



Achieving a Quality and Stable HMIS Staffing Pattern

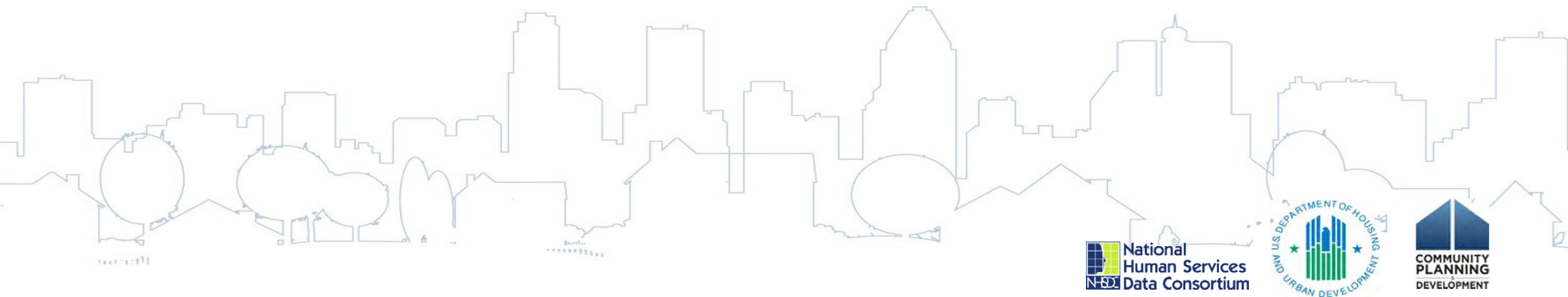
May 2020

Ryan Burger, ICF
Chris Pitcher, ICF



Webinar Instructions

- Webinar will last about 60 minutes
- Participants in 'listen only' mode
- Submit questions in Question and Answer box on right side of screen
- Webinar audio is provided through your computer speakers
- For technical issues, request assistance through the Question and Answer box
- Access to recorded version



Learning Objectives

- Identify questions to guide appropriate HMIS Lead staffing based on CoC size and need
- Summarize knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to manage and operate an effective HMIS implementation including roles and responsibilities
- Identify where funding opportunities may be available to support a functioning HMIS team
- Identify ways to invest in the professional development of your team

Characteristics of a Strong HMIS Lead

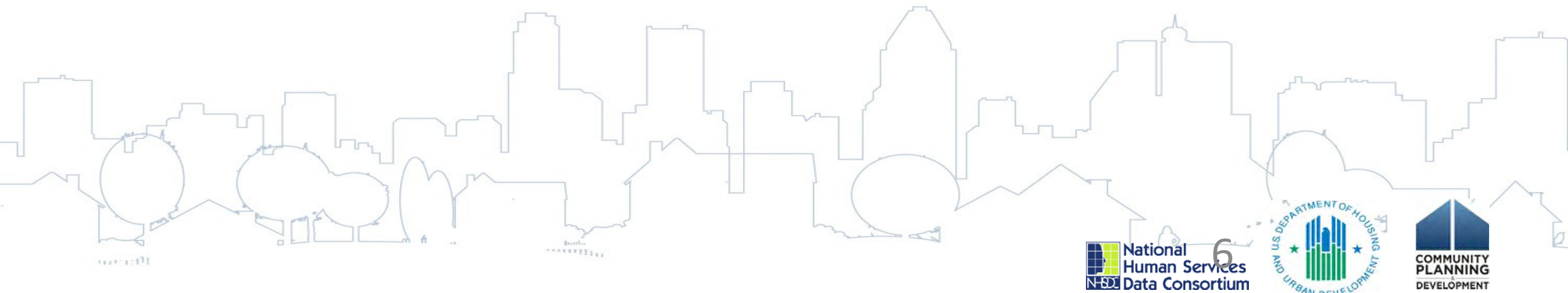
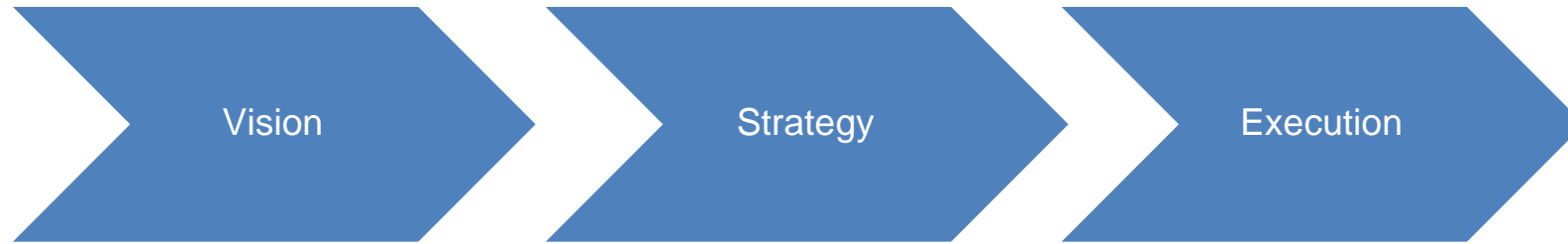
- Trusted by CoC to manage HMIS vendor relationships
- Supported by CoC and the CoC's Data Committee
- Enables a CoC-wide culture of performance
- Enhances data literacy and data-driven planning
- Demonstrates technical proficiency and policy expertise
- Outcomes-driven and transparent
- Implements feedback loops to improve performance

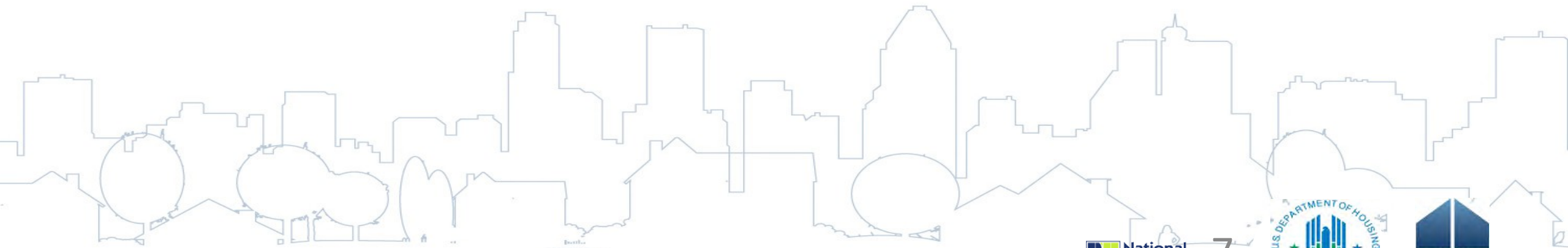
Guiding Questions

Identify guiding questions to develop an appropriate HMIS Lead staffing model:

- **What** is the vision and goal for HMIS in your community?
- **How** are you building a culture to support the vision?
- **Who** do you have in positions to move the vision forward?
- **When** should we assess the expectations of the HMIS Lead?
- **Where** does the funding and resources to make progress come from?

Defining Your HMIS Vision





Vision as “The What”

What role does HMIS play in your community?

- Is there a common vision, goal or understanding of HMIS?
- CoC and HMIS leadership should jointly and clearly articulate the vision for HMIS and how the Lead will achieve it. Lead staff need to understand how their contribution fits into the bigger picture.
- Important to find ways to infuse this sense of purpose on an ongoing basis for the continued growth of the team.
- Consider both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators

Vision as “The What”

What are the expectations of the HMIS Lead Agency?

- 1) Identify how the HMIS is currently being used in your community:
 - State/local reporting
 - Data matching
 - Funding opportunities

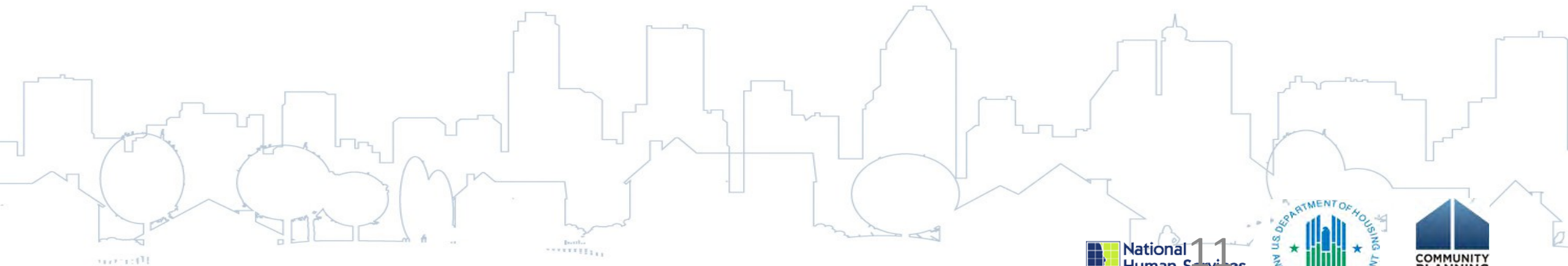
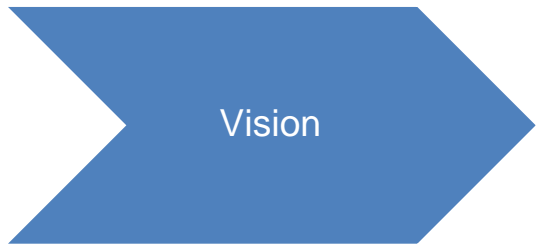
- 2) Do the expectations of HMIS align with the CoC's vision of HMIS?
 - Clearly define vision and goals of data as a tool to help end homelessness
 - Set expectations for the HMIS Lead to meet
 - Formalized in the HMIS-CoC MOU
 - Allow room for transparent assessment of matching needs and expectations with resources and strategy

Vision as “The What”

What are the expectations of your HMIS Lead Staff?

Key responsibilities of the HMIS Lead staff include many different activities, including:

- Policy and Planning
- System Administration
- Reporting and Analysis
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Training and Technical Support
- Coordinated Entry Support
- Communication and Capacity Building



Strategy as “The How”

How do you align HMIS resources with the CoC's vision for data?

Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

How do I know if I...

- 1) Understand the CoC's vision for data?
- 2) Have the right resources to support the vision?
- 3) Am developing the right skills across the HMIS Lead team?
- 4) Am aligning staffing models and competencies with the CoC's needs?

Assess Your System to Identify Staffing Needs

Consider whether your HMIS implementation is growing and expanding

- Increase in agency participation in HMIS
- Increase in request for user licensees
- Increase in projects within HMIS
- Increase in end users
- Increase in CoC expectations

Budgeting for future growth and expansion

- Importance of a forward-thinking approach when creating a budget
- Diversify funding sources to align with projected system growth
- Create a strategic plan that accounts for the demand of increased system usage

Assess Your System to Identify Staffing Needs

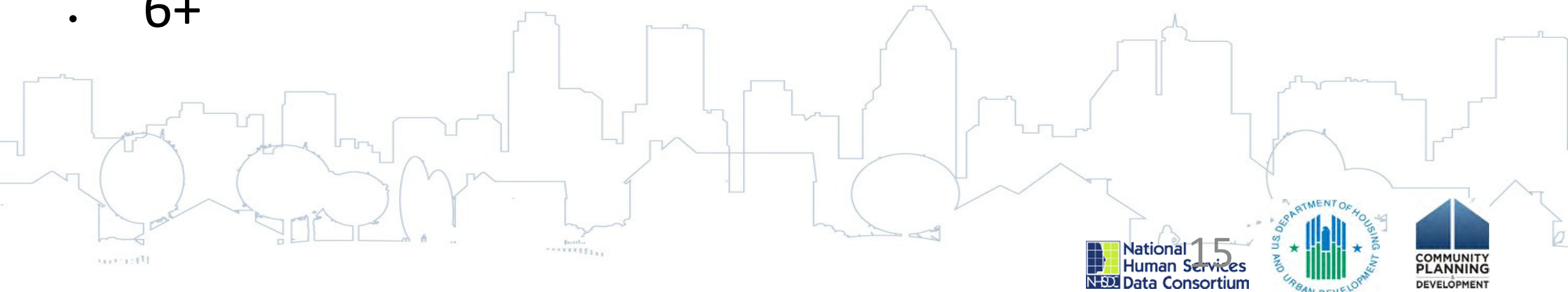
The CoC and HMIS Lead should regularly assess:

- The number of HMIS Lead staff
 - Consider staffing ratio to HMIS end users
 - Consider system administration roles and responsibilities across all stakeholders
- The focus areas and skill sets of HMIS Lead staff
 - Coordinated entry
 - Custom reports
 - Data quality
 - Data matching
 - New initiatives (YHDP, Pay for Success, etc.)

Poll #1

What is the current FTE staff for your HMIS Lead?

- .5 – 1
- 2 – 3
- 4 – 5
- 6+



Poll #2

What is the ideal FTE staff for your HMIS Lead?

- .5 – 1
- 2 – 3
- 4 – 5
- 6+

People and Organizations as “The Who”

Who is moving the HMIS vision forward?

Continuum of Care

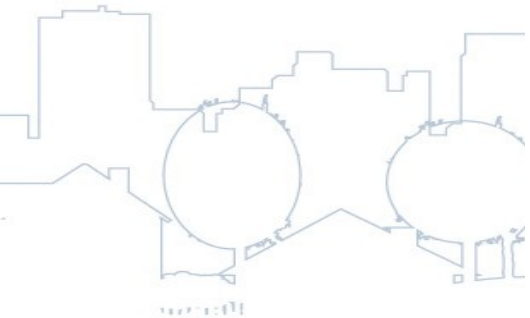
HMIS Lead Agency

CoC
Governance

HMIS Vendor

HMIS End Users

Contributory HMIS
Organizations
(CHOs)



HMIS Lead Roles and Responsibilities

- Policy and Planning → Project Manager
- System Administration → System Administrator
- Reporting and Analysis → Report Writer and/or Data Analyst
- Monitoring and Evaluation → Shared across CoC and HMIS leadership
- Training and Technical Support → Technical Trainer and Help Desk Staff
- Coordinated Entry Support → Shared across CoC and HMIS leadership
- Communication and Capacity Building → Project Manager and shared CoC and HMIS leadership

Identify Ideal Skill Sets

HMIS Technical Staff

- Customer support experience
- Written and oral communication skills
- Technical knowledge and experience
- Task efficiency
- Understanding of CoC programs and projects
- Skills supporting a culture of teamwork
- Passion for homelessness

ALSO: Strong policy orientation and working knowledge of HUD's definition of homelessness.

Identify Ideal Skill Sets

Analysis/Reporting Staff

- Logical, problem solving skills
- Ability to analyze large data sets
- Ability to query data using SQL and other analysis tools, such as Excel, R, SAS, or SPSS
- Understanding of HUD programming and reporting specifications
- Ability to assess data assumptions and vendor report parameters

ALSO: Strong policy orientation and working knowledge of HUD's definition of Homelessness.

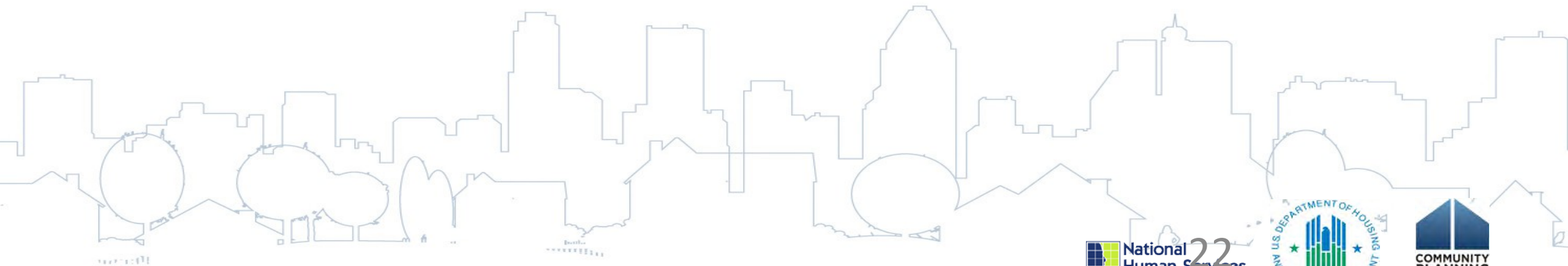
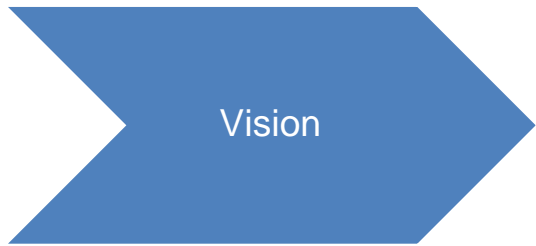
Policy: An Often-Overlooked Skill

HMIS Lead roles and responsibilities are about 50% policy and 50% technical

Job descriptions and staffing plans weighted too heavily one way or the other will leave gaps in local HMIS leadership and capacity

Policy oriented skills:

- ✓ Knowledge of Federal strategic initiatives to prevent and end homelessness
- ✓ Working knowledge of HUD's 4 categories of homelessness, as well as the chronic homeless definition
- ✓ Familiarity with federal, state, and local privacy statutes and regulations



Lead Staffing and “When” to Adapt

- Smaller HMIS implementations with few users to support, one or more of these functions may be combined in the same staff role
- Will need to have a multitude of relevant skills
- Larger HMIS implementations should ensure adequate staffing to cover the distinct task and time requirements of the multiple staffing roles needed to achieve CoC goals
- Must objectively consider level of commitment needed to avoid staff burnout and turnover

Strengthen and Improve Staff Capacity

Create a culture of flexibility yet accountability

- ❑ Be prepared to wear different hats if the needs of your CoC change
- ❑ Cross-train HMIS Lead staff to understand how their position affects the roles of others
- ❑ Clearly communicate roles and responsibilities when expectations change
- ❑ Create a holistic view of how the role of the HMIS Lead works within the greater CoC

Strengthen and Improve as a Team

Schedule regular meetings:

- By developing relationships and getting to know your team members, you will begin to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and skills yet to be developed.
- Take the time to learn how to motivate your team to go beyond what is expected of them.

Give proactive, constructive feedback:

- Instead of waiting until a problem occurs and then giving feedback, develop a habit of regularly letting your team members know how they are doing and what areas they could improve

Ensure supervision is prioritized and consistent:

- Take time to listen and provide guidance to your staff. Consistency communicates that your team is valued and heard, creating a trusting space to work through issues as they arise.

HUD Certificate of Completion

Reminder: HUD is offering a Certificate-of-Completion for completing four of the seven sessions within the HMIS Foundations track.

To earn credit for completion of this session, please make sure you included your contact details when the session began.

Thank you!

Ryan Burger: ryan.burger@icf.com

Chris Pitcher: chris.pitcher@icf.com

