

# HIFIS Consent Script & Staff Guide

This script is a staff resource to accompany Hamilton’s Homeless-serving Sector’s Consent Policy. It outlines key points staff will need to highlight to support clients in providing informed consent for the *Consent to Share Personal Information with Hamilton’s Homeless-Serving System*.

Obtaining Consent for New Clients
<p data-bbox="203 491 1356 569"><i>The following script is intended to support staff in communicating key elements of homeless-serving system consent</i></p> <p data-bbox="203 604 1404 856">Hamilton’s Homeless-Serving System is a group of service providers, the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership, and City of Hamilton staff that work together to support those experiencing or approaching homelessness to help them find and maintain appropriate housing and supports. The City of Hamilton and the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership are responsible as Community Entities to foster collaboration and ensure accountability to federal, provincial, and municipal funding mandates.</p> <ul data-bbox="203 898 1421 1856" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="203 898 1421 1045">• We collect information about you such as your name, age, gender identification, income, health related information that impacts your housing situation and needs, housing history, housing plans, and participation in housing support programs including case management details.</li><li data-bbox="203 1087 1421 1234">• We collect this personal information in order to coordinate housing related supports to best address your unique needs and preferences. This means you only need to complete an intake once and can be connected to a wider range of supports within Hamilton’s Homeless-Serving System.</li><li data-bbox="203 1276 1421 1497">• This information is securely stored and monitored in Hamilton’s Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). The City of Hamilton is the local host and administrator of the HIFIS database. All activity of staff using the HIFIS database is logged and audited, this means it is possible to see who accesses which information. This helps to prevent anyone from accessing information about you if they are not working with you.</li><li data-bbox="203 1539 1421 1707">• Your name will also be included on the By-Name List, which includes everyone who is known to be actively experiencing homelessness and who has provided their consent. This helps staff in Hamilton’s Homeless-serving Sector work together as a community to identify the right supports to address your housing needs.</li><li data-bbox="203 1749 1421 1856">• Personal information is only used by authorized providers in Hamilton’s Homeless-Serving System for the purposes of housing support, including the City of Hamilton’s Housing Services Division. Any staff member accessing your</li></ul>

information needs to confirm that they are working with you and that they require access to your information needed to provide you with coordinated supports.

- Hamilton's Homeless Serving System will also use the information you share in aggregate form for statistical, evaluation, research, and reporting to Municipal, Provincial, and Federal governments. This information may also be shared in aggregate form across City of Hamilton divisions to understand issues and inform program improvements. Data shared for these purposes does not identify individuals.
- Your information will not be shared without your consent, unless required by law.
- You can change your mind and remove your consent at any time, by contacting any organization within Hamilton's Homeless-Serving System.
- If you withdraw your consent, your file is hidden and would only be viewable to City of Hamilton HIFIS administrators.
- Do you have any questions or concerns? Do you understand why your information is being collected and how it might be used?
- Do you provide your consent to share your personal information with the homeless-serving sector as we have talked about here? *[If so, please have client sign the consent form and offer a copy of the consent form if they'd like one]*

#### **Clients Denying Consent (Indigenous Identifying)**

*The following script is intended to support staff in communicating key elements of system consent*

*"Indigenous Identifying" is defined as having Indigenous ancestry, including First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Metis*

- The City of Hamilton recognizes the lasting and ongoing impact of colonial violence on Indigenous individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The City of Hamilton and homeless service agencies are working closely with Indigenous community leaders to prevent and address Indigenous experiences of homelessness.
- Individuals who identify as having Indigenous ancestry are not required to participate in Hamilton's Coordinated Access By-Name List or submit information into HIFIS in order to receive emergency housing support services.

- Individuals who identify as having Indigenous ancestry may choose to share their information with the City or a specific program to access community housing supports.
- If you do not provide consent to have your information included in HIFIS or to participate in Coordinated Access, it may be difficult to access some housing supports (such as Rapid Rehousing and Intensive Case Management programs) as individuals who do not provide consent are not known to the system in order to make a referral and connection.
- Warm transfers to Indigenous Housing Services and programs are always an option for Indigenous clients.
- You can always provide your consent at a later time if you choose.
- Your information will not be entered into HIFIS in any way. Any emergency services you access through shelters, outreach, or drop-ins will only be recorded as an anonymous service provided.
- Service providers are encouraged to check-in with you frequently about consent and encourage you to provide informed consent so you can benefit from the full support of the system.

#### Clients Denying Consent (**Non-Indigenous** Identifying)

*The following script is intended to support staff in communicating key elements of system consent*

- Consent is not required in order to obtain emergency sheltering supports, however access to additional housing support programs (such as Rapid Rehousing and Intensive Case Management programs) may be limited as individuals who do not provide consent are not known to the system in order to make a referral and connection.
- You can always provide your consent at a later time if you choose.
- Your information will not be entered into HIFIS in any way. Any emergency services you access through shelters, outreach, or drop-ins will be recorded as an anonymous service provided.
- Service providers are encouraged to check-in with you frequently about consent and encourage you to provide informed consent so you can benefit from the full support of the system.

**Clients Withdrawing Consent**

*The following script is intended to support staff in communicating key elements of system consent*

- If you withdraw your consent, your file is hidden and would only be viewable to City of Hamilton HIFIS administrators.
- Consent is not required in order to obtain housing supports, however those supports may be limited based on the system’s inability to effectively coordinate resources specific to your needs.
- You can, at any time, sign a new consent agreement with any one of the organizations in Hamilton’s Homeless Serving System to receive supports and services.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Consent Type in HIFIS or Action to be taken</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
<p><b>New Client:</b> The individual agrees to share personal information with <b>ALL</b> service providers in HIFIS.</p>	<p>Coordinated Access + Explicit</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Client must sign the Common Consent Form.</li> <li>2. A staff person creates the client file in HIFIS. When creating the file and adding consent, leave the Consent Expiry Date blank.</li> <li>3. A staff person scans and uploads a copy of the signed consent as a pdf file to HIFIS when setting up the client.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. File naming: [client first initial and last name_HIFISConsent].pdf (example: <i>MJohnson_HIFISConsent</i>)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. <b>If the client verbally agrees to participate in HIFIS</b> (i.e., phone book-ins for hotels), add a Watch Concern for “Written Consent Required” so that staff know written consent is still needed. Found under “Client Information” –“Various Factors”.</li> <li>5. End the Watch Concern once written consent is obtained. Scan and upload the signed consent to HIFIS via the Documents Module once it has been obtained.</li> </ol>

		<p>6. Store the Common Consent Form in a secure location.</p> <p>7. Delete the electronic copy after it has been uploaded to HIFIS.</p>
<p><b>New Family (including couples):</b> The adults/parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees to share personal information with <b>ALL</b> service providers in HIFIS.</p>	Coordinated Access + Explicit	<p>Same process as above to be followed and <b>All adults must complete their own Common Consent Form.</b></p>
<p><b>New Family (Dependents):</b> Dependents who are accompanied by the person(s) whom they are dependent.</p>	Inherited	<p>The parent(s)/guardian(s) signs the Common Consent Form on behalf of dependents if under 16 years of age.</p> <p>Enter dependents into HIFIS as part of the Family. For dependents who are 17 years old at the time of intake, DO enter a consent expiration date set for the date of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. At that time, the client would be required to sign their own consent if continuing to receive services through the homeless-serving system.</p>
<p><b>New Client:</b> The individual <b>DOES NOT</b> want to share any personal information in HIFIS.</p>	Not applicable	<p>Light-touch services such as Goods, Services, Group Activities, and Turn Aways can be tracked in HIFIS for the individual.</p> <p>For these services, the information must be entered as Anonymous (where option exists) or as Client #1 (Anonymous, Anonymous).</p> <p>Shelter Stays cannot be entered or tracked for individuals who do not want to sign consent. Agencies are responsible for keeping track of anonymous shelter book-ins outside of HIFIS.</p> <p>Clients who do not consent to collection and sharing of their personal information may still access emergency sheltering</p>

		services and staff will attempt to progressively engage to obtain consent.
<b>Existing Client:</b> The client <b>NO LONGER</b> wants to share any personal information in HIFIS	Expiry added to existing consent by HIFIS Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have the client sign a new common consent form and ensure they check the box for “Withdrawing Consent.”</li> <li>2. Contact <a href="mailto:HIFIS@hamilton.ca">HIFIS@hamilton.ca</a> and send them the request to withdraw consent along with the signed consent form for “Withdrawing Consent.”</li> <li>3. The HIFIS Administrators will add an expiry to the client’s existing consent, upload the copy of the signed Withdrawing Consent form to HIFIS, update the client’s status to <b>Archived</b> and will hide the client file. Only HIFIS Administrators have access to hidden files.</li> </ol>
<b>Existing Client:</b> The client is deceased	No change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact <a href="mailto:HIFIS@hamilton.ca">HIFIS@hamilton.ca</a> to notify them and provide any verifying details.</li> <li>2. The HIFIS Administrators will add an end date to any cases or housing placement records open in the client’s file. They will then update the client’s status to <b>Deceased</b> and will hide the client file. Only HIFIS Administrators have access to Hidden files.</li> </ol>