

HMIS Lead / Sys Admin – Q&A

Questions from 06/15/2022 Webinar

For any questions that were not addressed on the webinar, or if there are specific questions to your own systems, please submit an HMIS AAQ to receive a thorough answer: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/my-question/>

Q: Are there going to be changes to the Data Standards coming this October 2022?

A: Data standards are updated bi-annually, and the next update will be in place October 1, 2023. The update process is underway now, and any input folks have any input on changes they would like to see are encouraged to submit them to the AAQ: <https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/my-question/>

Q: If non US citizens are getting services and they don't have a social, what would users do in order to not get errors for social security number?

A: Social Security Number should only be used to enter a valid social security number as issued. Some projects may serve clients that do not have an SSN. In these cases, select 'Client doesn't know.'

Q: If a RRH client loses the housing we got them, we close that HMIS entry and then start a new one for re-housing them. What do we put as 'location prior to project entry' for the second entry?

A: That should always reflect the reality of the situation of the client. We recognize that certain circumstances can arise where program eligibility and data collection requirements in HMIS do not always perfectly align. Documentation of eligibility should be retained on file for the client for monitoring & reporting purposes, and as backup to explain the minor head of household in the HMIS record.

Q: Would an exit from Homelessness Prevention be documented at the date of 'loss of housing'?

A: Correct

Q: Under the CoC NOFA, RRH projects can serve category 1, 2 or 4. Do we need separate prevention projects for category 2 and 4? I've been under the impression they could all go into RRH since HUD says those categories are eligible for RRH.

A: That is correct. RRH projects can serve category 1, 2, or 4. You don't need separate prevention projects for those if you're funding those folks under RRH. It's all about funder eligibility. SSVF specifically wants to see separate projects for SSVF's categories 1 & 2, which are not the same as HUD's categories 1 & 2.

Q: We have an agency who is seeing many undocumented clients. most of those clients don't want to be placed into a system for fear of being deported. Is it ok in this instance to enter them as anonymous in HMIS?

A: A client can refuse to provide each data element in which case you should follow the HMIS data manual for recording refused values.

Q: Our SSVF provider does NOT exit from HP if they wind up in shelter, they have always stayed there stating that the VA says once they're enrolled, they stay with that original program. Is this correct?

A: The VA had that guidance incorrect (on the data side) and we're starting the job of correcting that information. This will be a work in progress. The VA says veterans don't need to be re-categorized for funding purposes, but that is not the same thing as being captured correctly in HMIS re: project type.

Q: If a client in PSH loses their unit and becomes temporarily homeless until another unit is secured, do we exit that enrollment?

A: Yes. Should a household lose housing for any reason, staff should exit the client from the project and create a new project start date for the client on the same day or whatever day they begin to work with the client again to re-establish housing.

Q: If a client exits and re-enters a project that receives ESG or COC funding, does HMIS need to reflect that the new enrollment was the result of a referral from CES?

A: Not specifically as a federal data standard, no. Although local practices may be different.

Q: Will there be any further conversations between HUD and DV entities in regards to comparable sites as it relates to data entry for any agency with DV and "non-DV" projects?

A: HUD and the Federal Partners meet on an ongoing basis to discuss how we can best maintain confidentiality, serve survivors, and understand the nature and extent of homelessness experienced by survivors. We understand the difficulty this creates with "non-DV" projects for CoCs. However, this remains a restriction. If you have additional questions regarding administration use of VAWA, please reach out to the Safe Housing Partnerships: <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/technical-assistance>

Q: We import VASH data from HOMES, but the VA staff don't generally exit veterans when they lose housing. How could we resolve this so we have the correct housing data in HMIS?

A: If it's not currently documented in HOMES then you'd have to incorporate some sort of clean-up effort to make sure you have accurate information.

Q: Does Sage accept uploads from multiple projects at one time?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it only HUD-funded VSPs, or are ALL VSPs required to have a comparable database?

A: CoC/ESG funded projects who would otherwise need to use HMIS. Regardless of funding, VSPs cannot opt into using HMIS.

Q: People can refuse to provide data but the VSPs still need to have some client record for every person served right? What do you do, make up names for the household members and put client refused for everything else?

A: All data options have some form of "client refused" and "data not collected" - you can use those in the situations where a client refuses to provide their information.

Q: Regarding not being denied services when a survivor declines to provide their information (slide 23), that's true about all people receiving services, regardless of survivor status, right?

A: Correct.

Q: When you put client refused for date of birth you can't tell whether it's an adult or child in the report- is that ok?

A: This is allowable. It does contribute to the number of households whose household type cannot be determined, which can be a data quality concern if it is common.

Q: Does VSP data need to be included in System Performance Measures?

A: There is no expectations that VSP data is included in that dataset.

Q: I heard that HUD has agreed to relax the requirements for HMIS Comparable Databases so that previously out-of-compliance software can be in compliance again - is that true?

A: HUD is reviewing the HMIS Data and Technical Standards with stakeholders to make it easier for VSPs to use comparable databases while still maintaining the integrity and usefulness of the data. This work is in progress, and an announcement will be made on the HMIS lead webinar and through the HUD Exchange as soon as a formal decision is made.