

Quick Reference: Differences between Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and System Performance Measures (SPM) Reporting Logic

Both the LSA and the SPM provide CoCs with a look at their overall system functioning. The SPM report is a summary and year-to-year comparison of system wide counts, averages, and medians related to seven areas of performance. The LSA upload also includes data related to several of the same areas of performance, but the business logic defined by HUD for the two reports differs substantially. The results should not be expected to match.

The core difference between the two is that LSA performance data looks at how *households* are moving through a CoC's system (using the head of household's data), while the SPM report is based on *all persons* served. This difference is because SPMs are intended to be overall CoC benchmarks, while the LSA is intended to give CoCs detail about system functioning to inform interventions to improve that functioning. The LSA focuses on household-level performance, since programmatic decisions are implemented for different households and populations separately.

Below are other core differences in the LSA upload and SPM business logic:

- The LSA upload separates RRH and PSH project types and does not include data related to any other PH project types; the SPM report combines RRH, PSH, and OPH project types into a single PH category.
- In addition to system wide totals, the LSA provides detailed breakdowns for household types, populations, and demographic characteristics; the SPM report does not.
- Instead of reporting medians as the SPM report does throughout, the LSA provides distributions of lengths of time wherever they are relevant (e.g. LOTH, length of time served in a particular project, length of time to return). Both provide averages.

Differences between SPM and LSA content specific to each measure are described below.

Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless

Aside from the core differences detailed above, there is a significant difference in the logic associated with calculating the length of time persons remain homeless.

Both incorporate time homeless prior to the report period, including ES/SH enrollments that ended prior to the start, as long as the time is continuous with a period of homelessness that is within the report period. LSA logic considers any two dates of homelessness continuous as long as they are separated by less than seven days, which is consistent with the concept of being continuously homeless for chronic homeless purposes. The SPM report considers only consecutive, or 'contiguous' dates -- a gap of a single day is treated as a break. As a result, the lengths of time homeless reported in the LSA are likely to extend further back in time than those in the SPM.

Measure 2: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness

Data related to what is reported to Measure 2 is reported in LSA Exit Cohort tables.

LSA Exit cohort reporting includes counts of households who exited CoC projects in the timeframes both one and two years prior to the report period and those who exited in the first six months of the report period. Significant business logic differences are:

- An LSA household has only a single type; returns by individuals in a different household type than the original exit will be counted by the SPM report but not the LSA. A household returning to homelessness in a completely different household type does not suggest the same CoC performance issue that a household repeatedly becoming homeless in the same type suggests; The LSA focuses on the latter.

- The LSA will not identify returns from or returns to OPH projects.
- The LSA incorporates exits from SO projects into returns reporting, but disregards returns to SO projects. Returns to SO will not be identified.

Measure 3: Number of Homeless Persons

For Metric 3.2, Change in Annual Counts of Sheltered Homeless Persons in HMIS, the SPM Report provides a count of ES, SH, and TH clients in the current and previous fiscal years. The LSA includes related counts and demographics data for sheltered homeless people, households, and special interest populations served in ES, SH, and/or TH.

Unlike the SPM report, the LSA does not include distinct counts of people served by project type; all ES/SH/TH counts are combined.

Measure 4: Employment and Income Growth for Homeless Persons in CoC-Program Projects

The LSA does not include data related to SPM Measure 4.

Measure 5: Number of Persons who Become Homeless for the First Time

For Measure 5, the SPM looks only at those individual people who are homeless for the first time. The LSA demographics include a System Engagement Status table, which provides counts of households and populations served in the current report period who have been continuously engaged with the CoC, are homeless for the first time, are returning to the CoC after exiting to a permanent destination, are re-engaging with the CoC after exit to a temporary destination, and are re-engaging after exit to an unknown destination.

- Because the LSA looks at system use for households, rather than people like the SPM report does, and because any previous system use must have occurred under the same household type in order to be counted, the LSA may count some households as first-time homeless even though individual household members have a history of system use under another household type. Those households are considered “first time homeless in that household type,” which is useful to understand for system analysis and planning.
- Because the LSA does not include OPH data like the SPM report does, households previously enrolled in OPH projects may be identified as first-time homeless.
- Because the LSA does not generally include SO data, households with previous enrollments in SO projects will be identified as first-time homeless if they have not been enrolled in any other project types.

Measure 6: Homelessness Prevention and Housing Placement of Persons who Are Category 3 Homeless in CoC Program Projects

The LSA upload does not include data related to SPM Measure 6.

Measure 7: Successful Housing Placement

The SPM report, in Metric 7a.1, includes data related to successful placements from Street Outreach projects. The LSA omits SO housing outcomes.

The LSA upload includes data on permanent housing placements (exit destination types) for ES/SH/TH and RRH projects for heads of household as the SPM report does for all people under Metric 7b.1.

Metric 7b.2, which measures exits to or retention of permanent housing, is limited to PSH projects in the LSA; OPH projects are included in the SPM report.