

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Prospective Partner Guide

Overview:

A Homeless Management Information System, referred to as HMIS, is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data, and data on the provision of housing and services, to homeless individuals and families, and persons at risk of homelessness.

Each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. All CoC and ESG funded projects are required to use the HMIS systems and abide by the HUD defined HMIS Data Standards data collection guidelines.

HUD and its Federal partners are committed to assisting communities to end homelessness for individuals and families. Collecting complete and accurate data about homelessness in your communities is a core element to achieving the goal.

The Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) within the Office Community Planning and Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, works to enable both HUD and communities to spend more time focusing on ending homelessness. SNAPS also provides insight on increasing efficiency and time savings for applicants and HUD employees to expedite assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The SNAPS Strategy sets out three overarching goals for itself and communities: on ending homelessness, providing oversight of COC, HMIS, and other related programs on ending homelessness, providing oversight of COC, HMIS, and other related programs:

1. Communities use their data to optimize systems of care through making ongoing system performance improvements and determining optimal resource allocation.
2. Communities operate data systems that allow for accurate, comprehensive, and timely data collection, usage, and reporting; and
3. The Federal government coordinates to receive and use data to make informed decisions in coordination with other data sets, across and within agencies.

To end homelessness, communities must be able to analyze data at both the system and project levels and to evaluate their efforts by subpopulation, across project types, and in other ways. Not only must communities continue increasing HMIS bed coverage and improving data quality, they also should be using data to gain a more holistic picture of the communities' progress toward ending homelessness.

Who qualifies for HMIS?

IHCDA allows agencies located in the Indiana Balance of State who provide services to the people experiencing homelessness, to participate in the HMIS and DV production systems. This guide will provide interested agencies with information to decide to use the IN BoS CoC's HMIS system.

Any Social Service organization that meets the 1, or more, of the following [4 categories of homelessness](#), as defined by HUD, included below can use HMIS:

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- Literally Homeless
- Imminent Risk of Homelessness
- Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes
- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

Additionally, these project type components serving the above listed homeless categories:

- Permanent Housing (PH)
 - Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
 - Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
- Transitional Housing (TH)
- Supportive Services Only (SSO)
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Homelessness Prevention (HP)
- Emergency Shelter (ES)
- Day Shelter (DS)

Finally, please see the list of HUD funded HMIS participating funding streams:

- [HUD](#)
 - [Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
 - [Emergency Solutions Grant \(ESG\)](#)
- [Health and Human Services](#)
 - [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)
 - [Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness \(PATH\)](#)
 - [Administration for Children and Families](#)
 - [Runaway and Homeless Youth \(RHY\)](#)
 - [Social Service Block Grant \(SSBG\) Community Service Block Grant \(CSBG\)](#)
- [Veteran Affairs Homeless Programs Office](#)
 - [Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#)
 - [HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\)](#)
 - [Health Care for Homeless Veterans \(HCHV\)](#)
 - [Grant and Per Diem Program \(GPD\)](#)
 - [Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans \(DCHV\)](#)

What an HMIS is:

HUD has provided the following information to reiterate what an HMIS is and what it is not, so the public is aware when considering their options to buy an HMIS. An HMIS is a data system designed to help:

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- Help homeless service providers move people from homelessness to housing stability by providing clients' housing history within the CoC's jurisdiction.
 - Inform CoCs to understand the nature and extent of homelessness in their communities through different reports, so they can make sound policy and resource decisions.
- Provide HUD information on the nature and extent of homelessness in this country through generation of federal reports and data standards.
- Protect the use and disclosure of people's information to support their safety and choice; and
- Meet the use and reporting requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act for each CoC.

What an HMIS is not:

HMIS is not to be used in law enforcement. If a software vendor indicates they sell an "HMIS" for the purpose of tracking individuals experiencing homelessness for law enforcement, it is not an HMIS. Furthermore, HMIS data should not be used to adjudicate services or benefits unless federally required. Staff should not use or disclose HMIS data in a way that will violate the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Access Rule, or break state, local, sovereign nation, and other federal privacy laws. An HMIS is not a grants management system for all funders.

Balance of State Specifics:

IHCDA is the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead for the Indiana Balance of State. The Indiana BoS serves a large geographic makeup that is composed into sixteen regions across the state. As HMIS Lead, IHCDA has contracted with Eccovia Inc., to provide the HMIS software called ClientTrack. IHCDA has also established a closed database, which is comparable to the HMIS database, to serve victim service providers, known as the DV ClientTrack production system. The Indiana BoS HMIS and DV ClientTrack production systems are utilized by 150+ agencies, 313+ housing programs, 700+ total projects, and 750+ end users across the 91 counties in the Indiana Balance of State (all counties in the state of Indiana except Marion County).

The HMIS system for the BoS reports to HUD on data from:

- **Housing Inventory Count** - count of all housing stock by project type, program, and family composition
- **Point in Time Count** - 1 night census of sheltered and unsheltered persons in the state.
- **Longitudinal Systems Analysis** - how people experiencing homelessness use their system of care.
- **System Performance Measures** - statewide data points on length of time homeless, returns to homelessness, income increases, successful exits, and more!

Note: These reports are strong determinants of the yearly funding through the NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) from the HUD CoC (Continuum of Care) program. Data from these reports can be found at the [HMIS Data Portal](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis_data_portal/) (https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis_data_portal/).

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HMIS Governance

The responsibility for the overall oversight of the HMIS rests with the CoC Board, who oversees the Performance and Outcomes Committee.

The Performance and Outcomes Committee includes representatives from State agencies, academia, homeless service providers, users of the HMIS, and advocates for the homeless. The Performance and Outcomes Committee periodically review users and executive satisfaction with the present software, discusses changes in data standards required by HUD, and suggests opportunities to improve the system, especially with respect to increasing its use by non-HUD funded homeless providers.

Data Quality and Collection

An Agency may collect Protected Personal Information (PPI) only when appropriate to the purposes for which the information is obtained or when required by law. An Agency must collect PPI by lawful and fair means and, where appropriate, with the knowledge or consent of the Client. An Agency must post a sign at each intake desk (or comparable location) that explains the reasons for collecting this information. The consent of the individual for data collection may be inferred from the circumstances of the collection. PPI collected by an Agency must be relevant to the purpose for which it is to be used. To the extent necessary for those purposes, PPI should be accurate, complete, and timely (entered within 5 days). An Agency may only use the PPI in accordance with the HMIS Privacy Practices Notice. The data quality standards of the system are dictated by the Indiana Balance of State Continuum of Care Board of Directors. Required data points collected in the HMIS are based on the HUD HMIS Data Standards and updated/revised every two years by HUD. For more information about the data quality standards of the HMIS system, go to [HMIS Data Quality Plan](#).

While Data Quality Reports can verify that information is entered, it can only identify that data is present not that it is accurate. To check for accuracy, client level data held by the organization will be checked against the data in HMIS during grant monitoring.

The Site Administrator or Deputy Site Administrator of the organizations will designate a staff who is an active HMIS/DV ClientTrack user to:

- Run APR/CAPER, and review the APR/CAPER Review Tool, at a minimum 4 times a year, after the first coffee talk session for that specific project type. Reporting periods will be specified during the data quality coffee talks.
- Attend the data quality coffee talks and participate in the data quality office hours. Make the necessary corrections specified by the HMIS team within the agreed upon timeframe by following the step-by- step guides provided by the HMIS team.
- Failure to correct errors by the organization will result in the HMIS team forwarding the data quality report, communications with the agency, and any other relevant materials to the Performance and Outcomes Committee of the Indiana BoS CoC Board of Directors for further action/correction. Input will be sought on how your performance could impact funding.

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Security

All Contributing Homeless Organizations (CHOs) shall maintain the security and confidentiality of information in the HMIS and are responsible for the actions of their employees, contractors, volunteers, or agents, and their proper training and supervision. The CHOs agrees to follow the:

- [HMIS Security Plan](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Security-Plan.pdf) (<https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Security-Plan.pdf>)
- [HMIS Notice/Statement of Privacy Practices](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Notice-and-Posting-of-Security-Practices-V4.pdf) (<https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Notice-and-Posting-of-Security-Practices-V4.pdf>) and.
- [HMIS Standard Operating Policy and Procedure](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Standard-Operating-Procedures.pdf)(<https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/2023-HMIS-Standard-Operating-Procedures.pdf>)

At its discretion, IHCD may conduct periodic assessments of Agency to monitor its compliance with the Security Rule via remote or onsite monitoring's. All of these resources are available at the [HMIS/DV ClientTrack Webpage](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis-clienttrack-and-dv-clienttrack/) (<https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis-clienttrack-and-dv-clienttrack/>).

If you want to join the HMIS, what's comes next?

- To acquaint yourself to the Indiana BOS, please visit our [Indiana BOS CoC](#) will webpage and review the available resources
- Please review the [HMIS/DV ClientTrack](#) webpage. Documents to review as you assess if HMIS is appropriate for you include:
 - HMIS Manual
 - DV manual if you are a Victim Service Provider
 - HMIS Standard Operating Procedures
 - HMIS Security Plan
 - HMIS Data Quality Plan
- Review HUD resource at <https://www.hudexchange.info/> as well as HMIS specific resources here-<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/>
- If you believe your organization fits the criteria for access, please complete the [HMIS Project Set Up Form](#)

Once you've submitted your HMIS Set-Up Form:

- HMIS staff will reach out with any questions about submission of the set-up form. If all is correct, the HMIS Agency Agreement will be sent for review and signature.
- Once the HMIS Participating Agency Agreement is signed and returned, on demand training information will be provided to begin learning the system. Staff requiring access to the system will also be directed where to obtain and complete the HMIS User Agreement/Code of Ethics.
- Upon training completion, an onboarding session will be scheduled to ensure new organizations and end users of the system are comfortable and empowered in the functionality and procedures of the system. During this session, an agency site administrator(s) will be designated, as outlined in this

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document.

- Once the onboarding session is completed, credentials to the system will be provided. Review the [HMIS Data Portal](#) to understand how your data entered in the system translates to telling the story and status of homelessness in the Indiana Balance of State

Onboarding

The IHCD HMIS Team will:

- Review all new agency and/or project requests submitted for HMIS and/or DV ClientTrack access to determine if the agency/project serves 100% homeless individuals and/or families.
- Provide the HMIS Agency Participation Agreement for completion and signature by the agency's Executive Director
- Provide general information and the required online/on demand training links for new user access.
- Assign the new agency and/or project request to an HMIS team member.
- Schedule the new agency/project onboarding meeting with the Site Administrator and Deputy Site Administrator
- Provide a comprehensive overview during the onboarding meeting to include:
 - Help Desk functionality.
 - Indiana Balance of State HMIS and DV ClientTrack website
 - Roles/responsibilities of the Site Administrator and Deputy Site Administrator
 - HMIS Security
 - HMIS reporting
 - Data Quality
 - New User requests/forms
 - HMIS and DV ClientTrack News Page
 - Monthly live new user training opportunities

Agency Site Administrators

Each Agency must identify an individual who will serve as its Site Administrator, and as needed, a Deputy Site Administrator, for setting up new user accounts and serving as a point of contact for data quality issues and corrections. Site Administrators for the HMIS play a critical role in protecting HMIS data. Time, interest, and ability are the biggest factors in determining who should be a Site Administrator for the HMIS. More information can be found [here](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/Site-Admin-Training-December-2021.pdf) (https://www.in.gov/ihcda/files/Site-Admin-Training-December-2021.pdf)

For Questions

Please reach out to the help desk:

- HMIS Help Desk: HMIShelpdesk@ihcda.IN.gov