HOMEWARD
Strategic Partnerships Toward Ending Homelessness

Data Quality Plan & Best Practices

DES MOINES/ POLK COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

Table of Contents

Data Quality Plan Intentions

This data quality plan is intended to help define an integrated plan to improve and maintain the level of data quality needed to accomplish goals and objectives. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data quality is vitally important to the success of HMIS and the programs that use this database. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) monitors the quality of the HMIS data through programs such the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), the HUD System Performance Measures (SPMs) and the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). If the quality of the data is poor, HUD may refuse to grant funding or trim future funding. Funding cuts could negatively affect the Iowa program(s). Since it is imperative that the data is correct, the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) works diligently on adhering to the HUD data standards to ensure all reports are complete, consistent, accurate, and timely. This guide outlines the data quality and best practices that HMIS encourages all users of HMIS to follow.

Why Data Quality is Important?

Data quality can be measured by the reliability and validity of client data collected in the HMIS for clients receiving assistance for homeless prevention and services. When reliable, accurate data is entered into the HMIS database, Homeward can portray a true accounting of the population experiencing homelessness in the Des Moines/Polk County Continuum of Care. Since the HMIS database will only process what it is given, if incorrect data is input into HMIS, the output is not likely to be useful or complete when reports are ran. ICA encourages agencies to continue addressing data quality and run reports at least monthly. You can learn how to run reports on ICA's online Learning Management System (LMS) or ask an ICA system administrator. The data standards that HMIS must follow can be found in the document titled HUD HMIS Data Standards that can be found here: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/FY-2022-HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf

In coordination with Homeward and ICA, a data quality plan has been developed. The goals of this plan are to:
- Help ensure the availability of timely and accurate data
- Catch problems early and increase the usability of data.
- Prepare data for the CoC NOFO process.
- Prepare for the Point-In-Time Count-(PIT) and the Housing Inventory Count. (HIC)
- Prepare for the Longitudinal system analysis (LSA).
- Prepare and submit the HUD System Performance Measures (SPM'S)
- Prepare for other community-level reporting requests.
- Prepare for Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) annual reporting

Agencies and program providers will also benefit from participating in this process by:
1) Ensuring that reports for data quality are run regularly, which results in having fewer corrections when reports are due.
2) Having more up-to-date information readily available to help inform program decisions, monitor client progress, and inform stakeholders about program status
3) Frequent data reviews support implementing changes when necessary and assist in measuring and tracking progress.

4) Having correct data entry is imperative to the ongoing funding of individual programs, in addition to the community as a whole.

Roles and Responsibilities

HMIS Lead Roles and Responsibilities
To ensure data quality, HMIS lead staff will;
1) Ensure compliance with the current HMIS Data Standards.
2) Execute a participation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each agency/program that contributes data to the State of Iowa HMIS network. These MOUs will be renewed annually.
3) Provide regular and ongoing training and technical assistance and support to all homeless system agencies engaged in use of the HMIS network.
4) Prepare data for the CoC NOFO process.
5) Regularly monitor the number of homeless system agencies utilizing the network and report the percentages to Homeward.
6) Support the efforts of Homeward to ensure the fullest HMIS participation possible.
7) Coordinate a collaborative effort of the Iowa CoC Board and the Iowa Finance Authority to design a performance outcomes report, consistent with the expectations of the HEARTH Act, as well as newly developed reporting requirements. This report will be delivered to the Iowa CoC Board, and Iowa Finance Authority on a quarterly basis and will include an annual, year-end analysis.
8) Manage the collection of all data elements required for the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and produce and upload the data as required into the HUD Homeless Data Exchange on behalf of the Des Moines/Polk County CoC and provide a report of the data to the next full Homeward Board meeting following final submission to HUD.
9) Required Program Reports
   i. CoC – Annual Performance Report
   ii. CoC- Monitoring Report
   iii. YHDP– Annual Performance Report
   iv. PATH – Annual Performance Report
   iv. HOPWA – Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report
   v. ESG – To be determined performance outcomes Reports
   vi. SSVF - Regular data uploads to VA data registry

   As the HMIS lead, ICA is managing the collection of HMIS point in time related data collection, street count collection training and coordinate final reporting of required data into the Homeless Data Exchange to HUD. ICA will report to Homeward on the results of the count at the next full Board meeting following the final submission to HUD.
10) Coordinate and collect all housing inventory data on behalf of the Balance of State CoC and enter the relevant data into HUD's Homeless Data Exchange.
11) Provide a quarterly update on any changes to Homeward on HMIS bed coverage.
12) Prepare for the Point-In-Time Count-(PIT) and the Housing Inventory Count. (HIC)
13) Prepare for the Longitudinal system analysis (LSA).
14) Prepare for the HUD System Performance Measures.
15) Prepare for other community-level reporting requests.
16) Review the data quality reports for each CoC.

17) Run HUD Universal Data Elements, Data Incongruities Reports, and other data quality reports as determined by HMIS/HUD.
18) If a provider has data quality issues, forward the report to the provider so they can fix their data.
19) Review the provider list for each report.
20) If there are missing or incorrect providers on the list, confirm those with the program provider(s).
21) Notify the Executive Director if Agency Administrators are not responsive regarding any uncorrected data quality issues. End-User Role.

HMIS Agency End User Roles and Responsibilities
1) Attend all trainings required by HMIS utilizing ICA's online LMS.
2) Complete all required training within 14 days of user set up in online LMS
3) Sign an HMIS End User Agreement.
4) Review data quality reports at least monthly. (APR's/Monitoring Reports)
5) If you have data quality issues, correct them as soon as possible.
6) Let an ICA system administrator know if you have a project (ES, TH, RRH or PSH) that is missing from the list or one that should not be included. Let a system administer know if it has been discontinued.
7) Run data quality reports available in ART to check client data monthly. Use these data quality reports in conjunction with your existing data checking reports frequently to check your data.
8) At client intake, gather the most complete and accurate information you can about each client and the services they need in a timely manner.

HMIS Data Quality Reports
In ServicePoint, there are three reports suggested that most Agency End Users should run frequently. These reports can be used in conjunction with your current data checking reports and practices. The HMIS Lead will support providers with reports if needed.
1) HUD CoC APR- This data quality report facilitates the extraction of data for the completion of the CoC APR. This report should be run once a month at a minimum to confirm that complete and accurate data is being properly recorded in ServicePoint.
2) Data Quality Framework- This funding report displays the details behind the CoC APR report. This report consists of several tabs, each tab focusing on data quality. The report also includes features to assist in data quality monitoring such as null data flags, identification of non-HUD question values.
3) PC CoC Monitoring Report v06242020- This report can be in the Advanced Reporting Tool (ART) and is specific to performance evaluation.
4) YHDP- CoC APR

Why Accuracy Is Important?

Accuracy ensures that what is being recorded in a database is an accurate and true portrayal of the client's situation and the services they need. For example, if inaccurate income is recorded for a client, it could impact their eligibility for a particular program or at a broader level, it could impact an agency's score on performance indicators relative to income. Completeness means ensuring that all the appropriate and relevant data that agencies or funders need is being collected about clients and the services they are accessing. While the ability to record "Don't Know" or "Refused" responses for various

data elements ensures completeness, it does not aid in the accuracy, which is the single most important element to data quality. Complete data is required by HUD programs and is particularly important to the PIT/HIC which can affect funding for the CoC and its providers.

All agencies and staff members must utilize the same definitions for capturing data when entering data into HMIS. It is important that all users follow the HUD HMIS Data Standards, which defines each data element collected in HMIS. The HUD HMIS Data Standards document can be found at https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf.

1) Timeliness- Timeliness refers to how recent the information is in the HMIS database. How up to date the data is becomes an important component and ultimately impacts the accuracy of the data as well. For example, if a manager asks how many clients are currently in the program and no data entry has taken place, that information could not be easily pulled by the agency without pulling client hardcopy files or other spreadsheets. Additionally, if an agency serves a client and previous assistance received by the client has not been recorded or updated in HMIS, services may be duplicated. Likewise, client information may change over time. If updated information is not recorded in the system, analysis is done on old, inaccurate information. For this reason, HMIS requires all data collected to be input into HMIS within 14 business days.

2) Training- Training helps ensure that Agency End-Users are kept up to date on the latest ServicePoint software releases, are entering data correctly into HMIS, and are adhering to policies and procedures as defined by HUD. Training classes and resources can be found at www.icatraining.org where training videos and documentation including helper forms, intake forms, and workflows for multiple programs.

3) Monitoring- Monitoring data helps to ensure accuracy by making necessary corrections to meet the data standards outlined by HUD. This process allows the quick resolution of any data quality issues.

4) Incentives and Enforcement Policies- These policies are an important part of the HMIS Data Quality Plan as they provide incentives for staff and reinforce the importance of good data quality.

Data Quality Components Detail

All client data entered in to the HMIS should reflect what the client self-reported or an accurate assessment of known information by a case manager, where indicated by the HMIS Data Standards. Data captured for entry into HMIS should be what was self-reported by the client or data known by case managers. HUD procedures allow case managers to make changes to client data not reported by the client.

All client data entered HMIS should be consistent with the type of program. Client records entered into the HMIS should reflect the client population served, match capacity of enrollment, program type, and entry/exit should fall within service parameters. This information is based on consistency of accurate data entered on clients receiving services. For example, if the program is a program for men, you should not

enter data on women. If your program has 20 beds; there should not be any more than 20 people in your shelter unless you are utilizing overflow beds. All Homeward Data Committees, HMIS Member Agency providers, and HMIS staff will work together to ensure accuracy of reporting. The HMIS software includes a series of reports to aid in outcome evaluation, data quality monitoring, and analysis of system trends.

1) Completeness-
   a. HMIS Lead in collaboration with Homeward will evaluate the quality of all HMIS User Agencies data on the completeness of the data entered using detailed Data Quality Reports (DQRs), agency reports, and other tools. Completeness is the level at which a field has been answered in whole or in its entirety. Measuring completeness can ensure that client profiles are accurately answered in whole and that an entire picture of the client situations emerges. For all clients served and entered into HMIS by an HMIS Member Agency, all system data quality fields must be completed. In HMIS, there are several data quality fields that are essential to understanding patterns of data entry and client self-reporting. These fields are part of the Universal Data Element (UDE) requirements measured for each HMIS Member Agency. These fields measure the quality of their associated fields. For example, if the Date of Birth field has been left blank, the Date of Birth Data Quality field is used to explain why the field is blank. There are three quality fields in the system: Social Security Data Quality, Date of Birth Data Quality, and Zip Code of Last Permanent Address Data Quality. These fields allow for reporting only partial answers or full answers in order receive completeness credit. These fields in conjunction with the associated data element field will be used to assess data quality issues.

2) Project Performance/Evaluation-
   o TH, PSH, RRH, SSO-CI, ESG ES- The period that elapses between when a client enters a program and when client information is entered into HMIS. Under 7 days average data timeliness.
      a. Data completeness
         i. TH, RRH, PSH, SSO-CI- <2%
      b. Exit destination error rate
         i. PSH: <5%
         ii. TH, RRH: < 10%
         iii. Single ES: <65%, Family ES: <10%
      c. Income increases
         i. TH Only: 35%
         ii. PSH, RRH: 25%
      d. Average length of time from enrollment to permanently housed
         i. 30 days or less for all programs
      e. Percent of successful exits
         i. TH, RRH- 80%
         ii. PSH- 90%
         iii. Single ES: 15%, Family ES: 65%
      f. Percentage of adults or Head of Household participants that met literally homeless definition prior to entry
         i. 93%
      g. Percent of chronic individuals served
         i. RRH or TH Only-10%

ii. PSH Only- 100%

Centralized Intake- Project Performance/Evaluation- www.homewardiowa.org

3) Consistency-
   a. HMIS Lead will evaluate the quality of all HMIS Member Agencies data on the consistency of the data entered. All HMIS User Agencies client data should work consistently to reduce duplication in HMIS by following workflow practices outlined in training. HMIS User Agencies are trained to search for existing clients in the system before adding a new client into the system. Client data can be searched by Client ID, Name, Social Security Number, and Client Alias. HMIS User Agencies are encouraged to follow this protocol. End users review data entries in the database for duplicate entries. Since there cannot be duplicates, the staff must research and request a merge of client records to an ICA system administrator. All HMIS Member Agency client data should adhere to HMIS capitalization guidelines. HMIS User Agencies are trained on the current method and style to enter client level data. No HMIS Member Agency should enter a client name in any of the following ways: ALL CAPS, all lower case, a mix of lower- and UPPER-cAse LeTters, Nicknames in the Name space -- use the Alias box instead.

4) HMIS Timeliness-
   a. All agency users should evaluate the quality of all data on the timeliness of the data entered. Timeliness is an important measure to evaluate daily bed utilization rates and current client system trends. To ensure reports are accurate, Member Agencies should ensure that their internal processes facilitate real-time data entry.
   b. All data must be entered and updated as required, including data elements that are monitored such as Universal Data Elements (for HUD and VA), entry/exits, and services.
   c. All HMIS User Agency client data should be entered in real-time (or no later than the number of hours as determined by your type of program) after intake, assessment, or program or service entry or exit. Real-time is defined as "the actual time during which a process takes place, or an event occurs." In most cases, client data can be entered into HMIS in real-time - as the client is being interviewed at intake or assessment. The more real-time the data, the more collaborative and beneficial client data sharing will be for all HMIS User Agencies and clients. The goal is to get all program intake and assessment data into HMIS in real-time.
   d. HMIS User Agencies will use Coordinated Assessment to centralize and coordinate the process of client intake, assessment, and provision of referrals.
   e. All HMIS User Agency providers should back date any client data not entered in real-time to ensure that the data entered reflects client service provision dates. All required data elements including program entry/exit, service transactions, universal data elements, and bed management must be entered for each client within 24 hours of program entry/exit or service dates. If the date was entered more than 24 hours later than the program entry/exit or service provision, the actual data of service or entry/exit must be used.
   f. Homeward, HMIS User Agency providers, and ICA staff will work together to ensure the highest quality of data in HMIS. Due to the many reports and projects the ICA staff is asked to provide, HMIS User Agency's' response to ICA staff inquires and correction of

      data quality issues is critical. Many programs have very rigid time frames in which the ICA staff must provide updated information. All Agency Administrators should respond to

HMIS staff inquiries no later than 48 business hours. In instances of vacation or illness, the back-up Agency Administrator or alternate contact should be contacted.

g. After a report that outlines data corrections has been sent to the Agency Administrator or backup Agency Administrator, it is the responsibility of the User Agency to correct the issues within 5 business days. Once the corrections have been made, the Agency Administrator or back-up Agency Administrator should update the ICA staff member that sent the corrections.

h. All HMIS User Agency providers should correct client data in HMIS at least monthly, after running regular scheduled reports. All CoC funded programs are required to be licensed to provide client level data into the HMIS. Programs shall utilize the entry/exit process for every client entered the HMIS.

5) Training-
   a. ICA will provide training for Agency Users and facilitate training for ServicePoint, (HMIS System) software vendor.
   b. ICA will ensure that adequate End-User support is available.
   c. ICA staff who will train new staff on the uses of the HMIS must personally attend trainings offered by Homeward, HUD or other software vendors to ensure ongoing understanding of the development of HMIS, improved technical reporting capabilities, system updates, etc.
   d. All ServicePoint users must take a test that covers various topics of HMIS privacy, data collection, system security, and software usage to obtain a "certification." This certification is a requirement to using the HMIS system. Without this certification, users will not have access to the HMIS database.
   e. Staff who do not attend annual training will be unable to access the HMIS database.

6) Monitoring-
   a. On a monthly basis, an agency administrator will review the CoC APR and the Monitoring Report for the previous month within HMIS to ensure that the list of current, exited clients, and service transactions are accurate. Data Quality reports should be reviewed by program manager and/or director to ensure appropriate corrections are made if necessary.
   b. Reports listed in bullet A will be submitted for each quarter by agencies and reviewed by the HMIS-focused task group quarterly (January, April, July, October) for the previous quarter for accuracy and all findings. The task group will work with the agency on a plan/process to ensure that any inaccuracies are corrected. If any more insight is necessary, this can be taken to CoC Board.

      i. **Quarterly Report Dates**
         1. Quarter 1- January 1-April 1 (Due no later than April 15th)
         2. Quarter 2- April 1- July 1 (Due no later than July 15th)
         3. Quarter 3- July 1- October 1 (Due no later than October 15th)
         4. Quarter 4- October 1- January 1 (Due no later than January 15th)

   c. A Count Report should be added to user Dashboards in ServicePoint to show clients with NULL UDEs, who is missing data elements or clients with Refused or Do not Know responses.

      d.   Agencies will provide timely updates to the ICA staff regarding any changes to programs.

      e.   All staff must work to prevent duplicate data.

      f.   All staff must review hardcopy intake forms against the HMIS data to ensure they match.

      g.   ICA Staff will support programs in correcting data and updating program information as needed.

      h.   It is suggested that agency staff should meet at the end of each month for final review to ensure the APRs will be accurate.

7) Enforcement-

      a.   During training, the importance of the data, any upcoming needs of the data, and the efficient uses of the data will be emphasized.

      b.   Agencies should create internal procedures to encourage their staff to meet or exceed the thresholds specified by this data quality plan.

      c.   During periodic job performance reviews, management staff should consider addressing data quality as part of the review process.

      d.   The HMIS Focused task group will request submission of all providers with overdue reports at the CoC Board meeting in correlation with that quarters meeting. (January, April, July, October)

      e.   The HMIS Lead will investigate all potential violations of any security protocols. A Participating Agency's access may also be suspended or revoked if serious or repeated violation(s) of HMIS Policies and Procedures occur by Agency users. Any user found to be in violation of security protocols will be sanctioned.