

## **Tip of the Week: Is Client Chronically Homeless**

Do you really know the definition of the term “Chronic Homeless” for HMIS and HUD data collection?

It might be more complicated than you think.

Someone must meet all the following before you answer “yes” to the question “Chronically Homeless?”

- Current homeless status: At the time of entering your program, must be living on the streets or in an emergency shelter.
- Homeless extent: Must have been **homeless for a year or longer, or had 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years**, and have been living on the streets or in an emergency shelter during every episode.
- Single status: Must have been **unaccompanied** during every episode.
- Disability status: Must have had a **disabling condition** during every episode.

According to HUD, a disabling condition is defined as a “diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability . . . A disabling condition limits an individual’s ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.”

Did you know . . . you should answer this for every person in your program who is homeless, even if it is almost always “no.”

Q: If your program only serves families, will any of your clients ever be considered chronically homeless?

A: No – not according to the current definition.

Thanks for reading this week’s tip!