

San Luis Obispo County Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data Quality Plan

Introduction

To end homelessness, a community must know the scope of the problem, the characteristics of those who find themselves homeless, and understand what is working in their community and what is not. Solid data enables a community to work confidently towards their goals as they measure output, outcomes, and impacts.

What is a Data Quality Plan?

A Data Quality plan is a systematic approach for the CoC to establish and define data quality expectations. Data quality is a key component for HUD reporting purposes such as the System Performance Measures (SPM), Longitudinal Systems Analysis Report (LSA), Annual Performance Report (APR), Point-In-Time (PIT), Housing Inventory Count (HIC) as well as reporting purposes for the federal partners. In addition, HUD ties data quality to overall CoC competitiveness for funding.

Data Quality Elements

HMIS Data Standards

The [2020 HMIS Data Standards](#) provide communities with baseline data collection requirements developed by HUD and its federal partners.

A. Universal Data Elements

HMIS Universal Data Elements are elements required to be collected by all projects participating in HMIS, regardless of funding source. The Universal Data Elements establish the baseline data collection requirements for all contributing CoC projects. They are the basis for producing unduplicated estimates for the number of people experiencing homelessness, accessing services from homeless assistance projects, basic demographic characteristics of people experiencing homelessness, and patterns of service use, including information on shelter stays and homelessness over time.

The most current Universal Data Elements are listed in the [2020 HMIS Data Standards Manual](#).

B. Program Specific Data Elements

Program Specific Data Elements differ from the Universal Data Elements in that no one project must collect every single data element.

The most current Program Specific Data Elements are listed in the [2020 HMIS Data Standards Manual](#).

Data Quality Benchmarks

Policy

In order to qualify as “participating in the HMIS” all HMIS Participating Agencies must meet the data quality benchmarks as described in the San Luis Obispo County Continuum of Care’s HMIS Data Quality Plan. These benchmarks apply to all HMIS Participating Agencies whether or not the agency provides the data directly into the HMIS or submits it to the HMIS Lead Agency for input into HMIS. Including the following mandated projects HUD CoC & ESG, VA SSVF & GPD-OTH, and HHS RHY & PATH.

HMIS Coverage

Definition

The degree to which all homeless assistance providers within the CoC enter all homeless clients into HMIS.

Rationale

Partial participation across the CoC geography can negatively affect the ability of the CoC to report and analyze community performance. If some providers are not participating in the HMIS, it will be difficult to determine whether the data accurately reflects what is happening within projects or across the system.

Required Benchmarks:

1. 100% of all HUD funded homeless assistance programs (excluding Domestic Violence programs) must participate in HMIS.
2. 100% of all beds in non-funded projects.

Bed Utilization

Definition

The degree to which the total number of homeless beds within the HMIS are recorded as occupied divided by the total number of homeless beds within the CoC.

Rationale

Utilization rate, or the number of beds occupied as a percentage of the entire bed inventory, is an excellent barometer of data quality. It is difficult to measure data quality if the utilization rate is too low (below 65%) or too high (above 105%) without a reasonable explanation.

Required Benchmarks:

Housing Program Type	Target Utilization Rate
Emergency Shelter	85%
Transitional Housing	85%
Permanent Housing	85%

Data Completeness

Definition

The degree to which all required HMIS Universal Data Elements and Program Specific Data Elements are recorded in the HMIS.

Rationale

Partially complete or missing data (e.g. SSN digits, year of birth, disability or veteran status) can negatively affect the ability to provide comprehensive services and could mean participants do not get the help they need to become permanently housed. It also makes it difficult to unduplicate the number of clients served.

Required Benchmarks:

The required benchmarks reflect the [2020 HMIS Data Standards](#).

Data Timeliness

Definition

The degree to which the data is collected and recorded into HMIS.

Rationale

Entering data in a timely manner can reduce human error when too much time has elapsed between data collection and date entry. Also, when a user exits a person from one program and enters them into another, this may affect outcomes such as income. Timely data entry assures data is accessible when it is needed (e.g. monitoring purposes, funding reporting, responding to requests for information).

Required Benchmarks:

HMIS data must be entered into HMIS in real time or within three (3) business days from the point of the event, (intake/ enrollment, service delivery, annual assessments, or exit/ discharge) to record the information into the HMIS software.

Data Accuracy

Definition

The degree to which the data reflects the real-world client or service.

Rationale

To ensure data is collected and entered accurately. Accuracy of data in HMIS can be difficult to access. It depends on the client's ability to provide the correct data and the intake worker's ability to document and enter the data accurately.

Required Benchmarks:

100% of data entered into HMIS must reflect what clients are reporting.

Data Consistency

Definition

The degree to which the data is equivalent in the way it is collected and stored.

Rationale

To ensure that data is understood, collected, and entered consistently across all programs in the HMIS. Consistency directly affects the accuracy of data; in an end user collects all the data, but does not collect it in a consistent matter, and then the date may not be accurate.

Required Benchmarks:

100% of data in the HMIS should be collected and entered in a consistent manner across all programs. Data collection and entry should be conducted in accordance with the most current HUD HMIS Data Standards.
