeless without breaks (longer than detailed above):

i. Ask about other third-party sources that could verify homelessness in each of those months (i.e. outreach worker, other professional source)

ii. Participant can self-certify for up to three of the 12 months. In this case there is no need to ask more detail about breaks in their homelessness.

Example: HMIS has shelter records for eight of the last months and intake worker can obtain discharge paperwork or a written certification from a mental health professional that the participant was staying inpatient for another month. Nine months are now documented by third-party sources and the participant can self-certify for the remaining three months.

E. If the participant does not have a 12-month continuous episode of homelessness, ask them how many times they have been homeless in the past three years; including the current homelessness occurrence.

3. Chronic Verification Interview: If the participant has indicated a diagnosable disability AND has been homeless at least 12 months continuously, OR 12 months in three years; then complete the In-Depth Housing History Interview. Intake workers will only complete the In-Depth Housing History Interview if the participant could potentially be identified as chronically homeless.

Part 2 – In-Depth Housing History Interview

1. Each Local Planning Body of the MIBOSCOC should work to ensure there are Housing Advocacy/Street Outreach (HA/SO) positions as part of their regular Coordinated Entry System. These HA/SO should be designated specific participants with whom to conduct the in-depth housing history interview, either during the By Name List meetings or by HARA intake between meetings if caseloads allow.

2. HA/SO will then follow the attached documentation guidelines to certify chronic homelessness status for the referred participants.

3. All chronic documentation must be uploaded into the participant’s HMIS profile page under attachments and shall use the following naming convention for all file attachments:

Document Type	Naming Convention	What the Date Signifies
Identification	ID2023.6.23.jsmith	Date the ID was collected
Birth Records (Children’s birth records should be attached to the Head of Household’s HMIS client record)	BR2023.6.23.jsmith	Date the birth record was collected
Verification of Chronicity	VOC2023.6.23jsmith	Date the VOC was signed
Verification of Disability	VOD2023.6.23jsmith	Date on the document from the doctor or date on SSDI check
Verification of Homelessness	VOH2023.6.23jsmith	Date the VOH was signed
Release of Information	ROI2023.6.23jsmith	Date the ROI was signed