LSA Submission Process: Discussion Session Office Hours Session #1 10/28/2020 – TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 2:

Jeanne Goodman: Greetings everyone, we'll begin shortly.

SLIDE 3:

Meghan Henry: Hello, everybody. We're going to wait just one more minute to allow people to call in and then we're going to get started. Hi everyone and welcome to the office hour session for the CoCs on the LSA data submission for 2019 and 2020.

SLIDE 4:

Meghan Henry: We'll start by covering some of the logistics. Phone lines are muted to reduce background noise. We do ask that if you have questions, comments or technical difficulties, please use the Q and A function to submit your questions and use the All Panelist option to have your question triaged to the correct staff member.

SLIDE 5:

Meghan Henry: We have disabled to chat and so if you want to send questions directly to the host, please do so again, using the Q and A and select All Panelists. Here's the screenshot of the WebEx platform. We have circled the primary functions. If the Q and A box does not show up in your right hand panel you can add it by clicking on the blue icon on the right hand panel in the top right corner of the screen.

SLIDE 6:

Meghan Henry: Before sending your question, again, make sure all panelists are selected. We will be creating a resource to share after the event that will highlight the Q and A covered during the presentation. We will also be posting the presentation slides. If your question is not answered today during the live call, we will still include it in this resource. If you still don't see your answer in the resource that's posted, please submit the question through AAQ desk and select the HDX option when doing so to direct it to the right staff.

SLIDE 7:

Meghan Henry: We will begin today with an overview of the LSA in the AHAR and next we'll cover the upload process, provide an overview of the data quality review process. And then after that we'll cover some commonly asked questions that you all have submitted to us already. And then we'll turn to participant questions. We'll wrap up by highlighting the available resources and provide a reminder on what you can expect for the next steps.

SLIDE 8:

Meghan Henry: Today's panel include a group of us at Abt Associates who work on the LSA. I'm Meghan Henry, I'm the AHAR director, and I am joined by my colleagues, Tanya de Sousa, Cicely Wanska, Jesse Jorstad, Jason Rodriguez and Tom Baker. We also have Fran Ledger from HUD. Fran, would you like to introduce yourself and open the webinar?

Fran Ledger: Yeah, that would be wonderful. So I'm Fran Ledger, I'm from the SNAPS office and I'm excited to be here today. I want to thank you all for taking time out to join us. I just want to acknowledge, obviously October is a very difficult month for us. It's a time when there's a lot of reporting requirements happening. It impacts both the HMIS leads, the vendors, so a lot of stakeholders are working hard to make sure that we can do good data reporting and later down the road can look at performance and see how our communities are doing to help end homelessness. So, I just really want to acknowledge the work of everyone and thank you for all the good things that you're doing. I wanted to talk a moment just about the LSA and AHAR. The AHAR is one of the most critical reports we have for understanding homelessness. It's existed for a long time. It's a congressional mandate for us we've been doing and I think now, since 2006. It has evolved greatly over time, as we have advanced the methodology that we use for this report, and communities have advanced their ability to collect information and to refine that information. So, the quality of the data is better. We've been able to get more to get more reliable and valid information to help us to actually look at that data and feel confident about what that data says. And so what we've done in the last 2 years is we've moved towards the LSA, which is a different type of reporting. It requires a lot more information, it's more complex in nature. And what we've done this time around is we've asked communities to submit both their FY2019 and FY2020 reports in the same submission cycle. And we've done that because it actually will ease some of the burden on communities and the vendors at the same time and we've gained some economy of scale, though it's a larger chunk of data. Some of the activities required to do the cleaning and management of that process will actually make it a bit easier. So we appreciate your effort in doing this and I'm hoping this office hours will help you, though there obviously will be a lot more support offered during this process and you'll hear more about it today. And I will turn it over to our great folks at Abt. So, thank you.

SLIDE 9:

Meghan Henry: Thank you, Fran. So I want to go over just an overview. Fran gave a great overview of the LSA and reasons for the LSA. So this will be even maybe even briefer than I had intended, which is great. And many of you are probably not new to this process, but some of you might be. And so I wanted to give a very brief context. Again in 2018 we shifted away from collecting annual data on homelessness through aggregated AHAR tables to a much more detailed and complex LSA upload. This upload is comprised of 10 distinct files, and if you'd like to review information on those files, we'll provide you with resources at the end of this office hours. These data are used to produce the national estimates of homelessness over the course of the year. The shift to the LSA upload means that we can have a better understanding of both who experiences homelessness and how people are served nationally. As these data improve, we will learn much more about system use across the country. The shift in 2018 was a bumpy one and one that came with a lot learned, and we tried to really build these lessons into our process this year.

SLIDE 10:

Meghan Henry: So, with that, we're going to give a very brief overview of the data collection process and we're going to go into more detail about each of these phases as we move forward through this presentation. We are beginning the data collection process with the initial upload phase, which is what we are in right now. If you have questions during this upload phase, we ask that you submit those questions through the AAQ. We also ask that you attempt one submission per recording year during this phase. It does not need to be successful. We just need to know that you have attempted this site, that you're getting familiar with some of the changes to the 2.0. And then understanding that you've gone to this site we can also understand whether there is resources that are needed. This phase ends when you do have a successful upload. Next, when you have a successful upload, you will move into the data quality review phase. And during this phase, you'll be working with an assigned data review team liaison. We will be uploading your data quality review files, which we will discuss shortly to the HDX rather than emailing them back and forth. This phase ends when you and your vendor have addressed all of the issues that you can. We do expect that for most communities, this will be around the end of November. At that point, you will move into the data finalization phase. You may still be working with your liaison through the end of the year. You can make corrections or re-upload as you need and the review team may be in touch to finalize any outstanding issues. This phase and the data question process will end at the end of the year. This is really just a high level overview and again, we'll go into more detail, but at this time, I'm going to turn over to Tom Baker who will briefly walk you through how to upload your LSA. Tom?

SLIDE 1

Tom Baker: Great, thank you Meghan. So yeah, again, we really just want to highlight for you on a high level some of the functionality for the HDX 2.0. So we go to our next slide.

SLIDE 12:

Tom Baker: To upload LSA files to your CoC page, you're first going to need to select your CoC from the dashboard page. You see in the top right Corner of the HDX, that's on the home tab, and then the drop down menu there circled in red is where you're able to select your CoC and again, this is the first step to beginning an LSA upload in HDX 2.0.

SLIDE 13:

Tom Baker: So, once you have selected your CoC, you're going to click on either the view LSA button at the bottom of the LSA status table shown, circled there, or select the LSA tab in the top right corner of the page to navigate to the view official status page.

SLIDE 14:

Tom Baker: So you have two options there to submit. Either using that bottom button, or in the top right. On the official submission status page, you will have 3 options presented to you on the left hand side of the LSA section. You can view your official submission status at any time you can view all data sets, and you can upload a new data set. So, for the purposes of uploading, which we're talking through now, you will select the upload new tab as the third option there in the top left corner.

SLIDE 15:

Tom Baker: And then, here's where you get to kind of provide a little bit of information about your upload. So from that upload new page, you may upload an LSA file for any CoC with which you are affiliated. Before selecting an LSA file. You should indicate which reporting year the file is for, in the reporting year drop down menu. And this is especially important this year as we are doing a 2 year reporting cycle, fiscal year 19 and fiscal year 2020. So you will select and do a discreet submission. Once you select the reporting year, you can click the blue browse to find file button located at the top of the form to navigate to the file you wish to upload. Again, note that this upload to the HDX 2.0 is the zip file of the 10 required CSV files that complete and make up an LSA submission. And so you can work with your vendor to produce the needed materials. And many of you have already begun to successfully upload. So thank you so much for that. And here—we can just go back real quick and if you could, you can also, I just want to highlight one other thing. You can, at any time, upload a local use zip file or an official HUD submission. Just want to clarify that the local use zip file option is an option that you will see internally in your CoC it allows you to upload and review LSA files for local year round use. And then you can also choose official HUD submission for the LSA upload, and those ones will be the ones that are officially uploaded to our review team for data quality review and for subsequent inclusion in the AHAR. So, I just want to clarify that distinction there, make sure you're selecting official HUD submission for the ones that you would like us to see for the purposes of our data cleaning.

SLIDE 16:

Tom Baker: Alright, the next step is once you have officially uploaded your LSA so again, selected the reporting year and selected that zip file, the view official HUD submission status page will display and this will show the status for all your official LSA submissions for every year you submit and for any CoC you've been granted access for. So some of you may work with multiple CoCs. On this official submission status page that's where you will see all CoCs for all reporting years for all of the CoCs for which you’re submitting. From left to right, 23The CoC status summary screen shows information about your upload, so the CoC code and name, the file and name of your uploaded LSA, so being sure to name it something distinct that you will remember and that you can differentiate, the fiscal years covered by the submitted LSA report, so whether it's for the 2019 or 2018, submission, the date the report was generated and uploaded, whether or not it's in progress, in review, complete, or confirmed. And we'll talk a little bit more about what those steps mean later in this presentation. Who submitted it and who the primary contact is and some information about the data errors and warnings that may be present in the file. This is really just to view where the file is, your errors and warnings will be sent to you separately and we'll talk more about that. But this is really to just track the submissions you've made in the system thus far and make sure they're aligned with the reporting year that you wish for them to be.

SLIDE 17:

Tom Baker: And again, this is on the view all data sets page. This is where you can access each of the files. So it's a blue hyperlink file. Um, you can choose the search functions at the bottom, or in the upper right hand side of the table to filter your results. And this is where you can view and filter all of your data sets and actually click into them from the view all datasets page.

SLIDE 18:

Tom Baker: So, just wanted again to give you that really quick overview of the system for some of you, HDX 2.0 may be a totally new platform for you. So, just, again, these materials will be recorded for your future use and will also capture all of these steps for navigating the HDX 2.0 in the LSA submission guide, which we'll share at the end of this presentation. And as always if you have any questions for us, we are staffing the HDX AAQ Desk. So, you may at any time go to the AAQ desk, select that your question is related to the HDX, and provide any technical challenges you're having with your submission there and we'll get a response for you.

SLIDE 19:

Tom Baker: So, now I'm going to pass it over to Jesse to talk a little bit more about the data quality review and what you should expect once you submit a LSA upload.

Jesse Jorstad: Alright, thank you so much, Tom. Okay, so we've gotten a lot of questions from folks about the process. So we wanted to make sure that we could illuminate that for everybody and make sure that we're all on the same page.

SLIDE 20:

Jesse Jorstad: So, we are right now in the initial upload phase, which Meghan talked about a bit. What should be going on right now is you should be exporting your LSA report from your HMIS, you're going to download that file. You're going to upload that to HDX 2.0 that file will either be accepted or rejected. If the file is rejected, it probably means that there's something structurally wrong with the file, or that that could be one thing that it means, right. So, what I mean by that is that maybe there are columns in the files that are misspelled. Or that there is a name of a file that's incorrect. It's missing a column, those types of structural issues, right? Or it's the incorrect file type. Another thing that could be going on is that some of the project data descriptors might be incomplete or invalid. So those are the things that you're going to be making sure that you take care of during this period of time, so if you do get a rejected file, you can click on the print error report button, and it will describe for you what is going on. If you need help understanding what those errors mean, please reach out via the AAQ desk. If you need help resolving the errors, your vendor would be a good resource for this initial type of error.

SLIDE 2

Jesse Jorstad: Great. So once you get an accepted upload, your initial phase is done, and now you're moving into the data review phase. If you are already in that phase, you will not yet have your errors and warnings file. It just means that you're ahead of the curve and that's great news. So, you can just take the next couple of days off and just relax, but eventually we'll catch up to you, and we'll start the next phase with you. So, once you have that accepted report, and the next thing that will happen is, our team is going to generate an error and warning file. When that file posts to HDX 2.0, an email is going to go out to the CoC primary contact, the person who submitted the file, and also your data liaison. So, you'll get a notification that that file is ready to be picked up. You'll log in to you'll download that file. I'll show you what that looks like in a minute here. And then Jason in a couple of minutes is going to go through what those files look like and kind of how to handle them. There are some improvements that have been made since last year. So, hopefully, navigating those files is going to be easier. So, the types of warnings and errors you're going to see at this stage of the game will be things like a mismatch in the number of people or households that's recorded in one area versus a different area right? Or maybe a mismatch of inventory dedicated beds versus a funding source. So, maybe you've said that it's funded by VASH, but there are no dedicated veteran beds. That doesn't totally makes sense. We've got to figure that out together. This process is primarily driven by the CoC, so you can upload as many files as it takes for the data to reflect your community accurately.

SLIDE 22:

Jesse Jorstad: So, then we'll move to phase three and this is the data finalization phase. So, at this point, you've gotten to a place where you feel like your data are accurate and now the data liaison is sort of finalizing the data so, at that point, the data liaison is kind of driving the process. They might be back in touch with you to get additional information about your data or to ask for a few more corrections.

SLIDE 23:

Jesse Jorstad: So that error and warning file. So, as I mentioned, once the successful upload happens, this file is going to be generated. That is a process that is done by staff and so it doesn't happen immediately. The plan is for those files to be generated on Tuesdays and Thursdays. So, if you submit your file before the close of business on a Tuesday, you should have a file back the following day so it's going to happen in an overnight process. Now, that means that nothing went wrong with the technology, which sometimes happens, but I'll just call this the happy path. Right? So everything goes as planned, that's how it's going to work. So, just know that there is a bit of a delay. That does not at all impact your initial upload phase. So don't feel like, oh, my gosh. If we don't get it in, by close of business on Thursday, we're not going to have any information for Friday. Everything's going to fall apart. Nope, by Friday, we're just hoping to have a successful upload. Okay, so again, these files are going to contain some common data quality questions and concerns. The errors and warnings this time around are going to be grouped to show which are likely something to be addressed by the vendor versus something that likely needs the CoC's attention.

SLIDE 24:

Jesse Jorstad: Thank you. So, when you get the email about your errors and warnings, this is the screen that you will go to to pick up that file. You can see that there's a file name, it says error and warning, it says who it was updated by and when it was updated. And you'll be able to pick up your most recent file. This is also where you will upload the file to submit it back to your data liaison, then they will come here and pick up the file. And so that is how communication is going to work this time around, in terms of transferring that file, rather than if you were part of this process last year, there were a lot of emails going back and forth with this information. Hopefully, this will make it easier to keep track of which file is the most recent for you to be focusing on.

SLIDE 25:

Jesse Jorstad: This note about some language here so an error means that there's either something structurally wrong with the file or the data are not possible. What I mean by the data are not possible is that in in this area, you say you have ten adults, and in this area you say there are 11 adults, and that doesn't make sense. So, we've got to get that resolved. It means that there are corrections to the data that are needed in HMIS itself. Which you will then generate a new export and you will upload the new file to make those corrections. A warning is something that is unexpected in the data. So, that might be like, let's say that there are zero people in your LSA person file. That is very unexpected. It's not impossible, maybe you didn't survey anyone, or, you know. That's probably the only explanation, but those types of things where we're really not expecting to see that, or maybe the demographics in one area of your report are just radically different from another area. Those are the types of warnings that we see. So this requires either a correction to the data if there was an error or a mistake and then a new upload or a note of explanation.

SLIDE 26:

Jesse Jorstad: There are about 45 types of warnings, but these multiply out by household and project types for a total of about 330. So, we go through some of those, if we can put those in large types, what we're going to be looking at, in terms of those warnings, are files that don't have any data in them, records that have missing dates of birth, which means that we're unable to classify the household type, which is really key to the AHAR. There could be something happening with your dedicated beds. So either you recorded a dedicated funding source, but no dedicated beds, or, maybe there's, you've reported that all clients belong to a specific some sub-population like youth. But, none of the beds are dedicated, that's kind of unusual. So we would want to ask some questions about that to make sure that that's accurate. Another possible error, or another possible warning rather is that a victim service provider is reporting that clients we're serving during the period. What we would expect to see for a victim service provider is that yes, they are a continuum project. No, they are not HMIS participating. We would not expect to see client data in your file.

SLIDE 27:

Jesse Jorstad: There can also be unexpected performance things, so maybe your length of stay is really unusual or your utilization rate. Again, 100% of the clients belong to a sub-population and none of the beds are dedicated. If there's a high number of missing duplicative or invalid social security numbers. So, for example, if you have 100 people, and all of them have a social security number that is just a series of zeros. That's going to be, that's gonna be something that gets flagged for review. Demographic differences between your PIT and your LSA and differences between your HIC and your inventory. To clarify around the inventory when we compare the HIC to it, we are actually looking at your inventory for the date of your HIC/PIT. So, it's not, we're not making a comparison of like, here's your annual inventory versus your HIC, why aren't they the same, but rather on that date, we would expect those things to be the same.

SLIDE 28:

Jesse Jorstad: Okay, I'm going to pass it off to Jason to talk a little bit about the flag file.

Jason Rodriguez: Thanks Jesse. Yeah, so as Jesse mentioned, there are 2 types of flags. There are error flags and there are warning flags. Which is why we sometimes call this the errors slash warnings file, but it's also called the flag file.

SLIDE 29:

Jason Rodriguez: This may look familiar, if you participated last year, this spreadsheet might look familiar, but there are important differences from last year. So this is what you'll see when you first open the flag file and it's an Excel format. It'll open up to the table of contents and as you can see, um, so besides the table of contents, there are 5 different tabs. There's a flag summary tab, which, and that provides like, a 10000 foot view of your flags, just basic information, summarizing the file as a whole. Then after that, we have a couple different flags tabs that provide the individual details on your individual flags. So this is different from last year. We split the flags into 2 different sheets. One of the flag sheets is called the flags HMIS vendor tab. And this is where, so this is for flags where vendor support may be required and then the flags CoC tab is. That contains flags where the CoC should be able to resolve the flag without the vendor's help. So, even though it's called the flags HMIS vendor tab, CoC's shouldn't skip over the vendor tab. There might be some flags that they'll be able to resolve, but it'll likely require the vendors help. And then, lastly, at the end of this file, there are some bed and utilization tabs split into 2 different tabs. One is for CoC level summary data and the other is for more granular and project-level data. And I want to point out, to navigate this file, you'll want to look toward the bottom of that Excel page, you'll see the different tabs listed. They're kind of marked with the red box right now and, um, and since there are several tabs, if you don't see all of them, you'll want to make sure to scroll over using the green arrow button that's circled there.

SLIDE 30:

Jason Rodriguez: So, the first tab is the flag summary tab and here CoC's can see frequencies of their errors and their warnings across several categories. This is helpful if maybe there's 1 particular category of a flag, such as, geography or flags from the LSA person file that are causing a lot of problems. You can quickly identify which kind of flag is causing the problem, and this also distinguishes between the distinct number of flags triggered and the number of records flagged because the same flag can be producing a lot of issues across multiple records. So you can know exactly how many distinct issues there are and how many records they're affecting.

SLIDE 3

Jason Rodriguez: So the next 2 tabs contain the individual flags. These are a little more complicated. So I'll spend a little more time here. And as I mentioned, there's, there's an HMIS vendor tab and a CoC tab. Within these tabs, each row provides information on a unique error, or a unique warning for a unique LSA record. There are 3 groups of columns and they're each color coded, or each of the sections are, um, color coded. One is a flag summary section, which is different than the flag summary tab. There's a flag notes in status section and a flag data section. And altogether these sections will tell you which records are affected, they'll help you diagnose the underlying issues and that are triggering the flag and they'll help facilitate your communication with the AHAR team.

SLIDE 32:

Jason Rodriguez: Alright, so we're doing a deep dive now into the flag tabs and, like, I mentioned the HMIS Vendor tab and the CoC tab have the exact same layout so, right now I'm showing the flags CoC tab, but it looks the same as the vendor tab. So these tabs are wide, so you'll want to make sure you scroll over a lot so that you're seeing all the different sections. Right now we're just looking at the flag summary section. Each row shows a unique warning, or a unique error for a unique record. So you can see that the first row shown here is a warning flag. And the second row is a data error. The warning flag is saying that the utilization rate for this project type is unusually low, and it's at the CoC level, which you can see in the sixth column there. The summary section also shows the at the data source, and the, uh, some basic kind of identifying information about the flag, the flag ID number, the flag ID sub-number, the flag category. These can help facilitate your communication with your vendors and also the AHAR team.

SLIDE 33:

Jason Rodriguez: The next section in this tab is the flag notes and status section. So this is brand new and this will help facilitate your connection with your communication with the AHAR team. So, in your first flag file, all files will be marked as not resolved in that first column there, the resolution status. As you resubmit, and as you explain warnings, and as errors get fixed, resolution status may be marked as resolved, or may be marked as underlying data has changed. So the latter, the underlying data has changed and designation may indicate that a flag was previously resolved, but in your most recent data upload, there's some kind of change in the underlying data that necessitates another look. So that'll require an additional comment. So, the second column here, the CoC Notes to the AHAR team column is for CoCs to explain any warnings in their data. So, explanations of errors are not reviewed. So, the cell in the 2nd flag row is grayed out because that's an error flag. Um, the yellow cell indicates a warning flag and so that lets you know that you can enter in an explanation if you believe that the underlying data are actually correct, maybe you did have a really low utilization for that project type. And so that would be a chance to explain why. So when you submit this file back to the AHAR team, the AHAR team is going to review your explanation, and if necessary write a response to you and so, the AHAR team's notes to the CoC is that 3rd column there and that'll appear here on the subsequent flag file, because you'll be receiving multiple of these over time most likely. So, in your next flag file, you'll, you'll see the AHAR team notes in response to your previous explanation. And then the last column here is CoC flag status tracking, and this is not reviewed by the AR team. This is purely for your own internal use, and it's optional, that's just for you to write down any notes that are related to the flag in question just so you can help, just so you can keep track of what's going on.

SLIDE 34:

Jason Rodriguez: And the final section in the flags tab is the flag data section. So this is rather large, you might have to scroll quite a bit to see all of the different flag data fields shown here. Yeah, so these columns provide more detailed information on the specific LSA fields that are triggered or that are triggering the flag. So one flag can have as many as 14 data fields. That's uncommon here, only 3 data fields are contributing to these flags. But you may have to scroll to see the additional data fields. For each data field there is a description of the field. And the field's value for the record in question. For example, the second flag here shows a project ID of 240, and the colors of the columns alternate to visually distinguish flag data fields. So there's 2, the first 2 columns are for flag data field 1. The second 2 columns are for flag data field 2, and so on. And I want to run through a quick example using the flag data field shown here. So the problem described in the earlier section of this tab was that the CoC's utilization rate for ES, SH, and TH was unusually low. And here we see the data at the root of this determination. So the rate is calculated to be 21.37%, which is 65.84 average households divided by 308.8 active beds and you can see each of those numbers there. And that tells, and so, once again these are the underlying data that is behind the flag, and so if these data are correct, and you verify this, then that's when you would write an explanatory note in the flag notes and status section. Otherwise there may be a data issue that you need to address in in your next upload.

SLIDE 35:

Jason Rodriguez: And the last 2 tabs in the flag file are the bed and utilization tabs. So one is the bed and utilization summary tab. This shows CoC-level data for various combinations of statistic type, household type, and project type. For example, it'll show the average length of stay for, for adult only households in shelter projects. And a second of these tabs is the bed and utilization by project tab, this shows project level data for various combinations of a statistic type and household type. These flags are relatively self-explanatory, they show breakdowns for dedicated beds and key sub-populations and the project level tab shows breakdowns for various funding sources as well. And you might want to refer to this when you're investigating data issues that are producing flags, especially those related to inventory and utilization. For example, for the utilization issue we saw earlier, it may be that there are certain projects with very low utilizations that you might want to look further into. And I'll hand it off to Tanya.

SLIDE 36:

Tanya de Sousa: Thanks Jason. Okay. So now I'm going to go over some of the frequently asked questions that have come over the HUD AAQ desk. At the end of the session that we are going to open it up and respond to some of the questions that I've been going through in the Q and A and assigning. So, if I didn't respond to your question in the Q and A, it's likely that it's flagged for a verbal response for the whole team on the call today.

SLIDE 37:

Tanya de Sousa: So the first question that I wanted to go over was the time period covered in the LSA. So we've got 2 reporting years happening this year. The first one is fiscal year 2019, and that covers all data from October 1st, 2018 through September 30th, 2019. For the fiscal year 2020 report, that's going to cover everything from October 1st, 2019 through September 30th, 2020. So, each LSA report is also going to cover the client demographics and system use information for the 2 years prior to that reporting period. So it'll be back to October 1st, 2016 for fiscal year, 19, and through October 1st, 2017 for fiscal year 20. The product descriptor data elements for projects during this time period will also be included in the LSA.

SLIDE 38:

Tanya de Sousa: Alright, so question 2 is about who will be able to see the local use files, and who was able to see the official HUD review files. So any file uploaded for a particular CoC can be seen with anyone with read access or higher to that CoC as well as the HUD technical assistance team who administers the HDX 2.0 for troubleshooting purpose. Official review files that are in the system with a status of submitted or higher will also be seen by the Abt data liaisons and the Abt data analysis team.

SLIDE 39:

Tanya de Sousa: Next question. The next question is, why do I get an error message when I try to upload an official HUD review file even though I deleted my previous HUD review file. So you can only have 1 official HUD review file listed as a time in the HDX 2.0. You can see the system, you can use the systems replace button to easily switch the designation to a new upload. Otherwise you may need to locate and manually switch your current official HUD review file to a local use zip file before being able to update a new upload to that official designation. In addition, if you're trying to upload a new LSA file using the official HUD review file designation but already have another file still listed as the official HUD review file, your CoC will not show up on the list on the new LSA upload page. So, to fix that, you just need to return to your uploads list and switch the designation to official HUD review file. Oh, from official HUD review file to a local use file before proceeding to upload a new one and switching it to the HUD review file. That said we do recommend uploading all files as a local use file and changing the file type to official HUD review file after you review it and are ready to mark that as your submission.

SLIDE 40:

Tanya de Sousa: Question 4, when attempting to submit a test LSA through HDX 2.0 it will not allow me to select a CoC. What do I do? So the first thing you need to do is confirm that you have write access to the CoC, and if you do not, you'll need to request that your CoC primary contact change your access and give you write privileges. If you do have write privileges for your CoC and it's still not showing up in your drop down menu on the upload new LSA page, you're likely trying to upload an official HUD review file for a CoC that already has one. So, just select local use only on the drop down menu and you should be able to proceed with the upload.

SLIDE 4

Tanya de Sousa: All right question 5, do all of our CoC's projects need to be in HMIS, even if they don't participate in HMIS? So, yes. Every continuum project must be set up in HMIS even if it does not participate in HMIS by entering client level data. There's more information available about this in the 2020 HMIS data standard manual. That specifically says that at minimum, HUD requires that the CoC, typically via the HMIS lead agency, collect project descriptor information in the HMIS for one, all continuum projects within its jurisdiction participating in HMIS, by collecting and entering client level data as well as all residential continuum projects, regardless of their participation in HMIS. So, therefore, all continuum projects should be in HMIS with the org associated organization and product identifiers, even if the projects themselves do not report client level data in your HMIS. You can follow the guidance in section 1.2 of the data standard manual to assign the project descriptor data elements to those projects. And there's also more information in section 2.02 about how to assign project IDs that are linked to those product descriptor information as well.

SLIDE 42:

Tanya de Sousa: Okay question 6, what is geography type, and how do I include this data for the LSA? So, geography type is 1 of 3 designations, either rural, urban or suburban. The LSA doesn't ask per se, whether your CoC is rural, urban or suburban in the sense that it's not a question that your CoC needs to answer. Instead each project, and its associated clients is associated with a zip code that you provide in the project descriptor data elements in your HMIS vendors. So HMIS vendors have been provided with a crosswalk of zipcodes to rural, urban, or suburban designations. That crosswalk is also available on HUD exchange, and your vendor is expected to have embedded that crosswalk into your HMIS so that the geography field, auto populates based on the zip code that you enter for that project. So no further analysis or information is required on your part. Each client included in your LSA upload is therefore able to be sorted into 1 of those categories based on where they were served.

SLIDE 43:

Tanya de Sousa: Question 7 is our last question before I open it up, and that's why can't I submit LSA data in HDX 2.0? So only 1 contact per CoC has submit privileges in HDX 2.0, often times that's the CoC primary contact for the CoC unless that contact has gone into HDX 2.0 and reassigned those privileges to another individual. Your primary can check who has submit privileges under the manage my users tab in HDX2.0.

SLIDE 44:

Tanya de Sousa: Okay, so now I am going to pass it over to Tom, who is going to facilitate some of the verbal question and answer session. So if you have any additional questions, please make sure you put them in the Q and A, and we will either respond to them in writing or pull them out for a verbal response.

Tom Baker: Great. Thanks so much Tanya. Thanks to everyone who has submitted questions. We have a bit of a running list here so we will just jump in and start to answer them. So, our 1st question that we received is do rejected count towards meeting the 10/30 deadline.

Meghan Henry: Yes, so all we ask by the 10/30 deadline is that you try. So that you go into the system and you try. Meeting the deadline does not mean having a successful and submitted file. It just means that we see, and we can see who has attempted, and what the status of that attempt is.

Tom Baker: Okay, our next question is, which HIC is being used for the LSA this year. Is it 2019, 2018 or both?

Meghan Henry: Yeah, go ahead, Jason.

Jason Rodriguez: Oh, yeah, I was going to say we're, so we're collecting 2 years' worth of data this year and that includes the bed inventory data. So we'd want to include the 2019. so we'll, we'll be examining the 2019 pick when it comes to your fiscal year 2019 LSA, and then 2020 HIC when it comes to your fiscal year 2020 LSA.

Tom Baker: Okay, and our next question is, does HUD have a hard deadline for the LSA report submission? It's currently listed as late November.

Meghan Henry: So, we're, we're listing it as late November. I think November 27th is the date that we put on the slide and we'll present the timeline again after the question answer period. It really is, we wouldn't want to call it a hard deadline simply because as you all know, there are issues that come up. So it's the time that we expect most CoCs will be able to get to a place where they can submit a successful upload. We do anticipate working with CoCs through the month of December, particularly those who are struggling with getting to a successful upload at this point.

Tom Baker: Okay, I see last year there were ID numbers for each unique flag, but not for each instance of that flag. Is it the same this year? Or will there be a unique ID for each occurrence of each error? And will this remain consistent across flag file?

Jason Rodriguez: Yeah, that's a good question. So, yeah, so the same unique flag can be triggered multiple times. For example, if the same projects, or if different projects have had the same kind of kind of error or same kind of warning and this year, yes, there is a unique ID. For each instance of the flag, it's called flag data ID. And we've hidden it from the spreadsheet, just to kind of simplify the spreadsheet a little bit, but it's a hidden column. You can unhide it. It's mainly for our internal use but if you would find that helpful, it is in the file. And I should add that that's it. We only have a unique ID for the warnings, not for the errors.

Tom Baker: All right. Next question we have is are victims service providers expected to submit to the LSA? I believe that we answered that question. Anyone else want to add additional info about that, what the expectation is there?

Jesse Jorstad: I would just say that if your victim service providers have continuum projects, the projects should be in your HMIS. Again, yes, it's a continuum project, no, it's not HMIS-participating, but the victim service providers themselves are not submitting any data directly for the LSA process.

Meghan Henry: Yeah, and I would just add that I would ask that communities confirm that there are no client level data in those files? Because while we do expect the PE to be there we really do not want to see any client level data in there.

Tom Baker: Right, and will the error report for phase 1 specify the project ID with our PDDE errors.

Cicely Wanska: So that one I think was assigned to me, and I did answer that one. So really the report errors, the upload report error is going to look through each of the files, and it's going to identify each row where there is a data issue that's preventing upload. So, if the case, like the project, that CSV file where there is a project ID in there then yes, if it doesn't exist in the file in which the error is occurring then no, it would not have a specific project ID. HDX is just looking at the data, the data structure, as Jesse said, and then the data elements, and making sure that they adhere to the data dictionary. And if they don’t, then it's going to flag it. Pardon the pun.

Tom Baker: Okay, does the CSV used to upload need to be for the 3 year period, or just the 1 year period for 2019 or 2020 and this one was answered as well. This is just for the single year and your vendor should have programmed it in to also pull the additional information needed. This is a deadline question. Does the deadline for LSA submission mean that after November 27 there'll be no further opportunity to correct data issues in HMIS and submit a clean LSA, then in December, how are we working with the data liaison to finalize the submissions?

Meghan Henry: No, if you still need those few weeks between the end of November and the end of December to re upload, you can absolutely do so. For some CoCs, the relationship with the data liaison will be more limited, it will be just follow up on, you know, small number of issues that we need to understand a little bit better. And for others, you might still be working with them a bit more intensely, depending on where you are in the process.

Tom Baker: Okay, another question, a few questions have come in, just to clarify, just to recap because I think this is a Jesse question. If we have met the deadline and upload successfully, when will we get something back? I may have missed this, if you already answered it. I think we just got that a few times. I want to make sure that we clarify that.

Jesse Jorstad: Yeah, so if you've had a successful upload and you're waiting for your errors and warnings file, those files will be created on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and so you should see them the following business day. If what you're asking is you have done all of your errors and warnings, all of that is cleaned up, you feel like things are accurate, you've submitted, you know, all of your steps are done, I believe, and Meghan, maybe you can confirm this, that the usability determination, when you would hear about that is in February? Is that accurate?

Meghan Henry: We'll begin that in January. That's right.

Tom Baker: Okay, we have projects that have been closed and a new project opened during this 2 year period. Do we need to run the LSA for only open projects?

Jesse Jorstad: I can take that one. So, your vendor should have programmed your LSA in such a way and your data set up or your project set up data should be set up in such a way that all you need to do is enter the report parameters and the correct data will be pulled. So, as long as you have gone in and created a project end date, and ended that inventory, created a new project, that sort of thing the report should do all the hard work.

Tom Baker: Okay, next question, how do you use the local file upload to check for data quality throughout the year?

Meghan Henry: Well we don't, we don't have the capability even to run a data quality review reports, so a flag file, on your local use files. So that's not possible. However, there are a number of Stella resources that are available and so the local you file can be used as I understand it to sort of generally take a look at data quality through the Stella process. I don't know if somebody else can speak to that a little bit better.

Jesse Jorstad: Sure. I can take that one. So the other piece is that there is a data quality view that is kind of high level. That's part of the LSA submission process too, that gives you like missing rates. So if that's what you're looking for, that information is available in HDX 2.0. But I think most communities are using that local use file to be able to Stellavise their data and then look at things from more of a performance standpoint in Stella. But you could also use it to check the data quality in the LSA process.

Tom Baker: Thank you Jesse and can someone expand on what the usability determination is? Talk a little bit more about usability.

Meghan Henry: Sure. So, the usability determinations were made in prior AHARs differently than they are made now. Essentially, what we do is that we review the final set of data and the data quality issues that exist in every single file and essentially identify how to use what we have to account for what we don't have. That's really sort of, when it comes to the national estimates, we don't do a complete census and so we need to use weighting tool features in order to get at some missing data the data that we don't have and so, when we look at usability, the primary purpose, at least for the AHAR is really to get a sense for how we can use the data that we do have to account for data that we don't. That’s sort of the quick and dirty. And it is determining which data we can use to make that determination.

Tom Baker: Alright, not seeing any new questions come in a reminder you can use the Q and A function to add questions and reminder that yes, these resources will be posted on the HUD exchange, this recording and these slides for your future reference. Another one just came in. What if error corrections in one year—what if error corrections in one year affects both years, do we have to run and upload an LSA file for both years?

Meghan Henry: Yeah, unfortunately we'll have to run the 2 files. But we can try to do them, we’ll be working through in the beginning, because if there are those issues that span across 2 years, particularly if they're not errors and they’re warnings that you can explain, we'll figure out a way that we can pull those explanations across those years. So to sort of reduce the burden for you all.

Tom Baker: Okay. Will vendor issues automatically be sent to vendors, or will we need to send those to vendors for fixing?

Meghan Henry: It's a great question. Vendors are continuing to work on making sure that these files are ready to go. However, you all own your data, so, we can't send these files directly to vendors unless we work out, sort of an agreement with you and I'm not sure—we can bring up common issues with vendors that many communities are facing, but it really is on the community to send the files to their vendors. I think that's really the only way at this point.

Tom Baker: Okay, we have a follow up question for Jesse. Jesse you said we need to close out inventory and have a project end date. If I close the project wouldn't that count as closing out inventory?

Jesse Jorstad: That could be a vendor specific kind of question, because it is possible that a vendor may have created some programming where if you end a program it will automatically end your inventory. But I would not make that assumption. You should likely go into your inventory records and make sure that they have end dates that line up with the project dates.

Tom Baker: Okay, and when should we expect to receive our first flag file? Will there be 2 flag files, one for each submission?

Meghan Henry: Yes, you will receive 2 flag files, 1 for each submission. During this period of time the vendors are still working. We're still working. You guys are all still working and so we do plan to upload files next week. However, I will add a caveat that they may not be complete files. So if we don't have an entire data quality review, what we're going to be asking is you can review the file if you want to, but we're not asking you to act on it until it's an entire data quality review file. And that will happen, we will have those after the 31st. But probably, I'm looking at my calendar. I apologize. Probably not until the week of 9th. But if you have updated files, your files are successfully uploaded and submitted in the HDX now, we will begin running or partial data, partial data quality review files next week.

Tom Baker: Okay, thanks for the info on usability. If data is determined unusable, how does that impact the CoC?

Meghan Henry: I am not sure, is the answer. We don't actually, we don't really have anything to do with how the determination of usability affects anything outside of the AHAR. So that's really a sort of a HUD-directed question. I do know that in the last year, and this year, there is a lot of burden on communities and so for us, it is more about participation, It's more about participation than usability at this point, but that's the question that I would actually direct to HUD. I don't know if Fran is still on?

Fran Ledger: Oh, yeah, I am I was on mute I apologize for that. So, how all things work, not just with LSA, but other things, like Point in Time count and things of that nature is that, you know, HUD has requirements around submitting reports to HUD and then during the application process there's scoring in the application. Now from year to year, we don't know, at the onset what the scoring is going to be like, and of course, those things are not announced to communities, but what happens is in the application process, you're asked questions about things that you've submitted over the course of the year and there's the potential that if you're not able to submit things to HUD, that it could have an impact in your application process. So, I can't say whether it absolutely will or will not, but there's a potential in your application process if you're not able to submit data, then it would have an impact.

Tom Baker: Next a question about the flag file, um, last year, some of our explanations for warnings got lost between flag files. How does the process change to prevent that this year?

Jason Rodriguez: Yeah, so that's this is something we've, we've been working on a lot lately and so we've introduced some new processes to transfer CoC explanations of warning flags to a central database that we have here. And so, um, so that these explanations can be linked to subsequent uploads, and it's a more automated process. So this should reduce the chance that these explanations get lost between uploads.

Tom Baker: Okay, next question. So if I heard correctly, you will flag if the inventory doesn't match in HMIS versus what we report on the HIC, how is this going to affect us if we update the inventory in HMIS as it changes, such as bed reductions due to COVID?

Jesse Jorstad: Yeah, great question. So your inventory records should be historically accurate. So if you have a change, you would end an inventory record and start anything like a reduction, you would end the inventory, start another inventory record with the correct bed count. So that way when we look at your inventory and we go back in time, we know that let's say that your, it was conducted on the 27th January. We know that on 27 of January, this was your inventory. And if we looked on the 31st of March or whatever, we would know that there was a difference.

Tom Baker: Okay, the bed inventory on rapid rehousing project. Do the bed, does the bed inventory on rapid rehousing projects consider only those participants that have housing moving dates, or all active participants during those during that period?

Meghan Henry: The bed inventory on HMIS or the bed inventory just to—

Tom Baker: Sorry, I just broke out there for a 2nd, um. It looks like the bed inventory, I think I might have to follow up for more information on that one. Let's go to the next question for now, is there an acceptable percentage for missing data? I have one faith-based shelter that will not collect social security numbers. So they have a high rate of missing social security numbers.

Meghan Henry: Jason, as I understand it, we reduced the number of flags around the same data. Is that right?

Jason Rodriguez: Yeah, I'm not sure what the threshold is.

Meghan Henry: We can follow up some more information on that and include it in this resource when we post it.

Tom Baker: Alright can you speak more on the condition that night-by-night shelters need to have for the LSA submission in terms of quality? In terms of data quality.

Jesse Jorstad: I think I would need more information about the nature of that question. I'm not totally sure what they're asking.

Tom Baker: Okay, I'll assign that one to you Jesse. How will we be notified of changes or updates in the error warning file?

Jesse Jorstad: So, when you, so you'll get your first, the error/warning file, and that will either result in you creating another upload, which would generate potentially another file, which HDX would alert you of. Once that file is ready, you would get an email or, and possibly and, you are making notes in that error and warning file and then you're uploading the file back to HDX. Once your data liaison reviews that, if another file isn't generated, and then they would upload again, you would get an email when that upload happens. So every time there's new information for you to look at regarding your errors and warnings the system will send you an automatic email to the primary contact and then also to whoever the person was who submitted the file.

Meghan Henry: As well as your liaison.

Jesse Jorstad: Yes.

Tom Baker: Okay, and where is the best place to find guidance on how to modify our HIC to address changes due to COVID?

Meghan Henry: That we can get back to you on if you're doing modifications to the housing inventory prior to January. However, I will say that built into our data quality process is an understanding that there is going to be some changes to the HIC. And so when we do these comparisons, from what you've reported in your LSA to what you reported in the related HIC. We do sort of isolate, um, to the day that you report your HIC, specific day you reported your HIC data based on. So, yeah, so it won't be—it isn't that we're comparing your LSA, that we'll be comparing two different time periods essentially is what I want to clarify here.

Jesse Jorstad: So, I would also just add that because of the timing of the COVID crisis in the US, we would not expect there to be changes to your formal HIC. If you have to just refer to your inventory in general, there are resources on the HUD exchange, particularly around ESG project set up. Tom, do you want to assign that to me and I will find a link to that resource and send that over.

Tom Baker: Will do. Our next question is asking us just to address some of the improvements from last year to this year. And I think this could be from the HDX 2.0 perspective, or the flag file perspective. If anyone wants to speak to those changes.

Meghan Henry: Just general changes, Tom, was the question?

Tom Baker: Yeah, yeah. This requester was asking, you know, like that, there were some challenges last year, it was a pretty painful process that, um, that was gone through, and so just kind of any updates we've made this year to improve that process that we haven't highlighted yet.

Meghan Henry: Cicely, do you want to talk about the HDX?

Cicely Wanska: I certainly can, although it sounds like I think the painful process was mostly around flags. I think, you know, most of the improvements we've made directly in the HDX is just improving the layout of things in terms of information that's being shared on views to make it more helpful. We've added places where there is some communication within the data set itself for adding comments, not specific to data errors or warnings, of course, that's being handled by the flag process. I think also, just trying to, as part of the flag process improvement have a consolidated place where we can have that exchange of files. So it's not all being done via email. We will have some automated notification. So that information is being shared in a timely fashion to help facilitate that. I think on the HDX side that those are the primary updates.

Jason Rodriguez: And with respect to the flag file, I can, I can think of three main ones. So one, we've done a lot of work to reduce flag redundancy. So we did so the past few months we've been working to identify which flags kind of flag the same kind of issue. And can we consolidate them a little bit and reduce the overall number of flags. And then, as I mentioned earlier, the spreadsheet tries to separate out the flags that we know are CoC issues, so that will require a little less sifting. You can just go straight to the CoC tab if you want to go to the issues that, you know, are the CoC issues. And then, so we introduced some additional columns in the spreadsheet for communication between the CoC and the AHAR team that hopefully will be an easier communication process.

Jesse Jorstad: Tom, can we jump back the night by night shelter question really quick. So now that I see this, there was a reference to this admin call. So, yes, the Sys admin call slide deck if it's not already available on the Sys admin website then it will be shortly. If it's not yet available and you need that information today on what the sort of parameters are around night by night shelters and some data quality things you need to take into consideration, that same material was provided during the February call so you can also check that February slide deck and that lays it out. And it's things like, you can't have bed nights that are outside of the enrollment period. If you, the final bed night, the exit date has to be the, at least the day after. Right? So it can't be the same day, otherwise the system will go in and overwrite that. So there's some data quality checks around that. So if you're looking for that information you should check the Sys admin site.

Tom Baker: Any other information, we're getting a few more questions about collecting data for night by night shelters in HMIS due to COVID and social distancing requirements, client placed in hotels, more like moving inventory. And this is identified as this will make it appear as if shelters were not serving clients at all when in fact, they were. Anything you can add about that?

Jesse Jorstad: Yeah, so is there a way for me to post a link to everyone. I guess I put it in all attendees. Yeah, so there is some guidance in the COVID-19 HMIS set up and data sharing practices publication. I don't know if that for sure is visible to everybody, but it's called the COVID-19 HMIS setup and data sharing practices publication. So if you were to Google that it should come up with that link, if it didn't go through. But that will give you hopefully all the information you need to make sure that that is successful and that it reflects your community. And if you need more help on that, please absolutely utilize the AAQ and we can get you some more information on that.

Tom Baker: I was able to submit for review for three of my CoCs, however, for another CoC in a different state, the submit for review was grayed out. It did look like it was accepted. But can you advise why the process was different? And I think this would likely be a permissions issue. I'm sorry, I think I'd encourage you to submit an AAQ on that one, just for more guidance, but typically the submit for review button doesn't appear if you don't have submit access for that CoC. So I would recommend submitting an AAQ for anyone in that position. Okay, if we just resolve a flag issue with a new upload, will the flag just be removed? Or do we need to go through the steps of documenting that we have resolved issue?

Meghan Henry: If it's resolved, it should not appear in your next errors and warnings file.

Tom Baker: Okay, the questions have slowed down a bit. We will continue to assign questions that are in the chat, but we do want to pivot to our next portion of the presentation, just to highlight some resources and next steps for you all. Thank you all for submitting your questions. And we hope you did get some of your questions answered today. Like we said, we will be sending around these slides and this presentation through the HUD Exchange. So you'll be able to review the answers that we provided. And always feel free to submit a question through the AAQ and we'll be responsive there as well. So, I'll pass it back over to Meghan now.

SLIDE 45:

Meghan Henry: Thank you Tom and thanks to all of you for your questions. Here we just have a few closing up slides. So we've referenced available materials.

SLIDE 46:

Meghan Henry: First off is the LSA support, so we sort of hit this pretty clearly throughout, but just to do it again, communication with your liaison will be done through the AAQ—I'm sorry, with the LSA review team, reach out to the AAQ through this initial upload phase. So, again, while you're still working on getting your first successful submission, please ask questions through that portal, we have a big group of folks who are reviewing your questions and getting back to you as soon as possible. And so that's how you should do that right now. Starting next week, whether you've moved into the review phase or not, you will be contacted by a data liaison. Just they'll introduce themselves, and sort of give you a run through of what to expect over the next couple of months. And once you've successfully submitted your LSA file, you should plan to work directly with that person. We have changed the communication process a little bit. So all communication with your liaison will be done by AHAR regional email boxes, and these will be monitored by the entire LSA review team. So if you have a message, there's really sort of no way an email can slip through the cracks. So, if you want to know your email, main email correspondence address, this is what it is, just input your region and that's what your email is.

SLIDE 47:

Meghan Henry: But again, your liaison will be in touch to sort of give you more details about the process. As of last night I believe, the LSA data submission guide is posted on the HUD Exchange. And you can look for it here, this will be hyperlinked in the resources that we send out so it's not, you're not able to hyperlink from it right here, but this will provide you with a lot of information from upload all the way through to the end of the year to the finalization process.

SLIDE 48:

Meghan Henry: Here's a list of additional resources, particularly for some of you who are new, and are sort of trying to get your feet wet with all of this. There's a lot of information out there. Um, and so we encourage you to visit the resource page on the HUD Exchange.

SLIDE 49:

Meghan Henry: And I just wanted to give another view of the timeline. So, again, we're in this initial upload phase now. It ends sort of unofficially on the 30th. All we ask for you to do is to try to get one attempt per year in before the 30th. Once you get your submissions in, we'll begin the data review process, which will end around the end of November for most communities. And then we'll be working with communities until the end of the year. And that's when everything really stops. And after that point, we take what we have and we begin our usability determination in our AHAR analysis. You know, there's a small chance that during usability, we reach out to clarify just a few things, but it wouldn't require any sort of heavy lifting on your part. I'm just going to leave this up so instead of going to the close up slide, I'm leaving this up. So people can take a look at the timeline, but that's really it. I don't know if anybody else has anything to add before we close. Okay, well, with that let's end 5 minutes early you could have those minutes back and thank you so much for joining oh, one thing that we didn't talk about that. I want to repeat that I said at the top of the call is that we will be hosting more of these office hours. So, once you all start receiving files, we will be, we're going to try and plan to have them about semi-monthly where you can take your questions. It will be less of a presentation and more of just an open Q and A where we can talk through any issues you all are having with your files are and general issues with submission. And we'll send out those dates shortly. Okay, thanks everybody.