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# **Pennsylvania Homeless Management Information System (PA HMIS)**

## **GOVERNANCE CHARTER**



**15**

Adopted on: Eastern CoC PA-509 November 13, 2015  
Version: [1.5]

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## OVERVIEW:

While each CoC has the ultimate responsibility to select their own HMIS solution, collaborating in a single HMIS provides certain advantages. By participating collaboratively, system administration can be separated from local administration: CoCs have the ability to focus on more specific local solution needs without the need to devote effort to making sure that the standardized information is being collected in a manner that is compliant with federal and state requirements. Participating collaboratively also provides cost benefits due to an economy of scale. Additionally, while participating collaboratively can offer benefits, it also requires a balanced approach to ensure that the solution is able to maintain these benefits, long term stability, and operability while minimizing the chance of one CoC making system altering solution or policy changes that could adversely affect other CoCs. The following are the objectives related to the HMIS Lead Agency:

- 1) provide a vehicle through which participating Continuums of Care (CoCs) have an equal voice in creating and maintaining the high level policies and procedures that govern the use of the HMIS implementation;
- 2) ensure a data collection system to support a coordinated entry process for clients accessing housing services;
- 3) allow CoCs to collaboratively provide input into the way in which the HMIS implementation is managed concerning issues that affect all CoCs equally;
- 4) ensure the future financial success of the HMIS implementation while providing an economy of scale to reduce financial burden on each participating CoC;
- 5) provide an opportunity for CoCs to find common ground and agree on a unified direction when it comes to collecting data on homelessness and understanding the problem;
- 6) identify ways to help provider agencies and CoCs to record, report on, and improve their services through use of the HMIS implementation;
- 7) provide flexibility while ensuring that one CoC doesn't implement changes that adversely affect the other CoCs;
- 8) Create a forum through where participating CoCs can share ideas or identify new methods for use of the HMIS implementation that could benefit the rest of the collaborative.

Other Federal regulations are as follows.

**FEDERAL REGULATIONS.** The following laws, statutes, and regulations govern this agreement:

- a) The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the [2014 HMIS Data Dictionary](#) and [2014 HMIS Data Manual](#) on May 1, 2014, updating the 2010 HMIS Data Standards, when these standards are updated the subscriber will comply with all changes. The 2014 HMIS Data Standards outlined in these two documents provide communities with baseline data collection requirements developed by

HUD, HHS, and VA. The [2004 HMIS Data and Technical Notice](#) were put into place on July 30, 2004 and once this notice is updated the subscriber will comply with all changes.

**The effective date of the 2014 HMIS Data Standards is October 1, 2014.**

This joint release is a product of collaboration between the three agencies to update the HMIS Data Standards to allow for standardized data collection on homeless individuals and families across systems. Because this is a collaborative effort between HUD, HHS, and the VA, the standards are no longer presented in a HUD Notice format. Communities must collect the data included in the standards in order to comply with each federal partner's reporting requirements. The documents are structured so that communities can easily determine which data elements are required for each federal partner's program.

- b) The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and all rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the authority granted therein, including but not limited to, those set forth in 45 C.R.F. §§ 160-164 (2003), all as supplemented, replaced and amended from time to time.
- c) Federal confidentiality regulations as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, 42 C.F.R. Part 2 regarding disclosure of alcohol and/or drug abuse records. In general terms, the federal rules prohibit the disclosure of alcohol and/or drug abuse records unless disclosure is expressly permitted by written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by CFT Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose.
- d) Pursuant to the HUD Data and Technical Standards Final Notice published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2010 and the PA-HMIS policies and procedures, each Grantee will prominently display a PA-HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices or a notice developed by the Grantee that incorporates the content of the Grantee approved PA-HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices form, in its program offices where intake occurs, and will provide written copy of the Notices to all Clients enrolling in the Grantees programs and services. The Grantee will update its Notice of Privacy Practices as needed to comply with federal law and regulations and with the PA-HMIS policy changes.

The CoC shall at all times comply with the HMIS Program Regulations in addition to all of the a fore stated regulations, codes, statutes, laws, associated Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, other applicable Federal regulations, and all future revisions and amendments to the same. The Grantee shall become thoroughly familiar with all of the foregoing requirements as applicable and shall ensure that the use of the Services complies in all respects.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Charter is to identify the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the Pennsylvania Homeless Management Information System (PA HMIS) solution for participating Continuums of Care. The PA HMIS solution collects aggregate data to better understand the issues and gaps around person's at-risk or experiencing homelessness throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each CoC must comply with the following Federal and State regulations while funded through the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) program and Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program opportunities.

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the State to gather, compile and report certain information regarding the homeless population and services provided to that population. HUD has developed Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Requirements under the Proposed Rule, dated December 9, 2011, **24 CFR Parts 91, 576, 580, and 583** and requires the State to participate in the reporting of information in accordance with all HMIS requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the Department of Community and Economic Development (HMIS LA), developed and operates the PA-HMIS system, while administering funding for homeless prevention and assistance programs in HMIS LA in compliance with HMIS.

## ARTICLE 1: HMIS LEAD AGENCY

The HMIS LA CoC Board will identify the HMIS Lead Agency where the Pennsylvania Homeless Management Information System (PA HMIS) will be administered. Whenever the term "HMIS Lead Agency" is used in this charter, it shall mean HMIS LAHMIS LA.

## ARTICLE 2: STAKEHOLDERS

### PA HMIS Governing Board

The PA HMIS Governing Board known in this charter as the Collaborative is the governing body made up of key stakeholders throughout the Balance of State CoC. This Board meets on a quarterly basis to review compliance in regards to this charter and the performance of each Continuum of Care participating within the PA HMIS solution.

### Continuum of Care (CoC) Collaborative Applicant (CA)

#### *Balance of State CoCs*

The CoC Board also will identify the CA for PA-509 Eastern CoC and PA-601 Western PA and in conjunction with each CoC Board has selected to house the HMIS Lead Agency within the same administrative entity.

### ***Entitlement CoCs***

The Bucks County Department of Housing and Community Development is the CA for PA-511 Bucks County and utilize the PA HMIS solution. They have elected that the HMIS Lead Agency is housed within their CoC and participates in the Collaborative.

## **ARTICLE 3: COLLABORATIVE LOCATION**

The principal location of the Collaborative is facilitated by the PA HMIS Administrator place of employment HMIS LA. Any change to the location of the principal location shall not be considered an amendment to this charter.

## **ARTICLE 4: COLLABORATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

In support of the mission of the Continuums of Care and pursuant to Section 578.7 of the interim rule, the Responsibilities of the Collaborative include:

### ***A. Assure an effective performance management system through HMIS to ensure progress in meeting established project and continuum outcomes***

The Collaborative is charged with the responsibility of implementation and maintenance of the HMIS for the participating Continuums of Care. Specifically, the Collaborative must:

#### **1. Designate a single HMIS software solution for the geographic areas;**

- The CoC will identify the contracted software solution vendor. Whenever the term “Vendor” is used in this charter, it shall mean HMIS Vendor designated as the single HMIS software solution that is used for the Balance of State Continuums of Care.

Vendor is responsible for:

- Providing the Internet-based PA HMIS software and database;
- PA HMIS software upgrades;
- Hosting (maintaining, securing, performing backups, and ensuring availability);

- Providing training and technical support to PA HMIS Administrator and IT personnel;
- Compliance to contractual obligations

**2. Designate a single eligible applicant to serve as the HMIS Lead Agency to manage the HMIS and apply for HMIS funding;**

- Currently the HMIS LA serves as the Collaborative Applicant that manages the Collaborative and applies for Collaborative funding for the Balance of State Continuums of Care. Entitlement Communities funded through CoC funding and other Sources of federal, state and local funding may participate in the PA HMIS based on the established cooperation or service agreement.
- As the HMIS Lead Agency, HMIS LA is responsible for activities which includes:
  - Setup of the system;
  - Defining policies and procedures within the federal guidelines, best practices, and PA HMIS members' input;
  - Advocating PA HMIS software enhancements on behalf of participating agencies;
  - Initial and on-going training for PA HMIS;
  - Providing data quality assurance for the PA HMIS participating agencies
  - Fulfilling Federal, State and Local reporting requirements;
  - Providing technical support through the PA HMIS Help Desk.
- The Entitlement CoC communities participating in the PA HMIS may choose to designate another HMIS Lead Agency within their CoC, if the CoC maintains and employs its own HMIS System Administration staff housed locally within the CoC's Collaborative Applicant. If the CoC choose this designation they are required to adopt this charter along with appendices. The CoC may modify this Charter in order to incorporate an additional administrative structure by providing localized training, technical support, and improved capacity for local ad-hoc reporting and outcome measurements. When the CoC designates themselves as their HMIS Lead Agency it is created in harmony with the Collaborative staff, and will serve to increase the CoC's use of its own HMIS data while also alleviating some of the technical assistance workload of the Collaborative staff. The CoC must then be responsible for the activities listed above in relation to the Collaborative Lead Agency.

**3. Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD, HHS, and VA;**

The PA HMIS has established Agency Participation Agreement with all participating agencies within the Collaborative that outlines procedures and is not limited to the following requirement:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the State to gather, compile and report certain information regarding the homeless and services provided to that population. HUD has developed Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Requirements under the Proposed Rule, dated December 9, 2011, 24 CFR Parts 91, 576, 580, and 583 and requires the State to participate in the reporting of information in accordance with all HMIS requirements.

**4. To the extent possible, ensure that projects using an alternate data collection system (such as Victim Service Providers) are compliant with maintaining a “comparable database” and collecting the necessary HMIS data elements.**

HMIS LA has established Agency Participation Agreement with all participating agencies that if they are funding any programs under other federal statute require those programs to enter into a comparable database to be in compliance with the following:

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the 2014 HMIS Data Dictionary and 2014 HMIS Data Manual on May 1, 2014. Although, currently the CoCs must comply with the 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Notice.

**5. In consultation with the Continuums of Care the Collaborative has reviewed, revised, and approved:**

- [PA HMIS PRIVACY AND SECURITY PLAN- Appendix A](#)
- [PA HMIS DATA QUALITY AND FUNCTIONALITY PLAN- Appendix B](#)

**6. Ensure the consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients in the Collaborative.**

The Collaborative coordinates with the Continuums of Care, grant recipients and sub-recipients, and other participating organizations to establish performance



targets appropriate for its population and program types. It also reviews periodic reports on performance of Continuums.

### *B. Establish a Coordinated Entry System using HMIS*

PA HMIS can be used as the tool to support the operation of the coordinated entry system that provides a centralized method by which the housing, services, and needs of individuals and families within the Continuums are assessed. In coordination with the Continuums of Care, the Continuums will develop and maintain a policy that guides consistent operation of the coordinated entry system, with respect to how the system triages and addresses the particular safety needs of individuals and families who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness. In addition, the policy will state how the system will address the needs of individuals and families that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or sex trafficking. The coordinated entry system will:

- i. Cover the geographic area served by the Continuums;
- ii. Include a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

### *C. Reports an annual assessment of needs and resources through Point in Time Counts and Housing Resource Inventory*

In coordination with the CoCs the Collaborative will annually report on the needs of homeless persons within the CoCs through a generated report of a coordinated point in time count, an on-going assessment of trends, and an assessment of homeless needs and housing/service resources available within the Continuums. The CoCs will then use the data reported on to conduct a gaps analysis and determines unmet needs within the CoC.

The point-in-time count of homeless persons within the Continuum enumerates:

1. the number of homeless persons who are living in places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for humans (unsheltered homeless persons);
2. the number of homeless persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects (sheltered homeless persons); and
3. other reporting requirements established by HUD by Notices.

## **ARTICLE 5: Governance of HMIS**

HMIS governance is managed collaboratively with the CoCs, which are collectively referred to as the PA HMIS Governing Board. The PA HMIS Governing Board contains representatives from

each participating CoC's data sub-committees and is governed by this Charter. The responsibilities of the board as outlined previously is to advise each CoC Board with recommendations to determine performance driven decisions on the progress of creating new or maximizing resources within each CoC.

## ARTICLE 6: Continuum Performance Measures

The Collaborative has put into place the following performance measurements from a variety of Federal, State and Local government reporting requirements to be in compliance for several Federal and State Regulations.

1. PA HMIS program participation rates per CoC should be at a minimum of 65% and should aim for an 86% or greater per project type. This measure is used to encourage the CoC to build partnerships with non-participating Collaborative agencies to collect and understand the homeless population served throughout the CoC. This measure is also used for reporting to congress in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)
2. HMIS Bed Utilization Rate is used for reporting on the AHAR and is generated from the Housing Inventory Count (HIC) pulled out of PA HMIS. The formula can be defined as the total number of programs participating in PA HMIS per Continuum divided by the overall number of programs with in the Continuum broken out by project type (i.e.- ES, TH, RRH, PH).

Bed utilization rates per project types are required to reach a rate of 60% or greater for participation in AHAR.

3. HMIS Data Quality is required that all programs not have a total percentage of missing data of greater than 10 %. For data that is not missing although has a response of "Client Doesn't Know" or "Client Refused" the requirement is for records with data elements with this response selection not have a percentage greater than 5%.
4. Housing Stability Measures are used to help track and understand the gaps in service for those experiencing homelessness throughout the CoC gain a more permanent living situation through emergency and transitional living programs. The following outcome measures are set by each CoC's Data Management, Collection, and Outcomes Committee.

*Percentages may be determined by each participating Collaborative Applicant based on their agreed upon Baseline numbers for the Continuum.*

- ##% of cases exit to Permanent Housing from a Transitional Housing program;
- ##% of cases exit to Permanent Housing and/ or Rapid Re-Housing program from an Emergency Shelter program;
- ##% of cases exit to Permanent Housing from a Safe Haven program;
- ##% of cases exit to Permanent Housing Only from a Permanent Supportive Housing program.

5. Income Measures are used to help track and understand the gaps in service for those experiencing homelessness throughout the CoC to help increase their income. The following outcome measures are set by each CoC's Data Management, Collection, and Outcomes Committee.
  - Total Income Outcome must be at a percentage of 40% or greater
  - Earned Income Outcome must be at a percentage of 30% or greater

## ARTICLE 7: Standing Committees

Each CoC has establish the following committee and have a representative being either the Chair or Co-chairs of this committee be a part of the PA HMIS Governing Board:

### *Data Management, Collection, and Outcomes Committee*

This committee is responsible for conducting and coordinating research into the characteristics and needs of homeless, or at risk of homelessness individuals and families. It will review the availability of housing and services, conduct gaps analyses, provide data to the CoC, and make recommendations to the CoC to encourage potential areas of change/improvement. In this capacity, it oversees all data collection and use of data within the CoC. This includes, but is not limited to: ensuring compliance with HMIS regulations and compliance with this Governance Charter and the appendices attached, and recommending changes to the board, as necessary.

The CoC is responsible for ensuring progress in meeting HUD's System Performance Measures and establishing goals from these measures specific to the CoC's needs. The Data Management, Collection and Outcomes Committee will develop and maintain a system for tracking CoC-wide outcomes, as well as tracking progress towards meeting HUD goals. This includes the HUD goals included in the Continuum of Care application. As necessary, the Data Management, Collection and Outcomes Committee, will provide requested data to other committees.

The Data Management, Collection and Outcomes Committee will be responsible for preparing data collection tools and completing data analysis for the annual Point-In-Time survey. Any person may be recruited to serve on this committee by the committee chair. Committee membership may be drawn from the community at large, not only from the general membership of the CoC. Committees will meet periodically to fulfill their tasks. Reports of committee work will be made to at the CoC's Board Meetings, as needed.

Members of this Committee, as dictated in this Charter, will also participate on the HMIS governing board. This board is responsible for planning, decision making, recommending policies, evaluation and facilitation for the continued implementation and success of the HMIS, as well reviewing and updating the HMIS Charter, as necessary.

## ARTICLE 8: Funding Allocation

Funding for the PA HMIS is allocated through a variety of sources from grants, cooperation agreements, and service agreements with contracted agencies including:

- Continuum of Care(CoC) competition;
- Bucks County Department of Community and Business Development
- Emergency Solutions Grant;
- PA Department of Human Services (PATH programs);
- Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA;
- Veterans Multi-Service Center (SSVF programs);
- YWCA of Greater Harrisburg (SSVF programs).

#### *A. Reduction of a Specific Grant*

In the event that a CoC, no longer has funding to support their existing percentage per share of the PA HMIS implementation through their CoC's HMIS allocation, it is outlined in each agency participation agreement with those agencies within the Balance of State CoCs that individual agencies will be responsible for the cost of their own licenses to access the PA HMIS software. The Collaborative strongly encourages participating agencies to leverage funds from other non-CoC competition funding sources to help support their Collaborative implementation.

#### *B. Across the Board Funding Reductions*

In the event that the CoCs Boards determines that there is insufficient funding to service all existing grants and that funding reductions are required, as an option only of last resort, any such funding reductions shall not be applied to the direct cost of the Collaborative implementation, considering that HUD mandates the CoC's use of an HMIS database.

## **ARTICLE 9: Liability of Members**

No member of the PA HMIS Governing Board shall be personally liable, solely because of membership in the PA Balance of State CoCs, for any debts, obligations, or liabilities of the PA Balance of State CoCs.

## **ARTICLE 10: Governance Charter**

### *A. Adoption*

The initial Draft Charter will be published and distributed to HMIS Governing Board membership for comments to be received within a 21 day period. Comments will be reviewed and considered, and then adopt by majority vote a final Governance Charter for the PA HMIS. The Charter will be presented to each CoC Board for approval, then published on the PA CoC website. The adoption of the initial Policies, Procedures and Standards will follow this same process.

## B. Annual Updates

This Charter and all referenced policies and procedures, in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, will be reviewed and updated by the HMIS Governing Board Committee as needed and no less than annually. Any proposed changes will be provided to the HMIS Governing Board membership for comments at least 21 days in advance. By a vote of the majority of the Board, proposed modifications to this charter and its appendices will be approved and distributed to the membership.

## ARTICLE 11: Charter Version History

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version #</b>	<b>Comments/ Change Log</b>
05/20/2015	1.0	Initial Draft
11/13/2015	1.5	<i>Voted on by Eastern CoC Board for adoption with updated changes related to the following sections:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Overview objective # 2 added around Coordinated Entry;</i></li><li>• <i>Article 1 – 4 : DCED removed as entity to be more of an open document for other agencies to accept responsibilities as HMIS Lead or Collaborative Applicant;</i></li><li>• <i>Article 8.A. - Reduction of a Specific Grant, Language was updated.</i></li><li>• <i>Appendix A pages 7-9: Designating/ Removing Users</i></li></ul>