Alternative formats and communication supports available upon request. Please contact accessibility@brantford.ca or 519-759-4150 for assistance.

Date	March 3, 2021	**Report No.** 2021-142	

To   Chair and Members
Social Services Committee

From   Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager,
Community Services and Social Development

1.0   Type of Report

Consent Item   [X]
Item For Consideration   [ ]

2.0   Topic   Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Quarterly Update

3.0   Recommendation

THAT Report 2021-142 Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Quarterly Update BE RECEIVED.

4.0   Executive Summary

This report provides members of Social Services Committee and Council with a periodic update regarding the implementation of the HIFIS project and the associated information from that implementation. All City funded shelter agencies are now using HIFIS to support their everyday work including emergency shelters, housing with supports, and the Housing Resource Centre.

This report provides information relating to the time period between January 1st and January 31st, 2021. During this one-month time period 157 unique individuals accessed emergency shelter services with an average stay of 8 nights, and 47 unique individuals utilized housing with supports. Additionally, the new Housing Resource Centre (HRC) reported supporting 70 households with case management services, and support of 13 households with Housing

Stability Funds to assist with items including last month's rent, rental arrears, or utility connection assistance.

5.0   Purpose and Overview

To provide members of Social Services Committee and Council with a periodic update regarding the implementation of the HIFIS project and the associated information from that implementation.

6.0   Background

The Brantford-Brant Housing Stability Plan for the period of 2014 to 2024 identified the need to enhance Housing-First case management for individuals experiencing homelessness.

As part of the Federal Reaching Home contract, the City of Brantford is required to implement a Coordinated Access System by March 31, 2022. A core component of a Coordinated Access System is the implementation of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

The April 2019 Report 2019-217 – Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Update authorized the commencement of a project to implement the HIFIS system, and hiring a project manager to provide oversight. At its meeting on November 4, 2020 Social Services Committee approved Report 2020-497 – Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Implementation Update, and requested quarterly reports regarding HIFIS Coordinated Access information. HIFIS Coordinated Access system implementation has been planned in three Phases:

- Phase One: HIFIS tracking and roll-out to all shelter providers to include client profiles, admissions, and bed occupancy tracking; the essentials for shelter system management

- Phase 2: HIFIS enabled case planning and housing-first supports for clients to obtain housing including shelter diversion efforts

- Phase 3: Homelessness prevention efforts and utilization of the HIFIS tool to track processes delivered by the Housing Resource Centre (HRC) including Housing Stability Fund (HSF) resources; full development of a By-Name List

After a temporary pause of the project in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic Phase One of HIFIS Implementation is now complete with the application in use

at all emergency shelters, housing with supports and the Housing Resource Centre, and Phases Two and Three of HIFIS Implementation are underway.

7.0   Corporate Policy Context

This report supports City Council's 2021-2022 priority number two: "Meaningful supports are in place for those most in need in the community". In particular, the recommendations in this report support Brantford being recognized as a safe and healthy community – one that promotes and enables the well-being of its citizens, and supports access of all citizens to a full range of health and community services.

8.0   Input From Other Sources

None

9.0   Analysis

In collaboration with community partners, the City of Brantford is implementing a Homelessness Coordinated Access System with agencies within the Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care (BHSC).

At this time, the City of Brantford has successfully completed Phase One activities, HIFIS is fully launched and in place with all shelter service providers receiving funding through the City including:

- The Housing Resource Centre
- Kayorie Manor
- Nova Vita
- Penmarvian Retirement Home
- Rosewood House
- Salvation Army
- Youth Resource Centre

The City is progressing with planning and work to deliver Phases Two and Three of HIFIS Coordinated access, specifically focused on the implementation of Housing-First Case Planning and Homelessness Prevention.

As directed by Council through Report 2020-497 Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Implementation Update, this report will

provide quarterly updates on 1) Access to emergency shelter services; 2) Connections to housing and preventing homelessness; 3) Access to housing.

1) Access to Emergency Shelter Services

At this time, emergency shelters are utilizing HIFIS to support their everyday work. Some of the current uses of HIFIS include but are not limited to creating and/or updating HIFIS profiles, documenting admissions, sharing bed availability, indicating service restrictions, and for internal communications.

As noted HIFIS implementation is at a nascent stage, however emergency shelters reported the information in Table 1 (Note: some of the demographic details provided are entirely dependent on client responses, and some clients may decline to provide some information). To further refine the emergency shelter admission process, the City is working collaboratively with community partners to align HIFIS with local shelter diversion practices. HIFIS will be utilized to track a variety of key metrics including but not limited to the success rate of diversion within our system of care and the types of supports that are offered to individuals seeking services.

Table 1: Jan. 1 – Jan. 31, 2021 HIFIS Emergency Shelter Data

Unique Individuals Accessing Homelessness Services	Average Length of Shelter Stay (nights)	Total Completed Shelter Bed Stays	Identify as Male	Identify as Non-Indigenous	Identify as a Non-Veteran
158	8	240	72%	58%	95%

In addition, the age demographics reported by clients show the majority of occupants were between the ages of 25 to 44 years; with 38% between 25 to 34 years and 22% between 35 to 44 years. In terms of previous accommodations the majority, about 59%, reported staying in emergency shelter prior to their new arrival at shelter, 18% reported staying with friends/relatives, and 16% were from street or makeshift accommodation.

2) Connections to Housing and Preventing Homelessness

The Housing Resource Centre (HRC) is successfully using HIFIS to document the delivery of housing and homelessness services, the Financial Management

program, and to document the provision of items through the Housing Stability Fund (HSF).

During the month of January the new HRC used HIFIS to document their support of 70 households through the provision of case management services; this support included housing and homelessness services (n=60), and financial management programs (n=10). The HRC connected with these households around 157 times for the purposes of general contact, intake, and supporting housing search. In addition the HRC documented their support of 13 households by using the HSF to supplement items such as last month's rent, rental/mortgage arrears, transportation, and utility connections.

The City has been working with community partners to refine our local case planning approach, in alignment with housing-first best practices. As part of this approach, emergency shelters and representatives from the HRC will be able to document the results of VI-SPDAT assessments in HIFIS, and will have the ability to track individual progress towards obtaining housing. As a result, the City will be able to develop a "By-Name List" which will include identifying the number of chronically homeless individuals, the number of individuals receiving housing-first case management from the HRC and emergency shelters, as well as the number of individuals successfully housed as a result of service provision.

3) Housing with Supports and Access to Housing

Housing with supports agencies are using HIFIS to document and share information relating to the provision of services. Some key HIFIS functions housing with supports agencies use include, but are not limited to, creating and/or updating HIFIS profiles, documenting admissions, sharing bed availability, indicating service restrictions, and internal communications.

Table 2: Jan. 1 – Jan. 31, 2021 CHPI Funded Housing with Supports Data

Unique Individuals Accessing Services	Identify as Male	Age 65+	Identify as Non-Indigenous	Identify as a Non-Veteran
47	60%	68%	96%	94%

The City continues to work with community partners for the purpose of creating improved pathways to permanent housing opportunities. Future activities include

the development of policies and procedures related to prioritizing individuals for housing, and enhancing collaboration to identify community services that will support individuals to retain a housing match.

10.0 Financial Implications

None, the project is fully funded through the Federal Reaching Home program.

11.0 Conclusion

The implementation of HIFIS in Brantford and Brant is on track despite the COVID pandemic; Phase One has been completed, and Phases Two and Three now underway. A number of agencies are using HIFIS to support their daily work including emergency shelters, housing with supports, and the Housing Resource Centre. The implementation has been guided by a committee composed of agency users which has provided valuable feedback on the HIFIS tool and adjustments have been made on an ongoing basis to meet the needs of the City and HIFIS end users.

Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager
Community Programs & Social Development

Prepared By:

Hanah Itner,
Homelessness and Housing Stability System Project Coordinator

Kevin O'Hara,
Manager, Housing Stability

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required	[ ] yes	[X] no
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk	[ ] yes	[X] no
Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council?	[ ] yes	[X] no