

HMIS Resource Guide



CARES Inc

**85 Watervliet Ave
Albany NY 12205**

518-489-4130

caresny.org

4/6/2010

Reference documents for navigating the implementation and use of the Homeless Management Information System for HUD and Continuum of Care

Contents

HMIS – A History	3
Fact Sheet	4
What is a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)?.....	4
How do HUD and Congress use and support HMIS?.....	4
What data is entered into HMIS and how is it protected?.....	4
What questions can HMIS help to answer at the local and national level about homelessness?	5
Why is HMIS a better alternative than point-in-time counts or aggregate service provider reports for gathering community-wide information on homelessness?	5
Who is responsible for implementing the HMIS?	6
What are the requirements regarding data submission by homeless service providers to the CoC?	6
Implementation Models.....	7
HMIS Universal Data Elements (UDEs).....	9
HMIS Program Specific Data Elements (PDEs).....	12
Privacy, Security and Confidentiality Concerns.....	15
Technical Solutions to Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality.....	17
Policy Solutions to Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality.....	19
Glossary of HMIS Definitions and Acronyms	21

HMIS – A History

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) began as a grassroots effort in the mid to late 90's to use technology at the community level to improve service delivery, the Continuum of Care (CoC) process, and community planning. As this effort grew, it caught the attention of Congress. In 2001, Congress issued a directive to HUD to provide data and analysis on the extent and nature of homelessness and the effectiveness of the McKinney-Vento Act programs, including:

- Developing unduplicated counts of clients served at the local level;
- Analyzing patterns of service use; and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of these systems.

HUD responded to the directive by convening grassroots communities, technology experts, and service providers in a process to inform the development of the HMIS Data and Technical Standards (HMIS Standards) and standard methods for conducting one night counts (Point in Time).

HUD requires all McKinney-Vento funded providers, the implementation of and participation in HMIS and made HMIS an eligible use of Support Housing Program (SHP) funds through the CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process. To support this effort, HUD also implemented a National Technical Assistance component to assist communities with the details of implementation.

Between 2001 and 2005, Communities begin to implement HMIS and collect data to support program evaluation, community planning, and funding requests and grant writing. Each year, HUD increases the scoring in the NOFA process for HMIS implementation progress.

HUD develops and publishes the first Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) in 2007. The AHAR is a report based on the Universal Data Elements in the HMIS Standards and information from the Housing Inventory Chart that provides aggregate data from communities to HUD via excel spreadsheets. This report, along with data from CoC NOFA applications, provides data for HUD and Congress to make programmatic and funding decisions for homeless programs.

Congress continues to update the directive stating in 2007 that HUD must ensure full HMIS participation by all CoC and that future CoC funding will be tied to participation in HMIS and the AHAR. HUD announces that eventually CoC participation in the AHAR will become mandatory. In the 2008 CoC NOFA, HUD increases the scoring component for HMIS implementation and use to 24 points, which effectively signaling the importance of a fully functional HMIS and the shift towards evidenced based practices.

Communities are now voluntarily providing data for the AHAR report and are implementing advanced uses of technology (data warehousing, handheld devices, and GIS) and analytical processes (self-sufficiency, impacts of program models on client outcomes, effectiveness of 10-yr plans, and advocacy) to support their efforts.

¹ Except prohibited by law.

Fact Sheet

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

What is a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)?

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons throughout a Continuum of Care (CoC)¹ jurisdiction. An HMIS is typically a web-based software application that homeless assistance providers use to coordinate service provision, manage their operations, and better serve their clients.

HMIS implementations can encompass geographic areas ranging from a single county to an entire state. An HMIS knits together homeless assistance providers within a community and creates a more coordinated and effective housing and service delivery system.

How do HUD and Congress use and support HMIS?

Policymakers and planners at the federal, state and local levels use aggregate HMIS data to obtain better information about the extent and nature of homelessness over time. HUD's HMIS initiative is in response to 2001 Congressional direction on the need for data and analysis on the extent of homelessness and the effectiveness of the McKinney-Vento Act² Programs including: developing unduplicated counts of clients served at the local level; analyzing patterns of use of people entering and exiting the homeless assistance system; and evaluating the effectiveness of these systems. Additional information on the Congressional Direction and an annual report to Congress on HUD's Strategy for Homeless Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting can be found at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/hmis/strategy/>.

What data is entered into HMIS and how is it protected?

In 2004, HUD published data and technical standards for the implementation of HMIS. These requirements detail the data collection, participation, privacy, and security requirements for all agencies entering data into or having access to the HMIS. A copy of the HMIS Data and Technical Standards Final Notice can be found at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/hmis/standards/>.

All users of the HMIS must adhere to the privacy protections and security protocols in the Final Notice. Each organization must adopt a privacy notice, post a privacy sign that discloses uses of information, and implement a consent protocol (i.e. inferred, written, oral). Each individual workstation (i.e. computer), network, and server accessing, transmitting, or storing HMIS data must conform with the security standards. Each individual user must

have a unique username and password to access the individual workstation and the HMIS application.

Each computer must be stored in a secure location with updated virus protection, a locking screen saver, and be protected by an individual or networked firewall. Additional security provisions for system servers and networks include transmission encryption, mechanisms to limit access to the HMIS to previously approved workstations, off-site backup and recovery, proper disposal of storage devices, and system monitoring procedures. Data Standards training modules are available at:
<http://www.hmis.info/resources.asp?cvid=235&ccid=1>.

What questions can HMIS help to answer at the local and national level about homelessness?

HMIS is not a national database of homeless people. Data on homeless persons is collected and maintained at the local level. HMIS can help local communities understand how many people are homeless in shelters and on the street; how many people are chronically or episodically homeless; the characteristics and service needs of those served, and which programs are most effective at reducing and ending homelessness.

HMIS can help HUD and Congress understand: how many people are homeless in the United States; who is homeless; where people receive shelter and services and where did they live before they became homeless; the patterns of homeless residential program use; and the nation's capacity for housing homeless people.

1 For more information on HUD's Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs visit:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/>

2 For more information on the McKinney-Vento Act visit:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/rulesandregs/laws/>

Why is HMIS a better alternative than point-in-time counts or aggregate service provider reports for gathering community-wide information on homelessness?

One night counts, commonly referred to as point-in-time counts provide a head count of the number of persons that are homeless in a community on one given night. Point-in-time counts do not usually provide information on whether a person was homeless for one day or a longer period of time and have been shown to under represent those persons who move in and out of homelessness throughout a time period.

Aggregate program level information provides duplicated information on the number of persons served, their characteristics, and needs by adding up program level data across a community about those persons who were served during a given time period. Although aggregate program information may offer broad based knowledge about the population served, the same person is often counted multiple times by the different programs and can lead to a limited understanding of patterns of service use or population size.

HMIS generates unduplicated counts of clients served and is designed to capture information over time (i.e. longitudinal data) about those persons moving in and out of the homeless assistance system, including changes in residential status, family composition, and service use. HMIS provides the most accurate picture of the extent and nature of homelessness within a community.

Who is responsible for implementing the HMIS?

The CoC is at the core of planning and service delivery for homeless individuals and families within any given community or geographic area. Each CoC is responsible for HMIS implementation, including planning, software selection, implementation and management of the database according to HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

The HMIS administering agency and/or the applicant/sponsor of a SHP dedicated HMIS project are agents of the CoC, manage HMIS operations on behalf of the CoC, and provide HMIS administration functions at the direction of the CoC. The experience of successful HMIS implementations has shown that active participation by CoC members in the management of the HMIS process, including establishing policies, procedures and protocols for privacy, data sharing, data analysis, reporting, and data validity is essential. Additional questions about HMIS grant requirements and funding are available under the Questions and Answers section of the 2006 Notice of Funding Availability at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa06/grpcoc.cfm>

What are the requirements regarding data submission by homeless service providers to the CoC?

Homeless assistance providers who participate in the local HMIS are required to submit data to the central server that is maintained by, or on behalf of the CoC's system administrator, at least once a year. With the exception of domestic violence agencies, the standard requires that all HUD McKinney-Vento funded programs that assist homeless persons submit the universal data elements (Name, SSN, DOB, Ethnicity/Race, Gender, Veteran's Status, Disabling Condition, Residence Prior to Program Entry, Zip Code of Last Permanent Address, Program Entry/Exit Date) for each client served annually. In addition, HUD McKinney-Vento programs that complete Annual Progress Reports (APRs)³ are required to submit program-specific data elements (Income and Sources, Education, Physical Disability, Developmental Disability, HIV/AIDS, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence, Services Received, Destination and Reasons for Leaving) for each client served.

Given the unique circumstances of their clients, domestic violence shelters are not required to submit personal identifying client-level information to the CoC. In January 2006, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization of 2005⁴ became law and contains provisions that amend the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act relating to the disclosure of data to HMIS by domestic violence providers. HUD is analyzing the legislation to determine the most appropriate instructions and advice to convey to communities and domestic violence programs.

Implementation Models

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Model	Characteristics	Governance Model	Staffing Model	Potential Advantages	Potential Disadvantages
Single CoC	A Single CoC works independent of others to implement a single HMIS application. CoC can select HMIS application within local procurement regulations.	CoC is solely responsible for the HMIS, including oversight and governance of the HMIS by the CoC Lead organization and/or committee structure.	HMIS Lead is generally a local participating agency who provides day-to-day system administration functions; hosting is generally facilitated by the software vendor.	Local control System customized to CoC needs Reporting customized to CoC needs Greater community and/or private industry involvement Greater local government involvement	Cannot generate regional analysis of homelessness CoC bears full burden of costs Potential lack of available technical resources Subject to local politics
Multi-CoC/Regional	Multiple CoCs partner together to jointly implement a single HMIS application. HMIS application is commonly selected after a through review of responses to a Request for Proposal (RFP).	CoCs share responsibility for the oversight and governance of the HMIS through a governing committee or board composed of at least one representative from each participating CoC.	HMIS Lead agency may be a Coalition or a Government entity. HMIS Lead organization is typically an entity with authority across a geographically diverse area and knowledgeable of nonprofit information technology initiatives; entity may be selected in response.	Regional analysis Sharing cost burden Sharing of staffing resources Greater county government involvement Greater accessibility to technical resources Greater regional coalition involvement Greater access to funding resources	May or may not have local system administration CoC may or may not have local control Each CoC may have difficulty accessing locally relevant reporting HMIS may be less customized to meet individual CoC needs HMIS Growth and Operation tied to regional vs. local needs
<p>CARES Inc. * 518-489-4130 * caresny.org</p>					

to an RFP

<p>State wide</p>	<p>All, or the majority of, CoCs in a State jointly implement a single HMIS application</p>	<p>CoCs share responsibility for the oversight and governance of the HMIS through a governing committee or board composed of at least one representative from each participating CoC</p>	<p>HMIS Lead is generally a State government entity, a Coalition on Homelessness, or a professional contractor. HMIS Lead organization is typically an entity with authority across a geographically diverse area and knowledgeable of nonprofit information technology initiatives; entity may be selected in response to an RFP</p>	<p>Statewide analysis Sharing of cost burden Sharing of staff burden Greater government involvement Greater accessibility to technical resources Greater regional coalition involvement Greater access to funding resources Greater accessibility to political powers</p>	<p>May or may not have local system administration May or may not have local control May have difficulty accessing locally relevant reporting System less customized to CoC individual needs HMIS Growth and Operation tied to statewide, governmental, and research needs</p>
-------------------	---	--	---	---	--

HMIS Universal Data Elements (UDEs)

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Data Element ID	Universal Data Element	Rationale
2.1	Name	The first, middle, last names, and suffix should be collected to support the unique identification of each person served.
2.2	Social Security Number	Unique identifiers are key to producing an accurate, unduplicated local count of homeless persons accessing services covered by HMIS and an important Congressional goal is to increase the use of mainstream programs by homeless persons.
2.3	Date of Birth	Used to calculate the age of persons served at time of program entry or at any point in receiving services. It also supports the unique identification of each person served.
2.4	Ethnicity and Race	Used to count the number of homeless persons who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino and to count the number of homeless persons who identify themselves within five different racial categories.
2.5	Gender	To create separate counts of homeless men and homeless women served.
2.6	Veteran Status	To determine the number of homeless veterans.

2.7	Disabling Condition	Needed to help identify clients meeting HUD's definition of chronically homeless and, depending on the source of program funds, may be required to establish client eligibility to be served by the program.
2.8	Residence Prior to Program Entry	To identify the type of residence and length of stay at that residence just prior to program admission.
2.9	Zip Code of Last Permanent Address	To identify the former geographic location of persons experiencing homelessness.
2.10	Program Entry Date	To determine the length of stay in a homeless residential program or the amount of time spent participating in a services-only program.
2.11	Program Exit Date	To determine the length of stay in a homeless residential program or the amount of time spent participating in a services-only program.
2.12	Unique Person Identification Number	Every client receiving homeless assistance services within a CoC is assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which is a permanent and unique number generated by the HMIS application. The PIN is used to obtain an unduplicated count of persons served within a CoC. The PIN is the only identifier that is guaranteed to be present and unique for each client served.

2.13	Program Identification Number	Program identification information will indicate the geographic location of a program, its facility and CoC affiliation, and whether the program is a street outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, homeless prevention, services-only or other type of program.
2.14	Household Identification Number	To count the number of households served.

HMIS Program Specific Data Elements (PDEs)

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Data Element ID	Program Data Element	Rationale
3.1	Income and Sources	Important for determining service needs of people at the time of program entry, determining whether they are accessing all income sources for which they are eligible, and describing the characteristics of the homeless population.
3.2	Non-Cash Benefits	Important to determine whether people are accessing all mainstream program benefits for which they may be eligible and to ascertain a more complete picture of their situation.
3.3	Physical Disability	To count the number of physically disabled persons served by homeless programs, determine eligibility for disability benefits, and assess their need for services.
3.4	Developmental Disability	To count the number of developmentally disabled persons served by homeless programs, determine eligibility for disability benefits, and assess their need for services.
3.5	HIV/AIDS	To identify persons who have been diagnosed with AIDS or have tested positive for HIV and assess their need for services.
3.6	Mental Health	To count the number of persons served with mental health problems, and to assess the need for treatment.
3.7	Substance Abuse	To count the number of persons served with substance abuse problems, and to assess the need for treatment.
3.8	Domestic Violence	Necessary to provide the person with the appropriate services to prevent further abuse and to treat the physical and psychological injuries from prior abuse. Also, ascertaining that a person may be experiencing domestic violence may be important for the safety of

		program staff and other clients. At the aggregate level, knowing the size of the homeless population that has experienced domestic violence is critical for determining the resources needed to address the problem in this population.
3.9	Services Received	To determine the services provided during a program stay and any resulting outcomes. Some funders may want information on service receipt as a performance measure. Service receipt may also be useful in identifying service gaps in a community.
3.10	Destination	Important outcome measure. Includes: Permanent Supportive Housing, rented house or apartment, owned apartment or house, family and friends if expected tenure over 90 days.
3.11	Reasons for Leaving	Used, in part, to identify the barriers and issues clients face in completing a program or staying in a residential facility, which may affect their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
3.12	Employment	To assess the program participant's employment status and need for employment services. This can serve as an important outcome measure.
3.13	Education	To assess the program participant's readiness for employment and need for education services. It can also serve as an important outcome measure.
3.14	General Health Status	Information on general health status is a first step to identifying what types of health services a client may need. Changes in health status between intake and exit can be a valuable outcome measure. This data element permits the self-reported health status of homeless persons to be compared with the self-reported health status of the U.S. population in general.
3.15	Pregnancy Status	To determine eligibility for benefits and need for services, and to determine the number of women entering programs for homeless persons while pregnant.
3.16	Veteran's Information	To collect a more detailed profile of the homeless veteran's experience and to determine eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and

		benefits. These questions were developed in consultation with the VA and reflect HUD's continuing effort to standardize data definitions and standards across federal agencies.
3.17	Children's Education	To determine if homeless children and youth have the same access to free, public education, including public preschool education, that is provided to other children and youth. It can also serve as an important outcome measure. These questions were developed in consultation with the U.S. Department of Education.

Privacy, Security and Confidentiality Concerns

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Issue	Why is this concern?
The human factor	<p>Most security breaches are carried out by authorized users of client record systems. Confidentiality breaches may occur in human service agencies (in conversation, faxes, phone, paper records, e-mail). High levels of staff turnover in shelters lead to inadequate training and inconsistent enforcement of privacy protection policies.</p>
Existing data collection/sharing practices	<p>What are common data-sharing practices in your community? What is the general community perspective on sharing or not sharing information? What policies are in place already to protect client-identified information? How can existing policies be updated to reflect data collection and sharing in HMIS?</p>
Technology concerns	<p>How are client-level data protected in an electronic case management system? In a web-based system, how can clients' data be secured on a central server? How can a system be designed to obtain domestic violence provider data can be reflected in aggregate reporting? What are existing models that address all of the above?</p>

<p>Review existing laws that affect the sharing of client identified information</p>	<p>State laws.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Substance abuse- HIV/AIDS- Domestic Violence- Unaccompanied Youth- Other (lawyer/client, etc.) <p>Federal laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Substance abuse- HIV/AIDS- Domestic violence (Violence Against Women Act)- Unaccompanied Youth- Other (healthcare, mental health, etc.)
--	---

Technical Solutions to Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Technical Solutions	What is it?	Why do it/use it?
Firewall	A hardware and/or software system that enforces access control policies between two networks.	To prevent unauthorized access to the network that the server sits on.
SSL Encryption	Secure Sockets Layer (SSL): A communications protocol used to secure all sensitive data. SSL is described as wrapping an encrypted envelope around messages transmitted via the Internet.	To protect data as it is transferred “over the wire” from a service provider organization to a central server.
Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)	Self-issued certificate authority (parties trust each other). Example: Microsoft Certification Authority, or Third-party certificate authority (parties do not have historically trusting relationship). Example: VeriSign.	Only computers registered with certificates can access servers.
Authentication	The process by which users validate their identity: Something you know—password. Something you have—pass card/badge. Something you are—fingerprint.	Each user must have a unique user name and password to access the system and for audit purposes.
Database Encryption	Encryption that occurs at the field (data element) level within a record of information.	To scramble a field of data to protect it from unauthorized access (e.g. to make 999-99-9999 look like x&*K-P*-T#@!).
CARES Inc. * 518-489-4130 * caresny.org		Page 17

Audit Trail	A system that monitors, records, and reports on what users of the HMIS are doing.	To audit access to the data (i.e. identify which records a case manager has added, edited, changed).
Penetration Testing	Process used to validate the security architecture used to protect a system. Necessary for due diligence.	To be confident the system is secure, it needs to be tested by a professional security company.

Policy Solutions to Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Policy Solutions	What is it?
Client Consent	<p>Consent procedures will vary depending on state law</p> <p>Best practices use procedures that inform consumers about the lengths to which the system protects their information</p>
Informed Consent	<p>Recommended when client-level data is NOT shared. Informed consent should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What the system is <input type="checkbox"/> Why the agency is using it <input type="checkbox"/> Security protocols <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy protection procedures
Written Consent	<p>Required by law when data are shared between agencies. Consent forms must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What information is being shared <input type="checkbox"/> With whom the information is being shared <input type="checkbox"/> For what length of time
Interagency Data-Sharing Agreements	<p>Agencies that share client-identified information may be required to have a legally binding data-sharing (chain of trust) agreement between their agencies. This agreement must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles through which information is shared (i.e. system) <input type="checkbox"/> Names and signatories of responsible party for each agency
Participation Agreements	<p>Participation agreements outline minimal requirements for participation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contractual requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Roles and responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation requirements <input type="checkbox"/> User, location, physical and data access requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal data entry requirements

Staff Commitment Forms/Ethics Training	<p>Staff commitment forms require written consent by central server and agency staff for upholding a minimal level of commitment. These forms include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Location access procedures<input type="checkbox"/> System access (front end and database)<input type="checkbox"/> Username and password protocols<input type="checkbox"/> Dissemination and handling of data<input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement and penalties
--	---

Glossary of HMIS Definitions and Acronyms

2008 HMIS Training: HMIS 101 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

ACF – See Administration for Children and Families

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) – A division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACF has a budget for 65 programs that target children, youth and families, including for assistance with welfare, child support enforcement, adoption assistance, foster care, child care, and child abuse.

AIRS – See Alliance of Information & Referral Systems

AHAR – See Annual Homeless Assessment Report

Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS) –The professional association for more than 1,000 community information and referral (I&R) providers serving primarily the United States and Canada. AIRS maintains a taxonomy of human services.

Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) – Annual report to Congress on the extent and nature of homelessness

Annual Progress Report (APR) – Report that tracks program progress and accomplishments in HUD`s competitive homeless assistance programs. The APR provides the grantee and HUD with information necessary to assess each grantee`s performance.

APR – See Annual Progress Report.

Audit Trail - A record showing who has accessed a computer system and what operations he or she has performed during a given period of time. Most database management systems include an audit trail component.

Bed Utilization - An indicator of whether shelter beds are occupied on a particular night or over a period of time.

Biometrics - Refers to the identification of a person by computerized images of a physical feature, usually a person`s fingerprint.

CDBG – See Community Development Block Grant

CHO – See Covered Homeless Organization

Chronic homelessness - HUD defines a chronically homeless person as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been

sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter during that time.

Client Intake - The process of collecting client information upon entrance into a program.

CoC – See Continuum of Care

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – A flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1,180 general units of local and State governments.

Consumer - An individual or family who has or is currently is experiencing homelessness.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – A community with a unified plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. HUD funds many homeless programs and HMIS implementations through Continuums of Care grants.

Coverage - A term commonly used by CoCs or homeless providers to refer to the number of beds represented in an HMIS divided by the total number of beds available.

Covered Homeless Organization (CHO) – Any organization (including its employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors, and associates) that records, uses, or processes data on homeless clients for an HMIS. The requirements of the HMIS Final Notice apply to all Covered Homeless Organizations.

Data Quality - The accuracy and completeness of all information collected and reported to the HMIS.

Data Standards - See HMIS Data and Technical Standards Final Notice.

Date of Birth (DOB) – the date a person was born

Dedicated HMIS - the cost of the HMIS implementation is its own component in the SuperNOFA project exhibit

De-identification - The process of removing or altering data in a client record that could be used to identify the person. This technique allows research, training, or other non-clinical applications to use real data without violating client privacy.

Department of Education (DOE) Digital Certificates - An attachment to an electronic message used for security purposes. The most common use of a digital certificate is to verify that the user sending a message is who he or she claims to be and to provide the receiver with the means to encode a reply.

Disabling Condition - A disabling condition in reference to chronic homelessness is defined by HUD as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. A disabling condition limits an individual's ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.

DOB – See Date of Birth

DOE – See Department of Education

Domestic Violence (DV) - Occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate another. Includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, economic deprivation, and threats of violence. Violence can be criminal and includes physical assault (hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.), sexual abuse (unwanted or forced sexual activity), and stalking. Although emotional, psychological and financial abuse are not criminal behaviors, they are forms of abuse and can lead to criminal violence. There are a number of dimensions of DV. Including: mode - physical, psychological, sexual and/or social; frequency - on/off, occasional, chronic; and severity – in terms of both psychological or physical harm and the need for treatment, including transitory or permanent injury, mild, moderate, and severe up to homicide.

DV – See Domestic Violence

eHIC – See Electronic Housing Inventory Chart

e*SNAPs – See Electronic Special Needs Assistance Program

Electronic Housing Inventory Chart (eHIC) Electronic Special Needs Assistance Program (e*SNAPs) – The electronic update from HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPs) in the Office of Community Planning and Development, offers policy and program highlights, resource links, and community spotlights. The e*SNAPs update is issued bi-monthly to members of HUD's Homeless Assistance Program listserv.

Emergency Shelter (ES) – Any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) – A federal grant program designed to help improve the quality of existing emergency shelters for the homeless, to make available additional shelters, to meet the costs of operating shelters, to provide essential social services to homeless individuals, and to help prevent homelessness.

Encryption - Conversion of plain text into unreadable data by scrambling it using a code that masks the meaning of the data to any unauthorized viewer. Computers encrypt data by using algorithms or formulas. Encrypted data are not readable unless they are converted back into plain text via decryption.

ES – See Emergency Shelter

ESG – See Emergency Shelter Grants

Ethnicity - Identity with or membership in a particular racial, national, or cultural group and observance of that group's customs, beliefs, and language.

Exhibit 1 – Part of the SuperNOFA, includes the Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)

Exhibit 2 – Part of the SuperNOFA, project application section

Expansion Grant – additional funds to an existing grant by proposing a new expansion project within the implementation.

Extensible Markup Language (XML) – General-purpose specification for creating custom markup languages. It is classified as an extensible language because it allows its users to define their own elements. Its primary purpose is to facilitate the sharing of structured data across different information systems, particularly via the Internet, and it is used both to encode documents and to serialize data.

Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) – Provides national leadership on youth and family issues. Promotes positive outcomes for children, youth, and families by supporting a wide range of comprehensive services and collaborations at the local, Tribal, State, and national levels.

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) – Publicly announced standards developed by the U.S. Federal government for use by all non-military government agencies and by government contractors. Many FIPS standards are modified versions of standards used in the wider community.

Final Notice - See HMIS Data and Technical Standards Final Notice

FIPS – See Federal Information Processing Standards

FYSB – See Family and Youth Services Bureau

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – An information system for capturing, storing, analyzing, managing, sharing, and displaying geographically referenced information.

GIS – See Geographic Information Systems

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) – One of a series of laws designed to improve government project management. The GPRA requires agencies to engage in project management tasks such as setting goals, measuring results, and reporting their progress. In order to comply with GPRA, agencies produce strategic plans, performance plans, and conduct gap analysis of projects.

GPRA – See Government Performance and Results Act

Hashing – The process of producing hashed values for accessing data or for security. A hashed value is a number or series of numbers generated from input data. The hash is generated by a formula in such a way that it is extremely unlikely that some other text will produce the same hash value or that data can be converted back to the original text. Hashing is often used to check whether two texts are identical. For the purposes of Homeless Management Information Systems it can be used to compare whether client records contain the same information without identifying the clients.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) – U.S. law designed to provide privacy standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided to health plans, doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers. Developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, these standards provide patients access to their medical records and give them more control over how their personal health information is used and disclosed.

HHS – See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

HIC – See Housing Inventory Chart

HIPAA – See Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

HMIS – See Homeless Management Information System

HMIS Data and Technical Standards Final Notice - Regulations issued by HUD via the Federal Register describing the requirements for implementing HMIS. The HMIS Final Notice contains rules about who needs to participate in HMIS, what data to collect, and how to protect client information.

HMIS Lead Organization – The central organizations that will house those individuals who will be directly involved in implementing and providing operational, training, technical assistance, and technical support to participating agencies.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – Computerized data collection tool designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness.

HOPWA – See Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) – Consists of three housing inventory charts for: emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) – Established by HUD to address the specific needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. HOPWA makes grants to local communities, States, and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons medically diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and their families.

HUD – See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

I&R – See Information and Referral

Inferred Consent – Once clients receive an oral explanation of HMIS, consent is assumed for data entry into HMIS. The client must be a person of age and in possession of all his/her faculties (for example, not mentally ill).

Information and Referral (I&R) – A process for obtaining information about programs and services available and linking individuals to these services. These services can include emergency food pantries, rental assistance, public health clinics, childcare resources, support groups, legal aid, and a variety of nonprofit and governmental agencies. An HMIS usually includes features to facilitate information and referral.

Informed Consent - A client is informed of options of participating in an HMIS system and then specifically asked to consent. The individual needs to be of age and in possession of all of his faculties (for example, not mentally ill), and his/her judgment not impaired at the time of consenting (by sleep, illness, intoxication, alcohol, drugs or other health problems, etc.).

McKinney-Vento Act - The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on July 22, 1987. The McKinney-Vento Act funds numerous programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including the Continuum of Care programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program.

Mental Health – MH - state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life.

MH – See Mental Health

NOFA – See Notice of Funding Availability

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) – An announcement of funding available for a particular program or activity. See also SuperNOFA.

PART – See Performance Assessment Rating Tool

PDE – See Program Data Element

Penetration Testing - The process of probing a computer system with the goal of identifying security vulnerabilities in a network and the extent to which outside parties might exploit them.

Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) – Developed to assess and improve program performance so that the Federal government can achieve better results. A PART review helps identify a program's strengths and weaknesses to inform funding and management decisions aimed at making the program more effective. The PART therefore

looks at all factors that affect and reflect program performance including program purpose and design; performance measurement, evaluations, and strategic planning; program management; and program results. Because the PART includes a consistent series of analytical questions, it allows programs to show improvements over time, and allows comparisons between similar programs.

Performance Measures – A process that systematically evaluates whether your program’s efforts are making an impact on the clients you are serving.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Long-term, community-based housing that has supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities. This type of supportive housing enables the special needs populations to live independently as possible in a permanent setting. Permanent housing can be provided in one structure or in several structures at one site or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

Personal Protected Information (PPI) – Information that can be used to uniquely identify, contact or locate a single person, or may enable disclosure of personal information.

PH- See Permanent Housing

PIT – See Point in Time

PKI –See Public Key Infrastructure

Point in Time Inventory - A calculation of the numbers of beds in a region on one particular night.

Point in Time (PIT) – A snapshot of the homeless population taken on a given day. Since 2005, HUD requires all CoC applicants to complete this count every other year in the last week of January. This count includes a street count in addition to a count of all clients in emergency and transitional beds.

PPI – See Personal Protected Information

Privacy Notice - A written, public statement of an agency’s privacy practices. A notice informs clients of how personal information is used and disclosed. According to the HMIS Data and Technical Standard, all covered homeless organizations must have a privacy notice.

Program Data Element (PDE) – Data elements required for programs that receive funding under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and complete the Annual Progress Reports (APRs).

Public Keys - Public keys are included in digital certificates and contain information that a sender can use to encrypt information such that only a particular key can read. The recipient also can verify the identity of the sender through the sender’s public key.

Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) – An arrangement that binds public keys with respective user identities by means of a certificate authority (CA). The user identity must

be unique for each CA. The binding is established through the registration and issuance process, which, depending on the level of assurance the binding has, may be carried out by software at a CA or under human supervision. The PKI role that assures this binding is called the Registration Authority (RA). For each user, the user identity, the public key, their binding, validity conditions, and other attributes are made unforgeable in public key certificates issued by the CA.

Race – Identification within five racial categories: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White

RHYMIS – See Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System

Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS) – An automated information tool designed to capture data on the runaway and homeless youth being served by FYSB's Basic Center Program and Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (TLP). RHYMIS also captures information on the contacts made by the Street Outreach Program grantees and the brief service contacts made with youth or families calling the FYSB programs.

S+C – See Shelter Plus Care (McKinney-Vento Program)

SA – See Substance Abuse

Scan Cards – Some communities use ID cards with bar codes to reduce intake time by electronically scanning ID cards to register clients in a bed for a night. These ID cards are commonly referred to as scan cards.

Shared Grant - the cost of the HMIS Implementation is shared with another program. For example, if a transitional housing facility shares the cost of the HMIS implementation with other providers. **Shelter Plus**

Care (McKinney-Vento Program) (S+C) – A program that provides grants for rental assistance for homeless persons with disabilities through four component programs: Tenant, Sponsor, Project, and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Rental Assistance.

SHP – See Supportive Housing Program

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) – A residential property that includes multiple single room dwelling units. Each unit is for occupancy by a single eligible individual. The unit need not, but may, contain food preparation or sanitary facilities, or both. It provides rental assistance on behalf of homeless individuals in connection with moderate rehabilitation of SRO dwellings.

Social Security Number (SSN) – A 9-digit number issued by the Social Security Administration to individuals who are citizens, permanent residents, and temporary (working) residents.

Special Needs Assistance Program – SNAP

SRO – See Single Room Occupancy

Substance Abuse (SA) SuperNOFA – See Super Notice of Funding Availability

Super Notice of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA) – The consolidation of all of HUD’s homeless grants program into one notice of funding availability. The SuperNOFA funds the Continuum of Care Competition.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – A monthly stipend provided to aged (legally deemed to be 65 or older), blind, or disabled persons based on need, paid by the U.S. Government.

Supportive Housing Program (SHP) – A program that provides housing, including housing units and group quarters that has a supportive environment and includes a planned service component.

Supportive Services - Services that may assist homeless participants in the transition from the streets or shelters into permanent or permanent supportive housing, and that assist persons with living successfully in housing.

Supportive Services Only (SSO) – Projects that address the service needs of homeless persons. Projects are classified as this component only if the project sponsor is not also providing housing to the same persons receiving the services. SSO projects may be in a structure or operated independently of a structure, such as street outreach or mobile vans for health care.

SSN – See Social Security Number

SSI – See Supplemental Security Income

SSO – See Supportive Services Only

TA – See Technical Assistance

TANF – See Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Technical Assistance – TA

Technical Submission – The form completed in the second phase of the SHP fund application process where an applicant that is successful in the competition (called a “conditionally selected grantee” or “selectee”) then provides more detailed technical information about the project that is not contained in the original application.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – Provides cash assistance to indigent American families with dependent children through the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

TH – See Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing (TH) – A project that has its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months).

UDE – See Universal Data Element

Unaccompanied Youth – Minors not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, including those living in inadequate housing such as shelters, cars, or on the streets. Also includes those who have been denied housing by their families and school-age unwed mothers who have no housing of their own.

Unduplicated Count – The number of people who are homeless within a specified location and time period. An unduplicated count ensures that individuals are counted only once regardless of the number of times they entered or exited the homeless system or the number of programs in which they participated. Congress directed HUD to develop a strategy for data collection on homelessness so that an unduplicated count of the homeless at the local level could be produced.

Universal Data Element (UDE) – Data required to be collected from all clients serviced by homeless assistance programs using an HMIS. These data elements include date of birth, gender, race, ethnicity, veteran's status, and Social Security Number (SSN). These elements are needed for CoCs to understand the basic dynamics of homelessness in their community and for HUD to meet the Congressional directive to support AHAR.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – A Cabinet department of the United States government with the goal of protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – The Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs that improve and develop the Nation's communities, and enforce fair housing laws. HUD's business is helping create a decent home and suitable living environment for all Americans, and it has given America's cities a strong national voice at the Cabinet level.

VA – See Veterans Affairs

VAWA – See Violence Against Women Act

Veterans Affairs (VA) – A government-run military veteran benefit system. It is responsible for administering programs of veterans' benefits for veterans, their families, and survivors. The benefits provided include disability compensation, pension, education, home loans, life insurance, vocational rehabilitation, survivors' benefits, medical benefits, and burial benefits.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) – Programs range from policies to encourage the prosecution of abusers to victim's services to prevention programs. VAWA helped forge new alliances between police officers, courts, and victim advocates.

Written Consent - Written consent embodies the element of informed consent in a written form. A client completes and signs a document consenting to an understanding of the options and risks of participating or sharing data in an HMIS system. The signed document is then kept on file at the agency.

XML – See Extensible Markup Language