

NC-507: HMIS Data Entry and Licensing Policies

The Wake Continuum of Care Quality Improvement committee develops written policies and procedures for the Continuum of Care. The Data Quality Subcommittee is a branch of the CoC QI committee, that develops written policies and procedures specifically around HMIS data quality. This ensures that Wake County's HMIS data is a true reflection of our homeless service system at any given time.

The goals of these policies are to outline community standards of data quality as determined by community representatives participating in the Data Quality Subcommittee. Agencies are responsible for adhering to the requirements of their funders for certain data quality components; however, these policies are set forth as a baseline for all agencies utilizing HMIS, regardless of funding source.

Timeliness:

Timeliness is the amount of time between data collection from the client and data entry into HMIS. Prompt data entry reduces human error and can help data collection errors to be swiftly reconciled with the client.

All Universal Data Elements and Program-Specific Data Elements should be entered into HMIS, regardless of program type, within 48 hours

Data entry within 48 hours of collection is critical to the success of Wake's Coordinated Entry system. Real time data will ensure that clients are 1) swiftly connected to services that are proportional to their need and 2) their homeless episode is kept brief because housing resources are available in real time.

Recommended HMIS Reports:

- HUD Data Quality Framework

Completeness:

Completeness is the degree to which HMIS records do not include partial or missing data. Complete data is the key to assisting clients in finding the right services and benefits to end their homelessness. Incomplete data may hinder an organizations ability to comprehensively serve clients. Additionally, incomplete data will prevent the CoC lead agency from evaluating trends and patterns within Wake County's homeless population and adapt data-informed strategies to meet that need.

Complete data is defined as having at least 95% of the required HUD Universal Data Elements and Program Specific Data Elements required by the organization and/or funder. In addition, there should be no more than 5% unknown/don't know/refused for any Universal Data Element.

The Universal Data Elements include:

- 3.1 Name
- 3.2 Social Security Number
- 3.3 Date of Birth
- 3.4 Race
- 3.5 Ethnicity

- 3.6 Gender
- 3.7 Veteran Status
- 3.8 Disabling Condition
- 3.10 Project Start Date
- 3.11 Project Exit Date
- 3.12 Destination
- 3.15 Relationship to Head of Household
- 3.16 Client Location
- 3.20 Housing Move-in Date
- 3.917 Living Situation

Before selecting “Other” as an Exit Destination:

- Prior to selecting Other as an exit destination in HMIS, a staff member from that agency must call the the local system administrator to confirm that Other is the best option given the client circumstances.
- The use of Other contributes the allowable % of unknown data collected in HMIS.

Bed/Unit Utilization Rates:

Understanding the availability of homeless resources is a key component of identifying unmet need. Therefore, agencies are responsible for entering client data within the timeframe identified in the Timeliness section of this document to accurately reflect utilization rates at any given time. **For all program types, except for Rapid Rehousing, the acceptable Bed/Utilization Rate is between 65% and 105%.** Rapid Rehousing is not included in bed utilization rate calculations because the capacity to house persons experiencing homelessness is dependent upon funding streams rather than brick and mortar units.

Agencies can request their Bed and Unit Inventories be updated by contacting their local system administrator.

Recommended Reports

- HUD Data Quality Framework
- Annual Review Audit Report- identifies late or missing annual assessments
- CoC-APR (only for CoC funded PH projects)- identify child alone errors, missing data, late Annual Assessments
- ESG CAPER (only for ESG funded projects)- identify child alone errors, missing data

Accuracy:

Accuracy is the extent to which the data collected and entered into HMIS reflects reality. While accuracy can be difficult to assess, it is important to ensure that the information provided by the client is entered into HMIS as it is provided.

Staff entering client information into HMIS must enter that data as stated by the client.

Accurate search and entry of client identifying information is important because it ensures that each client gets only one record, which supports an accurate count.

In general, false or inaccurate data is worse than incomplete data. With inaccurate data, it is impossible to understand what is incorrect, but with incomplete data, we can, at the very least, acknowledge that gap in information.

The best method of ensuring accuracy is to compare client data in HMIS to another, potentially more accurate, source such as a paper intake file, social security card, driver's license etc. Agencies are encouraged to conduct monthly "spot checks" or audits of paper files and client data entered into HMIS.

The CoC's goal is to ensure client data is entered into HMIS correctly and is verifiable through separate documentation. Agencies are encouraged to regularly review data entered in HMIS and perform logic checks on that data. See Appendix A for examples of logic checks

Recommended Reports:

- HUD Data Quality Framework
- Duplicate Clients in Servicepoint- Identify duplicate clients
- Shelter-History, Overlap and Return- Identify duplicate entries
- ROI Audit Report- Check for accurate ROIs
- CoC-APR (only for CoC funded PH projects)- Identify child alone errors, missing data, late Annual Assessments
- ESG CAPER (only for ESG funded projects)- Identify child alone errors and missing data

Consistency:

Consistency is the degree to which data is collected and stored uniformly. A uniform data collection process reduces the likelihood of human error and improved data quality for the entire agency and CoC. Each agency is encouraged to outline standard procedures for data collection in agency policies

To Ensure Data Consistency:

- Agency staff receiving HMIS licenses are required to complete HMIS user training provided online through the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, who serves as the statewide HMIS Lead. Agencies are highly encouraged to use the HMIS training site to practice data entry apart from the live site. Live training by the local system administrator can be a substitute for some training modules. This must be arranged and approved by partnership staff before license approval.
- Agency staff are encouraged to revisit the online training site on a quarterly basis to review data entry processes and requirements.

Managing HUD Data Changes:

- The CoC Lead Agency and LSA will communicate with agencies of changes in HUD Data Standards.
- The CoC Lead Agency and LSA will implement and lead trainings on HMIS changes, providing at least **2 weeks** prior notice of trainings deemed mandatory for all HMIS end users.

Roles and Responsibilities:

CoC Lead Agency and Local System Administrator: The Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness

- The Partnership will lead and convene the Data Quality Subcommittee
- The Partnership will provide the Data Quality Subcommittee with data quality reports for all agencies using HMIS on a quarterly basis. The quarterly reports for the HMIS committee will provide information on timeliness, bed utilization rates, and data completeness for all projects.
- The Partnership offers additional training to those agencies that need to improve their data quality.
- The Partnership serves as the Local System Administrator and will lead ongoing data quality review and clean up along with monthly end user meetings.
- The Partnership will communicate directly with agencies regarding technical issues and changes within Servicepoint.

Data Quality Subcommittee

- The Data Quality Subcommittee is responsible for reviewing aggregate data quality reports quarterly and working with The Partnership to identify areas of improvement, training needs, and next steps.

Additional Funder-Specific Data Collection Requirements:

In addition to the CoC's policies for all HMIS participating agencies, funding partners may have specific data collection requirements.

- **For ESG funded projects:** data collection requirements are outlined in the **Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG) HMIS Program Manual**, available through the HUD Exchange Website (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/ESG-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf>)
- **For CoC funded projects:** data collection requirements are outlined in the **Continuum of Care (CoC) HMIS Program Manual**, available through the HUD Exchange Website (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoC-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf>)
- **For PATH funded projects:** data collection requirements are outlined in the **PATH Program HMIS Manual**, available through the HUD Exchange Website (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PATH-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf>)
- **For RHY funded projects:** data collection requirements are outlined in the **Runaway & Homeless Youth Program HMIS Manual**, available through the HUD Exchange Website (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/RHY-Program-HMIS-Manual.pdf>)
- **For SSVF and other VA funded projects:** data collection requirements are outlined in the **VA Programs HMIS Manual**, available through the HUD Exchange Website (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/VA-Programs-HMIS-Manual.pdf>)

HMIS Licenses

Agencies requesting HMIS licenses must make a formal request to the local system administrator and complete the provided application. All HMIS user licenses are approved by Partnership staff based on the needs and capacity of the participating agency. HMIS licenses are provided to participating agencies at no cost to the agency. Specific HMIS user licensing requirements including privacy and security standards and required training are outlined in the system-wide NC HMIS Operating Policies and Procedures, available here:

<https://www.mihomeless.org/index.php/north-carolina/documents/contracts-agreements-and-policies/finish/928-contracts-agreements-and-policies/8829-nc-hmis-operating-policies-and-procedures>

Partnership staff reserve the right to terminate a user's HMIS license for failure to adhere to these policies.