
HMIS DATA QUALITY PLAN

Lakeland, Winter Haven/Polk County
Continuum of Care
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PURPOSE

A data quality plan is a community-level document that facilitates the ability of the CoC to achieve statistically valid and reliable data. A data quality plan is generally developed by the HMIS Lead Agency based on standards established by HUD in the HMIS Data Standards Manual and is formally adopted after review by the CoC. In short, a data quality plan sets expectations for end users to capture reliable and valid data on persons accessing the homeless assistance system.

The purpose of this document is to establish data standards for the Lakeland, Winter Haven/Polk County Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and to define the parameters of compliance with these standards. HMIS Participating Agencies may establish additional or more stringent data quality requirements based on agency needs.

In addition to establishing data and compliance standards, this document describes the HMIS Lead Agency's process for analyzing and reporting on the reliability and validity of the data entered into the HMIS at both the program and aggregate system levels.

DEFINITIONS

HMIS Lead	The entity designated by the Continuum of Care to operate the HMIS on its behalf.
HMIS Participating Agency	An Agency which has executed an HMIS Participation Agreement and agrees to abide by the most current HMIS Plans approved and adopted by the CoC. The agency must ensure that all employees and agents comply with the HMIS Plans and provide staffing and equipment necessary to implement and ensure PC HMIS participation.
HMIS Participating Agency System Administrator	Individual designated by each participating agency to serve as an administrator for that agency. This individual has top-level program access at the agency level.

HMIS DATA QUALITY STANDARDS

DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

Each HMIS Participating Agency must collect a minimum set of data elements, referred to as Universal Data Elements (UDEs), from clients at initial program enrollment or service. UDEs are specified in the HUD Data Standards Manual.

In addition to UDEs, HMIS Participating Agencies must record program Entry and Exit dates and/or Service dates for each client served by an Agency project.

Data must be entered into the HMIS for every client and every program Entry/Exit and/or Service.

HMIS Participating Agencies must report client-level (UDEs) and program-level data elements using the response categories specified in the HUD Data Standards manual. These standard response categories are programmed into ClientTrack.

TIMELINESS AND FREQUENCY OF DATA ENTRY

Entering data in a timely manner can reduce human error that occurs when too much time has elapsed between the data collection or service transaction and the data entry. Data entry personnel may be relying on their own recall of a case management session, a service transaction, or a program entry/exit date. Therefore, the sooner the data is entered, the more likely it is that the data will be correct. Timely data entry also ensures that the data is accessible when it is needed.

Data entry timeframe by program type (excluding weekends or holidays):

- Emergency Shelters: within 24 hours after the check-in/check-out time;
- Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing Programs: within 3 days;
- Rapid Re-Housing and Homelessness Prevention Programs: within 24 hours after enrollment/eligibility is established.

Changes to a client's status, such as income or employment status, while enrolled in a program, should be recorded within three days of notification of the change.

Please refer to the HMIS Data Standards Manual for information on when and how often UDEs and Program-Specific data elements should be collected and updated in HMIS.

DATA COMPLETENESS AND ACCURACY

All data entered into the HMIS must be complete. Partially incomplete or missing data (e.g., missing information on disability or veteran status) can negatively affect the CoC's ability to provide comprehensive care to clients. Missing data could result in a client not receiving services that could help them become permanently housed.

Each HMIS Participating Agency will make every attempt to collect and enter all required information on all persons served during the time period that person is enrolled in the program.

All data entered into the HMIS must be accurate. In general, inaccurate information is worse than incomplete information. Missing information can be acknowledged as missing, while inaccurate data is misleading and may result in the inability to accurately measure performance or report results. Thus, it should be emphasized that it is better to enter "Data Not Collected" than to enter inaccurate data.

A significant amount of missing or inaccurate information could result in aggregate errors that do not accurately reflect the homeless population being served. For this reason, HMIS Participating Agencies must ensure a data completeness and accuracy standard of 100% for all data entered into the HMIS. To ensure the most up-to-date and complete data, data entry errors should be corrected as soon as they are discovered.

DATA QUALITY MONITORING

The HMIS Lead Agency will perform regular data quality checks on HMIS data entered by each HMIS Participating Agency, and will send data quality reports to each HMIS Participating Agency's system administrator. Reports will include any findings and recommended corrective actions. If the agency fails to make corrections, or if there are repeated or egregious data quality errors, the HMIS Lead Agency may notify the agency's funders and/or the CoC of non-compliance with required HMIS participation.

HMIS data quality certification is now part of several funding applications, including CoC and ESG programs. Low HMIS data quality scores may result in denial of this funding.

DATA QUALITY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Each HMIS Participating Agency must require its HMIS users to complete HMIS training. This training will be provided by the HMIS Lead Agency at regular intervals and on an as-needed basis.

HMIS SUPPORT

The HMIS Lead Agency will assist agencies in identifying data quality and completeness errors by running regular reports and providing those reports to agency administrators. Users should request additional training, reports, and other HMIS support from the HMIS Lead Agency as often as necessary to achieve the 100% data accuracy and completeness standard.

Data Collection Requirements for Referred Projects

The following items are required to be entered into the Polk County HMIS database if a housing referral is provided from The Homeless Coalition of Polk County. Goals/Case Plan/notes, current signed lease, housing inspection – HQS OR NSPIRE, all services provided to the client (case management, rental payments, utility payments, etc), the landlord W-9, a referral that matches the enrollment, a service summary report, and a client is enrolled in 1 program per housing type. Some best practices that are encouraged are uploading client's ID/SS Card/Birth Certificate/Award letter/Income verification/income recertification uploaded into client files in the HMIS database.