



Chautauqua County Homeless Coalition
Chautauqua County Continuum of Care

Standard Operating Procedure
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
Data Quality Monitoring

This document describes the regularly recurring HMIS operations relevant to data quality assurance. The plan provides protocols for ongoing data quality monitoring that meets requirements set forth by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

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Introduction

Chautauqua County Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a locally administered, electronic data collection system that stores longitudinal person-level information about the men, women, and children who access homeless and other human services in Chautauqua County.

HUD requires recipients of funds from the McKinney-Vento Act to collect electronic data on their homeless clients through HMIS. The HMIS software application is used to collect demographic information on people served. The purpose of HMIS is to record and store client-level information about the numbers, characteristics and needs of persons who use homeless housing and supportive services and about persons who receive assistance.

- **Extent of Homelessness** – Produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons for each Continuum of Care.
- **Nature of Homelessness** – To provide comprehensive analysis and to know how to address homelessness.
- Determine the **Patterns of Homeless Service Utilization**.
- Understand the **Effectiveness of the Homeless Service System**.

Extent of Homelessness

The number of homeless people has been at the center of debate for as long as homelessness has been acknowledged as a social problem. Due to inconsistent or no data collection, different estimation methods result in largely diverse numbers. One goal of HMIS is to estimate the number of homeless people that closely represents reality. By collecting personal information on all clients served, HUD hopes to generate an estimate of the unduplicated count of homeless people that access services nationally. Achievement of this goal depends on high quality personal identifying data, such as social security number, name, gender and date of birth, which are used to create unduplicated counts.

Nature of Homelessness

Additional HMIS data elements focus on the characteristics of those engaged in homeless services. Analyzing this information on a larger level will improve our understanding of the people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face, and their service needs. High quality data on gender, date of birth, race, ethnicity, veteran status, disability and household composition are needed for this goal.

Pattern of Homeless Service Utilization

People who are homeless often use more than one of the programs that are available to help them access housing, resolve their crisis, support them and link them with other services. Accurate program entry and exit dates and information on residence prior to program entry are critical in determining service use patterns that assess average length of stay and movement among different homeless programs. The collection of accurate identifying information at each program is also necessary in order to identify the extent to which clients appear in multiple programs, how clients move through the system and to detect cycles of homelessness.

Effectiveness of the Homeless Service System

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APPROVED 4/28/2016, 1/18/2018

Assessing the effectiveness of the current homeless service system is critical to finding successful solutions to ending homelessness. For that reason, information at program exit, such as destination and income, are important to learn if and how the system has helped to resolve clients' housing crisis and to improve their overall stability. Data on returning clients also contribute to this goal. Comparing program entry data with program exit data at the aggregate level will also provide a picture of homeless program impacts on the clients they serve.

In March 2010, HUD published changes in the HMIS Data Standards Revised Notice incorporating additional data collection requirements for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These HMIS Data Standards effectively collect additional demographics and information on homeless prevention and enables the system to track the stabilization of those who are rapidly re-housed.

These goals are not only important on the federal level, but also critical for understanding homelessness and program planning at the local level.

Data Quality

Data Quality is a term that refers to the extent that data recorded in the Chautauqua County Continuum of Care HMIS Project accurately reflects the same information in the real world. The quality of data is determined by assessing certain characteristics such as timeliness, completeness and accuracy.

To meet the CoC's project goal of presenting accurate and consistent information on homelessness, it is critical that the HMIS projects have the best possible representation of reality as it relates to homeless people and the programs that serve them. Specifically, it is our goal to record the most accurate, consistent and timely information in order to draw reasonable conclusions about the extent of homelessness and the impact of homeless services.

Data Quality Plan

- Specific data quality benchmarks for timeliness, completeness and accuracy.
 - Timeliness
 - Intake data should be entered into HMIS within five (5) business days from when it is collected. The term “intake data” refers to the client/household member’s:
 - Name
 - Date of Birth
 - Social Security Number
 - Veteran Status
 - Complete and accurate transaction data for the month must be entered into HMIS within seven (7) business days from when the event occurs. The term “transaction data” refers to the client/household member’s:
 - Entry assessment for program(s)
 - Exit assessment for program(s)
 - As needed, any updates and/or interim assessments
 - As needed, any corrections or additions to client data previously entered
 - Data Completeness
 - To be complete, HMIS must include all homeless assistance programs (to maximum extent possible), all clients served by those programs, and all required data elements for each client served.
 - Each Contributing Homeless Organization (CHO) must regularly review their data to ensure that they are collecting all required information.
 - Acceptable range for clients with Null/Missing data is 4% and Don’t Know/Refused will be no higher than 5% for the HUD Universal and Program Specific Data Elements for all clients served.
 - Data Accuracy
 - Information entered in HMIS must be valid and consistent.
 - CHOs must regularly conduct quality checks and audits.
 - Data in HMIS must accurately reflect client data recorded in the agency’s client file. For example, “exit date” should be the date the client physically exited the program.

- Data Quality Acceptable Rates.
 - The Universal Data Elements Standards (UDES) are entered into HMIS as follows:
 - Program Descriptor Data Elements (PDDE) – data elements recorded about each project in the CoC, regardless of whether the project participates in HMIS.
 - Universal Data Elements (UDE) – baseline data collection that is required for all programs reporting data into HMIS.
 - Program Specific Data Elements (PSDE) – data provided about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided and client outcomes. These data elements must be collected from all clients served by programs that are required to report this information to HUD.
 - Annual Performance Report Program Specific Data Elements – the subset of HUD’s Program Specific Data Elements required to complete the Supportive Housing Program (SHP) Annual Performance Report (APR) set forth in the HMIS Data Standards Revised Notice, March 2010.

Monitoring

This Data Quality Monitoring Plan is a set of procedures that outlines a regular, ongoing process for analyzing and reporting on the reliability and validity of the data entered into HMIS at both the program and aggregate system levels. This is the primary tool for tracking and improving data quality over time.

Establishing Data Quality Benchmarks and Goals: by generating reports of Null/Missing and Unknown/Don't Know/Refused data elements and recording the rates of each program type. HMIS Advanced Reporting Tool can establish the benchmark and measure this benchmark by generating monthly data quality reports and comparing them with the baseline by asking the following questions:

- a) What is the data quality now? (the baseline)
- b) What should the data quality be? (the goal)
- c) What are the interim goals?

Defining Roles and Responsibilities: It is important to identify who will monitor the goals and what specific tasks are necessary to ensure high quality data. The tasks for the monitoring plan are the steps needed to accomplish the interim, as well as overall goals. The logical order of these tasks is repeated on a monthly basis.

- The HMIS Lead Agency is responsible for:
 - Generating and distributing data quality reports to authorized parties.
 - Conducting training, including one-on-one training on how to correct the data entered into the system.
 - Present data quality reports to the CoC for review.
 - Work with providers to identify steps necessary to correct data and/or data collection processes.
 - Identify training needs and/or report problems with providers to the CoC.

Timeliness: The HMIS Lead Agency will establish the timeliness for specific goals. The HMIS Timeliness Report (attached) will give the Lead Agency the ability to monitor the time it takes between the client intake occurring and the date the data was actually entered into HMIS. Assessing the length of time between client serve dates and data entry dates assists the Lead Agency to understand the extent to which the provider is using the system. It can also be used to assess whether a program is meeting the timeliness benchmark set forth.

Establishing Timeframes for Data Quality Reports: It would be unreasonable to ask providers to go back a year or more to correct the data in the system. Therefore the reasonable start date for the data quality monitoring plan to begin is October 1, 2015, which is the first day of the 2016 AHAR collection period.

Maintaining data quality levels requires ongoing assessment and intervention. It is recommended that the CoC update their data quality monitoring plan at least on an annual basis so that tasks, goals and benchmarks are added and met on a continual basis.

Resources and Tools: Using a data quality monitoring tool, the CoC should be able to guide a process to develop a data quality plan and ongoing monitoring procedures. Companion reports from HMIS ART will also assist with the development and maintenance of a data quality monitoring tool.

The Data Quality Monitoring Tool includes:

- Data Quality Plan: This allows the CoC to create a task list, assign task leads, and set targets and completion dates for their data quality monitoring plan.
- Data Quality Benchmark Rates: The CoC records the acceptable rates of Null/Missing and Unknown/Don't Know/Refused Universal Data Elements.
- Data Quality Program Level Report: This report allows the CoC to monitor the completeness rates of each individual program and quickly identify potential problems.
- Data Quality Monthly Progress Report: This report is used to measure monthly progress towards compliance goals for each program type in the system.

By using the Data Quality Monitoring Tool, the Chautauqua County Continuum of Care will systematically move agencies toward compliance with the data quality plan.

Incentives and Enforcement

To ensure that service providers have continued access to the expectations set forth in the Data Quality Plan, the following protocol will be used:

- All service providers will be given access to the Data Quality Plan.
- The HMIS Lead Agency will make available by the 10th business day of each month data quality reports for the purposes of facilitating compliance review by participating agencies.
- Participating agencies will have 5 business days to correct data. The HMIS Lead Agency will prepare revised data quality reports on a monthly basis. These reports will be presented at each CoC meeting.
- The CoC will review participating agency data quality reports for compliance with the data quality benchmarks. The CoC will also work with participating agencies to identify training needs to improve data quality.
- The Lead Agency will provide an update on progress related to the data quality benchmarks at the bi-monthly CoC meetings.
- Agencies that meet the data quality benchmarks will be periodically recognized by the CoC.
- All agency administrators must ensure that the minimum data elements are fulfilled for every program utilizing HMIS. Programs that do not adhere to the minimum data entry standards will be notified of their deficiencies and given appropriate training on how to correctly enter data.

Data Quality Goals

Data Quality Benchmark: 99%

Goals:

1/1/2018-12/31/18	Maintain minimum of 97% accuracy
1/1/2019-12/31/19	Maintain minimum of 98% accuracy
1/1/20 and forward	Maintain minimum of 99% accuracy

Data Timeliness Goals

HUD continues to move closer to a zero day lag time in HMIS data entry, or “real-time” data entry. Providers within our CoC are challenged with very limited resources to realistically pursue a real-time data entry system within the next 365 days.

Interim Goals:

By 5/1/2018 Less than 20 days
By 8/1/2018 10-15 days
By 12/31/2018 7 days or under

Interim goals will be re-evaluated after 365 days.

A timeliness measurement tool will be added to the current data quality monitoring plan to track progress. This tool will be implemented as of 1/1/2018.