BNL Scorecard Questions

9.) Does your community implement **consistent policies for determining inactive status** that at minimum:*

1. Establish a certain number of days after which an individual who cannot be located becomes inactive (i.e. an "inactivity threshold")
2. Ensures action is taken to locate individuals on the list before they meet the inactivity threshold
3. Accounts for all other than permanent exits from your system

Take into account young people **residing in institutions who have been there 30 days** or longer?*

10.) Does your by-name list have a way to account for young people experiencing homelessness who have **not consented to services and/or assessment**? *

Please note that any systems in place should adhere to all applicable privacy and security standards, including HUD's HMIS privacy and security standards.

11A.) Does your community have policies and protocols in place for keeping your by-name list up to date and accurate, including timelines for data submission from providers and ongoing quality assurance protocol? *

11B.) Do you implement **policies and procedures** to ensure that data collection takes place in a **complete and consistent way** across all access points to your system?*

16.) Do the **critical stakeholders** in your community regularly review community data, including:*

- BIPOC and LGBTQ+ young people currently experiencing homelessness
- BIPOC and LGBTQ+ young people with recent lived experience of homelessness
- Frontline staff and provider leadership
- Other key systems listed in questions 2 and 3
- Advocates
- Elected officials

17.) Do the critical stakeholders in your community regularly reviewing your data believe that the system flow data **reflects the reality of what is happening on the ground** (or if it does not, do they have a shared understanding of why?)*

What is the Anchor Community Initiative?

Skagit County is one of 9 communities who have committed to ending youth and young adult homelessness as part of the Anchor Community Initiative (ACI) run by A Way Home Washington. Anchor Communities work to build quality, reliable, real-time By Name Lists of the unaccompanied youth and young adults (YYA) aged 12-24 experiencing homelessness, and use that data to drive system improvement and to functionally end YYA homelessness. This includes ensuring just and equitable outcomes for young people of color and LGBTQIA+ young people.

Each community has an Improvement Team, a Youth Action Board made up of rad, young people with lived experience, a data workgroup and a team of community stakeholders, who lead various pieces of this system transformation. Together, we look at data and use our expertise to make our youth homelessness system in Skagit:

- Able to support everyone who needs it
- Be a system young people want to access
- House young people quickly
- Make sure that when young people are housed, they stay housed
- Evaluate cracks in the system for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ YYA and reinvents equitable practices

Through ACI, Skagit County produces a system level data dashboard to visualize critical data for young people system-wide on a monthly basis. (Password: yestoyes2022)

We are here to end youth homelessness, and want our data systems to drive the changes needed to get there. See the Functional Zero measures here.

Skagit County's 2019-2024 Homeless Housing Plan

Skagit County's current five-year Homeless Housing Plan (see [here](#)) has five key objectives:

1. Quickly identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness and all unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination between every system that encounters people experiencing homelessness.
2. Prioritize people with the greatest need.
3. Operate an effective and efficient homeless crisis response system that swiftly moves people into stable permanent housing
4. Project the impact of the fully implemented local plan using the modeling tool developed by Commerce.
5. Address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness.

In addition to Skagit County's efforts to reach Functional Zero for unaccompanied youth and young adults, building our quality, real-time data infrastructure and system-wide data literacy is essential for us to achieve our community objectives around homelessness.

Definition of Data Quality

Data quality is a term that refers to the reliability and validity of client-level data collected in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). It is measured by the extent to which the client data in the system reflect actual information in the real world. The quality of data is determined by assessing certain characteristics such as timeliness, completeness, and accuracy.

This data quality plan is directly related to our efforts to maintain a quality, real-time, and reliable By-Name List for unaccompanied youth and young adults in Skagit County. With good data quality, Skagit County can "tell the story" of the population experiencing homelessness, and effectively use our real-time By-Name List data to drive system improvements, case conference clients, and reach functional zero for youth and young adults.

What is a Data Quality Plan?

A data quality plan is a community-level document that facilitates the ability of the Skagit County service providers to achieve reliable, accurate By-Name List data. A data quality plan sets expectations for both the community and the end users to capture reliable and valid data on persons accessing the homeless assistance system.

Skagit County Quality Assurance Plan

A data quality assurance plan is a set of procedures that outlines a regular, ongoing process for analyzing and reporting on the reliability and validity of the data entered into the HMIS at both the project and aggregate system levels. A data quality monitoring plan is the primary tool for tracking and generating information necessary to identify areas for data quality improvement.

The data quality policies outlined in this plan are applicable to all projects participating in HMIS. Unless otherwise noted, all participating projects are expected to achieve and maintain the data quality standards; this also includes those projects that are not funded by HUD or other governmental funding bodies.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Washington State Department of Commerce**: Balance of State HMIS Administrator, responsible for managing HMIS users, licenses, overall data quality, HMIS TA and training, and fielding help requests.
- **Skagit County:** responsible for quarterly monitoring of data entry, timeliness and completeness.
- **Skagit Anchor Community Initiative's Data Workgroup**: reviews aggregate system level By-Name List data, and is responsible for troubleshooting data reliability, completeness, and accuracy on a month-by-month basis.
- **Provider Agencies:** ensures that staff are accurately and completely entering HMIS data in alignment with this policy.

Timeliness Policy

Entering data in a timely manner can reduce human error that occurs when too much time has elapsed between the data collection/service transaction and the data entry. Entering data as close as possible to the incident or activity is also essential to the effectiveness of the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and By Name List Case Conferencing efforts. It is important for the By Name List generated from HMIS to have accurate data on individuals and households experiencing homelessness and those who have entered permanent housing.

HMIS data entry is required **within seven calendar days of the event** to allow for the appropriate individuals to be added to the By Name List, connected to a CE referral or diversion resources, or removed from the process of connection to permanent housing as appropriate. This expectation is for both HMIS enrollments and exits.

When a client is exited from a project in HMIS, they should be exited as of the date they last utilized the bed/services provided by the project. For example, if a client last received services from a project on 1/10/2019, they should be exited from the project on 1/10/2019, even if the user is doing the data entry on a future date.

Clients can often disappear from a housing placement for several days or weeks before returning again for services. **Projects should exit clients from their housing project in HMIS no more than seven (7) days after their last stay**. This helps ensure clients are not perpetually enrolled in a project in HMIS despite no longer being served, which assists in providing exact locations for clients when trying to house them through Coordinated Entry or Case Conferencing. If a client returns to a project, a new Enrollment record should be created.

Exception: Street Outreach Services (SOS) programs should exit young people when their exit destination is known within 7 calendar days of exit. However, for clients that the program loses contact with, clients should be exited at 90 days from the date of last contact.

The acceptable threshold for compliance is 90% for all program types. Every program must follow the timeframe outlined in the plan.

Completeness

The purpose of completeness is to ensure sufficient data on clients, their demographic characteristics, and service use in order to make system improvements and drive reductions in youth and young adult homelessness and disproportionality for queer, trans and black, indigenous and youth of color.

When exiting clients to destinations that may be ambiguous given the HUD categories offered, providers should reference the following guidance to ensure consistency:
   ❖ [HUD Guidance](#)
   ❖ [Skagit County-specific exit destinations](#)

Youth and Young Adult Universal Data Elements (UDE)

The purpose of the UDEs is to ensure that all Skagit County service providers participating in the Balance of State HMIS are documenting the data elements necessary to produce county-wide unduplicated count of clients served. Our community needs up-to-date, accurate and complete information for all unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in order to drive system change and end disproportionality for queer, trans, black, indigenous and youth of color.

All Skagit County HMIS projects must fully collect demographic data, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age for unaccompanied youth and young adults age 12-24 in accordance with our Demographic Data Collection Policy (see [here](#)).

These data elements are evaluated regularly by HUD and are critical for Skagit County to measure our progress towards reaching functional zero for unaccompanied youth and young adults. As such, all clients who receive services and have their information entered into HMIS should have complete data for all UDEs. **The percentage of all clients served with "null/missing" UDEs or without full and valid responses in Skagit County HMIS should be no higher than 5%.**

Table of YYA Universal Data Elements

Data Element	Why we collect it
Name	A full, consistently used name supports the unique identification of each person in HMIS *While legal names are useful, it is important to use the name young people use the most consistently and that is most affirming for them
Social Security #	A Social Security Number (SSN) supports the unique identification of each person in HMIS. An important objective for ending homelessness is to increase access and utilization of mainstream programs. SSN is required for many mainstream programs and projects may need SSN to help clients access mainstream services.
Date of Birth	Date of Birth (DoB) is used to calculate a client's age at any point during a project stay and supports the unique identification of each person served. Age is a key element to identify which services a youth or young adult is eligible for, and is an important demographic element ACI looks at when developing system improvements.
Race	Race is an important demographic category that can help us more fully see and serve clients, as well as see and address systemic racism in our YYA homelessness system. The ACI team regularly reviews aggregate race/ethnicity data to pinpoint areas in need of improvement to end disproportionality for youth of color. *Race should never be assumed, young people should always be able to self-identify their race. Clients can self-identify with one or more of five racial categories.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity is an important demographic category that can help us more fully see and serve clients, as well as see and address systemic racism in our YYA homelessness system. The ACI team regularly reviews aggregate race/ethnicity data to pinpoint areas in need of improvement to end disproportionality for youth of color. ACI includes Hispanic/Latinx young people of any race in the aggregate 'People of Color' category. *Ethnicity should never be assumed, young people should always be able to self-identify their ethnicity. Clients may self-identify as Hispanic/Latino/a/x/e or not.
Gender	Gender is an important demographic category that can help us more fully see and serve clients, as well as see and address systemic transphobia in our YYA homelessness system. The ACI team regularly reviews aggregate data on the service and outcomes for gender diverse and cisgender young people to pinpoint areas in need of improvement to end disproportionality for trans and nonbinary young people. *HUD's 2022 Data Standard revisions include more comprehensive options around gender identity, and allow for clients to select multiple options. This

	means that clients can choose, for example, 'male' and 'transgender' or 'a gender that is not singularly male or female' and 'transgender'. **Gender should never be assumed, young people should always be able to self-identify their gender. ***Agencies may use more robust gender identity categories than HUD or OHY require.
Sexual Orientation	Sexual Orientation is an important demographic category that can help us more fully see and serve clients, as well as see and address systemic homophobia in our YYA homelessness system. The ACI team regularly reviews aggregate data on the service and outcomes for LGBQ+ and straight young people to pinpoint areas in need of improvement to end disproportionality for LGBQ+ young people. *Sexual orientation is required to be collected as per Skagit County's ACI [Demographic Data Collection Policy] for all unaccompanied YYA in HMIS aged 12-24, but is not required for most projects by HUD or OHY. Providers must enter sexual orientation via the 'assessments' tab at the profile level in HMIS. **Sexual Orientation should never be assumed, young people should always be able to self-identify their sexual orientation. ***Agencies may use more robust sexual orientation categories than are listed in HMIS. If clients identify with a sexual orientation outside of the available boxes, providers should type their response into the 'other' box.
Veteran Status	Indicates whether clients are veterans of the United States armed forces. *Supports an accurate count of how many veterans experience homelessness, and useful for screening for possible housing/service interventions and for understanding veterans' service needs.*
Disabling Condition	Indicates whether clients have a disabling condition. *Used with other information to identify whether a client meets the* **criteria for chronic homelessness.**
Project Start Date	Indicates the date a client started participating in a project.
Project Exit Date	Indicates the date a client ended participation in a project. Used together with Project Start, this information is used to calculate and report the time spent in a project and for accurate client counts at a given time. This information may also be used by the ACI team to make program-level changes and improvements.
Exit Destination	Exit Destination is used to calculate the permanent housing placement rate, which is a key measure of functional zero. This information is reviewed monthly to pinpoint opportunities for improvement in services and support to ensure young people exit quickly into safe, stable housing that they need and want.

Relationship to HoH	Identifies one person that all other households can be linked to at the time they enter a project. This information is critical for identifying if a YYA is unaccompanied or a member of a family unit, or is a young family - all of which can impact their eligibility for services and housing opportunities.
Housing Move-in Date	Documents the date that a household admitted into a Permanent Housing project actually moves into housing. This is necessary to calculate length of time to housing, which is a key measure of functional zero. *Critical to point-in-time and housing inventory counts as it differentiates households that are enrolled but still literally homeless from households that have already moved into permanent housing.*
Prior Living Situation	To identify the type of living situation and length of time in that situation just prior to project start for all adults and heads of households. *Used with other information to identify if a client appears to meet the criteria for chronic homelessness at various points of enrollment.*
Current Living Situation	An accurate Current Living Situation is critical for determining the status of a young person on the By Name List (ie Unsheltered, sheltered, doubled-up/couchsurfing, etc). This information will be used by the ACI team to design improvements around areas like reducing unsheltered homelessness and increasing housing placements for specific populations.

ACI Project in HMIS

Young people may show up in a variety of community spaces in search of housing support. However, the By Name List is produced through a report pulled from HMIS, and only established housing service providers have access to projects within HMIS. The ACI Project in HMIS is therefore established to function as a catch-all project for young people who are experiencing homelessness but are not enrolled in another HMIS project. This primarily includes young people on Northwest Youth Services' Youth Interest Pool (YIP) and young people that may be accessing services at non-HMIS providers or other systems of care, such as school districts. Young people should only be enrolled in this project when they are **not** receiving services in another HMIS program.

Duplication and Non-Consenting Policy

The Skagit County Youth and Young Adult By Name List (BNL) works to anonymously track contact with unaccompanied youth and young adults (ages 13-24 years) experiencing homelessness who have not consented to services/assessment to improve understanding of how to engage with them and to use case conferencing to coordinate outreach and engagement for those unable to undergo an assessment, while not disclosing identifying information.

Unaccompanied Youth and Young adults (ages 13 -24 years) who have not consented to services and/or assessments may still consent to being on Skagit County's Youth and Young Adult By Name List (BNL) and receive case conferencing support, where service providers come together to efficiently prioritize and house young people experiencing homelessness, a best practice for communities to successfully reduce and end youth homelessness.

Tracking Participants

The Youth and Young Adult By-Name-List (BNL) is currently held by Community Action of Skagit County and will not be shared in full in order to protect participant privacy. No participant information will be shared until a **Release of Information (ROI)**, consenting to being on the Youth and Young Adult By Name List is signed by the participant. Encounters with individuals unwilling or unable to complete a full assessment should be entered into HMIS as "Consent Refused" and included in the By-Name List. When possible, outreach and housing providers should collect identifying information and answer all questions young people may have about sharing their information. Entering clients as "Consent Refused" should be used as infrequently as is possible.

For the purpose of engaging with a participant who has not signed an ROI, an outreach worker may be given limited information in order to engage the participant, but the outreach worker will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement before receiving any information. Once the outreach worker is able to locate the participant, they will attempt to collect a Release of Information and conduct an assessment if possible. If the participant refuses to sign a Release of Information, the outreach worker will continue to engage the participant so that they have access to any services they wish to utilize.

Washington State Department of Commerce and local Coordinated Entry policies and procedures will be followed for all Consent Refused records.

The Anchor Community Initiative Data Lead will work with the Skagit County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) admin/vendor to establish a workflow within HMIS that allows providers to record client details without using identifying information that can be tracked separately, thereby maintaining confidentiality but allowing records to be included in the overall count of actively homeless youth and young adults. The non-consent policy within HMIS will be followed per Commerce guidance.

Periodic review of Consent Refused clients will be conducted to ensure that the overall data quality in the system does not suffer from poor data maintenance.

Inactivity Policy

HMIS By-Name List Inactivity Policy
If a youth/young adult (YYA) who is experiencing homelessness and has had no contact with any system/provider (i.e. CES access point, system navigators and/or community outreach) for 90 days, they will be moved to Inactive ("No exit interview completed"). This excludes YYAs that are known to be in a publicly-funded institution (e.g., hospital) for 90 days or less AND who had been on the street or in a shelter immediately prior AND who will return to literal homelessness upon discharge.

Within the current capacity of the outreach teams and/or shelter staff and partner agencies, reasonable attempts will be made to locate youth and young adults (YYA) exiting to ("No exit interview completed") destinations in the period between the exit date and the date they will become inactive if they are not re-engaged.

If a YYA on the inactive list contacts someone in the homeless system including outreach workers, drop-in centers, shelters, meal lines, etc., they will be moved from the inactive list to the active list and can be referred with the date of status change.

Young adults who are active without a current housing plan or housing approval will be moved to Inactive (Over 24) the month following their twenty-fifth birthday.

Coordinated Entry Inactivity Policy
For a household to maintain their place on the CE prioritization lists they must check in monthly with Housing Resources Center staff at Community Action. As long as the household remains eligible for CE (literally homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness) and continues to check in monthly, they will be active in the Housing Interest Pool. Households may also check in through a provider that is not Community Action, as long as the provider makes timely contact with Community Action staff. Households that do not check in within ninety (90) days or longer may be taken out of the Housing Interest Pool. Staff conducting an CE intake share the conditions for households to maintain their place on CE prioritization list as part of the intake process.

Coordinated Entry

The purpose of Coordinated Entry (CE) is to provide the quickest access to the most appropriate housing to every household experiencing or at-risk of homelessness through a standardized assessment and referral process. Skagit County's Coordinated Entry system is managed by Community Action.

The CE system must take a dynamic prioritization approach that considers a household's prioritization status and current resource availability. This approach requires CE to anticipate upcoming resource availability (e.g. next 60 days.) Our CE system uses the Skagit County Coordinated Entry Vulnerability and Prioritization Tool (see the [CES Intake Packet](#) here).

Access points who have staff that can administer the Vulnerability and Assessment tool to unaccompanied youth and young adults can be found at:
- Community Action's Office during Housing Resource Center hours (walk-in)
- Anacortes Family Center
- Samish Indian Nation in Anacortes
- East County Resource Center in Concrete
- Northwest Youth Services
- YMCA Oasis Teen Center

Young Adults can also access housing through Northwest Youth Services' Youth Interest Pool (YIP). To find out more, contact NWYS directly with the information below.

- **Walk-in Hours:** Monday and Wednesday from 9am-4pm
- Address: 427 N 4th St Mount Vernon, WA 98273
- Phone: (360) 336-1988
- TTY/TDD services number is 1-800-833-6388
- [Direct Referral link](#)

Contact info for Community Action

- Phone: (360) 416-7585
- Address: 330 Pacific Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273
- Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 3pm. (excluding holidays).
- [Website](#)

Skagit's Point of Contact at the WA Department of Commerce: andrea.arteaga@commerce.wa.gov (206) 600-0638

See Skagit County's Coordinated Entry Policies and Guidance below
[HUD CE Guidance](#)
[Washington State Coordinated Entry Guidelines](#)
[Skagit County Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures](#)
[CES Grievance Policy](#)
[CES Intake Packet](#)

Ongoing Training Plan

The Washington State Department of Commerce is responsible for maintaining access to Skagit County's HMIS and ensuring regular training is available to HMIS users. This includes new user training, alongside a variety of more advanced training options, manuals and guides. More information is available [here](#).

In addition, the Skagit Valley YMCA will offer regular training for Skagit County HMIS users as needed on data entry best practices and the expectations laid out in this policy. To request training, reach out to the Skagit Valley Family YMCA.

Stakeholder Review

To ensure that our community is catching all data quality issues and constantly improving the reach of our system, Skagit County ACI will facilitate *at least* quarterly stakeholder review sessions in the context of ACI Community Team meetings and Youth Action Board meetings or Focus Groups. Specific effort will be made to host 2 focus groups per year specifically centering on BIPOC youth experiences, and 2 on LBGTQ youth experiences. At minimum, we will ensure representation from the following key groups regularly throughout the year:

- BIPOC and LGBTQ+ young people currently experiencing homelessness
- BIPOC and LGBTQ+ young people with recent lived experience of homelessness
- Frontline staff and provider leadership
- Key Systems such as Child Welfare and Schools
- Advocates
- Elected officials

These stakeholder review sessions will be focused on reviewing the monthly system-level data dashboards, pinpointing areas of high confidence and areas of concern, and uplifting key issues that may be contributing to problems in the data quality or system reach.