TORONTO

What is SMIS?

The Shelter Management Information System (SMIS) a web-based information management system used by many programs across the City that provide services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. SMIS is administered by the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) division. SMIS is primarily used by City-funded shelters, 24-hour respites, and COVID-19 temporary shelter programs to conduct client intake, admission, case management, and discharge. It is also used by some service programs (e.g., eviction prevention, drop-in programs).

SMIS will continue to transition into a 'homelessness management information system' to serve as the primary information system for a broader range of programs (e.g., Street Outreach) as part of a Coordinated Access system in Toronto. Coordinated Access is a consistent method to assess, prioritize, and connect people experiencing homelessness to housing and supports. Toronto aims to have a Coordinated Access system in place by March 31, 2022. Coordinated Access relies on a series of tools and modules that are available through recent and upcoming SMIS releases.

SMIS Bulletins

This document is the first in a series of bulletins that SSHA will share to explain how changes are made to SMIS and communicate upcoming SMIS enhancements. These bulletins will include topics such as new SMIS processes (e.g. user feedback opportunities), upcoming changes, SMIS tips, and changes to policy/protocols.

Upcoming SMIS Changes

SSHA is currently planning to release updates in the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2021. The next SMIS update will occur on **April 1, 2021**. This is one of the largest updates to SMIS in its 10-year history, including nearly 50 unique system changes over 18 enhancements (listed on page 2-3).

At the highest level, this update will introduce three major changes, to be implemented at sites over the next few months:

1. **A new Intake and Triage:** An updated SMIS Intake and Triage will be introduced to all SMIS site using a staggered approach over the coming months. The form as been piloted by 14 shelter sites for the past six months, who have helped to inform training and implementation plan which will be implemented by SSHA. The form is the first step towards the implementation of a common assessment tool, is informed by extensive user research, adopts a user-friendly display, and a number of enhanced questions to further support clients in finding and maintaining housing.

   Please note: Sites who have <u>NOT</u> been involved in the pilot will not see changes #6-17 in the list below on April 1, but should wait to hear from SSHA regarding the staggered implementation through the Spring which will involve virtual training opportunities for new and existing SMIS users.

2. **A Street Outreach Pilot:** A number of new features for service programs will be enabled, allowing five street outreach programs to pilot the use of SMIS. This is an exciting next step in expanding the use of SMIS to more service programs and building towards a more comprehensive understanding of the clients we serve.

3. **Street Needs Assessment Survey Participation Tracker:** This flag will appear on the client summary screen and allows users to track participation in the 2021 Street Needs Assessment Survey. Further training will be provided to staff on using the tracker who will be supporting the implementation of the survey in April of 2021.

The April 1, 2021 update will include the changes listed in the following table. For full details about the changes, please visit the City of Toronto's web site, and click the document titled "SMIS Release Notes April 2021" under the "Release Notes for New Versions" section.

General SMIS Changes

Description of changes	Reason for changes	Applicable to
1. Added a new "Street Needs Assessment Survey Participation Tracker"	Allows users to track client participation in the Street Needs Assessment survey	All users
2. Added a new 'End of Service' function for Service Programs	Allows Service Program users to close client intakes and track housing outcomes	Service Program users
3. Added an 'End-Of-Service' and an 'End-Of-Service Unique Clients' statistics page	Allows users to view summarized housing outcomes for Service Programs	Service Program users
4. Enhanced the 'Discharge' and 'End-of-Service' statistics pages	Allows users to view housing outcomes over the "Last 7 Days" and "Last 14 Days", and can support in ensuring discharges are accurately recorded in SMIS using the 14-day editing window.	All users
5. Enhanced the Admission and Discharge list pages	Allows users to view more details for each admission/discharge, including who admitted/discharge the client and when	All users

Changes to the SMIS Intake and Triage

NOTE: These changes will be introduced to all SMIS sites using a staggered approach throughout Spring 2021 once all users have received appropriate training. Changes will not be seen immediately, unless the site is participating in the pilot.

Description of changes	Reason for changes	Applicable to
6. Added the ability to print a blank intake form as a PDF	Allows users to print a blank version of the intake form	All users, once activated
7. Made the [Pronoun] field mandatory	Ensures that this important data is captured for all clients at time of intake	All users, once activated
8. Added "Bahamas" as an option in the [Country of Origin] field	It was identified that this country was missing from the list of countries	All users, once activated
9. New Field: Identify a client's service start date	Allows users to retroactively identify the date that the client began accessing the program	Service Program users
10. New Field: Add a "Primary Worker" to an Intake	Allows users to identify a client's primary worker (similar to the admissions page)	All users, once activated
11. Revised the taxation field	Improved the wording of this field to ensure that information is collected consistently	All users, once activated
12. Updated the Descriptive Text in the [Client Details] section	Provides additional clarity and instructions to users	All users, once activated

Changes to the SMIS Intake and Triage

NOTE: These changes will be introduced to all SMIS sites using a staggered approach throughout Spring 2021 once all users have received appropriate training. Changes will not be seen immediately, unless the site is participating in the pilot.

13. Revised the title for 'Housing Connections' in [Housing Applications]	Reflects the name change for this program	All users, once activated
14. Substantially revised the [Housing Applications] section	Allows for users to add new application types and record notes for each application	All users, once activated
15. Updated Link: Support Assessment Guide	Allows for users to access the revised Support Assessment Guide	All users, once activated
16. Substantially revised the [Support Needs] section	Provides additional clarity and instructions to users	All users, once activated
17. Added a "VAW Support" checkbox option to [Health & Wellness] section	Allows for users to identify "VAW Supports" as a Health & Wellness need	All users, once activated

Changes to the SMIS Mobile Application for the City-operated Streets Outreach programs

NOTE: The SMIS mobile application is currently only available to City-operated street outreach programs at this time, as it is still being piloted and is only available on the City's server. SSHA is assessing options to make SMIS mobile-friendly for all programs as part of a future SMIS update.

Description of changes	Reason for changes	Applicable to
18. New Function: Capturing Anonymous Clients Data in SMIS Mobile	Allows City-Operated Streets 2 Homes (S2H) users to record and track anonymous clients	City-Operated S2H users

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What changes are included in this update?

SMIS update 3.5 (April 1, 2021) includes the changes listed in the above tables. For full details about the changes involved in this update, please visit the City of Toronto's web site at https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/community-partners/emergency-shelter-operators/shelter-management-information-system/, and click the document titled "SMIS Release Notes April 2021" under the "Release Notes for New Versions" section

Q2. Why don't I see some of these changes in SMIS?

Changes #6-17 will only be available to the 14 pilot sites as of April 1, 2021. These changes will then become available to all other sites in Spring 2021 (date to be determined), once training has been provided to all staff. Further details will be provided once available.

Change #18 is currently only applicable to Street Outreach programs that are directly operated by the City of Toronto. Bedded programs do not have access to this mobile app. SSHA is assessing whether other programs, such as Purchase-of-Service Street Outreach and bedded programs, would likewise benefit from this application and, if so, will prioritize this change as part of a future SMIS update.

Q3. What training and resources will I receive regarding these changes?

SSHA will be providing additional user support for this change, including:

Type of User Supports	Who is this training available to?	When is it available
New User Training: Virtual training sessions to provide basic training on all applicable SMIS functions, including the changes that are being introduced as part of this update	New SMIS users	New user training is offered periodically throughout the year and can be arranged by your Access Manager
Information Sharing and Question and Answer sessions: SSHA staff will provide a high-level demonstration of the updated changes and provide an opportunity to ask and respond to questions	All SMIS users	Sessions will be available in Spring 2021. Further details will be provided once available
SMIS Intake and Triage training: Virtual training sessions to provide an in-depth training on the SMIS Intake and Triage**.**	All SMIS users	Training information and material will be available in Spring 2021. Further details will be provided once available
Release Notes: A detailed description of all changes that are being incorporated as part of this update	All SMIS users	Available on the City's website
Frequently Asked Questions (this document): A list of common questions and answers related to the update	All SMIS users	Available on the City's website

Q4. Who can I speak to if I have questions about these changes?

If you have any questions about the changes, please speak with your Supervisor or SMIS Access Manager. If you do not know who your SMIS Access Manager is, please ask your Supervisor. Additionally, if you require

technical support regarding SMIS or any of the associated changes, please contact the SMIS helpdesk, by sending an email to smishelp@toronto.ca.

Q5. Why is SSHA making changes to SMIS?

These changes help ensure that SMIS:
- Continues to grow and change to meet the needs of its users and clients;
- Is gradually transitioning into a 'homelessness management information system' to serve as the primary information system for a broader range of programs (e.g., Street Outreach) as part of a Coordinated Access system; and,
- Receives necessary maintenance and enhancements.

Q6. When can users expect to see future changes to SMIS?

SSHA is working on the next round of changes which are expected to be released in the Summer of 2021. SSHA is also aiming to release batches of SMIS changes 3-4 times per year to minimize disruption to users and clients and ensure the most effective use of resources when updating the system.

Q7. Why is SMIS mobile only available to City-operated Street Outreach programs?

The SMIS mobile application is a pilot project that is currently being tested by the City-operated Street Outreach program. As this application is only a pilot, it is temporarily being hosted on the City's server, which means that it can only be accessed by City staff. SSHA is assessing options to make SMIS mobile-friendly for all programs, including Purchase-of-Service Street Outreach and bedded programs, as part of a future SMIS update.

Q8. What is the difference between a "Bedded Program" and a "Service Program"?

A **bedded program** is a program that admits clients to a physical bed (or alternative). Examples include emergency shelters, 24-hour respites, and COVID-19 temporary shelter programs. Generally, these programs conduct intake, admission, case management, and discharge.

A **service program** is a broader category of programs that provides services to clients that are not necessarily linked to the provision of a physical bed (or alternative). Examples include street outreach, eviction prevention, drop-ins, and art programs. These programs may conduct intake, case management, and end-of-service.

Q9. What is the difference between a "Discharge" and an "End-of-Service"?

The "Discharge" module is used to close a client Intake for a **bedded program** (e.g., shelters, respites) and record the client's housing outcome. The "End-of-Service" module is used to close a client Intake for a **service program** (e.g., Street Outreach) and record a client's housing outcome.

Q10. What are the differences between the old Intake and the updated Intake and Triage?

The updated Intake and Triage introduces a number of improvements to the old Intake form, including:
- An enhanced look that is more user-friendly; and,
- Additional questions to better support client clients during intake and conduct case management (e.g., a print function, pronoun field, racial identity field, additional comment boxes, additional support needs options, a support need triage function, a housing applications function, and an enhanced contact information section).

Please note that the updated Intake and Triage does not include 7 fields that were previously available in the old Intake form. These fields have either intentionally not been transferred over or require additional user research before they can be released.

The 7 data fields that are not included in the updated Intake and Triage include:

1. Reason for Homelessness (Drop-Down List) - Eliminated in favour of the 'reason for service' field as the two fields were redundant;
2. Presenting Issues (Checkbox List) - Replaced by the Support Needs section;
3. ID Numbers (Open Text Field) - This field has privacy considerations that need to be assessed before this feature can be incorporated in the updated Intake and Triage;
4. Referred to (Drop-Down List) - This field was used infrequently and was intended to identify if a client is not being admitted and is instead referred elsewhere;
5. Reason for Non-Admittance (Drop-Down List) - linked to the previous question and therefore removed;
6. Language (Open Text Field) - This optional field has historically been used rarely (completed in 3% of all intakes). This information can be captured in the comments field of the Support Needs section, if needed;
7. Referred by (name, #, email) - Replaced by the client contacts section.

Q11. Will users still be able to access historically completed Intakes once the updated 'Intake and Triage' is released?

Yes, any closed (historical) intakes will still remain available for read-only reference.