

HI-FIS



HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES
INFORMATION SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

VERSION 1.0

REACHING HOME | VERS UN CHEZ-SOI



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Canada

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Admissions	The process of admitting an individual or family that is homeless or at-risk of homelessness into a service provider.
At-risk of Homelessness	Individuals or families who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.
Bed Selection	A graphical display of a shelter's rooms and beds.
Bulletin	A message that can be read by users who are logged in to HIFIS.
Case Management	<p>Refers to intentional and collaborative service planning between service providers and their clients. The “intent” of the interactions differentiates various forms of case management. For example, case managers can specialize in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Service Navigation: Connecting clients to appropriate services using information gathered through triage and assessment. Includes completing paperwork for various waiting lists and following up on referrals. ■ Housing-Based Case Management: Helping clients to reduce acuity in the areas of life that present risks to a tenancy. Includes arranging and coordinating a range of services to meet client needs.

Term	Definition
Chronic Homelessness	<p>People who are currently experiencing homelessness and meet at least one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ have a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year; or ■ have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days).
Client	An individual or family that is experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness who has accessed or is currently accessing services provided by a service provider.
Client Consent Form	An agreement between the client and the service provider that provides the service provider consent on the collection, retention, and sharing of an individual's data.
Cluster	A functionality in HIFIS allowing the data of clients from specific service providers to be isolated. Service providers in clusters can only view data within their designated cluster.
Community Advisory Board (CAB)	Local organizing committee responsible for approving the Community Plan and recommending projects for funding to the Community Entity.
Community Data- Sharing Agreement (CDSA)	An agreement signed by service providers that governs data-sharing within a community. The CDSA outlines a common understanding of what information is to be shared and why, detailing privacy and security protocol decisions, the quality of data to be provided, data entry protocols and relevant data management practices.

Term	Definition
Contributing Factors	Life events that have played a role in leading the client to requiring assistance from a service provider.
Coordinated Access	A way for communities to bring consistency to the process by which people experiencing or at risk of homelessness access housing and related services within a geographic area. Core components of a strong Coordinated Access system include a Housing First approach; real-time data about the supply of and demand for housing resources; and a streamlined service-delivery approach with access points to service, a standardized workflow for triage and assessment; prioritization and vacancy matching and referral.
Custom Tables	HIFIS module that is used to create customized records for service providers whose needs exceed the defaults of the application. Custom tables are used to gather information on clients with user-created fields.
Data Provision Agreement (DPA)	An agreement between ESDC and a HIFIS Lead organization that authorizes ESDC's quarterly collection of the non-directly identifiable data-fields in exchange for HIFIS.
Family Head	Where individuals are part of a family, the Family Head is the person who has been identified as the lead for the family as a whole (e.g., the primary parent or guardian responsible for dependents).
HIFIS Administrator	The role that is responsible for the administrative functions within HIFIS (e.g., configuration, data integrity, backups).

Term	Definition
Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)	Developed by ESDC in collaboration with communities, HIFIS is a comprehensive data collection, reporting and case management system that supports the day-to-day operations of housing and homelessness response service providers. HIFIS is designed to support the implementation of Coordinated Access by allowing multiple service providers from the same community to access real-time data and refer clients to the appropriate services at the right time.
HIFIS Host	Organization that has the servers on which HIFIS is installed and where client information is stored.
HIFIS Lead	Depending on the context, refers to the organization or dedicated staff responsible for the initial set-up, implementation and ongoing maintenance of HIFIS.
HIFIS Program	A label or tag created by the community to group client transactions by category. For example, <i>HIFIS Programs</i> can be used to track similar kinds of services (e.g., shelter stays, youth programming or assistance provided during a natural disaster) or goods and services funded by the same source (e.g., certain supportive housing units in a building). Reports can be generated using <i>HIFIS programs</i> , summarizing service transactions either within or across HIFIS service providers.
HIFIS Service Provider	Organized and logical "set of services" that is available to individuals and families. HIFIS Service Providers share client information based on their individualized access rights, which are assigned to specific staff roles in the housing and homelessness response system.

Term	Definition
Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)	A tool that captures records client-level data and manages service provider information over time within a housing and homelessness response system. The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is one type of HMIS.
Housing First	An approach that involves moving people experiencing homelessness — particularly people experiencing chronic homelessness — rapidly from the street or emergency shelters into stable and long-term housing, with supports.
Housing and Homelessness Response System	Refers to all the service providers within a geographic boundary that help individuals and families with their housing challenges. In an integrated system with Coordinated Access, service providers most often use the same Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) installation.
Life Events	Life Events are defined as discrete experiences that disrupt an individual's usual activities causing a substantial change and readjustment.
Local Help Desk	A service established by a community that supports HIFIS users to manage the system and resolve technical issues, including incident management, service requests, problem management, advance support, and release management.
Look-up Tables	A functionality that is used to add, edit, or remove values that appear in the drop-down menus throughout HIFIS.
Modules	Key components of HIFIS organized by functions or similar types of service transactions (e.g., Case Management, Housing Placement, Directory of Services, Food Bank).

Term	Definition
Person(s) with Lived Experience	Individual or family that has experienced homelessness.
Primary Service Provider	A service provider with the ability to modify the mandatory fields and look-up table values of service providers placed underneath it.
Privacy Assessment	Process used to determine how service delivery could affect the privacy of an individual or family, with the goal of ensuring that privacy issues are identified and resolved or mitigated.
Rights Templates	Functionality that allows an administrator to apply the same user rights to multiple HIFIS users depending upon their roles and/or responsibilities.
Service Provider	Organization in the housing and homelessness response system that has staff who directly interact with clients to help them address their housing challenges.
Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)	An assessment tool for frontline workers developed by OrgCode Consulting to inform prioritization in a Coordinated Access system and also support case management.
Super-user	A service provider's HIFIS specialist with special privileges needed to administer and maintain the system as well as train HIFIS users.
User Rights	Govern ways by which a user can access HIFIS modules and view information. Rights specify if a user can see, edit, and/or delete data.
Violence Against Women shelter (VAW)	A service provider that caters specifically to women and their children who are fleeing violence, or the threat of violence.

Term	Definition
Vulnerability Index Assessment (VAT)	An assessment tool for frontline workers developed by Downtown Emergency Service Centre to measure a person's vulnerability, which could be used to prioritize who should receive service first.
Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)	Self-reported survey used to quickly determine a client's acuity. This triage tool is not designed to provide extensive detail about a client's vulnerability. Results can be confirmed or refined through a full SPDAT assessment.

THE HIFIS TOOLKIT

Over the last two decades, the ways to measure the extent of homelessness have significantly evolved in Canada. The dedication of service providers and municipal and provincial governments to collect and share data through the [Homeless Individuals and Families Information System \(HIFIS\)](#) and [Point-in-Time counts](#) is at the centre of this success. When used jointly, these data collection efforts provide a comprehensive local and national picture of homelessness. For the first time in history, Canadians have quality data that supports policy and program development, as well as strategic planning in the homelessness sector.

As Canada is moving forward with the [National Housing Strategy](#) and [Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#), collecting, managing and sharing data becomes more important than ever to advance the collective understanding of homelessness and to support decision-making. In particular, Reaching Home emphasizes coordinated access and introduces a data-driven, client-centred approach to serve individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In this context, the Government of Canada is committed to continuously enhancing HIFIS in order

to support communities in their data collection and efforts to eliminate homelessness. Recognizing that HIFIS modernization is driven by the homelessness sector's needs, a National HIFIS working group was created in 2018 to leverage the expertise of communities and experts and help guide HIFIS enhancements.

HIFIS is designed to support coordinated access by allowing multiple service providers from the same community to access real-time homelessness data through a community-wide system available via web-enabled devices, such as laptops, smartphones and tablets. HIFIS also allows communities to document the number, characteristics and needs of homeless individuals and families, as well as the number of people receiving services.

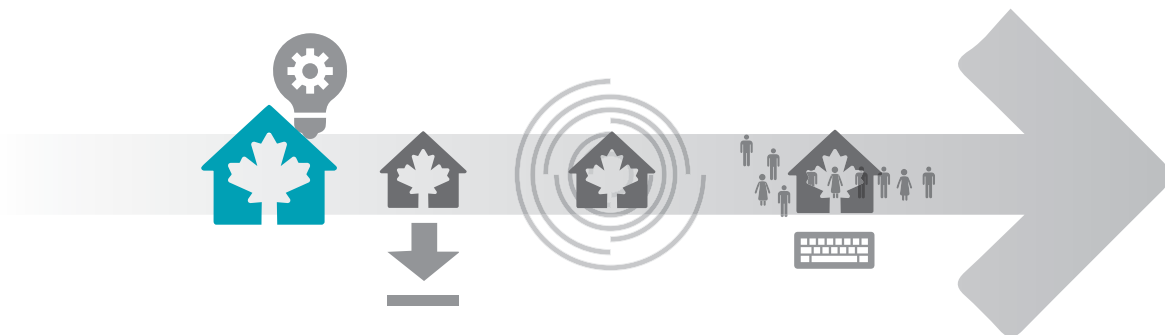
To meet Reaching Home requirements and implement coordinated access systems, communities have to adapt their business model, which encompasses developing and adopting new governance frameworks and data management strategies. Doing so requires planning, committing resources and training to promote data literacy and instill a data-driven culture.

To assist communities in this transformation, ESDC has developed a HIFIS Toolkit composed of four guides. These guides cover the following topics:

1. **Implementation** – Provides guidance from planning to the deployment and maintenance of HIFIS.
2. **Installation** – Describes the technical requirements, architecture and installation procedures.
3. **Configuration** – Explains the configuration procedures to align with community's business needs.

4. **User instruction** – Gives a description of each function and how to use it.

Communities using HIFIS become part of a pan-Canadian movement that is building a data-driven culture to advance the understanding of homelessness in Canada. By working together, we can support the most vulnerable Canadians in providing access to safe, stable and affordable housing and reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027–2028.



ABOUT THE HIFIS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



Engaging service providers on implementing a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) and on data management is a significant undertaking. Strategies and project planning are essential aspects of any successful implementation. It also requires the collaboration of service providers, front-line users and clients to leverage a multidisciplinary team and create change. The *HIFIS Implementation Guide* is intended to support those who will have to turn strategies and plans into actions regarding the deployment and maintenance of HIFIS.

This guide provides general information to get started on: 1) the governance structure and its considerations, 2) implementation planning, 3) the deployment strategy, 4) the delivery of client support services and 5) the approach to system maintenance. The guide also includes templates to support some implementation activities.

The *Implementation Planning* section, which provides insights regarding HIFIS configuration, can be used with the *Configuration Guide*. It

explains the benefits and common challenges of configuration and how some approaches can be simplified and streamlined to support the community's activities and reporting.

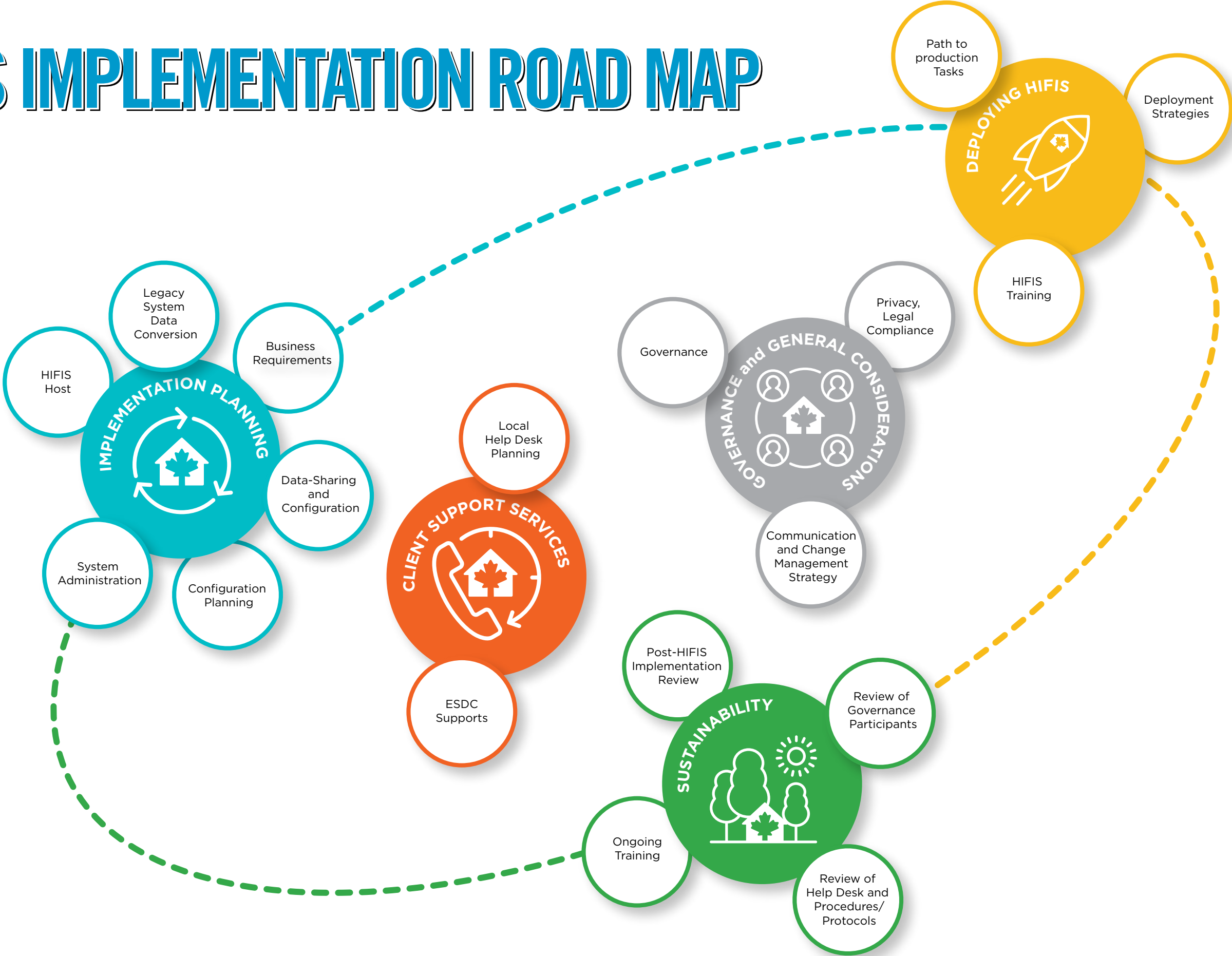
Implementation of an HMIS is not a linear process; its scope and sophistication will vary according to the coordinated access approach, and the size and the structure of the community. Therefore, the *HIFIS Implementation Guide* should be used as a reference document according to the community characteristics.

For more information to support the implementation and management of HIFIS, you can visit the [Homelessness Learning Hub](#).

To stay connected and get the latest updates on HIFIS, please confirm your interest by sending your consent at support@hifis.ca.

For any questions or enquiries, you can contact the HIFIS Clients Support Centre at **1-866-324-2375** or support@HIFIS.ca

HIFIS IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP



GOVERNANCE AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Identifying Governance Stakeholders
Establishing the Governance Structure
Resource Planning

Governance

Privacy,
Legal
Compliance



Communication
and Change
Management
Strategy

This section covers the following topics:

- Governance
- Privacy and Legal Compliance
- Communication and Change Management Strategy

1.1 GOVERNANCE

The term “governance” identifies the structure(s) established to provide better stakeholder coordination and distribution of roles and responsibilities in order to make decisions and take coordinated action.

In the context of HIFIS implementation, the governance structure will help with decision making and with coordinating HIFIS deployment and operationalization strategies to ensure that it is aligned with the business objectives of each service provider and the housing and homelessness system overall, and that it encourages local efforts to achieve desired community-level outcomes.

The governance structure will also ensure accountability and transparency in planning and prioritizing efforts; and will provide a frame of reference for managing each phase

of the implementation, operationalization and continuous improvement. Generally, the governance structure helps to maximize the long-term viability of the information management system and related activities.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to establishing a governance structure, because such an approach must consider the context, the number and type of service providers, and existing governance structures.

1.1.1 Identifying Governance Stakeholders

Best practices show that representing all partners in the HIFIS governance structure will help instill confidence for HIFIS implementation.

Relevant organizations and community representatives who are able to provide necessary perspectives or expertise for HIFIS implementation must participate in its governance. Specifically, communities may wish to consider including strategic and business representatives for each type of service provider (e.g. shelter, outreach, supportive housing, and prevention and diversion) to ensure that decision-making, including the configuration of HIFIS, aligns with the roles and responsibilities of each service provider. Governance participants will change over time, as certain roles may be essential for implementation and others for system maintenance.

The selection of partners may not be clear in the beginning; however, it is recommended to start with one main group and to expand when other needs arise. Governance structure participants include the following:

1. **Service providers** – Can confirm whether the HIFIS objectives, business model and requirements correspond to their organization's needs. The representatives could be managers or front-line workers who know the operations, policies and protocols of their organization and understand the role

of their organization within the housing and homelessness response system.

2. **Indigenous service providers** – Can help ensure that HIFIS configuration is responsive to the needs of Indigenous people.
3. **Individuals who have experienced homelessness** – Can help to shape HIFIS implementation by raising client needs and concerns, especially on the way information should be collected (e.g., data entry protocols), and how clients can be supported to navigate the system using a client-centred approach.
4. **Subject matter experts** – Can provide specific knowledge to support decision-making, especially information technology, HIFIS, legal and privacy issues, change management, Coordinated Access or the housing and homelessness response system.
5. **Municipal representatives or other government representatives** – Provide information on the reporting requirements and priorities in order to guide configuration.

1.1.2 Establishing the Governance Structure

As specified in the Coordinated Access guide, the governance structure established for Coordinated Access and HIFIS should address the following items:

- Support change management and build political will;
- Set up and implementation of Coordinated Access and HIFIS;
- Ongoing management and accountability (e.g., meeting minimum federal requirements);
- Day-to-day operational oversight and responsibilities; and
- Ongoing continuous improvements.



Figure 1 - Example of the Coordinated-Access governance structure

The Reaching Home directives require that communities establish a governance structure that will supervise decisions related to HIFIS implementation, maintenance and data management.

A. Coordinated Access Leadership Group

The responsibilities of the Coordinated Access Leadership Group with regard to HIFIS include:

- Monitoring the planning (e.g. confirm the scope of HIFIS, endorse the communication and change management strategy, identify the HIFIS Host), implementation (e.g., endorse the configuration and deployment strategy, ensure that training and technical supports are available) and continuous improvements (e.g. ensure that quality controls are in place)
- Approve policies and protocols

Even though some communities may prefer having a specific leadership group for HIFIS implementation, others may choose to take advantage of the Coordinated Access Leadership Group to support the existing community planning process (as illustrated above).

Terms of reference

Clear terms of reference for the Coordinated Access Leadership Group will formalize the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. These terms of reference provide information about the Group's structure, roles and responsibilities, objectives and composition, as well as the frequency of its meetings and its decision-making method ([See Appendix A - Sample Terms of Reference](#)).

Data life cycle

Under HIFIS, the Leadership Group can also monitor the data management life cycle and support the collection, analysis and sharing of high-quality data.

The Leadership Group must pay particular attention to:

- Operational and strategic reporting needs and identify the data that should be collected;
- Policies and protocols to standardize data entry;
- HIFIS user data collection training; and
- Data quality problems and solutions.

B. HIFIS Lead/Project Manager

The HIFIS Lead, often a Community Entity, assigns staff to support HIFIS implementation. The HIFIS Lead has several responsibilities covered throughout this guide. These include the following:

- Help define the scope and vision of HIFIS implementation ([See Appendix B – HIFIS Vision Planning](#)) to be confirmed by the Leadership Group.
- Develop business requirements and HIFIS configuration.
- Develop policies and protocols (e.g. privacy and consent, data entry, data sharing and user rights, security and audit logs).
- Develop a working privacy framework, a Data Sharing Agreement and consent forms.
- Develop and implement an HIFIS communications strategy.
- Identify the HIFIS Host site (e.g. where HIFIS will be installed and where client information will be stored) and the technical infrastructure.
- Develop training for the user.
- Launch HIFIS and set up a local support centre.

- Perform maintenance activities regularly (e.g. quality assurance reports and evaluations).
- Analyze data in order to support continuous improvement, in partnership with Coordinated Access and HIFIS working groups.

A HIFIS Lead, or Project Manager, may be appointed to implement HIFIS in order to meet the project objectives within the established time frame and budget. Project management responsibilities include managing scheduling, resources and deliverables; and liaising with the Leadership Group to provide status reports on progress, challenges, risks and schedule updates ([See Appendix C – Sample Project Status Report](#)).

Scope and business requirements

The HIFIS Lead/Project Manager is responsible for defining the scope of HIFIS, among other things (while the leadership group confirms it). It must also bring together experts from the service provider and combine their needs in order to develop the necessary organizational requirements to direct HIFIS configuration.

The following questions can help define the scope of HIFIS implementation:

- What are the geographic boundaries of the “system”?
- What is the scope of the service “system” that agreed to share the same HIFIS database?

For example:

- Which of these services helps people to stay housed (preventing homelessness) or to avoid a shelter stay (shelter diversion)?
- Which of these services follows prevention and diversion such as shelter stays?

- o Which of these services is offered only through Coordinated Access (where referrals to specific housing resources are managed centrally), such as rapid rehousing, supportive housing and/or case management supports that help people to stay housed?
- o What other services will be available to clients as part of the shared service planning documented in HIFIS, such as outreach or other housing help services?
- o Is there dedicated staffing to support Coordinated Access?

The business requirements should include the service providers' specific needs, the needs of Coordinated Access, as well as other needs, especially the strategic direction established by the CAB and other stakeholders. The functional requirements used to configure HIFIS cover the following items:

- Requirements for the business processes of each service provider, based on the services and programs offered;
- Service providers and their roles related to Coordinated Access, and the role of the Coordinated Access Lead and their reporting needs. For example, this will help determine the module and data each service provider must have to carry out its operations. Similarly, the role and duties of the Coordinated Access Lead (e.g. monitor housing resource vacancies, identify clients experiencing homelessness who have been waiting for a long time to receive housing or support offers);
- Populations served (e.g. demographic data) and personal information collected;
- Privacy and security requirements; and
- Data and reporting needs.

Section 2.3 - [Business Requirements](#) provides more information about business requirements.

C. HIFIS Working Group

The governance structure can also involve one or several working groups to:

- Advise the Coordinated Access Leadership Group;
- Support the HIFIS Lead/Project Manager in their duties; and
- Develop policies and protocols: policy and protocol development will help in planning, implementing and maintaining HIFIS and high-quality data. These should cover the data life cycle.

Ongoing governance structure

Following HIFIS implementation, the governance structure should remain active and continue to provide direction on improvements (e.g. review policies and protocols, monitor data quality issues). The composition of the Leadership Group and working groups must be reviewed regularly, as new skills may become relevant as HIFIS reaches maturity ([Section 5 - Sustainability](#)).

1.1.3 Resource Planning

The following resources should be retained for HIFIS implementation:

- Legal counsel (e.g. Data Sharing Agreements, consent forms, understanding legal requirements)
- Project management, including a Project Manager or a Business Analyst to implement HIFIS, set schedules, engage service providers and develop policies and protocols ([Section 1.1.2 - Establishing the Governance Structure](#))

- Communications or Change Management Specialist (Section 1.3 – Developing a Communications and Change Management Strategy)
- IT resources ([Section 2 – Host and install HIFIS; manage server security; perform data conversion](#))
- Report Development Specialist (Crystal Reports)
- Resources for training services ([Section 3.3 – HIFIS Training](#))
 - Help Desk resources ([Section 4.1 – Local Help Desk Planning](#))

1.2 PRIVACY AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Identifying and addressing issues that can affect HIFIS implementation will influence planning strategies. Although communities could identify other issues, this section focuses on privacy and legal compliance, which are central to the implementation of HIFIS.

Since Coordinated Access systems rely on the sharing of information between service providers, communities must establish proper privacy and legal standards and data collection, audit processes and arbitration procedures.

In a Coordinated Access system, service providers must collect personal information from individuals and families in order to help clients access the level of service that meets their needs. While these individuals remain the owners of their personal information, service providers and the HIFIS Lead are responsible for protecting this information, and clients must be informed about why, how, and by whom information is collected, used, shared, stored, and destroyed.

HIFIS is designed to safeguard personal information using role-based access control or role-based security model. It allows the customization of user access rights to ensure that users can only use functions and see the information that is necessary to do their job.

Communities must also plan how clients' personal information is managed and protected. A privacy expert should oversee work in this area, to help ensure that decision-making, processes and procedures align with the appropriate legislation. There are five types of privacy and legal documents that support HIFIS implementation: (1) Data Provision Agreement, (2) Community Data Sharing Agreement, (3) Client Consent Form, (4) Confidentiality and User Agreement, and (5) Privacy Assessment.

1. Data Provision Agreement between the HIFIS Lead and ESDC

The HIFIS Lead must sign a Data Provision Agreement (DPA) to install HIFIS. The DPA will allow the sharing of pre-determined, non-identifiable client information with the Government of Canada. The DPA is an agreement that outlines the terms and conditions related to the:

- the licence that ESDC will grant to the HIFIS Lead, which will extend to service providers and their third-party organizations, in return for the export of information from the HIFIS Lead Organization subject to the agreement; and
- the collection and disclosure of personal information by the HIFIS Lead Organization in such a manner as to protect the privacy and dignity of clients.

The DPA outlines the HIFIS Lead Organization's roles and responsibilities, and obligations related to the use and disclosure of the non-directly identifiable information.

2. Community Data Sharing Agreement between the HIFIS Lead Organization and service providers

The HIFIS Lead has to enter into a Data Sharing Agreement (or similar agreement) with service providers for the extended use of HIFIS and for obtaining the authority to share client's information. A Community Data Sharing Agreement outlines the objective of data sharing, including a description of these data, the roles and responsibilities of both parties, and the privacy and security protocols that should be in place.

The HIFIS Lead has the responsibility to develop a Data Sharing Agreement in accordance with the applicable legislation and agreements.

3. Client Consent Form

To use and disclose a client's information, service providers are required to obtain consent from a client, which is normally done via a consent form. Clients can also provide verbal consent, which is captured in HIFIS under Client Information > Consent.

The consent form should provide information on the personal information being collected and the purpose for which it is being collected and used. It should inform individuals that their personal information can be shared with local service providers, and that certain non-identifiable information will be shared with the Government of Canada for the purposes of analysis, research and to support policy and program development.

The governance body should decide what client information should be shared between service providers. This decision should be guided by what HIFIS can and cannot do, and implemented through policies and protocols, and HIFIS configuration.

Consent forms should be reviewed on a regular basis to support the Coordinated Access system, and meet applicable legislation.

TIP: Job aids or scripts can support workers with explaining the consent form to clients in a consistent and comprehensive manner. Developed in collaboration with people with lived experience, these scripts will respond to the needs of the client.

4. Confidentiality and User Agreement signed by HIFIS users

A Confidentiality and User Agreement (CUA) is a legal contract with a HIFIS user agreeing on the terms and conditions for using HIFIS and the protocols for protecting associated clients' privacy. In order to have access to HIFIS, a user could be required to sign a CUA that outlines his or her responsibilities towards clients' information.

TIP: The governance body should identify where accountability for the CUA lies. Some communities find it is more practical to delegate responsibility for applying these agreements to the service providers (employer).

TIP: Service providers' HIFIS access should be limited to their functions in the Coordinated Access system. HIFIS users' access rights should be limited to the information they need to perform their duties.

5. Privacy assessment

In addition to the aforementioned agreements, the HIFIS Lead may wish to conduct a privacy assessment that considers the potential risks and implications of collecting, managing and sharing client data.

A privacy assessment is a common practice conducted by an organization that determines how a program or service could potentially affect the privacy of an individual. In conducting a Privacy Assessment, risks and appropriate response measures are identified in accordance to local, provincial and federal legislation in a transparent manner, increasing accountability and readiness.

The following are important steps when considering a Privacy Assessment:

- Identifying all personal information related to a program or service and looking at how it will be used;
- Identifying where personal data is collected, managed and shared;
- Mapping who collects, manages and shares the data;
- Identifying clear roles and responsibilities regarding the staff involved in the management of the data;
- Identifying privacy risks and the level of those risks; and
- Finding ways to eliminate or reduce privacy risks to an acceptable level.

1.3 COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Implementation of HIFIS impacts how services are provided to clients due to new processes, protocols and tools. Effective communication eases this transition by articulating why the change is needed, how it will improve services and business delivery, status of the project and training opportunities.

TIP: Communities should implement a change management strategy.

A change management strategy could help service providers mitigate the risks associated with change, encourage the adoption of new practices and direct support to the people or teams that need it the most.

Such a strategy would require the appropriate communications and training, and the establishment of feedback loops/activities that allow service providers' employees to ask questions and share concerns. A change management strategy tailored to the context of each service provider is to be developed with the designated champions and appropriate resources of each organization.

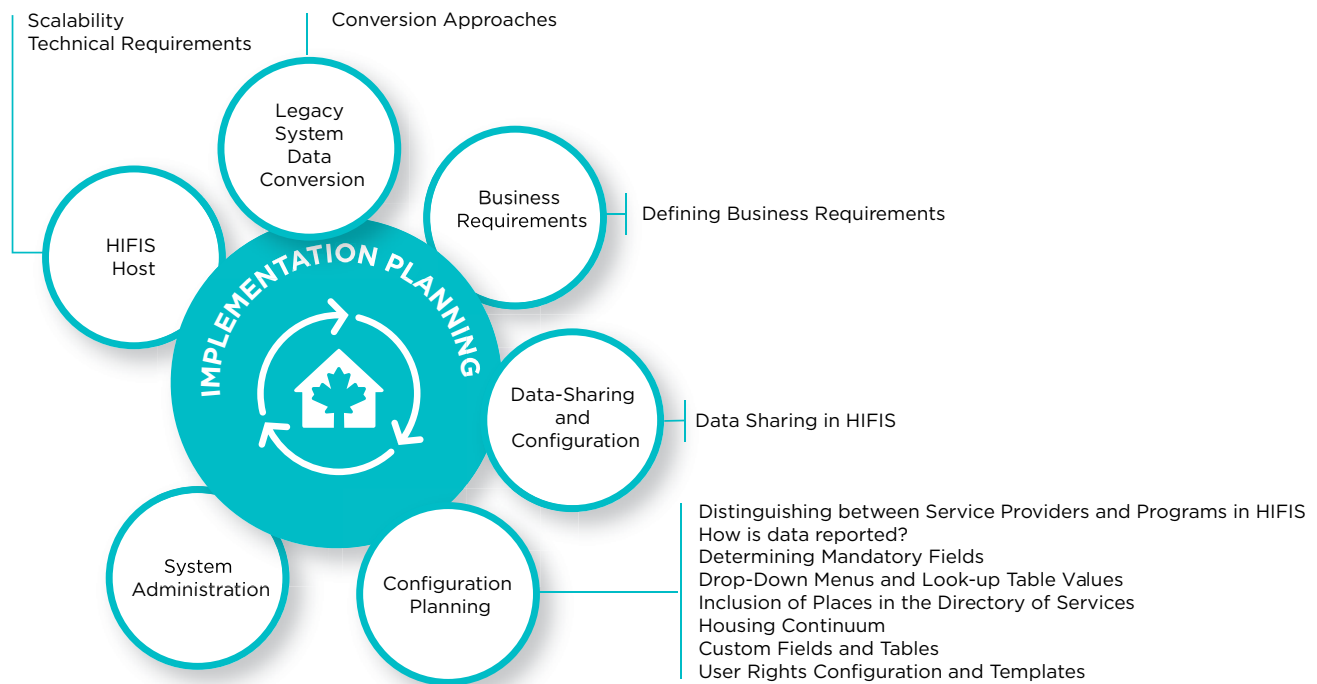
A communication strategy helps communication to be efficient and effective by identifying who needs to be reached, how and when, as well as the objective of the communication. It may also include meeting opportunities to allow service providers, including their employees, to share their concerns and feedback, and respond to their questions. The HIFIS communication strategy could be part of the broader strategy for the implementation of Coordinated Access systems. A communication strategy includes:

1. Defining the purpose: The communication strategy depends on what an organization is trying to accomplish with the messaging. Topics to communicate could include:
 - Implementation status, such as updates, schedule, feedback or question and answer sessions;
 - Communications, such as decisions, surveys, events, new HIFIS functionality and reports, and program news;
 - System Notifications, such as planned releases, outages, bugs, fixes and tips.
2. Identifying the audiences: Targeted messaging, which requires the identification of your audience, helps maximize impact. Audiences can be broken down in different ways, including by roles and responsibilities, type of services offered, etc. HIFIS

audiences in your community's housing and homelessness response system could include HIFIS Users, governance structure entities or any other stakeholders affected by the implementation of HIFIS directly or indirectly.

3. Selecting the communication channels: Determine channels according to the audience. Communication channels can include:
 - *Meetings/conferences/town halls:* Use existing events in your community with tailored communications materials.
 - *Email:* Disseminating information and calls for action (e.g., training). The sequence and timing of an email campaign should be planned.
 - *Website:* Using a webpage to provide information on HIFIS project status and resources, including users' guides, reference guides, training materials and frequently asked questions (FAQs).
 - *Newsletter:* Publishing an electronic or paper newsletter on a regular basis throughout the implementation and beyond.
 - *HIFIS Bulletins:* Sending reminders to read the latest newsletter or visit the HIFIS website. HIFIS Bulletins are also useful to advise of system outages, new releases and new reports.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING



This section provides information on discussion items and decisions that need to be made before deploying HIFIS:

- HIFIS Host
- Legacy System Data Conversion
- Business Requirements
- Data Sharing and Configuration
- System Administration
- Reporting

2.1. HIFIS HOST

The Host is where HIFIS is installed and where the client's information is stored. The governance body must determine who will host HIFIS.

HIFIS can be hosted within an organization or via a third party. Experts consult and guide decisions from the governance body to determine if an organization has the technical capacity to host HIFIS or if an external server is required.

2.1.1. Scalability

Assessing the scope of HIFIS is necessary to determine a host and the capacity of a server ([see section 1.1.2 – Establishing the Governance Structure](#)). Baseline metrics identify the scale of HIFIS implementation to support the housing and homelessness response system's current and ongoing needs, such as:

- The total number of service providers, users and concurrent users, the latter being among the most critical factors for performance;
- The peak activity times;
- The number of transactions per hour, day, week and month;
- The number of client files to transfer from the legacy system;
- The number of new client files created per year; and
- The number of new service providers and users to be added in subsequent years.

To have the proper system in place, communities should consider the accumulation of data over time, especially for those storing photos, images and other documents in HIFIS. Large quantities of data on the database server may have an impact on HIFIS performance.

2.1.2. Technical Requirements

1. HIFIS minimum technical requirements for the application, the server and the database are detailed in the HIFIS Installation Guide and have information on the following:
 - Software requirements;
 - Hardware requirements;
 - Hard disk space requirements;
 - Required server roles; and
 - Required server features.

2. While planning for minimum technical requirements, the following information should also be sought:

- Speed of the internet connection;
- Dedicated Internet Protocol (IP) address;
- Web domain;
- Secure Socket Layer (SSL) certificate;
- Development of a disaster recovery process; and
- Implementation of a system back-up solution.

2.2. LEGACY SYSTEM DATA CONVERSION

The Governance body will determine whether client files from the community's legacy system(s) will be migrated into HIFIS. While this decision should be based on the business value of converting data, the complexity, cost and privacy requirements could be taken into account:

- Number and types of legacy systems in the community;
- Number of client files and fields to be transferred for each legacy system for each; and
- Personal information sharing protocols, based on the legal framework in force. For example, if data sharing consents have a lifespan, is it legal to share data collected before the client's consent has been re-obtained?

Data conversion from a legacy system requires consultation with technical, legal and data experts to ensure it is streamlined and accurate. ([See Appendix D – Planning the Steps for Converting Data into HIFIS for guidance regarding fields](#)).

2.2.1. Conversion Approaches

There are different approaches to deal with historical data from legacy systems:

1. No conversion (start net-new)

- Client files are created in HIFIS for new clients only.
- Existing issues or duplication of client's files are not introduced into the new system.
- Historical client files remain in the legacy system(s) and become inaccessible or read-only.

2. Partial conversion

- Only the data of clients who have used the services in the last few months are converted into HIFIS.
- Only part of the client's file is converted, as provided for in the legal framework. It is possible to consider converting demographic data, for example, in order to ensure business process flow at the launch of HIFIS.
- This offers a smaller set of client files to convert in comparison to converting all client files, minimizing the amount of errors and duplications
- Inactive client files remain in the legacy systems and become inaccessible and unsupported.

Another possibility is to convert all client files. This approach, however, involves challenges, including the potential significant time investment.

Communities undertaking data conversion should establish procedures to merge duplicated profiles and clean data. For example, the service provider that has worked closely with a participant with a duplicate record could be assigned the responsibility to verify the data and merge the profiles.

2.3. BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

HIFIS is highly configurable. The system-level decisions that communities make about Coordinated Access—the specific services that are coordinated, the tools used in triage and assessment, which populations are prioritized, and how service providers share information about common clients—drives HIFIS configuration. Configuration decisions must be well informed as they have a direct impact on HIFIS usability and usefulness.

This section explains the type of information needed to support configuration decision-making, as well as the configuration process and considerations.

2.3.1. Defining Business Requirements

The business requirements for individual service providers and for the Coordinated Access system as a whole will guide the configuration of HIFIS. Before starting the configuration, the governance body should gather information, including:

- Scope of HIFIS ([see section 1.1.2 – Establishing the Governance Structure](#)).
- Could/should these different kinds of services be “grouped” as distinct service providers in HIFIS? ([See section 2.5 – Configuration Planning on configuration of HIFIS service providers.](#))
- What are the specific staff roles in each service provider? What information does each role need to do their job? What other staff roles exist in the system? (e.g., Coordinated Access Lead)
- What client information is helpful for shared service planning when workers are supporting the same client?

- What is the impact of **not** being able to access information in a shared database and how might this inform expectations for timely data entry?
- Who will benefit from the client information gathered in HIFIS and in what format (e.g., reports) will it be most helpful for the different audiences (e.g., clients, front-line workers, supervisors/managers, service providers, funders)?

This information will support configuration decisions:

- Service providers to identify who is providing service to clients (i.e., roles);
- Translation of the end-user workflow in HIFIS, gap analysis, development of workarounds and process re-engineering;
- Use of HIFIS modules, fields and drop-downs to classify service transactions;
- Depending on the roles of each service provider, the access rights templates that are applied to an employee (restricting their access to HIFIS modules, fields and drop-downs to an as-needed basis);
- Identifies gaps between business practices and standard HIFIS modules (e.g., customizing fields and drop-downs or adding new tables or surveys);
- What protocols should be developed to operationalize HIFIS workflows (e.g., guidelines around timing for data entry).

Walkthrough process

The HIFIS Lead or Project Manager, along with service provider representatives, could perform a system walkthrough to explore HIFIS functionalities. During this process, participants use HIFIS as end-users would, exploring modules and functionalities, and documenting their experience against the organizational model.

One possible approach would be to have service provider representatives looking at HIFIS from the perspective of each service type (e.g., shelter, street outreach, supportive housing) and other representatives focusing on the housing and homelessness response system-level perspective. The participants would document the relevant modules, fields that should be made mandatory, drop-down menus, etc., for each service provider type.

Subsequently, the team could consider looking at the relevant drop-down menus, fields and modules and validate that the information collected will respond to the operational and strategic needs (e.g., to do their job, produce necessary reports) of the clients, HIFIS users, managers and Coordinated Access lead.

The sections below provide more information on how these decisions can be made.

TIP: Many of the modules are configurable. See the HIFIS Configuration Guide to learn more.

2.4. DATA SHARING AND CONFIGURATION

2.4.1. Data Sharing in HIFIS

The configuration of the *Service Providers*, *User Rights* and *Clusters* settings enables HIFIS to share data or restrict data to ensure that HIFIS users can access information solely on the basis of their function and to properly serve clients (e.g., if they are serving the same clients or require the information to do their job).

Service provider – Establishes the data access privileges of a service provider (e.g., viewing of certain population groups such as gender and age) and establishes whether this information is shared with other service providers of the same or different type.

User Rights – Establishes the user's access rights and privileges. User Rights can be restrictive and/or as open as its specification by role. A HIFIS user can have restricted access that only allows seeing, editing, listing, or deleting transactions that pertain directly to their responsibilities, or a HIFIS user can have a more open access that allows a user to see modules and modify transactions across multiple service providers.

Cluster – Restricts the sharing of information to a group of local service providers, while using the same HIFIS licence of other service providers that do not have access to the information stored on the cluster.

What data is shared between service providers?

When accessing a client's file, there are two main sections in HIFIS – Client Information and Client Management.

Between service providers, HIFIS shares **all data** in *Client Information*, depending on users' access rights, unless the data is marked as not shareable (e.g., for Health Information, when adding a health record, a user can mark an item as "shareable" and "editable").

Information in *Client Management* is only shareable if the user is given rights to see this information based on their role in the system. Without the proper user rights, users will be able to see that a transaction exists, but not be able to access details of the transaction (other than what is displayed in the list view).

Figure 2 - Data Sharing

The screenshot shows the 'Client - Add Health Record' form in HIFIS. On the left, there are tabs for 'Client Information' and 'Client Management'. The main form area has a 'Health Issue' dropdown menu, a 'Start Date' field with a calendar icon, an 'End Date' field with a calendar icon, and a 'Description' text area. At the bottom, there is a red-bordered box containing four checkboxes: 'Self-Reported', 'Suspected', 'Diagnosed', and 'Contagious'.

2.5. CONFIGURATION PLANNING

Configuring HIFIS is based on the needs and objectives of the housing and homelessness response system.

2.5.1. Distinguishing between Service Providers and Programs in HIFIS

Establishing service providers and programs in HIFIS will determine how the system is organized, how users access information, and how transactions are recorded. Decisions in this area impact administrative functions (e.g., at what level can mandatory fields and look-up tables be defined), usability (e.g., log-ins) and functionalities (e.g., HIFIS users' information access rights, data entry).

When configuring service providers and programs in HIFIS, four principles should be considered:

1. Shared service planning and access to information when workers are supporting the same clients.
 - o Sharing client information provides the opportunity to build on service plans and limits clients telling their stories multiple times;
 - o Basic client vitals are shared according to users' access rights (first tier);
 - o The level of collaboration to be supported in service planning can differ (second tier).
2. Distinguishing service interactions: provides the opportunity to report data for a single provider;

3. Organizations' business management: offers different possibilities for an organization's progress and service management; and
4. Making the most of HIFIS features: how will the Coordinated Access Resource Inventory be managed for Coordinated Access (e.g., housing units can be grouped by service providers) to allow for full functionality of Vacancy Matching and Referral?

A. What is a service provider in HIFIS?

In HIFIS, the term “service provider” has a broad meaning and could be seen as any organization (service provider) within the housing and homelessness response system that provides services to clients; or, depending on how a community decides to structure HIFIS, a type of service within an organization (e.g., Emergency Shelter Program, Outreach Program or Supportive Housing Program). To differentiate them from other service providers (organizations) in the community, “service providers” in HIFIS will now be referred to as *HIFIS service providers*.

In the HIFIS Service Provider module, it is possible to define all the service providers in the community that are part of the same cluster and that use HIFIS together.

The configuration of this module is the very foundation of the collaboration mechanism of the service providers (organizations) and has a significant impact on the daily operations of HIFIS users and administrators. It is thus crucial to reflect on the structuring of organizations in HIFIS and that of the various programs and services that they offer to clients.

This structuring will take the form of an organizational tree of service providers configured under Administration > Service Providers > Management of Service Provider > List of Service Providers.

A HIFIS service provider can:

- Record transactions on clients;
 - Services, such as case management, assessments, receipt of goods or services, participation in group activities, etc.
 - Stays in a shelter
 - Participation in the Coordinated Access process
 - Housing placements and housing loss prevention
 - Other
- Have individual user accounts based on specific staff roles;
- Create rooms and beds (e.g., shelter or transitional beds);
- Share data with other service providers;
- Customize the use of HIFIS by:
 - Restricting what types of clients users can see (e.g., only males, females, youth or children)
 - Establishing mandatory data fields
 - Customizing look-up values
- Generate reports based on a service provider, multiple service providers or a client; and
- Act as the HIFIS Administrator to manage and configure the system.

Tiers of HIFIS service providers

In HIFIS, it is possible to create several levels of HIFIS service providers. For example, a secondary (Level 2) HIFIS service provider that reports to a Level 1 HIFIS service provider can be created. It is also possible to create a tertiary (Level 3) HIFIS service provider that reports to Level 2, and so on. A “parent” service provider can have several “children.”

By creating a HIFIS service provider that reports to another, it is possible to copy the search table values and mandatory fields configured in the parent service provider in order to facilitate the task of configuring the underlying service providers.

TIP: It is recommended to configure the search table values in the parent service provider before creating the child service provider. Once the child has been created, these values can no longer be copied from the parent to the child and it will be necessary to configure all of the child tables. This can require considerable effort.

Although the parent pushes its values on the children, it is possible to personalize the mandatory fields and the search table values in the child HIFIS service provider. It is also possible to force the mandatory fields of one or more children (but not the grandchildren) from the parent service provider. The children cannot reverse this setting.

HIFIS service provider settings

Defining each HIFIS service provider allows for individualized configuration of the HIFIS interface (e.g., which modules appear). In addition, it is possible to configure the mandatory fields and look-up table values for each HIFIS service provider.

Although it is possible that all organizations and their programs use the same mandatory fields and look-up table values, configuration of these values may allow additional benefits, such as simplifying the interface, limiting choices in drop-down lists and improving the quality of the data collected. This would bring HIFIS closer to the user’s reality on the ground.

There are three scenarios to be considered with respect to the administrative and geographic linkages between HIFIS users and service providers:

1. Associate HIFIS users with the end service provider (i.e. organization) that employs them. This requires configuring the service provider as a *HIFIS service provider*, regardless of the geographic location where the services are provided or the user's work address. In such a case:
 - The service provider (i.e. organization) is a *HIFIS service provider* (no children);
 - Users need to connect to only one interface to access clients;
 - In this case, the organization's various programs can be configured under Programs in HIFIS.
2. Associate HIFIS users with the geographic location (ex. service location) where the service provider's services are offered to clients. This could result in the breakdown of the service provider (i.e. organization) into several *HIFIS service providers* if the organization has a number of service locations. In such a case:
 - The service provider (i.e. organization) is the parent *HIFIS service provider* and its service points are the children *HIFIS service providers*;
 - Each child HIFIS service provider has its own beds associated solely with its service point;
 - Users may have to connect to several service providers if they are involved in a number of service points. Forgetting to connect under the right service provider will have an impact on how the transactions are recorded.

3. Associate HIFIS users with the types of services to which they are assigned, independently of the geographic location. This will translate into the breakdown of the organization into a number of service providers under HIFIS.
 - The organization is the parent service provider and its various programs are the child service providers;
 - Each service provider has under its own beds associated with the emergency shelter it represents;
 - Users may have to connect to a number of service providers if they are involved in a number of programs.

TIP: It is recommended to create at the root of the service provider's tree a service provider representing the geographic scope of the community (e.g. name of the province, city or cluster). The entire cluster can be administered from this root.

Managing Rooms and Beds

Rooms and beds are managed within each HIFIS service provider. Depending on the configuration, they can be managed in the same interface and benefit from a lot of flexibility in bed assignment, independent of the geographic location, or managed individually by each HIFIS service provider.

Before configuring the *HIFIS service providers*, gathering specific information on each service provider in your housing and homelessness system might be of use. [See Appendix E – Sample Service Provider Survey](#) for example of questions to gather general information, a survey template for technical assessment and Rooms and Beds.

[Appendix F - Sample User Survey](#) is an example of a template list that could be used to list all the organization's users who will use HIFIS. Gathering this information will help with user set-up (roles and account creation) and the planning of training (numbers to be trained by role and skill level).

B. What is a program in HIFIS?

A program is a label or tag created by the community to group client transactions by category. A program does not have the same functionality as a HIFIS service provider. For example, *HIFIS Programs* can be used to track similar kinds of services (e.g., shelter stays, youth programming or assistance provided during a natural disaster) or goods and services funded by the same source (e.g., certain supportive housing units in a building). Reports can be generated using *HIFIS programs*, summarizing service transactions either within or across *HIFIS service providers*.

Each service offered to clients by the organization (e.g., Admission, Case Management, Housing Placement steps, provision of Goods and Services) may be attached to one or more *HIFIS programs*.

Programs in HIFIS will now be referred to as *HIFIS programs*.

A HIFIS program allows for

- tracking of funded programs (e.g., stay in a shelter, housing program with support services, youth program) – programs allow the tracking of payments by clients towards the activity the program is being used for; and
- tracking of certain indicators and operations (e.g., audience, delivery of services aimed at men or women, a geographic region, temporary displacement of clients due to natural disaster).

Figure 3-4: Link a program to the relevant service(s) and Service Provider(s)

Service Provider	Start Date	End Date	Funds	Beds	Action
Drop-in Centre	07/06/2019	-- / -- / --			
Family Shelter	07/06/2019	-- / -- / --			
Grandview	26/03/2019	-- / -- / --			
Main Shelter	07/06/2019	-- / -- / --			
Main Shelter Housing Agency	07/06/2019	-- / -- / --			
Youth Shelter	07/06/2019	-- / -- / --			

Add Program

Program Name

Program Type

Owner

Services ☐ Stay ☐ Emergency ☐ Transition ☐ Non-Shelter ☐ Goods and Services ☐ Storage ☐ Reservations

A HIFIS program may be

- exclusive to a service provider, or
- shared by a number of service providers, such as regional programs, or programs offered at several service points.

TIP: To obtain a quality report based on *HIFIS programs*, users must attach transactions to the appropriate HIFIS program.

As this is a manual process, communities' protocols, procedures and training will play a key role in ensuring that HIFIS users select the right HIFIS program(s) for the right transaction.

By default, the Program field is optional in the various modules. It is possible to make it mandatory ([see section 2.5.3 - Determining Mandatory Fields](#)) depending on the module.

For example, upon a client's admission to a shelter, a program is associated with the client's admission, then a bed is assigned to the client. This allows for more flexible management of the service provider's beds, as the beds are not exclusive to a program.

For each HIFIS service provider, a specific program may be attributed to one or more modules under the Program field. This makes it easier to collect data for users.

C. What are the impacts of creating *HIFIS service providers* versus *HIFIS programs*?

The following considerations are required when deciding to create a HIFIS service provider or a HIFIS program:

- What data will be accessible, and to whom?
 - HIFIS service provider(s) can restrict access to data, while *HIFIS programs* cannot
- Will users have to log on and log off to record transactions?
 - Users will have to log in to access a HIFIS service provider, but will not need to do so to access relevant *HIFIS programs*.
- How much information does a service provider want to share with other service providers, or within its own organization?
 - *HIFIS service providers* have greater control over what data is accessed by users, while *HIFIS programs* do not have this feature.

	HIFIS Service Provider	HIFIS Program
Transactions	<p>Automatically associated with a HIFIS service provider under which the HIFIS user is logged in.</p> <p>Users have to log in to each service provider to ensure the transaction is associated with the right HIFIS service provider.</p>	<p>Can be manually associated with specific transactions.</p> <p>Can be configured so that service providers see only the programs relevant to them in their program drop-down menus.</p>
Functionalities	User rights, look-up values, mandatory data fields and the modules available are configurable at the HIFIS service provider level.	Programs are a static field created by the HIFIS Administrator (or someone with the delegated rights to create programs).
Reporting	Can be developed based on each service provider, or a combination of service providers	Can be developed based on each program or a combination of programs.

Use Cases

Scenario 1 – A community fragments its model into a high number of *HIFIS service providers*. Among other things, the community chooses to establish its funding programs X and Y as *HIFIS service providers* (i.e., X and Y are configured as *HIFIS service providers*). This ensures that transactions under X and Y are automatically compiled in the right place, rather than relying on users making a manual selection at the time of data

entry (i.e., if X and Y had been configured as *HIFIS programs*).

Impact: Every time they need to enter transactions or see information in X and Y for a client, users have to log in to X, then log out, and then log in to Y, then log out. This can become time-consuming for users, who may have to log on and log off multiple times throughout the day, even for a single client.

Scenario 2 – A community uses minimal *HIFIS service providers* and a large number of *HIFIS programs*. This allows HIFIS users to work with the same client by labelling transactions for a specific program or project, without the need to log on and off multiple times. With this approach, however, the community loses the ability to restrict information between HIFIS users.

For example, if an organization works with many types of clients—men, women and youth—and all shelter beds are under the same service provider, any user with the right

to see shelter beds and book in clients will be able to see all the clients staying in shelter beds. Given that the organization is working with many types of clients—men, women and youth—it may wish to create *HIFIS service providers* for each population so users cannot access information for clients with whom they do not work.

Impact: Data-sharing policies and procedures are required to ensure that users are only accessing the information they need to do their jobs.

2.5.2. How is data reported?

Decisions made by communities and service providers on how to better support individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness need to be grounded on facts of homelessness and service provisions, which must be based on data. As an important source of data, HIFIS can support the prioritization of clients, strategic decision-making, the identification of trends and community planning.

In order to optimize the use of HIFIS as a tool for supporting decision-making and support its configuration, communities should evaluate and prioritize business and strategic needs and identify data that should be collected.

In HIFIS, data reporting can be done at numerous levels, including at the community (aggregation of *HIFIS service providers'* information), *HIFIS service providers* (or collection of service providers), transaction and HIFIS program levels. HIFIS reports give the option to select which service providers to include in a HIFIS Report.

HIFIS uses Crystal Reports as its reporting tool. A number of standard reports come pre-installed in HIFIS; however, communities that have additional reporting requirements should develop their own customized Crystal Reports. Reports can also be developed at the individual client level.

TIP: The *HIFIS Configuration Guide* provides additional information and step-by-step instructions on how to configure HIFIS.

2.5.3. Determining Mandatory Fields

Making fields mandatory helps improve data completeness and, by extension, the quality of reports. Mandatory fields will also show HIFIS users that these fields are of a higher business value and should be prioritized.

Making too many fields mandatory, however, can have a detrimental effect on clients if they are not convinced that it improves services, and can increase strain on users collecting this information. In order to avoid this, the community could establish criteria to make a field mandatory and document the business value or justification for the mandatory fields.

Mandatory data fields are marked with a red star. HIFIS users' input into HIFIS cannot be saved until the mandatory fields are filled.

TIP: The Data Provision Agreement (DPA) between the HIFIS Lead Organization and ESDC identifies the fields that are mandatory to report to the Government of Canada. The fields are mandatory only if using the modules where these fields exist.

Figure 5: Example of a mandatory field

The screenshot shows the 'Add Client' form with the following fields and requirements:

- Consent Type:** A dropdown menu with 'Select an option' and a red star icon. Below it, a yellow warning icon and the text 'The consent type is required.'
- Consent Start Date:** A date input field with '2019-11-01' and a calendar icon.
- Last Name:** A text input field with a red star icon. Below it, a yellow warning icon and the text 'The Last Name field is required.'
- First Name:** A text input field with a red star icon. Below it, a yellow warning icon and the text 'The First Name field is required.'

2.5.4. Drop-Down Menus and Look-up Table Values

Drop-down menus show the pre-determined entries that appear to users who enter information in specific fields. They increase navigation efficiency and increase reporting accuracy by allowing HIFIS users to select information from a finite set of options, rather than typing in a free text field, which is prone to errors.

Entries for most drop-down menus can be edited (added, removed, retitled) within the Look-up Table menu. A walkthrough should be conducted to review the default values of each drop-down list to ensure they are relevant to your community and service provider(s). In most cases, there may be unrelated or missing ones that need to be added, or ones that do not apply that need to be deactivated. A careful selection of the values will ensure that HIFIS users have access to the most accurate and relevant options when assisting clients.

Figure 6: Example of a drop-down menu

The image shows a software interface with a form. On the left, there are three labels: "Geographic Region", "File Number", and "Country of Birth". To the right of these labels is a drop-down menu. The menu is currently open, displaying a list of options. The first option, "This Community", is highlighted in blue. Below it are "This Region / County", "This Province / Territory", "Other Province", and "Other Territory". Above the list, there is a text box with the placeholder "Select an option".

2.5.5. Inclusion of Places in the Directory of Services

The Directory of Services module is used to capture the location and contact information

for places of importance in the community. Once configured, these places become available in various HIFIS modules and can be used to record locations that a client has or will be visiting, or the location at which a service was received (e.g., pharmacy for when HIFIS users are adding a client's medication records, a school for education records or another service provider the clients have accessed or from which they have been referred).

When aggregated, this information can be used to track the volume of interactions with partners from across the community, including the origin/destination of clients' inflow/outflow and the different partners from which clients receive services. This can be used to support decision-making for strategic partnerships, the Coordinated Access system or community planning.

As communities implement Coordinated Access systems, it is expected that the places in the directory of services will expand, reflecting the involvement of an increasing number of community partners.

2.5.6. Housing Continuum

Setting up a housing continuum consists of identifying categories in this continuum (e.g. emergency shelter, supportive housing) and linking them to housing types. The housing continuum categories are used in the Housing Type drop-down menu that can be found in several modules (e.g. Housing History).

Configuring the housing continuum allows communities to track and report on clients' pathways through homelessness and supports the monitoring of intervention outcomes. The housing continuum can also be used to calculate inflows, outflows and chronic homelessness.

2.5.7. Custom Fields and Tables

Following the configuration of the mandatory fields, the look-up tables, the places and the housing continuum, a community or service provider may discover that HIFIS does not capture all information required as per the business requirements.

HIFIS allows for the creation of custom fields and tables that are not included in the default setting.

2.5.8. User Rights Configuration and Templates

User rights

HIFIS allows for the creation of highly customizable user rights. User rights are configured either individually per HIFIS user or through User Rights Templates.

User Rights Templates can reflect the various types of HIFIS users based on the role they play in the system. These templates protect client information by determining what module and information a HIFIS user can see/access, as well as the actions the user can execute (customize, edit, delete, etc.). They also streamline interaction with HIFIS, as users will only see the modules and fields they need to do their work, thus reducing the amount of information on the screen. Once created, these user rights templates can be applied to one or several HIFIS users.

In order to determine how many different templates are necessary and how to customize them, communities should identify and group the types of users they have (e.g., shelter worker, shelter supervisor, outreach worker, site administrator). A survey can be used to identify employee tasks and functions, and from that, the HIFIS modules and fields they need can be set up.

Case: A large service provider with a shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, shelter diversion, a drop-in centre, homelessness prevention programs, street outreach and housing first programs requires a large number of HIFIS Front Desk Modules, including Admissions, Housing Placements, Group Activities and Housing Loss Prevention.

HIFIS users need access only to the modules relevant to them. The Rights template should be configured so that, for instance, the homelessness prevention staff have access to Housing Loss Prevention, but not shelter staff.

Adding user profiles

HIFIS User Profiles must be created before individuals can use HIFIS. During this process, users are linked to:

- **HIFIS service provider(s):** as indicated earlier in this section, a HIFIS user making transactions to multiple *HIFIS service providers* will have to log in to each one separately.
- **HIFIS rights template(s):** HIFIS users that have access to multiple *HIFIS service providers* can have different rights for each of them. This would be the case if an employee is working for more than one service provider within the system or is responsible for providing more than one type of service (e.g., prevention and diversion, shelter).

- **Role(s):** HIFIS Roles (e.g., Staff, Caseworker, Lawyer, Landlord) govern where in HIFIS the user's name appears in drop-down menus. For example, a Caseworker (Role)'s profile name would be available in the Case Management, Housing Placement and Assessment modules in the Caseworker field.

2.6. SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

The governance body should identify HIFIS administrator(s) that would be responsible for its day-to-day management, including:

- Managing and creating user accounts;
- Resetting passwords;
- Managing and creating *HIFIS service providers*; and
- Adding/making changes to:
 - Rights templates;
 - Fields and tables;
 - Housing continuum;
 - Mandatory fields;
 - Look-up table values;
 - Clusters; and
 - Changes to *HIFIS programs*.

There are several approaches for the delegation of administrative responsibilities:

1. Centralized – HIFIS Lead as the Single Administrator

- One group performs administrative tasks for all the service providers and its staff.
- **Advantage:** All users, service providers and configurations are managed consistently.

- **Impact:** Requires dedicated resources, especially when supporting a large number of HIFIS users and service providers. Can create a “one-size-fits-all” approach making HIFIS configuration less tailored to service providers' specific needs.

2. Isolated Delegation – Each HIFIS Service Provider as an Administrator

- Each service provider manages its own users and its own environment, including mandatory fields, look-up tables and rights templates.
- **Advantage:** The service provider has control over its own configuration and can tailor it to its specific needs.
- **Impact:** Configurations between service providers may become fragmented. This could have maintenance, reporting and general use implications that deviate from the original set-up and impact data integrity.

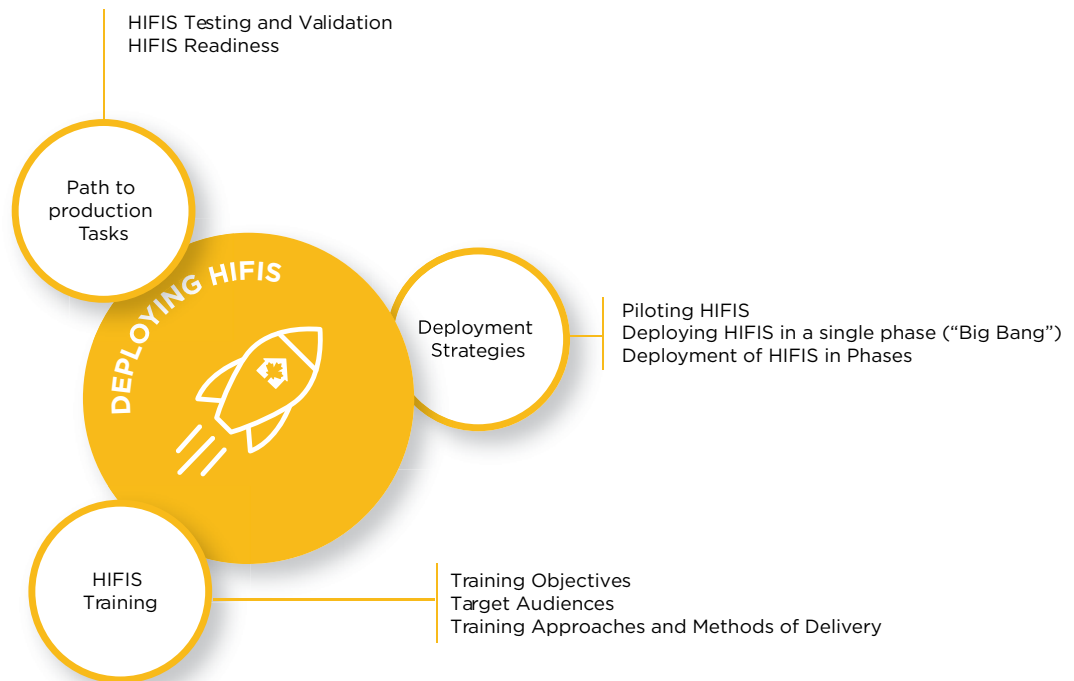
3. Hybrid Delegation – Shared Administration

- Maintaining a central administrator for core administrative functions (e.g., configuration and set-up) and delegating certain administrative functions to the service providers, such as creating user profiles and rights templates.

Decisions and the rationale during the configuration should be documented. These could become useful for HIFIS training, but also to support future configuration changes.

See the *HIFIS Configuration Guide* for information on administrative tasks.

DEPLOYING HIFIS



This section covers activities to deploy HIFIS:

- Path to Production Tasks
- Deployment Strategies
- HIFIS Training

NOTE: Sections 3.1 and 3.2 contain general information on the activities and considerations leading to the deployment of HIFIS. Your community can follow its own business protocols, if applicable.

3.1 PATH TO PRODUCTION TASKS

The following activities should be completed before moving forward with HIFIS deployment:

- Testing and production environments are available;
- HIFIS is hosted, installed, configured and tested, including user rights templates;
- The local help desk is ready;
- If applicable, data conversion from legacy system(s) is completed for the service providers involved;
- A contingency plan (procedures) is put in place in case there are issues preventing the deployment of HIFIS within the scheduled timelines.

3.1.1 HIFIS Testing and Validation

HIFIS should be tested for regulatory, technical, business and user requirements. Incidents and non-conformities should be documented in a log, managed by the HIFIS Lead or Project Manager.

Test results should be reviewed by the HIFIS Lead and stakeholders responsible for implementation to identify issues that should be remediated before deployment. Once HIFIS has been tested and approved, the HIFIS Lead (or appropriate technical expert) creates the HIFIS “release candidate.”

Stress testing could also be conducted to ensure that the environment can process the expected number of transactions at any one time.

3.1.2 HIFIS Readiness

Ensure that the host site, service providers and user accounts are ready before deploying HIFIS ([See Appendix G – Deployment Readiness Checklists](#)).

3.2 DEPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

The governance body should select a deployment strategy based on characteristics of the community, such as capacity, training requirements, and organizational needs. There are three main deployment strategies to consider:

1. Piloting HIFIS;
2. Deploying in a single phase; and
3. Deploying in multiple phases.

3.2.1 Piloting HIFIS

Piloting HIFIS with selected service provider(s) gives the opportunity to identify issues that should be corrected prior to deployment across the community. While often considered for large-scale implementations, piloting HIFIS offers the ability to:

- test HIFIS and receive feedback from front-line users;
- validate that front-line users have been adequately trained;
- validate deployment steps;
- adjust help desk processes and related documentation;
- identify communication strategy gaps; and
- evaluate user readiness.

Issues that arise during the pilot should be addressed before deploying HIFIS more widely the community.

3.2.2 Deploying HIFIS in a single phase (“Big Bang”)

HIFIS is deployed in one single phase, while the legacy systems are removed when HIFIS is deployed.

Advantages:

- Shorter HIFIS rollout (usually within days rather than months);
- Users adopt HIFIS simultaneously; and,
- A number of programs and services are considered in the deployment, which makes it possible to put in place an inclusive model adapted to a large number of contexts.

Challenges:

- Can require a lot of resources deployed simultaneously; and,
- Issues encountered affect the entire community.

3.2.3 Deployment of HIFIS in Phases

HIFIS is deployed in phases over time, and users are on-boarded in waves. The phased approach can be done several ways, including by organization or service provider type.

Advantages:

- Ability to deliver training and provide support in phases;
- Issues/lessons learned identified in one phase can be addressed in/applied to the next phases;
- IT team workload is spread over a longer period.

Challenges:

- HIFIS is implemented over a longer period.

3.3 HIFIS TRAINING

Training users on HIFIS will help them in their use of the system in the context of their daily activities.

This section covers the key elements of a training plan, and provides examples of methods to consider for delivering training.

The HIFIS Lead plays a significant role in HIFIS training. They could be responsible for developing the training plan and materials, and can deliver training sessions. In larger communities, delivery and other related responsibilities could also be delegated to a training coordinator or instructor.

A training plan provides:

- training objectives;
- target audience(s);
- training approaches, duration and methods of delivery;
- feedback and evaluation mechanism for the training and trainer.

3.3.1 Training Objectives

Establishing objectives will ensure the training meets users' needs: frontline, help desk, managers and super-users. Objectives should target training on policies and procedures on such topics as data standards, roles and responsibilities, business requirements and module use.

Training is an opportunity to build users' data literacy by providing information on the value of collecting specific information and by sharing instructions on data entry protocols and procedures. Doing so will help prevent data entry errors that can have a significant impact on data quality, reporting and decision-making.

3.3.2 Target Audiences

Identifying different audiences helps to develop training tailored to the participants' roles and needs. One way to identify the audiences is by listing HIFIS users in their role and the use of HIFIS.

The table below provides examples of audience types, with details on their expected use of HIFIS and training needs:

Audience	Role/Utilization of HIFIS	Training Needs/Outcomes
Shelter Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use the system to intake and assess clients ■ Use the following functions in HIFIS: client management, shelter operations, goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have practical knowledge of HIFIS modules, functions and features to perform their role ■ Understand processes and procedures as they relate to the use of HIFIS ■ Understand privacy/security policies and protocols and how they apply to HIFIS access and use
Outreach Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use the system to serve outreach clients: client management, case management, housing, referrals, subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have practical knowledge of and can support users on all HIFIS modules, functions and features ■ Understand processes and procedures as they relate to the use of HIFIS ■ Understand privacy/security policies and protocols and how they apply to HIFIS access and use

Audience	Role/Utilization of HIFIS	Training Needs/Outcomes
Organization Administrators/ Help Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respond to end users' questions, including on how to use specific modules, functionalities and features ■ Manage configuration and set-up, user access, reporting and other administrative functions of HIFIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have practical knowledge of and ability to support users on all HIFIS modules, functions and features ■ Understand HIFIS's administrative and configuration functions ■ Understand the service provider's processes and procedures as they relate to the use of HIFIS ■ Understand the privacy/security policies and protocols and how they apply to HIFIS access and use ■ Have system knowledge to triage and manage incidents, service requests and requests for information from the user community
Other: Executives, Managers, Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Receive educational training ■ Non-system personnel who require system knowledge for decision making, policy and leadership purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand how HIFIS has been implanted and how it is being used in the community ■ Understand how to access program level reports ■ Understand the business value of HIFIS

3.3.3 Training Approaches and Methods of Delivery

Communities may take different approaches to training depending on the size and scope of their implementation and the resources available to them.

Training approaches may include one, or a combination, of the below:

- Train trainers, who will then deliver one-on-one (or small group) training to new users;
- Use instructor-led training that is delivered in person or by webinar;
- Use self-paced computer-based learning that users can access when and as often as they require.

To help communities train HIFIS users and develop training materials, tools and materials will be made available:

For HIFIS users:

- [Demo site](#), which helps get a hands-on experience and explore HIFIS capabilities.
- [The Homelessness Learning Hub](#), which offers courses for professional development and community capacity building. It features resources on HIFIS and Reaching Home, such as tools, webinars and templates.

For HIFIS support teams, in addition to what is above:

- *Installation Guide*, which provides a description of HIFIS technical requirements, architecture and installation procedures.
- *Configuration Guide*, which provides an explanation of the configuration procedures to align with the community's business needs.
- *HIFIS User Guide*, which gives a description of each function and how to use it.

These tools are based on the standard HIFIS installation; however, communities will have specific configurations and customizations of HIFIS.

TIP: Adapt the User Guide from the Implementation Toolkit with only the modules from your configuration and set-up of HIFIS, and use it as a training tool or reference document.

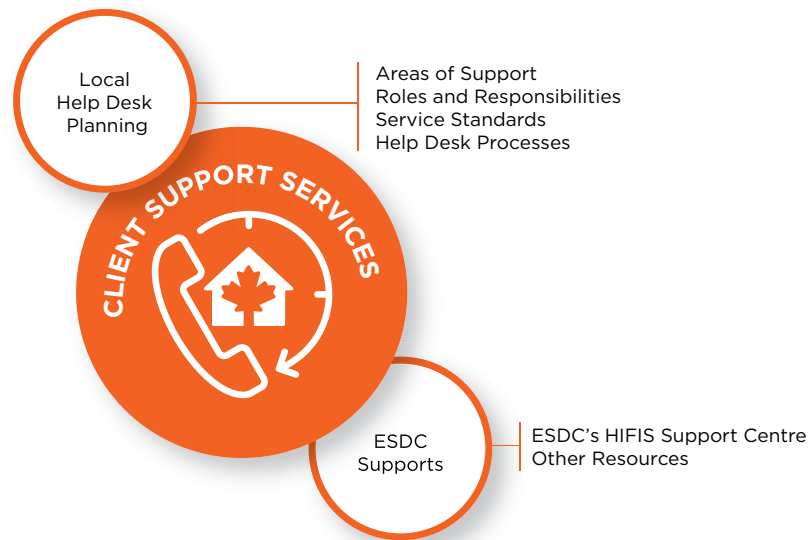
Communities may develop their own training and tools that target their needs and specific content. Many communities are willing to share their training tools with other communities implementing HIFIS 4. Look on the [Homelessness Learning Hub](#) for shared resources.

When deciding on delivery methods, consider the size and complexity of the implementation, the resources available and the types of users to be trained.

- Online training
 - Is easily scalable, flexible and accessible whenever the users need to learn.
 - Can be expensive and time-consuming to create and update; does not allow for asking direct questions.
- Classroom training
 - Provides in-person interaction with participants, supports train-the-trainer approach, classroom setting.
 - Requires available training resources to deliver, create curriculum and coordinate training sessions; a training environment; and computer terminals for each participant.

Both online and classroom training can be complemented by training exercises to reinforce learning. Evaluation surveys to help identify any learning gaps or improvement opportunities should be part of any training plans.

CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES



This section covers the steps to set up a client support service and the roles of ESDC:

- Local Help Desk Planning
- ESDC support

Service providers and users require support related the day-to-day use of HIFIS. The HIFIS

Lead (or Project Manager) must put in place the user support processes, people and tools to respond to incidents, users making service requests or configuration changes. This service support is intended to provide a single point of contact to meet users' needs.

The HIFIS Lead would integrate local help desk services for HIFIS as part of the operational support model.

4.1 LOCAL HELP DESK PLANNING

This section covers the elements to consider when building and maintaining a help desk, including roles and responsibilities, service standards and procedures.

4.1.1 Areas of Support

Incident management

An incident can be defined as an unplanned event that causes interruption or degradation of service. Incident management is the process of limiting disruptions caused by an event, followed by a return to business as usual. This process includes escalating incidents with software vendors for some of the components HIFIS requires (e.g. Microsoft's Windows Server and SQL Server as well as SAP's Crystal Reports) and with ESDC for HIFIS itself. The main types of incidents are:

- Minor incident: fault resulting in the system producing an incorrect or unexpected result or behaving in unintended ways;
- Major incident: System is down or users are not able to log in to the system during organizations' work hours.

Service requests

Service requests are usually for information, advice, a standard change or access. The main types of service requests are:

- Data Fixes: request to change/edit data (e.g., merging client record);
- Enhancement: collect requests to add new functionality or change existing functionality;

- Configuration: collect requests for a change to system configuration (e.g., add a new value to a drop-down menu);
- Account Requests: set up/modify a user account, password resets; and
- Information Requests: information about how the system works or the procedure for how to do something in the system.

Advance support

The help desk could be responsible for centralizing and managing specific HIFIS configurations that support the end users: service provider information (settings, rooms and beds), application settings, user set-up, and places and housing units.

Management of enhancement requests

The help desk serves as the single point of contact between the organization and ESDC to escalate change requests for HIFIS, ensuring standardized methods and procedures for efficiently handling, communicating and coordinating the approval of changes the organization would like seen in HIFIS.

Release management

During releases of new versions, maintenance releases and patches, the help desk can play a role by coordinating releases, handling communications with end users, and testing and piloting releases.

4.1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

For HIFIS Leads without formal IT service management capabilities, the scope of activities that a help desk performs can be broad. Roles and responsibilities must be formalized to ensure everything is completed, accountabilities are clear and expectations are set with clients. A help desk must have the following roles:

- **HIFIS Business Owner:** Responsible for the overall operation of the help desk and to ensure the right tools, processes and documentation are in place.
- **Support Manager:** Manages day-to-day operations by prioritizing activities, managing service level agreements and collecting, managing and reporting on support desk statistics.
- **Tier 1 Support Analyst:** Front-line help desk worker who interacts directly with end-users requesting support. They resolve tickets within the scope of their activities (e.g., account management, password resets, minor data fixes, and answering procedural questions).

The Tier 1 Support Analyst can also be responsible for training end-users, creating training documentation, conducting privacy and security audits, and HIFIS configuration maintenance.

- **Tier 2 Support Analyst:** Escalation point for the Tier 1 Support Analyst. The Tier 2 Support Analyst resolves more complex incidents that require further investigation, including working with the network provider, software vendors, ESDC and the application-hosting provider. The Tier 2 Support Analyst can also be involved in problem and change management processes.

Additional responsibilities for the help desk staff can include training of end users, and creating and maintaining procedures and training documentation.

4.1.3 Service Standards

Service standards are commitments to a measurable level of performance that users can expect under normal circumstances. Service standards are integral to client service as they help manage user expectations, while contributing to service improvements and setting performance targets. When developing service standard levels, resource availability, the HIFIS service availability and expected level of requests should be considered.

The length of time it will take to resolve an incident or respond to a request is a key service standard to establish and communicate to users. The time to resolution can be based upon the complexity of the request.

Below are some examples of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for some issue types:

Issue Type: Account Request

- Resolve within 24 hours
- 95% Target SLA

Issue Type: Informational/Procedural

- Resolve within 24 hours
- 95% Target SLA

Issue Type: Data Fix (Merges)

- Resolve within 5 days
- 95% Target SLA

Issue Type: Bug, Enhancement, Configuration

- Best Effort

Here is a typical impact and urgency matrix to determine priority of incidents and service requests:

		Priority		
		High – System Wide	Medium – Localized	Low – User
Urgency	High	Critical	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Low	Planning

Prioritizing requests

To help meet service standards and better support users, service requests and incidents should be sorted, logged and prioritized.

The priority of a request can be determined by its impact on users, the business and its urgency. Impact is the measure of the extent of potential damage the incident may cause, while urgency is how quickly a resolution is required.

- **Low priority:** Does not interrupt users or the business and can be worked around. Service to users can be maintained.
- **Medium priority:** Affects a few employees and interrupts work to some degree. Service to users may be slightly affected or inconvenienced.
- **High priority or critical:** Affects a large number of users, interrupts business and affects service delivery.

4.1.4 Help-Desk Processes

To maximize service quality, processes and procedures should be developed for how the help desk will receive, investigate and resolve requests that are submitted. Processes and procedures help streamline how requests and incidents are handled, help ensure that responses to similar requests are consistent and allow for more effective training when onboarding new helpdesk personnel.

While distinct processes and procedures could be developed for different types of requests (e.g., application incidents and defects, procedural requests or “how-tos...,” configuration changes and service requests), general steps from reception or identification of issue to resolution would include:



Scale and hours of service

The hours of service will help determine the resources required for the help desk. To inform this decision, the HIFIS Lead could consult with the service providers on their business needs.

For example, a local help desk could provide support during normal business hours Monday to Friday and implement on-call service or institute contingency planning for any incidents received after-hours, on weekends or holidays.

Methods of communication

To ensure that users can access timely support, the help desk can use several methods of communication, including:

- Dedicated email – “Mail To” link can be placed in footer of HIFIS application and all HIFIS communications products.
- Dedicated phone with the ability to route number for after-hours support.
- Website – Provides self-server support for “how-to” questions.

Help Desk toolset

Tools to track, manage and monitor incidents and service requests help improve processes, reduce costs and prevent incidents from happening in the future. These include:

- Ticketing system: collects and organizes users’ requests and manages them in one location.

- o For small communities, this can be as simple as creating a spreadsheet to track incidents received:

- Unique incident ID
- Issue type
- Status
- Date received
- Issue description
- Assigned to
- Action steps
- Reported by
- Reported via (email, phone)
- Resolution
- Date closed

- o For large communities, a professional tracking system may be necessary. Many commercial options exist.

- Knowledge Base: a self-service library of information that helps users find solutions on their own. While knowledge bases can take many forms, from documents structured in folders on a shared network to complex stand-alone software, the solution must make information easy to find, help standardization of responses and provide general how-to information.

The procedures and processes developed during the implementation process can be the start of a knowledge base.

4.2 ESDC SUPPORT

As the provider of HIFIS, ESDC has resources available to support organizations implementing and operating it. Support provided to organizations is third tier (Level 3) in nature and complementary to the help desk function. Incidents and service requests escalated to ESDC normally require engineering or application specialist level intervention.

4.2.1 ESDC's HIFIS Client Support Centre

ESDC provides support services through its Client Support Centre. Lead Client organizations supporting their communities' HIFIS implementation (normally the help desk) work with ESDC's HIFIS Client Support Centre for matters relating to:

- the technical set-up or update of HIFIS, as well as its hosting and IT technical infrastructure;
- HIFIS application configurations and customizations;
- application enhancements and changes; and
- bug and defect remediation.

The HIFIS Client Support Centre (Support Desk) can be contacted at:

- Phone: 1-866-324-2375
- TTY: 1-800-926-9105
- Fax: 1-819-654-2695
- Email: support@hifis.ca

4.2.2 Other Resources

ESDC is developing resources to support HIFIS implementation at all stages:

HIFIS Demo Site – Can be used by communities for training as it includes a Training Centre with video tutorials for learning basic and administration functions.

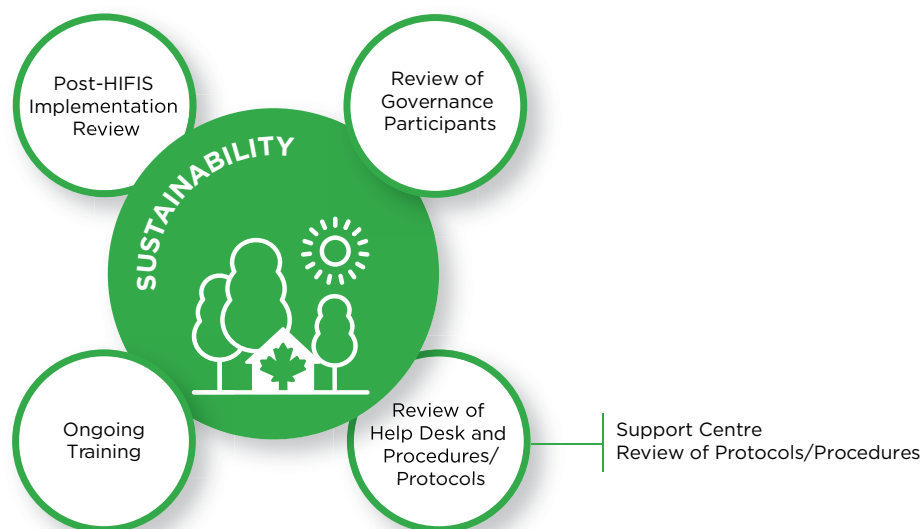
Homelessness Learning Hub – Public online resource where HIFIS resources (documents, links, videos, etc.) developed by communities can be shared, and questions asked and answered.

Reaching Home Newsletter – Published by ESDC monthly, the newsletter provides subscribers with information on Reaching Home-related happenings in the sector.

Webinars – Organized by ESDC, webinars provide learning opportunities on various functions of HIFIS 4. Links to webinars are shared in the Reaching Home Newsletter.

HIFIS Toolkit – A series of guides (Implementation, Configuration, Installation, Users) providing communities supports in the implementation and operations of HIFIS.

SUSTAINABILITY



This section covers activities that will help ensure the sustainability of HIFIS:

- Post-HIFIS Implementation Review
- Review of Governance Participants
- Review of Help Desk and Procedures/Protocols
- Ongoing Training

5.1 POST-HIFIS IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Once HIFIS has been deployed, the HIFIS lead should conduct a review. This review could be done following a period of adjustment, where some issues and technical challenges that did not emerge during testing have been addressed.

The objective of the review is to determine whether HIFIS fully meets the community's business objectives and whether newly identified business requirements should be considered and to identify implementation lessons learned.

[Appendix H - Post-Implementation Review](#) contains suggested activities that can be part of the review.

5.2 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE PARTICIPANTS

The implementation of HIFIS is a long-term commitment, as the system will become the community's data management system of record for homelessness services. Once implemented and used across the community, the Coordinated Access Leadership Group/

HIFIS Working Group should continue to meet regularly to monitor issues, improve policies and procedures, provide directions on future plans and ensure that an adequate level of resources is still committed to HIFIS.

As indicated in the Governance Section ([Section 1](#)), certain roles in the Coordinated Access Leadership Group/HIFIS Working Group that were critical during the implementation may not be as relevant during the sustainability phase. For this reason, their membership and terms of reference could be revisited.

The Coordinated Access Leadership Group will therefore have to determine who becomes responsible for certain ongoing responsibilities (e.g., reviewing training material, suggesting HIFIS enhancements) or issues (e.g., data quality)

5.3 REVIEW OF HELP DESK AND PROCEDURES/PROTOCOLS

5.3.1 Support Centre

Incidents and service requests received by the local help desk must be reviewed and analyzed on an ongoing basis to uncover common issues. This information could be used to prioritize HIFIS enhancements or configuration changes; develop communications products; or update training materials, user guides and reference guides.

5.3.2 Review of Protocols/Procedures

Data protocols

Given the importance of data to inform decision-making, systematic procedures for evaluating data quality should be developed, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Monitoring users' compliance with data entry protocols and procedures (e.g., via reports highlighting the occurrence of data entry errors);

- Reviewing and fixing records; and
- Implementing corrective strategies (e.g., investing in training for users to build data literacy).

TIP: Organizations with outreach services: After HIFIS had been deployed, a community noticed that many of the client records were incomplete, even if users had received training on mandatory fields. This resulted in situations where the client file contained insufficient information for effective client management. The service provider found that employees working on the streets were taking handwritten notes that did not translate well into HIFIS.

The service provider decided to create a paper template form with mandatory fields for every HIFIS module, which made it easier for employees to collect the right information, in the right format.

Privacy and legal procedures and documents

Privacy documents and procedures must be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the most recent changes in the community's Coordinated Access systems or address any concerns from stakeholders or clients.

5.4 ONGOING TRAINING

Given the high employee turnover experienced by certain service providers, training material must be kept up to date to provide new employees with current training. In addition, periodic releases of HIFIS enhancements will require the development of new training.

APPENDICES

Content in the Appendices is for illustrative and sample purposes only. The HIFIS courses in the Homelessness Learning Hub is a place to access templates that other communities have created.

APPENDIX A SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(For illustrative purposes only)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The HIFIS Working Group will direct the HIFIS project to conclusion through governance-related deliberation and decision-making.

Responsibilities

Through collaboration, the committee will:

- Serve as the decision-making authority on project issues, risk mitigation and scope;
- Act as the approving body for project deliverables;
- Advise and provide strategic project and program oversight and direction;

- Provide effective, timely, and consistent communications to the project team and stakeholders;
- Ensure alignment with government, community and funding organizations and initiatives;
- Serve as the primary advocate for the project.

Chair

- The HIFIS Working Group meetings will be chaired by the HIFIS Lead.

Membership of the HIFIS Governance

- HIFIS Lead or Project Manager
- Coordinated Access Lead
- Director, Service Provider 'A'
- Director, Service Provider 'B'
- Community/Governmental Representatives
- End User Representatives (Shelter/Outreach Managers)
- Funding Representatives
- HIFIS Business Analyst

Reporting Structure

Escalations and communications to executives will leverage the existing reporting structure:

- Community Entity Representative
- Vice President, Homeless Services
- Executive Director, Service Provider 'A'
- Executive Director, Service Provider 'B'

Reporting out of the working group to the project will be conducted through the sub-working groups for each of the project work streams.

Reporting to the stakeholder community will follow the protocols set forth in the Communications Plan.

Decision-Making Process

Decisions will be made by consensus and recorded in the HIFIS Working Group minutes that each member has acknowledged agreement to that decision.

In order to reach consensus, a quorum is required. For the purposes of the working group, a quorum requires a minimum of four members where service provider, funders and community members are represented.

If the working group cannot reach consensus on a decision, it will be escalated to the executives identified in the 'Reporting Structure' section above.

Should a decision be required prior to the next scheduled meeting, an out-of-band meeting will be set up. If a meeting cannot be coordinated, an email requesting decision support will be sent out to the committee members.

HIFIS Working Group members shall not provide votes by proxy.

Approval of Deliverables

Project deliverables will be sent via email to committee members when they are ready to enter the review and approval process. As a guide, committee members will have five business days to review and provide feedback or approval on project deliverables.

Confidentiality

All confidential information that comes into the possession of the committee members is for the sole purpose of enabling the committee to seek solutions to issues requiring strategic counsel. Committee members will not share any confidential information; use confidential information only as required to enable the member to perform his or her duties on the committee and not use the confidential information for any other purpose.

Frequency of Meetings

The HIFIS Working Group will meet on the first Tuesday of each month. As required, additional meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. A teleconference will be set up for members that cannot attend in person.

Meeting minutes will be distributed to the members within two weeks after a meeting.

The agenda and presentation will be distributed a minimum of 3 business days prior to a scheduled meeting.

Evaluation

The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX B HIFIS VISION PLANNING

Task

Craft a project statement for HIFIS that would meet the needs of your community. The project statement should respond to the following questions.

1. Why are we doing this?
2. What are the anticipated outcomes of the HIFIS system?
3. What are the objectives for HIFIS?
4. What are the anticipated benefits of implementing HIFIS for:
 - a. Homeless individuals?
 - b. HIFIS Users/Staff?
 - c. Service providers and Sector?
5. What do we want to be able to accomplish at the local level?
6. What do we want to accomplish at other levels (regional, provincial)?

APPENDIX C – SAMPLE PROJECT STATUS REPORT

Status Summary

Provides a dashboard project summary of major activities and tasks.

Project Name				Project Manager		Period Ending:	
HIFIS Implementation							
Status							
Overall Status	Financials	Scope	Schedule	Issues	Risks	Bus. Resources	Proj. Resources
GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	YELLOW	GREEN	RED	GREEN

Executive Summary
Highlights of major project activities

Status Summary
Achieved This Period
Activities and tasks that have been completed during the reporting period
Planned Next Period
Activities and tasks that are planned for next reporting period
Notes

Milestones

A project milestone is a task that shows an achievement in a project. The milestones should represent a clear sequence of events that incrementally build up until the project is complete.

Milestones					
% Complete	Deliverable	Owner	Target Date	Actual Date	Status
100%	HIFIS Business Requirements	Project Manager	May 1	May 20	Complete
75%	HIFIS User and Service Provider Survey	Business Manager	June 15		In Progress
50%	HIFIS Configuration	IT Lead	July 1		In Progress
50%	HIFIS Privacy Assessment	Privacy Officer	June 15		In Progress
50%	HIFIS Training Plan and Strategy	Project Manager	May 30		In Progress
50%	HIFIS Training Curriculum and Presentation	Training Lead	August 30		In Progress
50%	HIFIS Communication Plan Development	Project Manager	July 1		In Progress
25%	HIFIS Test and Training Environment Set-up	IT Lead	July 1		In Progress
0%	HIFIS Deployment Strategy	Project Manager	August 1		Not Started
0%	HIFIS End User Training	Training Lead	Sept 25		Not Started
0%	HIFIS Go-Live	Project Manager	October 1		Not Started

Risk Register

The risk register records unplanned events or conditions that may affect at least one project objective if they materialize. Identifying, assessing and mitigating the risks will help to minimize the impact on the project.

Risk Register							
#	Risk Description	Risk Response	Date Logged	Priority	Impact	Owner	Status
1				High Medium Low	High Medium Low		Open Closed
2							
3							
4							
5							

Issues Log

Issues are risks that have been realized. The issue log records the steps to resolve the issues.

Issue Log							
#	Issue Description	Issue Response	Date Logged	Priority	Impact	Owner	Status
1				High Medium Low	High Medium Low		Open Closed
2							
3							
4							
5							

Action Items

An action item is a specific task that is to be completed, usually by a single individual or a small team or group. Action items typically arise from meetings and should always be clearly documented.

Action Items							
#	Action Description	Action Steps	Date Logged	Priority	Impact	Owner	Status
1				High Medium Low	High Medium Low		Open Closed
2							
3							
4							
5							

Planned Absences

Identifying when project resources will be away will help with project planning.

Planned Absences		
Resource	Dates of Planned Absences	Notes
Project Manager	Vacation: August 1 – August 15	
Training Lead	Conference: June 1 – June 3	
Report Developer	Vacation: October 3 – October 9	

Distribution List

Identifies to whom the project status report should be distributed.

Status Report Distribution List		
Name	Organization	Email

APPENDIX D – PLANNING STEPS FOR CONVERTING DATA INTO HIFIS

The business value of converting legacy system data efforts and the legal feasibility (consents) should be taken in the decision to take this road. The rationale or benefits should be documented.

1. Fields from client files to be converted:

Identify all data fields that need to be converted into HIFIS. A rationale for each field could also be developed to ensure that there is business value in doing a conversion.

2. Corresponding fields in HIFIS:

For each legacy system data field that will be converted, identify the best suited field in HIFIS. Creating a table similar to the one below can help accomplish this task.

Field by field mapping helps to plan for the technical aspects of the conversion. Some issues may be uncovered during this process. For example, there may be a field in the legacy system that does not map to one in HIFIS or two fields in the legacy system may have to join into one field in HIFIS.

3. Post-migration data field conversion clean-up activities:

Once conversion is completed, data clean up may be necessary. It is advisable to document clean-up activities that the service providers will need to take.

You are encouraged to contact the ESDC HIFIS Client Service Centre to discuss best practices and options for the data conversion.

Legacy Entities	HIFIS Entities	Notes
Shelter Stays	Client Stays	Note any unique characteristics, instructions or business rules between the two systems
Demographics Profile	Vitals – Client Details	
Site	Service Provider	
Housing	Housing History	
Client Case History	Case Plan – Sessions	
Worker	Case Worker	

APPENDIX E – SAMPLE SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

Information collected below will be used when configuring the service provider in HIFIS.

General Information

Fill out for each service provider location in the implementation.

Service Provider Information
Service Provider Name
Service Provider Type
Genders Served
Funding Program(s)
Target Clientele
Telephone
Fax Number
Email Address
Website
Address
City
Province/Territory
Postal Code

Service Provider Questionnaire

The questions below are designed to obtain a better understanding of the overall technical and structural capabilities currently available within the organization. The objective is to understand what is to be done to help the organization engage in an HIFIS implementation.

Technical Assessment Questionnaire

How many service providers will use HIFIS?	
Type of organization or service	e.g., Emergency Shelter, Transition House, Outreach Services
Approximately how many clients does your organization serve per month?	
List the funding programs that your organization operates	
Total number of computers at each service provider?	
Type of internet access?	
What is the age of the computing equipment at your organization?	
Does your organization have access to the internet for electronic mail?	
Does your organization have access to the internet for data transfer?	
Does your organization have access to a network to connect computers within your same building?	
Does your organization have access to a network to connect computers across multiple service providers within your organization?	
How often is client data entered into the system?	
How many individuals in your organization will be using HIFIS?	
Do the individuals in your organization have a unique email address (not shared)?	
List the types of staff positions (roles) in your organization.	e.g., Case worker, shelter worker, administrators, health worker, counsellors, intake worker, other (please specify)
Does your organization plan to migrate a legacy system into HIFIS? If yes, what system and database package is currently installed?	

Room and Bed Survey (Shelters Only)

List the number of funded beds in the shelter by funder:

Funder	Number of Beds
Funder 'A'	20
Funder 'B'	10
Funder 'C'	5

List the number of rooms and beds by type:

Room Number/Name	Bed Number/Name	Bed Type	Overflow Bed?
Room A	Bed #1	e.g., Bunk, cot, mat, single, etc.	No
Room A	Bed #2		No
Room A	Bed #3		No
Room B	Bed #1		No
Room B	Bed #2		No
Room B	Bed #3		No
Room C	Bed #1		Yes
Room C	Bed #2		Yes
Room C	Bed #3		Yes

APPENDIX F – SAMPLE USER SURVEY

List all the organization's personnel who will use HIFIS. Gathering this information will help with user set-up (roles and account creation) and the planning of training (numbers to be trained by role and skill level).

First Name	Last Name	Position/Role	Email	Service Provider Name	Other Work Locations	Computer Skills
John	Doe	Shelter Worker	jdoe@shelter.ca	Main Shelter		Example, Expert, Intermediate, Beginner
Jane	Smith	Case Worker	jsmith@shelter.ca	Main Shelter	Crosstown Outreach	
Dave	Smith	Administrator	dsmith@shelter.ca	Main Shelter	Crosstown Outreach, Uptown Shelter	

APPENDIX G - DEPLOYMENT READINESS CHECKLISTS

User Accounts Readiness

HIFIS user accounts should be set up in advance of the deployment to ensure they can start using the system as soon as it becomes available.

Typically, users will have to take training and sign the necessary paperwork to receive their HIFIS login credentials. Once this is complete, HIFIS administrators can create their accounts and assign roles and rights under the appropriate service provider.

Checklist:

- ☐ Collect and document required user information for account creation;
- ☐ Create user accounts in the production version;
- ☐ Verify user emails;
- ☐ Develop communications to distribute user names and passwords;
- ☐ Develop communications to end users for deployment and go-live instructions; and
- ☐ Determine if staff work at multiple service providers using HIFIS.

Service Provider Readiness

Ensure that service providers and their staff are ready for the deployment.

Checklist:

- ☐ Confirm network connection is sufficient to process HIFIS transactions;
- ☐ Confirm service provider has the appropriate technical requirements;
- ☐ Confirm service provider has the appropriate workstations to support the right number of users;

- ☐ Confirm that the appropriate/updated version of a browser is installed on all workstations using HIFIS;
- ☐ Confirm production HIFIS URL is installed on all workstations; and
- ☐ Confirm users have been trained.

HIFIS Leads who conduct a service provider survey will have information on their community's IT infrastructure.

HIFIS Lead Organization Readiness

The HIFIS Host should complete the steps to be ready for the release of HIFIS into production.

Checklist:

- ☐ Perform dry-run deployment in a test environment.
 - ☐ Deploy release candidate, test the release, evaluate results and decide whether to move to production.
- ☐ Confirm project resources to support and execute the HIFIS deployment into production;
- ☐ Prepare go live communications and instructions to service providers.
- ☐ Create a short interval schedule that details all the steps and resources the deployment requires:
 - ☐ Exact timing of each step
 - ☐ Resource responsibility
 - ☐ Contact information
 - ☐ Communications to be sent during the deployment
 - ☐ Roll back procedure
 - ☐ Post-deployment verification and test
 - ☐ Deployment completed communication

APPENDIX H – POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Gap Analysis

- Review the project business requirements to evaluate how closely the project results match the original objectives;
- Review the project deliverables to ensure they can provide guidance to support the program or whether supplementary work needs to be done; and
- If gaps exist, develop a plan to remediate them.

Evaluate Project Goals

- Is HIFIS functioning as expected?
- Are users adequately trained and supported?
- Are the necessary controls and systems in place, and are they working properly?
 - Data quality reviews
 - Privacy auditing
 - Review of help desk tickets to identify training needs and HIFIS enhancements
- What day-to-day activities are needed to support the implementation's ongoing success?
- Was the project on time and on budget? If no, what were the causes?

Service Providers Satisfaction

- Were the end users' needs met?
- Is the project sponsor satisfied?
- What are the effects on the client or end user because of the HIFIS implementation?
- If key individuals are not satisfied, how can this be addressed?

Continuous Improvement

- Have expected objectives been achieved? If not, what is needed to achieve them?
- Are there opportunities for further training and coaching that will improve the use and data in HIFIS?
- Are there any additional uses of HIFIS that would benefit clients, users and service providers?

Lessons Learned

- What went well, success stories and lessons learned?
- What went wrong, why did these things go wrong, and how could these problems be avoided next time?

The project review will identify areas of improvement, successes and a road map for the future of HIFIS within a community.

