

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2025-04

Date Issued: May 12, 2025

Bulletin Type:	General Update
Subject:	Reminder on Facilitating Access to Toronto's Shelter System by Central Intake and Avoiding Duplicate Client Records in Shelter Management Information System (SMIS)
Bulletin:	<p>Please post this bulletin in a conspicuous area accessible to all relevant shelter staff.</p> <p>This bulletin provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Function of Central Intake and requests service providers to direct people seeking access to shelter to Central Intake and;• Provides a reminder on how to avoid duplicate client records in SMIS <p>This bulletin is applicable to all City-funded emergency and transitional shelters, respites and 24-hour drop-ins.</p> <p>Please note: This bulletin does not apply to shelter-to-shelter transfers. For shelter providers making shelter-to-shelter referrals for admitted clients, please refer to the Toronto Shelter Standards section 8.2 Referrals, and 8.3 Admissions. For respites and 24-hour drop-ins, please refer to 24-Hour Respite Site Standards, section 6.2 Referrals, and section 6.3 Admissions.</p> <p>Function of Central Intake</p> <p>Central Intake provides intake assessments and referrals to Toronto's shelter system through a 24/7 contact centre. Central Intake also provides information about other homelessness and housing stability services.</p> <p>Given its specific role in Toronto's shelter system, Central Intake is resourced and positioned to support shelter diversion and placement of individuals and families seeking access to shelter or supports that they may not have knowledge of and/or direct access to. This includes</p>

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the ability to conduct intakes and referrals into specialized programs across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond (e.g. referrals to available services for refugee claimants, tenant and legal services, primary and mental health care supports).

Shelter diversion, where implemented successfully, ensures individuals and families are directed to the most appropriate services and supports that meet their immediate needs, thereby reducing demand on the shelter system by delaying access or preventing shelter stays altogether. This is critically important given the ongoing unmet demand for shelter and related supports.

Supporting Walk-ins at Shelter Sites

In the event that individuals or families walk into a shelter site seeking access to shelter space, providers are requested to support the individual(s) with calling Central Intake. This will ensure that people have immediate access to available shelter vacancies at the time of intake and are informed of the available shelter spaces.

Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) is reminding and requesting service providers and shelter staff to direct people seeking access to shelter to contact Central Intake.

Central Intake can be reached at 416-338-4766 or 1-877-338-3398 or by calling 311.

TSSS is working towards creating processes that will support better intake into the shelter system through Central Intake as the centralized access point and will be engaging with shelter providers for input on how to effectively support vulnerable clients and families in a coordinated and responsive manner.

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Avoiding Duplicate Client Records in SMIS

The quality of data and information maintained within SMIS is the collective responsibility of TSSS and its community partners. Maintaining data quality supports with improving client experience and ensuring accurate reporting and system level decision-making. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of duplicate client records, primarily in the family sector.

To ensure each family and individual clients are maintaining a single record in SMIS, TSSS is reminding its partners of responsibilities for compliance with the procedure below:

In the event of intaking a new client into a shelter program, SMIS users are required to:

- Perform a client search in SMIS, to determine if the client is an existing client or a new client. You can search by entering either the client's first and last name, Date of Birth, Assigned to or Program.
 - The Search process is to be repeated every time a client enters your shelter.
- If no client is found or the results list does not contain your client, refine your search criteria to search again, or click on the New Client action button to create a new client.
- If you find a duplicate client record, please notify smishelp@toronto.ca with subject head "SMIS Merge Request" and include the clients' names and SMIS IDs for the suspected duplicate records.

Following this process, as outlined in the [SMIS User Manual – To Search for a Client](#), ensures that duplicate client records are avoided in SMIS as much as possible.

Please ensure that this Bulletin is cascaded to all relevant staff as soon as possible, and a hard copy of this document posted in a conspicuous place for ongoing reference.

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Resources: For more information on Central Intake, please refer to:
<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter/homeless-help/central-intake/>

For more information on how to search for a client in SMIS, please refer to: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/90fb-SMIS_UM_HELP-Searching-for-Your-Client.pdf

Contact Information: For more information about this Bulletin, please contact your Agency Review Officer (ARO) or Manager.