VA Programs HMIS Manual

A GUIDE FOR HMIS USERS AND SYSTEM ADMINISTRATORS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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ALIGNS TO FY 2020 HMIS DATA STANDARDS

Contents

Revision History

Release Date	Revision Summary
March 2015	First Release
December 2016	Second Release • Removed the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (VADOM) program due to its reclassification as a residential treatment program • Replaced HCHV Contract Emergency Residential Services (HCHV/CERS) program guidance with Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Housing (HCHV/EH) and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Treatment (HCHV/RT) guidance • Updated Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program Guidance on Transition In Place (TIP) projects • Updated to the 2017 HMIS Data Standards v1.2
April 2018	Third Release • Updated Data Collection Requirements table to include R6 Employment Status for SSVF Projects
September 2018	Fourth Release • Removed Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) from requirement to collect project identifiers for HIC/PIT data collection • Updated "AHAR" to "LSA" throughout
September 2019	Fifth Release • Updated to the FY 2020 HMIS Data Standards • Modified data element numbers to match data elements in FY 2020 • Updated links to other resources • Added project set up requirements for SSVF: Rapid Resolution projects • Updated data collection requirements for SSVF, GPD, and HCHV

Introduction

The *VA Programs HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) program grantees.

This manual provides information on HMIS program setup for VA funded projects. Data collection instructions and other standard guidance for VA funded projects are provided in an additional document, the VA Data Guide. While the VA Data Guide is meant to convey all data management requirements to VA grantees, necessary tools to properly meet those requirements and information needed to help manage program data, the VA Programs HMIS Manual is meant to help system administrators and HMIS Lead staff ensure that VA funded programs are properly set up in HMIS.

VA Resources

- o Additional information about the VA homeless programs and requirements can be found online at the VA Homeless Programs page.

- o **Ask A Question:** To ask a question about any VA Program's HMIS requirements, go to the "Ask A Question" section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select "HMIS" for your question under "My Question is Related To." HUD and VA program staff are working together to answer questions that come in on the AAQ related to the VA programs and HMIS.

HMIS Resources

Additional HMIS Resources

- o There are a variety of documents available on the HUD Exchange HMIS page that detail all HMIS Data and Technical Standards, Federal Partner Information, and information about HMIS forums for HMIS Leads, System Administrators, and Vendors.
- o The 2020 HMIS Data Standards page contains a suite of HMIS Data Standard resources, which are briefly described below. Each of the documents has a specific purpose and intended audience. The HMIS Lead should be familiar with all the documents and collectively use them as their HMIS reference materials along with specific materials provided by the software provider.

  - ▪ FY2020 HMIS Data Manual represents the foundation for the data contained within an HMIS, project setup instructions, and data collection instructions.
  - ▪ FY2020 HMIS Data Dictionary Table Shells contain the data element tables with   relevant programming instructions, system logic and other issues to be used by vendors for HMIS programming. The information in the tables shells aligns with   the information contained herein.
  - ▪ FY2020 CSV Specifications This document provides specifications for a standard set of comma-separated values (CSV) files that include all data elements and fields defined by the FY2020 HMIS Data Standards, along with information that describes an exported data set.
  - ▪ FY2020 XML Schema The HUD HMIS XML Schema specifies a format for transferring HMIS data. This XML format can be used for data migrations between systems, or the data types defined within it could be individually referenced in custom web methods.

- [HMIS Federal Partner Participation Resources](#) Each link on this page contains resources and materials for following the HMIS requirements of HUD and other federal partners.
- [HMIS Project Setup Tool](#) provides a general framework to support project setup in HMIS by system administrators. It assists system administrators in ensuring that all HMIS participating projects are set up using the appropriate HMIS project types and are collecting the required data elements.

HMIS Data Terms and Concepts

Definitions of HMIS terms and concepts used in this Manual are detailed on page 4 of the [HMIS Data Standards Manual](#).

HMIS Project Setup Steps

It is important to be sure that communities understand the difference between a **program** and a **project** because they have distinct meanings in this document and for the purposes of data collection in HMIS. A *program* is the source of funding that the organization is receiving to run its homeless intervention whereas *project* refers to a distinct unit of an organization as set up in the HMIS (e.g., Grant and Per Diem *Program* funding for ABC Transitional Housing *Project*).

Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all of the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive VA funding. The [VA Medical Center (VAMC)](#) serving your community should be aware of all VA funding awarded to your CoC. VA has also posted their [Directory of Veteran Service Organizations](#) online, which will assist with contact information.

Identify the VA Program Funding

Identify the **program** for each VA-funded project serving Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and operating within the continuum. The VA funds projects under the following relevant programs:

- The **Grant and Per Diem (GPD)** program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing (up to 24 months) and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability. These services only, safe haven and transitional housing projects have been **strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.
  - Models of GPD projects include:
    - GPD: Bridge Housing
    - GPD: Low Demand
    - GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing
    - GPD: Hospital to Housing
    - GPD: Clinical Treatment
    - GPD: Case Management /Housing Retention
  - **Note:** A limited number of GPD projects use the "Transition in Place" (TIP) model. VA has clarified that these projects should be classified as "Permanent Housing Only" project type in HMIS. These projects have been strongly recommended by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC, identified as "Other Permanent Housing" (OPH).

- o The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Housing (HCHV CRS: EH)** program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness. These emergency shelter projects have been **strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- o The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Community Contract Safe Haven (HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven)** program provides an early recovery model of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless individuals. These safe haven projects have been **strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- o The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program provides case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, as well as time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. SSVF serves veteran families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness without SSVF assistance. These projects are **required** to **participate in HMIS**; two separate projects – one with a type of Homelessness Prevention and one with a type of Rapid Re-housing must be set up in HMIS. Data for the Rapid Re-housing project must be included in the continuum's HIC.
  - ▪ **New:** Starting in FY 2020, SSVF grantees will have an additional project set up in HMIS to capture data about veterans who have "Problem Solving" or "Rapid Resolution" conversations with SSVF-funded case managers.
  - ▪ These new projects are required to use the "14-Coordinated Entry" or "6-Services Only" project type (depending on local set up and needs for Coordinated Entry data collection at the CoC level) and are required to record data for upload to the SSVF repository using element "4.20-Coordinated Entry Event" to document those conversations.
  - ▪ HMIS Leads and System Administrators are to provide an HMIS project for recording these conversations, and to work with local Coordinated Entry data collection Leads to reduce or eliminate data entry burden on SSVF case managers when these conversations are required by the CoC to be recorded in the local CE project *as well.*

Every residential project receiving funding through these programs must be included in a continuum's HIC and PIT Count. In communities that use HMIS to generate the HIC, all projects funded under these programs must be entered into HMIS, regardless of HMIS participation. Furthermore, every project in a CoC's HIC is required to be set up in HMIS regardless of collection of client level data in HMIS or not. This is to facilitate participation in reporting efforts such as Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), as well as other CoC-driven analysis efforts.

Note: CoCs should not report VA-funded Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (VADOM) and Compensated Work Therapy, Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) grants inventory, which are more appropriately identified as institutions. These funding components should not be included in the HIC or PIT count, and also should not be set up in HMIS to capture client data.

Set Up Projects in HMIS

One of the most critical steps towards the establishment of an accurate data collection and reporting system is the proper set up of projects in HMIS. Incorrect project setups may jeopardize recipients' ability to produce accurate, reliable reports and will affect the community's ability to generate community wide reports like System Performance Measures (SPM) and the LSA. For a VA-funded SSVF project, incorrect project set ups could compromise homeless assistance providers' ability to comply with HMIS Repository submission deadlines.

HMIS Leads and System Administrators should follow the procedures established for their particular HMIS when setting up projects in the HMIS. These setup procedures must include, at a minimum, the following:
1. The HMIS includes Project Descriptor data elements for all residential continuum projects, regardless of their participation in HMIS; and
2. The HMIS Lead, in consultation with the CoC, reviews project descriptor data at least once annually and updates that data as needed.

The following required Project Descriptor Data Elements are detailed below.

Organization Information (2.01)

The name of the agency/organization receiving VA funding must be entered. An identification number will be generated by the HMIS. There may be only one record in HMIS for each agency/organization, regardless of how many projects they operate. In the HMIS Data Standards, HUD strongly recommends that the name of the organization is the entity's legal name - not an abbreviation or other derivative since the name is transmitted in reports.

Organization Information (2.01) is also where HMIS Leads would designate Victim Service Provider (VSP) status for the organization (Yes/No).

Project Information (2.02)

- **Project ID**: A Project ID must be assigned to each project via a system generated number or code. Each project must receive a distinct identifier that is consistently associated with that project.

- **Project Name**: The name of the project receiving VA funding and providing the direct service must also be entered or identified with the VA-specific project. HMIS administrators should note that often the name of the project on the grant agreement is not the same as the name the project is called by the organization and/or the common name in the community and often not the same name as is used on the HIC. System administrators should maintain mapping information to correlate grant names, HIC names, and common names with the project identifiers either within the HMIS itself or separately.

- **Operating Start Date**: The Operating Start Date of a project must be completed on all projects within the HMIS. The Operating Start Date of the project is defined as the first day the project provided services and/or housing. Thus, this date must be no later than the date the first client served in the project was entered into the project. For projects which began operating prior to October 1, 2012, the start date may be estimated if not known.

- **Operating End Date**: An Operating End Date must be entered when a project closes. The Operating End Date must be the last day on which the last client received housing/services. The Operating End Date should be left empty if the project is still in operation (refer to the specific HMIS instructions on project close out in an HMIS).

- **Continuum Project**: A project within the geographic boundaries of the Continuum(s) of Care served by the HMIS whose primary purpose is to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless by providing lodging and/or services. Continuum Project should be answered "Yes" for all projects funded under the VA programs listed in the "Identify the VA Program Funding" section of this document.

- **Project Type**: A project is to be assigned a 'Project Type' based on the lodging or service it is providing. The 'Project Type' for VA funded projects is as follows:

Funded Component	Project Type #	Project Type Name
SSVF: Rapid Rehousing	13	PH - Rapid Re-Housing
SSVF: Homelessness Prevention	12	Homelessness Prevention
SSVF: Rapid Resolution	14 or 6 (determined locally)	Coordinated Entry or Services Only
HCHV CRS: EH	1	Emergency Shelter
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Bridge Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Low Demand	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Hospital to Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Transition in Place	9	PH - Housing Only
GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention	6	Services Only

- **Affiliated with a residential project:** This only applies to FPD: Case Management/Housing Retention and SSVF: Rapid Resolution (if the community set the SSVF: Rapid Resolution data collection and reporting project as "Services Only"). For GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention, identify if the services that are being provided are in conjunction with a residential project which is a separate project in HMIS. For SSVF: Rapid Resolution, mark "No."

- **Project ID(s) of residential project(s) affiliated with a Supportive Services Only project:** If "Yes" for GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention, identify the Residential Project in HMIS.

- **Emergency Shelter Tracking Method:** Among VA programs, this data element is only relevant for projects funded under the HCHV CRS: EH program component; these projects should be set up using the Entry/Exit Date method.

- **Housing Type:** For residential projects only, identify the type of housing provided by the residential project, "Site based-single site," "Site-based – clustered/multiple sites" or "Tenant-based – scattered site." If there is more than one Housing Type, multiple projects must be set up to account for the different types of housing offered.

- **HMIS Participating Project:** 'HMIS Participating Project' should be "Yes" for all projects funded under the VA programs listed in the "Identify the VA Program Funding" section of this document if the project has client data collected about them in the Universal Data Elements, Common Data Elements, and Federal Partner Program Specific elements in the Continuum's HMIS. Otherwise, select "No."

- **Target Population:** Identify a target population, if any, for the project.

Continuum of Care Information (2.03)

Select the CoC code based on the location in which the project operates. VA-funded projects may be funded to operate in a single CoC, or they may be funded to operate in a wider geographic area that covers multiple CoCs. Projects funded to operate in multiple CoCs should be associated with all of the CoC codes for which they will be entering client-level data into the HMIS. For example, if a SSVF project is expected to provide financial assistance to everyone in the catchment area then all of the CoC codes which cover the area must be selected. However, if the SSVF project only provides services to people in City X, and City X has a single CoC code, then select the code that applies to City X's CoC only. If a project is funded to operate in multiple CoCs and is participating in the HMIS implementations of each separate CoC with a separate project created in each, only the CoC Code relevant to the HMIS implementation need be entered.

'Geocode,' 'Project ZIP code,' and 'Project Street Address' fields must reflect the location of the project's principal lodging site or, for multiple site projects, the area in which most of the project's clients are housed.

Funding Sources (2.06)

Projects funded in whole or in part by VA funds are to be identified based on the VA program. Select the appropriate VA program for each project:

Component	Funding Source #	Funding Source Name
GPD: Bridge Housing	37	VA: Grant Per Diem – Bridge Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	40	VA: Grant Per Diem – Clinical Treatment
GPD: Hospital to Housing	39	VA: Grant Per Diem – Hospital to Housing
GPD: Low Demand	38	VA: Grant Per Diem – Low Demand
GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	41	VA: Grant Per Diem – Service Intensive Transitional Housing
GPD: Transition in Place	42	VA: Grant Per Diem – Transition in Place
GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention	45	VA: Grant Per Diem – Case Management/ Housing Retention
HCHV CRS: EH	27	VA: CRS Contract Residential Services
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	30	VA: Community Contract Safe Haven Program
SSVF: Homelessness Prevention	33	VA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SSVF: Rapid Re-housing	33	VA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SSVF: Rapid Resolution	33	VA: Supportive Service for Veteran Families

For VA projects the **Grant Identifier** field should include the VA grant number or FAIN, along with the corresponding Grant Start Date and Grant End Date. With the exception of SSVF, projects that operate as a single entity but are funded under multiple VA programs or grants may be set up as a single project in HMIS, as long as the project type (as shown in 2.02 Project Information above) is the same and each of the funding sources is recorded in HMIS. For SSVF, multiple VA grant identifiers should only be associated with a single project when a grant is renewed. Organizations operating with more than one VA grant at the same time must have separate projects set up for each grant.

Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.07)

HMIS administrators must complete the bed and unit inventory information for projects that provide lodging (Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-housing, Emergency Shelter, and Safe Haven). This information should match the Housing Inventory Count (HIC). The bed and unit information is based on the number and type of beds in the entire project, which may be more beds/units than are funded by the VA Program.

HMIS Leads should consult their HMIS vendor regarding the specific way to complete this element to meet all of the requirements. Correct set-up is critical for accurate reporting in the LSA.

Data Collection Requirements

Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the HMIS Data Standards Dictionary and Manual.

All VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are required to collect and enter Universal Data Elements and relevant Program-Specific Data Elements. The Program Specific Data Elements to be collected by each VA- funded project are shown below:

Data Collection Requirements by Program Component

Element	Name	SSVF: RRH	SSVF: HP	SSVF: RR	HCHV: All	GPD: All
3.01 -3.917	Universal Data Elements	X	X	X	X	X
4.02	Income and Sources	X	X		X	X
4.03	Non-Cash Benefits	X	X		X	X
4.04	Health Insurance	X	X		X	X
4.05	Physical Disability				X	X
4.06	Developmental Disability				X	X
4.07	Chronic Health Condition				X	X
4.08	HIV/AIDS				X	X
4.09	Mental Health Problem				X	X
4.10	Substance Abuse				X	X
4.11	Domestic Violence	X	X		X	X
4.19	Coordinated Entry Assessment			O	O	O
4.20	Coordinated Entry Event			X	O	O
V1	Veteran's Information	X	X		X	X
V2	Services Provided – SSVF	X	X		O	O
V3	Financial Assistance – SSVF	X	X			
V4	Percent of AMI (SSVF Eligibility)	X	X			
V5	Last Permanent Address	X	X			
V6	VMAC Station Number	X	X		X	X
V7	SSVF HP Targeting Criteria		X			
P4	Connection with SOAR	X	X			O
R4	Last Grade Completed	X	X			
R6	Employment Status	X	X			X

X = Data collection required   O = Data collection optional at the discretion of grantee

Special Data Collection Instructions

While HUD maintains this data collection manual for consistency with other federal partner materials and to help HMIS Leads perform VA-specific project set up tasks, the VA publishes its own data collection guidance for the VA specific data elements. In an effort to reduce duplication, those detailed instructions are not provided in this manual. Please see the VA Data Guide for special data collection instructions for VA grantees.