NEW ENGLAND HMIS:
GUIDE TO PATH DATA ENTRY

Version 1

Abstract

The New England HMIS data entry workflow guide is a comprehensive resource for users to assist in entering and troubleshooting the data entry process.

Institute for Community Alliances

CONTENTS

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Version	Document Change
April 2022	1.0	Initial Draft

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This document provides the comprehensive workflow guides to assist the user in data entry for the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH).

USING THIS GUIDE

- This guide is intended for users who already familiar with the basic Clarity workflow and are looking for guidance on the PATH specific data entry requirements.
- The accompanying screen shots are taken from a training site user and account under the username "Generic User" who works at the "Generic Agency." Actual users will of course be logged in under their name and will have access to their own set of Agency specific Programs, Services, and other features. If agencies have questions about their Agency set up in Clarity, please reach out to your System Administrator.
- Red arrows, red circles, and yellow highlighting help identify the relevant parts of the included screen shots.
- When referring to Bitfocus Clarity or HUD/HHS specific terminology, words or phrases such as "Program" and "Client Living Situation" are capitalized.

Many questions not covered in this guide may be answered using the following additional resources:

- ICA website: https://icalliances.org
- ICA-New England Basic End User Guide
- 2020 HUD/HHS PATH HMIS Manual: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PATH-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf

PATH SPECIFIC TERMS

PATH – Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

SAMHSA – The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the part of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

SOAR – SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery, SOAR is a program designed to increase access to Social Security disability benefits for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Project Start Date - The project start date is the date of the first contact between the PATH-funded worker and the client.

Contact - This is an interaction between a worker and a client. These can be verbal conversations between the worker and client, or a referral to a service. Contacts are recorded using the Current Living Situation Assessment every time a client has an interaction with an outreach worker.

Current Living Situation – This is the Assessment used to document contacts in Clarity.

Date of Engagement - The date on which an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan, etc. It is expected that all data elements, ie Income, Disability, etc have been collected on or before the Date of Engagement.

Eligibility Determination Status – The date a client's SAMHSA PATH eligibility is formally determined. This must happen on or after the date of engagement. Additionally, the PATH-eligible individual and the PATH provider have mutually and formally agreed to engage in services.

Attained / Not Attained / Unknown – Outcome options for PATH Funded Referrals

Project Exit Date – The project exit date is the last date of contact between the PATH-funded worker and the client. In New Hampshire and Vermont, if a client has not been contacted by a PATH-funded worker in 90 or more days, they must be excited as of the last date of contact.

Project Exit Date – The process of re-establishing interaction with PATH-enrolled individuals who are disconnected from PATH services to reconnect the client to services based on the previously developed case management or goal plan. Reengagement must occur after enrollment and prior to project exit.

Referral – Active and direct PATH staff supports on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service. Referrals are only reported for PATH-funded referrals provided to a PATH-enrolled individual.

Project Exit Date – A specific PATH-funded assessment, benefit, or form of assistance provided to a PATH-enrolled individual. PATH-funded services may include screening, clinical assessment, community-based mental health services, substance use treatment, and housing assistance.

BACKGROUND

The PATH program workflow starts when the outreach worker meets with a potential client one or more times prior to Engaging in a reciprocal relationship and eventually formally determining their PATH eligibility. Clarity provides the following fields to track that data:

CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

1. This Assessment is used to record each Contact with the client.

2. It contains entries for the Date, Living Situation, and Location Details.
3. The date of the first Contact is the same as the Program start date.

DATE OF ENGAGEMENT

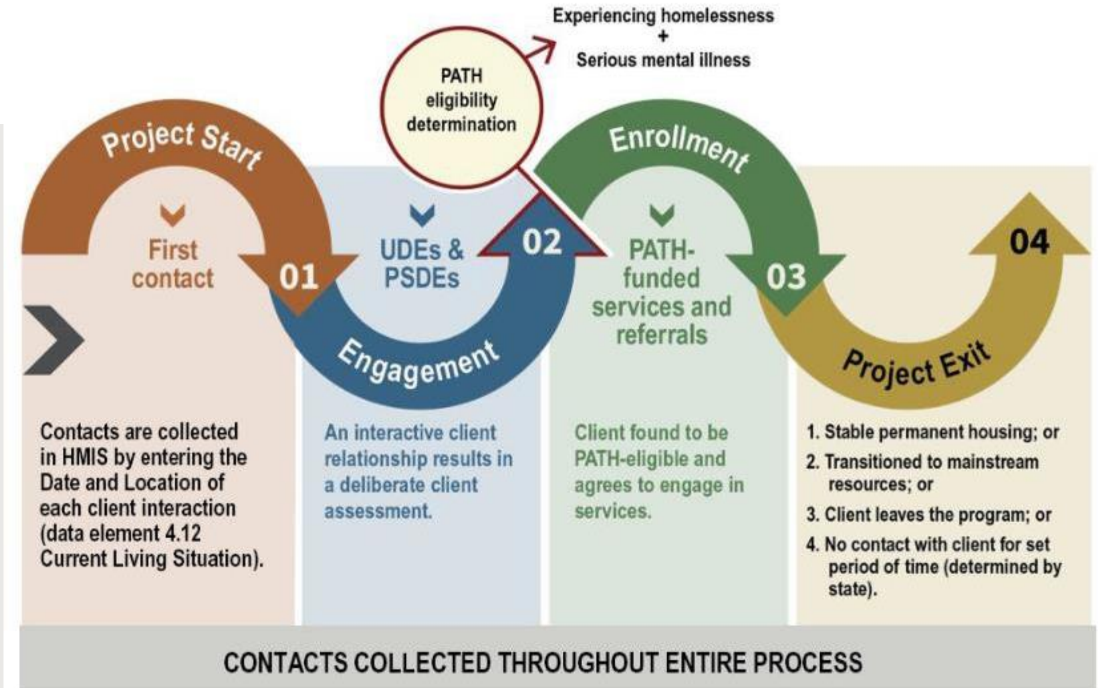
1. This is the date that the client consents to participate in services provided by the PATH program.
2. There should only be one Date of Engagement per Enrollment.
3. The Date of Engagement must occur on or before the Date of Status Determination
4. If the client does not "engage" prior to Program Exit, no date is recorded.

PATH ELIGIBILITY STATUS DETERMINATION

1. A date is entered into this field if the client is both "engaged" (has an Engagement date) and formally determined to be eligible for ongoing PATH services (because they are both experiencing literal homelessness and are diagnosed with a severe mental illness).
2. This is the HUD defined "PATH enrollment date." While the language is the same, and therefore potentially confusing, it is different than "Enrolling" a client into a PATH Program in the Clarity HMIS software. HMIS Enrollment facilitates ongoing documentation and therefore happens following the initial contact.
3. If a client is determined to be ineligible, or exits prior to determination, the date and reason for exit are documented on the Exit Assessment.

Following the recommended workflow will ensure that data are entered properly into Clarity for reporting purposes, and that users are compliant with the requirements outlined in HUD's June 2020 PATH Program HMIS Manual.

PATH WORKFLOW DIAGRAM



https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PATH-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf

INITIAL CLIENT MEETING – PROGRAM START DATE

This is the initial Contact with the client. ***PATH outreach workers are required to create an Enrollment in HMIS for all persons contacted.*** It is important to gather and include as much information as possible/appropriate. That said, it is understood that in some instances a person may not be willing to provide even basic information such as a name. These clients still require a HMIS Profile and Program Enrollment. Their initial file will include only the rudimentary information available at the time of the initial contact. It is understood that PATH outreach workers will update the file over time.

SEARCHING EXISTING HMIS PROFILES

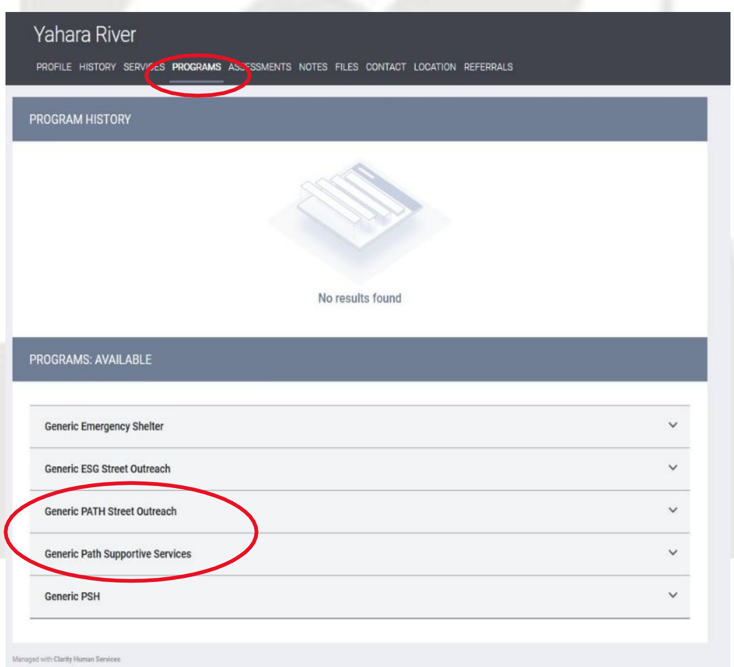
1. The first step to entering data into HMIS after an initial Contact is to check if the client has as existing file. Follow the steps outlined in the Basic User Guide to search existing clients. This includes queries using:
    a. The first three letters of the first and last name
    b. The date of birth (DOB)
    c. Last four of the SSN
    d. Other potential nicknames, etc.
2. If an existing client file has been identified, please ensure all unique identifying elements match before proceeding.

ADDING A NEW HMIS PROFILE

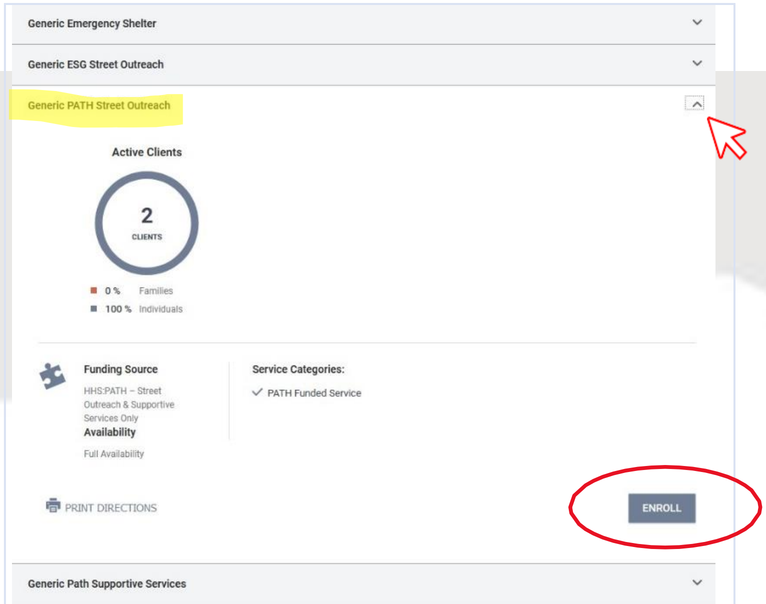
1. Sometimes you encounter a client who has no existing record in the HMIS database or for whom you have too little identifying information to find an existing record. In this case you will need to Add a New Client following the detailed procedure outlined in the Basic User Guide.
2. When creating a file for a client whose name is unknown, follow the policies of your agency for creating a nickname or pseudonym.
3. In most cases, if the responses to fields are unknown, they cannot be left blank. Please mark as Client Refused. Do not use 'Data Not Collected' as 'Data Not Collected' means the question was never asked. 'Client Refused' is an appropriate selection even if at the point of data entry, the client had not been asked the question. Part of PATH is to build a trusting relationship with the client where they feel safe in sharing data with you.
4. As more information is obtained - i.e. full name, DOB, etc. - it is important to add this information to the Client Profile.
5. In addition, is also important to continue to cross check the new information with existing HMIS files. If upon receiving additional information it is discovered a client has multiple HMIS files, please contact your System Administrator to have the files merged.

PATH PROGRAM START

1. In the client's HMIS file, navigate to the Programs tab and select the appropriate PATH program based on where the client resides.
   a. PATH Street Outreach - provides outreach and engagement to clients *living in places not meant for human habitation*. These PATH activities are designed to meet the immediate needs of unsheltered homeless persons by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, and/or critical health services.
   b. PATH Supportive Services - provides outreach and engagement to clients who are *residing in emergency shelter or are doubled-up in housing and are at-risk of homelessness*.
2. In this example we will enroll the client, Yahara River, into the Generic PATH Street Outreach Program.



3. Clicking the small down arrow expands the Program making the Enroll button available.



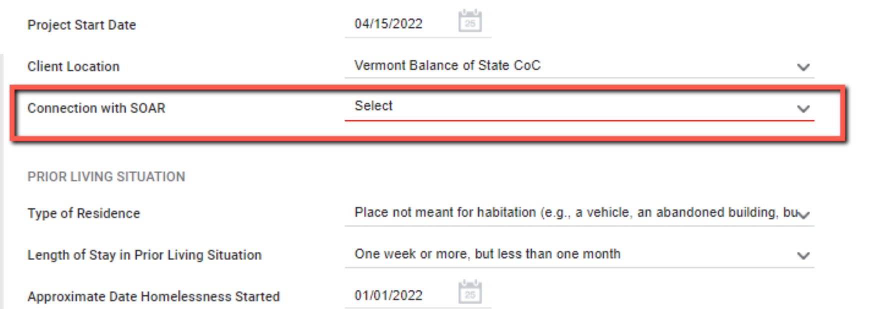
4. Clicking Enroll opens the Program Enrollment Assessment. The PATH Enrollment parallels other program types, in most ways, and the universal data element questions are all present to be answered as best as possible. This includes questions such as the Project Start Date, Prior Living Situation, income, disability, etc. Please refer to the Basic User Guide for additional guidance on creating an Enrollment and completing the Enrollment Assessment.

5. In most cases, if the responses to fields are unknown, they cannot be left blank. Please mark as Client Refused. Do not use 'Data Not Collected' as 'Data Not Collected' means the question was never asked. 'Client Refused' is an appropriate selection even if at the point of data entry, the client had not been asked the question. Part of PATH is to build a trusting relationship with the client where they feel safe in sharing data with you.
    a. As additional client information is obtained, return to the Enrollment Assessment, and fill in the incomplete information until all UDEs are entered.
    b. Note: If the information is not newly obtained, but rather the Status itself has changed (i.e., a change in income), this should be entered in HMIS using a Status Update Assessment rather than editing the Enrollment.
6. There are some PATH specific questions present in the Enrollment Assessment. These steps are not covered in the Basic User Guide and are explained in more detail below.

PATH SPECIFIC ENROLLMENT QUESTIONS

1. The first PATH specific question on the Enrollment Assessment asks whether the client has ever had a **Connection with SOAR**.
2. From the drop-down menu select the correct response.
3. The Connection to SOAR status must be answered when creating the initial entry record with the understanding that the response may change as more information is gathered or if the client becomes

connected during their enrollment. As soon as the initial history of connection to SOAR is determined this should be entered into the Enrollment Assessment.

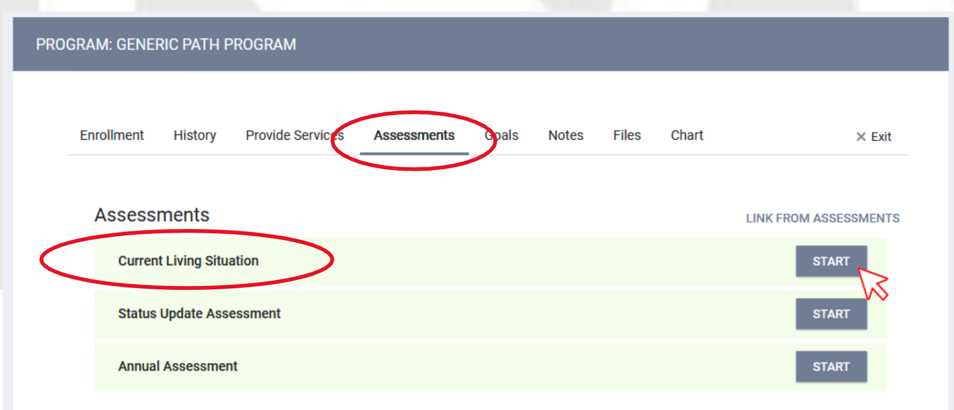


4. If a previously unconnected client becomes connected to SOAR during their PATH enrollment, this should be documented using a Status Assessment Update.
5. The next PATH specific question is the **Date of Engagement**. This is the date the client agrees to receive services from the PATH program. Often this will not occur during the initial contact. This field may be left blank when creating the Enrollment and updated as appropriate. See below for additional details on the Date of Engagement.
6. The final PATH specific question on the Enrollment Assessment is the **Date of Status Determination**. This is the date a client's formal eligibility for ongoing PATH services was determined. Often this will not occur during the initial contact. This field may also be left blank when creating the Enrollment and updated as appropriate. See below for additional details on the Status Determination Date.

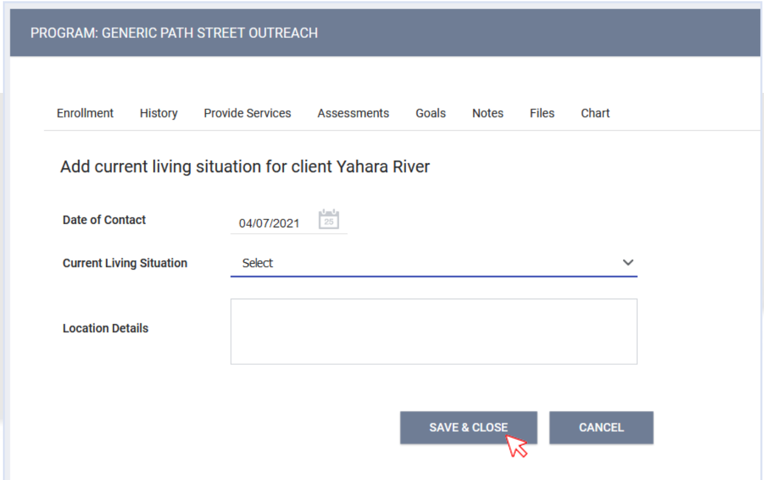
PATH SPECIFIC WORKFLOW – UPDATES OVER TIME

DOCUMENTING CONTACTS - CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

1. Every client contact must be documented using the Current Living Situation Assessment. Navigate to the Assessments tab within the Program Enrollment and click the Start button.



2. This opens the Current Living Situation Assessment with three fields to complete. Enter the date, the client's current living situation.



3. There is conditional logic built into the Current Living Situation field meaning that some responses to this question may cause additional fields to populate. All fields present must be answered.
4. A text box is available to add any additional details about the client's location.
5. Click Save and Close.
6. If during an interaction any additional information was gathered that was initially missing from the client Profile (ie. DOB, SSN, etc) or the Enrollment Assessment (ie. income, benefits, etc) be sure to make those updates in the appropriate location.

CONNECTION WITH SOAR

1. As mentioned above, this field must be answered when completing the Enrollment Assessment at the initial contact.
2. If the initial response is uncertain or unknown, it can be answered as such on the Enrollment and updated when further information is gathered.
3. If a client who was not connected to SOAR at the time of initial contact becomes connected during their PATH enrollment, this change should be recorded using a Status Update Assessment.
4. Clicking Start opens the Status Update Assessment. Enter the correct Status Update date and update the Connection to SOAR question response as appropriate.
5. Complete any other updates before scrolling to the bottom of the Assessment and Clicking Save.

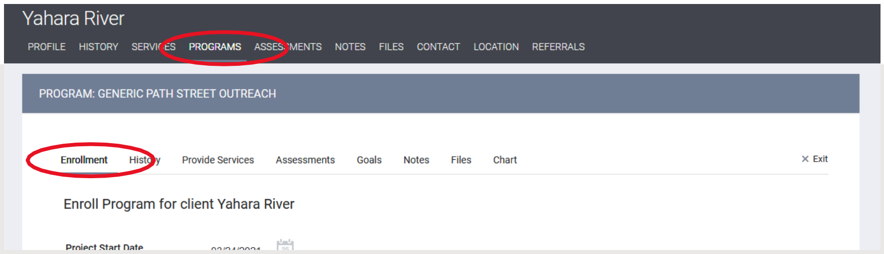
DATE OF ENGAGEMENT

1. The PATH Date of Engagement reflects the date a client consents to a more formal case management type relationship including receiving ongoing services such as developing a case plan and working toward established goals, etc. While this could occur during the initial contact, it often occurs following a period of rapport building. This date must occur on or before the Status Determination date.
2. Once the client is "engaged" this change should be reflected by updating the Enrollment record to

include the Date of Engagement.

   a. Note: The Date of Engagement can only be updated on the Enrollment Assessment.

3. Navigate to the initial Enrollment Assessment.



4. Scroll down to the relevant question and enter the relevant date into the field.

5. In addition, it is expected that coinciding with completing the Date of Engagement any remaining unknown data elements have now been collected and the Enrollment screen is complete.
6. Be sure to enter a Client Living Situation coinciding with the Engagement date.

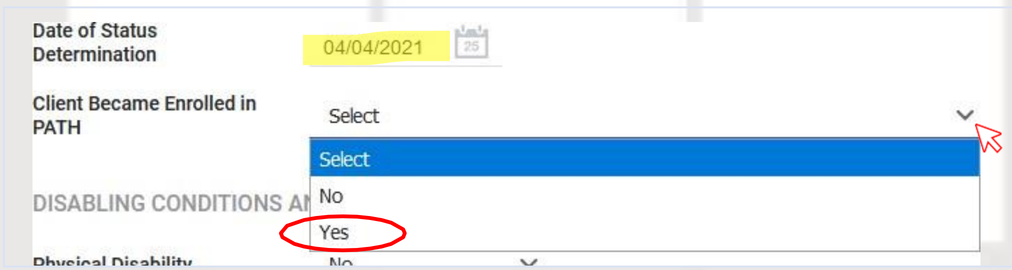
DATE OF STATUS DETERMINATION

1. The PATH Date of Status Determination reflects the date a client's SAMHSA eligibility for PATH programing was determined.
   a. Note that this is considered the SAMHSA enrollment date, which is different than the HMIS enrollment date. Remember that a program Enrollment must be created in HMIS following the initial contact.
2. There are multiple options for where to enter the Date of Status Determination. It may be updated by reopening the Enrollment Assessment (as was done for the Date of Engagement), on a Status Update Assessment, or, when appropriate, on an Exit Assessment.
   a. Note: The process and questions are the same regardless of which Assessment is used. See below for additional information on accessing Status Update and Exit Assessments.
3. Regardless of which Assessment is chosen, once the Assessment is open, scroll down to the Status Determination question and complete the field with the correct date. As described in the text preceding the question, there can only be one Date of Status Determination per program enrollment. In addition, if

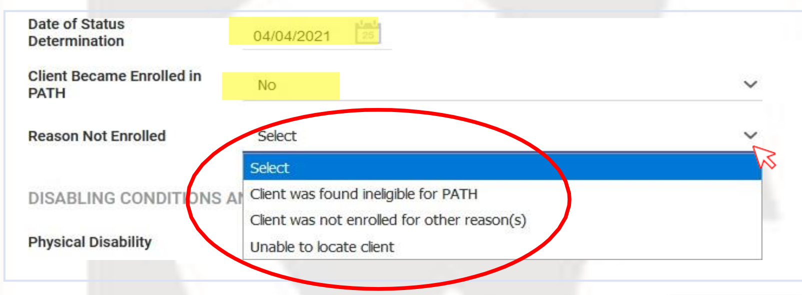
a Date of Engagement has been entered, the Date of Status Determination date must be on or after the engagement date.

4. Entering a date into this field activates additional prompts that must be answered

5. If the client is eligible for continued services, mark “Yes” from the drop-down. No additional response is necessary.



6. If the answer is “No,” an additional field to provide the Reason Not Enrolled will appear.

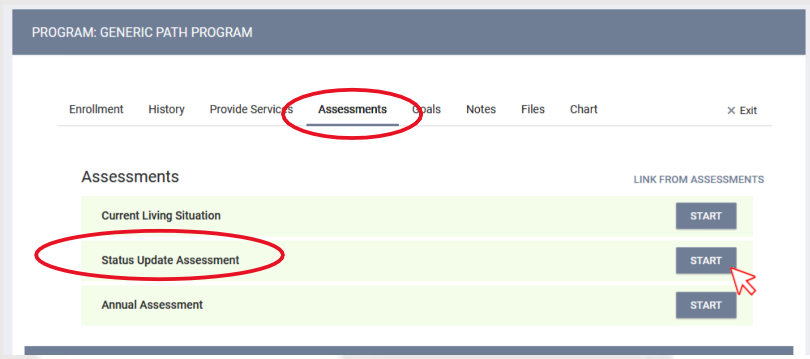


7. If the client is not Enrolled in PATH, proceed with Exiting the client from their HMIS Enrollment in the PATH Program. See below, or reference the Basic User Guide, for more details on Exiting a client.
8. Make any additional updates on the Status Update and click Save at the bottom of the screen.
    a. Note: If you are making this update in the Enrollment screen, any additional updates will need to be entered into a Status Update Assessment.
9. Be sure to enter a Client Living Situation coinciding with the Status Determination date.

STATUS UPDATE ASSESSMENTS

1. Whenever a client’s Status around particular data elements such as income, non-cash Benefits, disability, insurance, etc change during an Enrollment, these changes should be documented using a Statues Update Assessment.

2. As described above, updates to the Connection to SOAR questions and PATH Status Determinations can also be documented on Status Update Assessment.
3. Additional information on these Assessments can be found in the Basic User Guide.
4. Navigate to the Assessments tab within the PATH Enrollment.

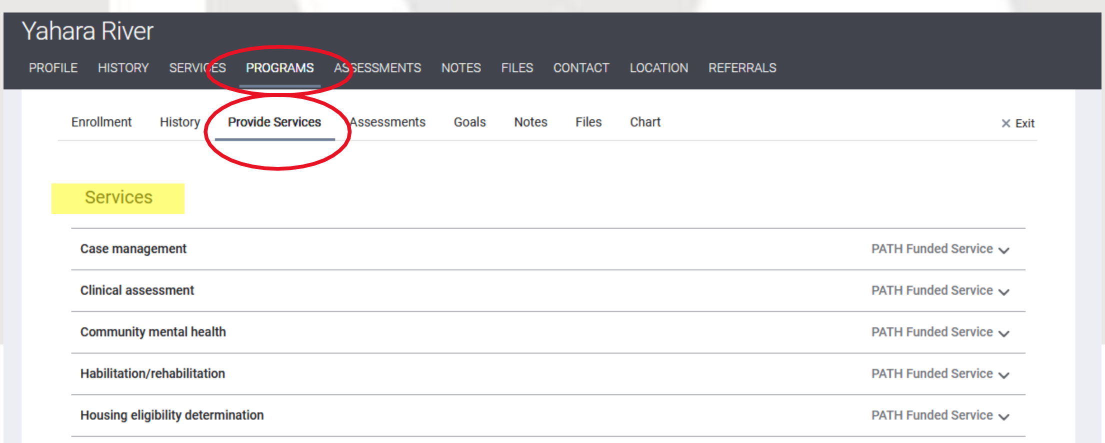


5. Click Start to open the Assessment.
6. Be sure to enter the correct date before making any changes and clicking Save & Close.

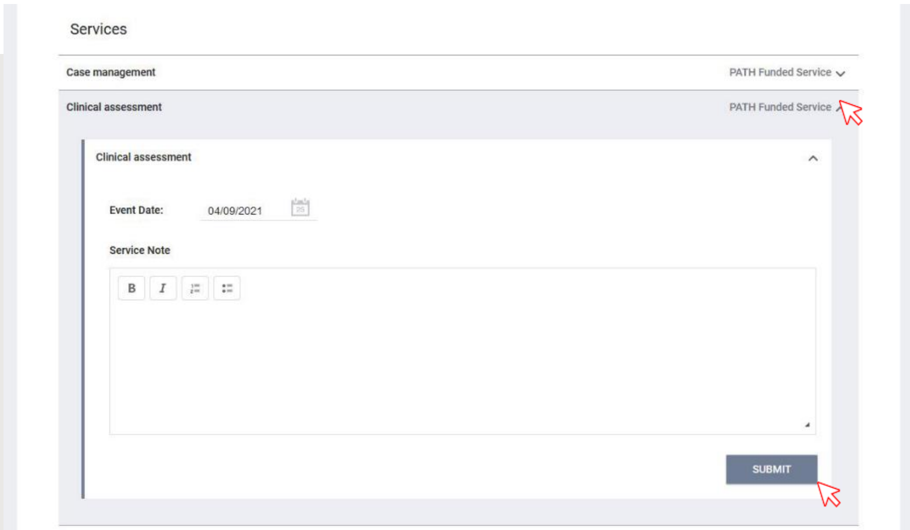
PROVIDING PATH SERVICES & MAKING PATH REFERRALS

DOCUMENTING PATH SERVICES

1. PATH Programs in Clarity have Services that align with SAMHSA funding and reporting requirements.
2. These Services can only be provided after a client's formal SAMHSA enrollment with a date and "yes" response entered into the Status Determination fields.
3. While the Service options themselves are largely unique to PATH Programs, the process for documented them is the same as other Program types. Additional Guidance on Providing and Documenting Services can be found in the Basic User Guide.
4. Every time a PATH Funded Service is provided to a client, it must be documented in HMIS.
5. To access the PATH Funded Services, navigate to the Provide Services tab within the Program Enrollment



6. Click the small arrow across from the relevant service to expand it.



7. Enter the date before clicking Submit to save the record.
8. Notes should be added to the notes section of the enrollment and are optional

TYPE OF PATH FUNDED SERVICES AND DEFINITIONS

Type of PATH FUNDED Service	PATH Definition
Re-engagement	The process of engaging with PATH-enrolled individuals who are disconnected from PATH services
Screening	An in-person process during which a preliminary evaluation is made to determine a person’s needs and how they can be addressed through the PATH program
Clinical assessment	A clinical determination of psychological needs and concerns
Habilitation/rehabilitation	Services that help a PATH client learn or improve the skills needed to function in a variety of activities of daily living
Community mental health	A range of mental health and/or co-occurring services and activities provided in non-institutional

	settings to facilitate an individual's recover. Note: this category does not include case management, alcohol or drug treatment, habilitation, or rehabilitation, as they are standalone services with distinct definitions
Substance use treatment	Preventative, diagnostic, and other services and supports provided for people who have a psychological and/or physical dependence on one or more substances
Case management	Collaboration between a service recipient and provider in which advocacy, communication, and resource management are used to design and implement a wellness plan specific to a PATH-enrolled individual's recovery needs
Residential supportive services	Services that help PATH-enrolled individuals practice the skills necessary to maintain residence in the least restrictive community-based setting possible
Housing minor renovation	Services, resources, or small repairs that ensure a housing unit is physically accessible and/or that health or safety hazards have been mitigated or eliminated
Housing moving assistance	Funds and other resources provided on behalf of a PATH-enrolled individual to help establish that individual's household. Note: this excludes security deposits and one-time rental payments, which have specific definitions
Housing eligibility determination	The process of determining whether an individual meets financial and other requirements to enter into public of subsidized housing
Security deposits	Funds provided on behalf of a PATH-enrolled individual to pay up to two months rent or other security deposits in order to secure housing
One-time rent for eviction prevention	One-time payment on behalf of PATH-enrolled individuals who are at risk of eviction without financial assistance

DOCUMENTING PATH REFERRALS

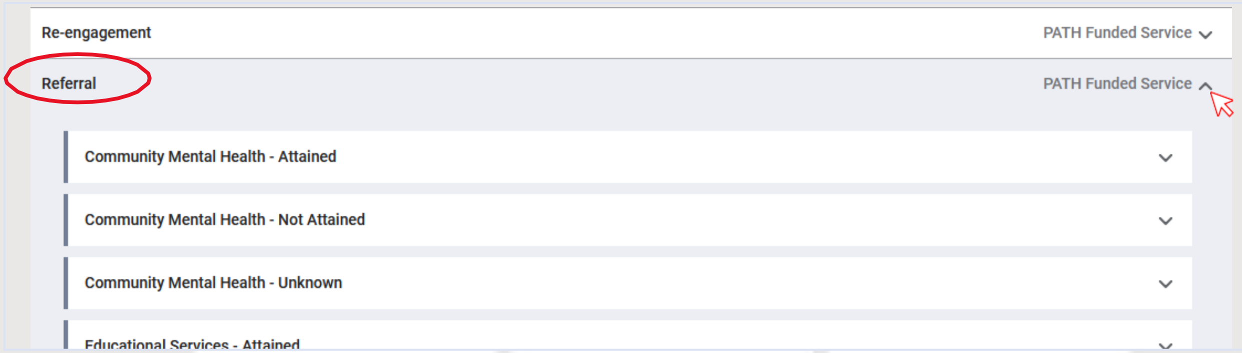
Notes:

a. PATH Funded Referrals are distinct from the other Clarity Referral functions that some agencies and/or coalitions may use to request or coordinate services.
b. These instructions refer specifically to documenting PATH related referrals for federal reporting purposes. Please refer to the Basic User Guide, Coordinated Entry User Guides, and/or other relevant resources for additional information on non-PATH referrals.
c. In most cases, if a non-PATH Referral is made within the Clarity database, an additional PATH Referral also needs to be documented.
d. It is possible to make multiple Path Referrals from the same category throughout an Enrollment.

1. PATH Funded referrals are documented in Clarity as a specific Service within the list of other PATH

Funded Services. Follow the instructions outlined above (Documenting PATH Services) to navigate to the Provide Services tab.

2. These Referrals can only be provided after a client's formal SAMHSA enrollment with a date and "yes" response entered into the Status Determination fields.
3. To document a PATH Referral, scroll down to the Referral Service and click the small arrow to expand the referral types.



4. Referral options include categories such as: Community Mental Health, Educational Services, Permanent Housing, etc. Each category has three distinct Service Items with each indicating different outcomes. Thus, as seen in the above screenshot, a Community Mental Health referral may be Attained, Not Attained, or Unknown. The use of these three terms stems directly from the HMIS data standards.
    a. **Attained** - the client was connected and received the service. (If the referral is for housing, it is not attained until the housing placement starts.)
    b. **Not attained** - the client was referred to but may not have ever been connected with the service, or did not actually receive the service.
    c. **Unknown** - the status of the client's connection or receipt of service is unknown to the provider entering the data.
5. Referral Services are completed the same as all other Services. Enter the date, any relevant notes, and then click submit.
6. If a Referral is created but the outcome changes over time, for example initially the outcome is "Unknown" but eventually becomes known (either Attained or Not Attained), an additional Referral should be entered documenting this eventual outcome. The original referral, with the "Unknown" outcome, does not need to be altered or deleted and can remain in the record.

TYPE OF PATH FUNDED REFERRAL AND DEFINITIONS

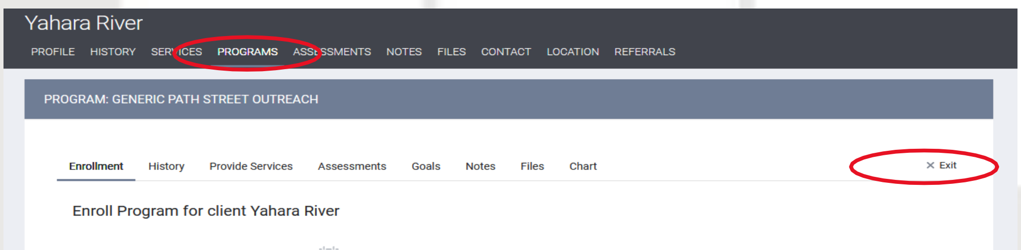
PATH Referral	**PATH Definition**
Community mental health	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that stabilizes, supports, or treats people for mental health disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders

Substance use treatment	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers preventive, diagnostic, and other services and supports for individuals who have psychological and/or physical problems with use of one or more substances
Primary health/dental care	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers physical and/or dental health care services
Job training	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that helps prepare an individual to gain and maintain the skills necessary for paid or volunteer work
Educational services	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers academic instruction and training
Housing services	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers assistance with attaining and sustaining living accommodations
Permanent housing	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers residence in a stable setting where length of stay is determined by the individual or family without time limitations
Temporary housing	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers shelter in a time-limited setting
Income assistance	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers benefits that provide financial support

Employment assistance	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers assistance designed to lead to compensated work
Medical insurance	Active and direct PATH-staff support on behalf of or in conjunction with a PATH-enrolled individual to connect to an appropriate agency, organization, or service that offers coverage that provides payment for wellness or other services needed as a result of sickness, injury, or disability

EXITING A CLIENT

1. To exit a client, navigate to the Program Enrollment and click the Exit button.



2. Clicking Submit opens the Exit Assessment.
3. Be sure to enter the correct date the client is exiting the program.
4. Enter the client's exit destination.
5. If a Date of Status Determination has not already been entered it should be entered on the Exit Assessment.
6. Update any additional fields as necessary.
7. Click Save & Close to complete the Exit record.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WORKFLOW CHECKLIST

- ✓ Find the Client's HMIS profile. Create a new profile if one does not already exist.
- ✓ Select the correct PATH Program.
- ✓ Enroll the client using the date of the initial Contact. Record all known data elements at Program Enrollment.
- ✓ Record subsequent contacts using the Current Living Situation Assessment.
- ✓ Fill in missing data from the Profile or Enrollment Assessment as they become known.
- ✓ Record Date of Engagement and ensure all data elements have now been collected.
- ✓ Record Date of PATH Status Determination (SAMHSA enrollment).
- ✓ Following SAMHSA enrollment, document all PATH funded Services and Referrals.
- ✓ Continue to record Outreach contacts using Current Living Situation Assessments.
- ✓ Record program Exit and destination.

DATA ELEMENTS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS OVER TIME

Universal Data Elements	At Project Start	By Date of Engagement	At Date of Enrollment	At Project Exit
3.01 Name	X			
3.02 Social Security Number		X		
3.03 Date of Birth		X		
3.04 Race		X		
3.05 Ethnicity		X		
3.06 Gender		X		
3.07 Veteran Status		X		
3.08 Disabling Condition		X		
3.10 Project Start Date	X			
3.11 Project Exit Date				X
3.12 Destination				X
3.15 Relationship to Head of Household	X	X	X	X
3.16 Client Location	X	X	X	X
3.917 Living Situation	X	X	X	X

Source: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PATH-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to your respective states' HMIS HelpDesk

- New Hampshire: nhhmis@icalliances.org
- Vermont: vthmis@icalliances.org