



Overview of SWAP Performance Measures

This document presents an overview and explanation of the core program type and program level performance measures included in System-Wide Analytics and Prediction (SWAP).

Household Entries from Homeless Prior Living measures the effectiveness of program targeting regarding serving people who are literally homeless: unsheltered or living in emergency shelters. The most effective use of system resources is prioritizing homeless households for beds while diverting those who are still housed. Successfully reducing homelessness depends on communities prioritizing those with the highest needs for available units, so this data allows communities to understand the degree to which each program is serving people with the most acute housing needs.

Household Entries from Non-Homeless Prior Living shows the percentage of entries from housed locations, including institutions, family/friends, subsidized and unsubsidized housing, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Again, this measure is important in that it assesses the effectiveness of program targeting. The impact of prevention and diversion efforts should be carefully considered in terms of the rate at which new entries to homeless programs could be reduced.

Utilization Rate measures whether existing bed capacity is being maximized and can help identify programs with high barriers to entry. Maximizing the use of available bed capacity is essential to ensuring that system resources are being put to their best use and that as many homeless people are being served as possible in the existing inventory.

Length of Stay measures how quickly programs are helping households exit homelessness and can be considered in relation to the rate of return to homelessness.

Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing shows the rate at which homeless people exit programs into housing. This is a basic measure of effectiveness and one of the most straightforward and impactful ways to identify acceptable and unacceptable performance.

Rate of Return to Homelessness measures whether people who exited the system to permanent housing return to a homeless program within 12 months. This measure identifies whether programs are helping people into housing placements that “stick”. Assessing this measure can help alleviate concerns that serving higher needs clients and helping them exit to housing more quickly could result in housing placements that are not stable.

Cost per Permanent Housing Exit illustrates whether system resources are being invested in interventions that are effective in ending homelessness. This measure also helps identify system components or programs that are not cost effective. Cost per permanent housing exit is a key performance measure because it assesses not only whether a program is helping clients to move to permanent housing but also whether they do so in a cost effective manner. This data allows communities to understand whether scarce system resources are being spent in a way that achieves the maximum possible results. The algorithm for this measure is carefully designed to reflect actual performance, including length of stay for those who exited to permanent housing.