ClientTrack HMIS Data Entry Guide:

ESG Programs

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About This Guide

Data Collection information in this guide is taken directly from ESG Program HMIS Manual released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Housing Forward Staff has added screenshots of ClientTrack HMIS and guidance specific to our HMIS data entry for the program-specific data elements required for ESG programs.

All guidance added by Housing Forward is listed on a page with the Homeless Collaborative logo (shown below).

Please refer to the full ESG Program HMIS Manual for information on additional data elements, reporting, etc. The ESG Program HMIS Manual divides data collection guidance by project type rather than by data element. For this reason, the data collection guidance in the following guide is listed by project type. Following all project-specific guidance, data entry guidance (specific to ClientTrack) is found in the following pages of the guide divided by data.

Data Collection Requirements

Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the 2024 HMIS Data Standards Dictionary and Manual.

Universal Data Elements (UDE)

All ESG funded projects are required to collect all the Universal Data Elements, which include:

- 3.01 Name
- 3.02 Social Security Number
- 3.03 Date of Birth
- 3.04 Race and Ethnicity
- 3.07 Veteran Status
- 3.08 Disabling Condition
- 3.10 Project Start Date
- 3.11 Project Exit Date
- 3.12 Destination
- 3.15 Relationship to Head of Household
- 3.16 Enrollment CoC
- 3.20 Housing Move-in Date
- 3.917 Living Situation

Special notes about UDE's:

- Many of these elements comprise basic demographics about a client which are critical to an HMIS's client search functionality and ability to de-duplicate client records. Data quality is checked and reported on many basic demographic elements.
- Two of the elements are required to identify a client as chronically homeless: Disabling Condition and Prior Living Situation. Because street outreach and emergency shelter projects are critical in the identification of chronic homeless person's special attention in training should be provided to users of those project types.
- **Project Start Date (3.10)** HMIS Leads/System Administrators should provide users additional information on Project Start Date for each project type.
    - **Street Outreach**– date of first contact with the client.
    - **Emergency Shelters**–
        - **Entry/Exit -** night the client first stayed in the shelter
        - **Night-by-Night** -will have a project start date and allows clients to re-enter without "exiting and restarting" for each stay.
    - **Transitional Housing**– date the client moves into the residential project (i.e., first night in residence).
    - **Rapid Re-Housing**– date following application that the client was admitted into the project. Admission into the project indicates the client met the following factors:
        1) Information provided by the client or from the referral indicates they meet the criteria for admission;
        2) The client has indicated they want to be housed in this project;

3) The client can access services and housing through the project. The expectation is the project has a housing opening (on-site, site-based, scattered-site subsidy) or expects to have one in a reasonably short amount of time.

- **Homelessness Prevention and day shelters**– date the client first began working with the project and generally received the first provision of service.

Common Program Specific Data Elements

Common Program Specific Data Elements are data collected by most ESG project types. The following chart indicates which elements are required for collection for each of the ESG component types. Projects funded by the ESG Program must collect data according to the chart below to generate the CSV-CAPER Report.

Data Element	Emergency Shelter Entry/Exit	Emergency Shelter Night-by-Night	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid ReHousing	Street Outreach
4.02 Income and Sources	x		x	x	x
4.03 Non-Cash Benefits	x		x	x	x
4.04 Health Insurance	x		x	x	x
4.05 Physical Disability	x	x	x	x	x
4.06 Developmental Disability	x	x	x	x	x
4.07 Chronic Health Condition	x	x	x	x	x
4.08 HIV/AIDS	x	x	x	x	x
4.09 Mental Health Disorder	x	x	x	x	x
4.10 Substance Use Disorder	x	x	x	x	x
4.11 Domestic Violence	x	x	x	x	x
4.12 Current Living Situation		x			x
4.13 Date of Engagement		x			x
4.14 Bed Night		x			
4.21 Sex	x	x	x	x	x
W5 Housing Assessment at Exit			x		

HUD has introduced a new element, 4.21 / Sex. This new element will be collected for all clients at record creation for the funding sources outlined below. HUD has also been very clear in their direction that this element is distinctly different from the retired Gender element and no mapping will be done as part of the Data Standards Update. The allowable response options for this element are:

- 0 / Female
- 1 / Male
- 8 / Client doesn't know
- 9 / Client prefers not to answer
- 99 / Data not collected

Special Data Collection Instructions

HMIS Leads/System Administrators need to be aware of the following special data collection issues that apply to ESG-funded projects and educate HMIS end users.

Street Outreach

Data Collection Challenges: Street outreach projects may create a client record with limited information about the client and improve on the accuracy and completeness of client data over time by editing data in HMIS as the client relationship evolves. The initial client record may be as basic as the *Project Start Date* (3.10) and a de-identified *Name* (3.01). For example, you would record a date "4.5.2023" and a deidentified name "Redhat Tenthstreetbridge" that would be identifiable for retrieval by the street outreach project in HMIS. However, Street Outreach projects are prohibited from establishing protocols that only require outreach workers to collect minimal client data. Over time, street outreach projects must attempt to collect all data required and edit recorded data for accuracy (e.g., replacing "Redhat" with "Robert") as the client relationship evolves.

De-Duplication of Client Records: It is possible in a street outreach setting that a single client may be contacted by multiple street outreach workers over a period of time in different locations. Local protocols should be established to determine how coordination among street outreach projects effectively manage the identification and data collection of clients. In a smaller CoC, it may be possible to coordinate street outreach efforts and reduce duplication of client records through case conferencing or other efforts to coordinate outreach services. In a larger CoC, client search functionality may be available in HMIS so that street outreach workers can perform queries or client searches by deidentified name or alias, or other informal identifier shared with street outreach workers in order to manage the identification of clients. The use of temporary de-identified names should not be an excuse for excessive duplicate clients or poor data quality. Street Outreach projects and local HMIS leadership should work together to minimize the use of de-identified names and attain high data quality.

Contacts: A street outreach project is expected to record every contact made with each client in the HMIS via 4.12 *Current Living Situation*. A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client designed to engage the client. Contacts may include activities such as a conversation between the street outreach worker and the client about the client's well-being or needs, an office visit to discuss their housing plan, a phone call, or a referral to another community service. A contact must be recorded anytime a client is met, including when an engagement date or *Project Start Date* (3.10).

Engagements: Per the HMIS Data Standards and by agreement across all federal partners, an Engagement date is defined as the date when an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan. The date of engagement should be entered into HMIS at the point when the client has been engaged by the outreach worker. This date may be on or after the project start date and must be prior to project exit. If the client exits without becoming engaged, the engagement date should be left blank. If the client was contacted on the date of engagement, a contact must also be entered for that date.

Data Quality: Data quality for street outreach projects is limited to clients with a date of engagement. Therefore, it is important that outreach workers record the engagement date and also review all of the UDE and applicable Common Program Specific Data Elements for completeness and accuracy. The *Date of Engagement* coincides with the requirement for HMIS data quality, therefore all UDE should be entered into HMIS at or before the *Date of Engagement*.

HUD System Performance Measures: Data collected for street outreach projects in HMIS affects the HUD System Performance Measures that are reported for the entire CoC. Measure 7a evaluates how successful street outreach projects are at helping people move off the "street" and towards permanent housing, recognizing this process may be direct or may involve other temporary situations along the way. Measure 7a does not require a *Date of Engagement* for a client record to be included in the performance measure, only a project exit. Additionally, while data quality is only measured following the *Date of Engagement*, System Performance Measure 7a measures placement from street outreach beginning at the first contact/project start. This means that HMIS leadership and street outreach projects need to work together to assure that street outreach data is of high quality at the time the HUD System Performance Measures are calculated regardless of the Date of Engagement.

Project Exit: Project exit represents the end of a client's participation with the street outreach project. The exit date should coincide with the date that the client is no longer considered to be participating in the project. Reasons to exit a client include:

- The client has entered another project type (e.g., ES, TH, RRH, PSH), otherwise found housing, or entered to an institution (hospital, jail);
  - There are some instances where a street outreach worker may temporarily continue to provide services to an outreach client who has been placed in shelter or housing to ensure a successful transition. In these cases, the project exit date should be the date that the last service is provided to the client after entering a shelter or other housing. This transition period is expected to be short-term and the CoC should set a standard limit to assure that street outreach providers are not providing unnecessary or duplicative services to these clients. HUD acknowledges that this may result in an overlapping enrollment with street outreach and a residential project.
- The client is engaged with another outreach worker or project;
- The client is deceased;
- The outreach worker has been unable to locate the client for a period of time and there are no recorded contacts. The CoC must be involved in the determination of "period of time", and to which projects the solution is to be applied.
  - If this situation arises, and the client is to be exited from the project due to a lack of regular contact the project exit *Destination* (3.12) should be listed as "No Exit Interview Completed."
  - The possibility that the client may not be seen again is not a reason to exit a client from a project, and project exit should only be recorded once project participation has ended, or after the locally determined period of time has passed without a contact with the client.

Continuing Case Management: The nature of effective Street Outreach is focused on creating meaningful relationships between the street outreach worker and the client. This relationship is essential to improving housing stability from literal street homelessness into emergency shelter or rapid rehousing. Effective street outreach includes a warm hand-off to housing and other services providers. As such, HUD recognizes that there are instances when the street outreach worker may need to temporarily continue that client relationship after accessing emergency shelter or rapid re-housing to ensure a successful transition. If the relationship is needed to maintain the housing stability of the client in emergency shelter or rapid re-housing being enrolled in both street outreach and emergency shelter or rapid re-housing is allowable. The CoC should set a standard to assure that street outreach providers are not providing unnecessary or duplicative services to those in emergency shelter or rapid re-housing.

Street Outreach case management can continue when a participant is already enrolled in the Street Outreach program **AND** the participant is not expected to remain in shelter, housing, or an institution for an extended period **AND** it would be reasonably expected that the participant will end up sleeping outside or in a place not suitable for human habitation upon exit of the shelter, housing, or an institution.

Emergency Shelter

Night-by-Night (NBN) shelters:

- **Night-by-Night** shelters should be set up to collect all data required, however, HUD understands that often NBN shelters are not able to collect exit data. Persons who leave/disappear without completing an exit interview are to be recorded with an exit destination as: No exit interview completed.
- **Contacts**: NBN shelters must record contacts they have with each person served via 4.12 *Current Living Situation*. A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client designed to engage the client. Contacts may include activities such as a conversation between the shelter worker and the client about the client's well-being or needs, an office visit to discuss their housing plan, or a referral to another community service. A contact must be recorded anytime a client is met, including when an engagement date or *Project Start Date* is recorded on the same day.
- **Engagements:** NBN shelters are required to record engagements. Per the HMIS Data Standards and by agreement across all federal partners, an engagement date is the date when an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan. The date of engagement should be entered into HMIS at the point when the client has been engaged by the shelter worker. This date may be on or after the *Project Start Date* and must be prior to project exit. If the client exits without becoming engaged the engagement date should be left blank. If the client was contacted on the date of engagement, a contact must also be entered for that date.

Day Shelters: Data collection and performance measurement for Day Shelter and Entry/Exit Shelters are the same, so no other changes in setup or for data collection are required.

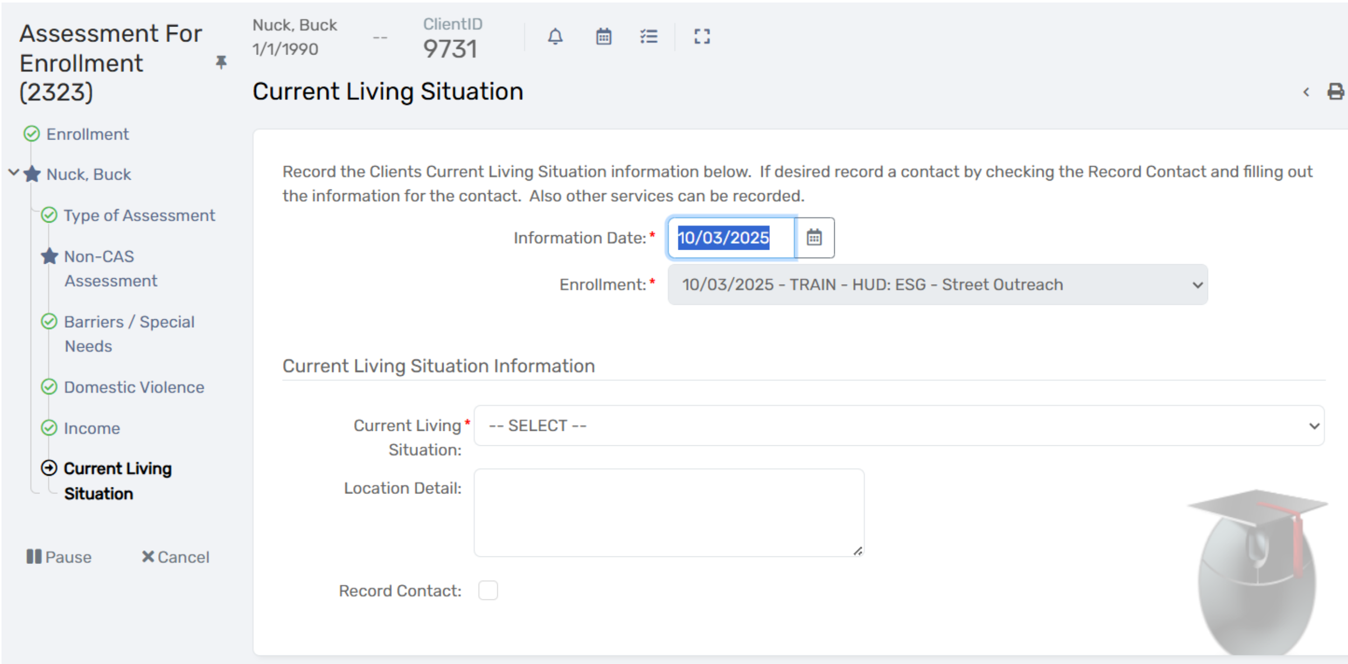
Annual Assessment: Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons being served in a project one year or more, based on the head of household's anniversary date.

Homelessness Prevention

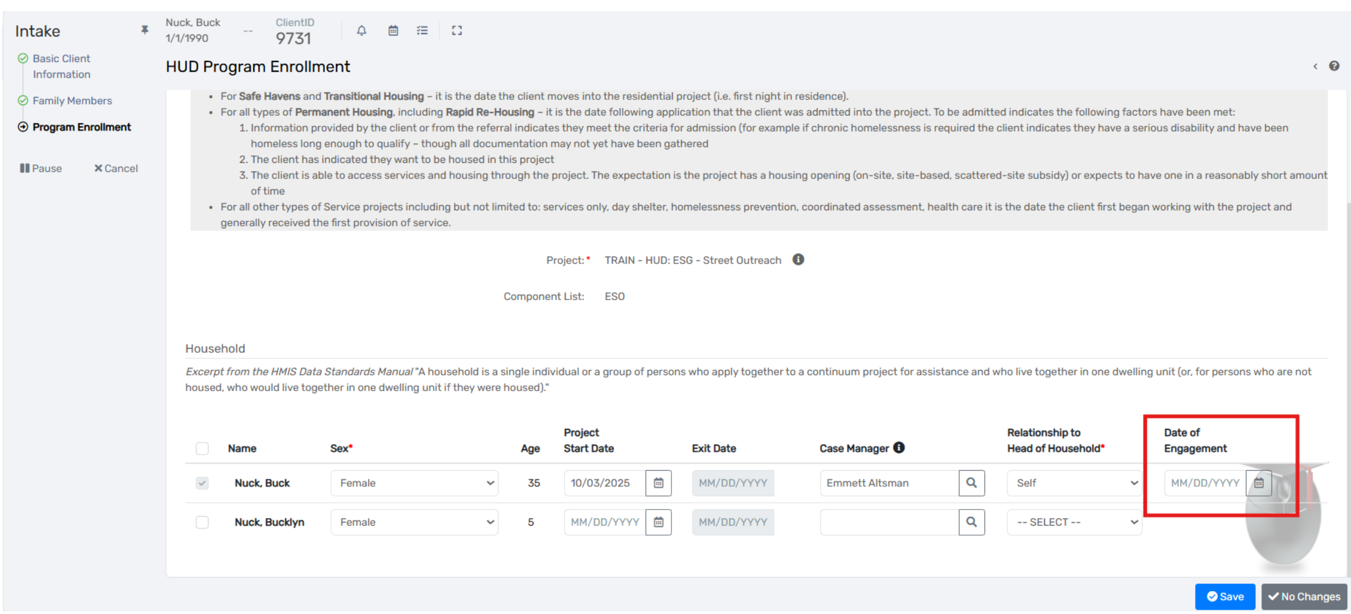
- Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing must be set up as two separate projects in an HMIS. They must not be combined into one project.

- Recipients and subrecipients are not required to maintain financial assistance payment information within an HMIS. Recipients or subrecipients may elect to maintain financial assistance as part of a case management record within the HMIS if the software allows for that type of data collection. However, HUD expects that recipients will use other recipient and subrecipient financial records rather than HMIS for financial reporting in the CAPER.
- Recipients or subrecipients must re-evaluate and update information on Homelessness Prevention clients once every 3 months. Information required to be updated in the HMIS, if changes have occurred, include: 4.02 *Income and Sources*; 4.03 *Non-Cash Benefits*; and 4.04 *Health Insurance*.
- In addition to the UDE – 3.12 *Destination*, Homelessness Prevention projects must also collect W5 (Housing Assessment at Exit) information to reflect the housing situation of clients at exit.

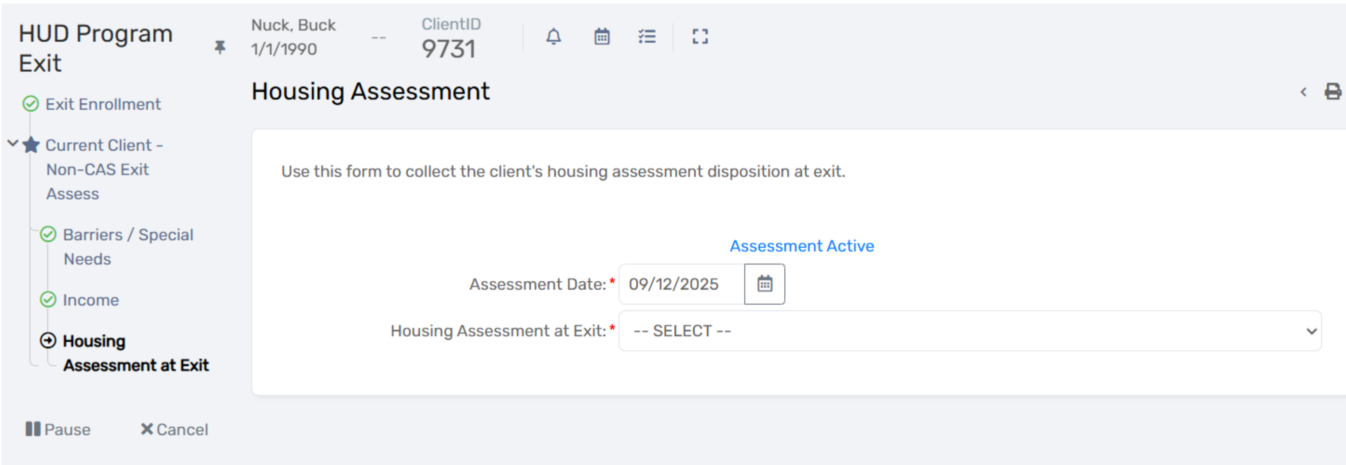
Current Living Situation:



Date of Engagement:



Housing Assessment at Exit:



HP to RRH Transition

It is possible that a client who is currently receiving either financial assistance or supportive services from an ESG Homelessness Prevention project becomes literally homeless while enrolled. In these cases, the CoC must determine what approach to take to address this situation. HMIS data collection guidance will vary based on which option the CoC elects to implement.

CoC Options	HMIS Guidance
A – The HP project transfers the case to a Rapid Re-Housing project (ESG, ESG-CV or CoC) that has an opening	Complete a full HMIS exit for the client, documenting their exit destination to a homeless situation from the HP project. The RRH project should complete the normal full project start data collection in HMIS.
B – The HP project continues to serve the participant under the Homelessness Prevention component	No action is necessary to be taken in HMIS for this situation. Clients in this situation may potentially be active in both the HP project and an Emergency Shelter, Day Shelter, or Street Outreach project at the same time. Data note: In this situation the CoC and/or ESG Recipient will need to discount these cases in reviewing project performance for homelessness prevention success.
Both A and B are options in the community – CoC allows client to select either A or B	Follow the data collection guidance above for the applicable option (either A or B)

NOTE: Regardless of the option that the CoC chooses, the CoC must update their Coordinated Entry policies and procedures and the ESG recipient must update their ESG written standards to describe how the selected option will be operationalized.

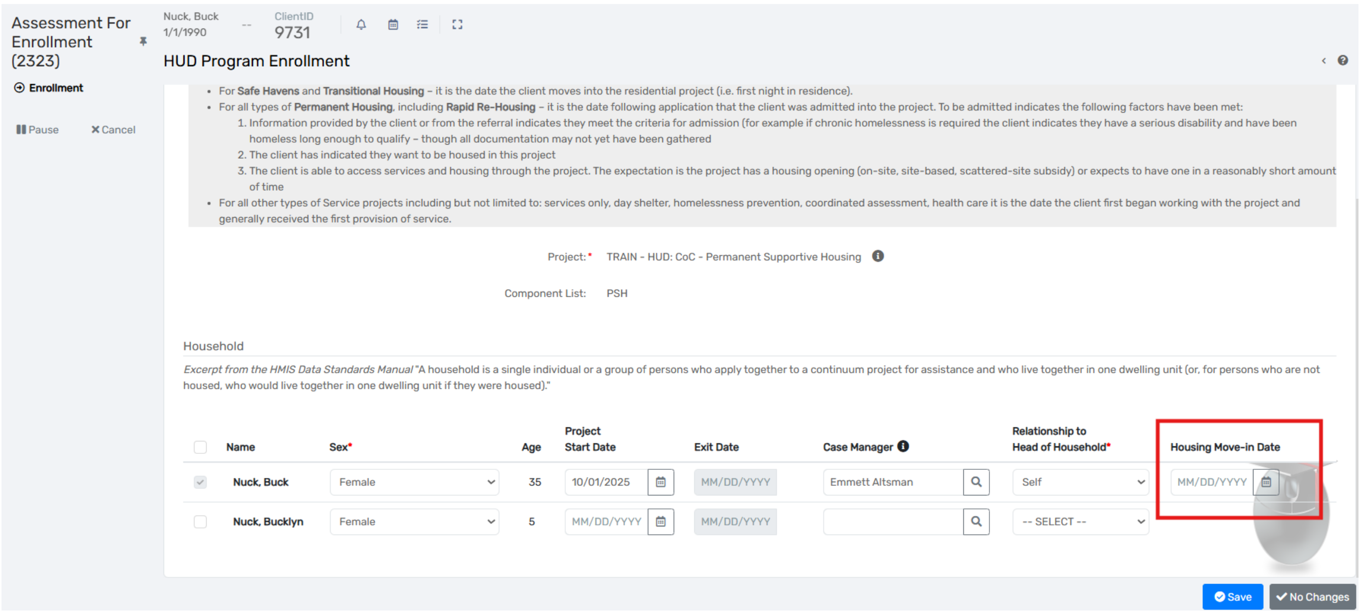
Rapid Re-Housing

- The project start date is the date the client(s) were admitted to the project. This means the client has completed an application, and they have been "admitted" to the project. In this context, the requirements for admittance must be:
  - Information provided by the client or from the referral provider indicates that the client meets the criteria required for admission to the project. This does not mean that all or any of the eligibility documentation has been gathered that may be required for the project;
  - The client has indicated they want to be housed in this project; and
  - The client can access services and housing through the project. This means that there is an expectation that within a reasonably short period of time the project expects to have an opening (rental subsidy available for scattered site or unit available for site-based).

- The project start date is not expected to generate a “waiting list” for housing. It is not expected that everyone with a project start will actually move into a unit with the project. It is expected that the time it takes from project start to move into housing will be carefully reviewed by the community to determine program and system performance and continuously strive to reduce the time from project start to move-in.
- Housing move-in date must be completed for all clients who have moved into housing. Move-in means a lease arrangement has been made, the client has a key or entry ability to the unit and that the client has physically slept in the unit.
- Recipients or subrecipients must re-evaluate and update information on Rapid Re-Housing clients once annually. Information required to be updated in the HMIS includes: 4.02 *Income and Sources*; 4.03 *Non-Cash Benefits*; and 4.04 *Health Insurance*. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or after the one-year anniversary of the head of household’s *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent ‘update’ or any other ‘annual assessment’.

HOUSING FORWARD

Housing Move-In Date:



ESG Reporting

- ESG recipients are required to collect aggregated ESG Program information from each subrecipient via the Sage HMIS Reporting Repository.
- Subrecipients are required to submit a project-level CSV-CAPER Report to each ESG recipient that funded a project, using the date range specified by the recipient.
- Subrecipients can find additional information about ESG reporting requirements in the Sage ESG CAPER Guidebook for ESG-funded Programs.