

HMIS Webinar 5/18/2022

MARY SCHWARTZ: Hello, and welcome to the HMIS Lead webinar. We will get started as soon as we see that attendee list hit our sweet spot. Just a few minutes.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Welcome. Welcome. The numbers continue to climb up and up, which is great. It's the HMIS Lead webinar and we're going to get started here in just a minute or so.

MARY SCHWARTZ: All right. It's happening, it's really happening. We are meeting today to talk about all things HMIS Lead, System Admin, have all the great information we have for you today. So I think, we will get started.

MARY SCHWARTZ: We have a big packed agenda, so we're going to try and go quickly through these intro slides that most of you are pretty familiar with. You should be here if you're in our HMIS world, you are doing HMIS system administration or you're doing CoC work that involves HMIS. Or maybe you're a comparable database system administrator and joining our call. Any kind of connection to the Homeless Management Information System work that happens in your Continuum of Care. This is the place for you. So welcome.

MARY SCHWARTZ: We're gonna keep you muted today. If you have any questions for us while we're going through our material, please use the Q and A feature of Webex. You should be able to also submit HMIS AAQs after this call. If you feel like your question wasn't addressed, or we may ask you to do that instead of addressing your question directly, the AAQ sometimes allow us a chance to dig a little deeper if we need to.

MARY SCHWARTZ: All materials, including today's presentation, slide deck, transcripts, recording will all be on the HUD exchange HMIS Lead website. Everything back to 2019 is also there for you to search through if you need past materials. If you need anything else, basically AAQ is the place to turn to get in touch with us.

MARY SCHWARTZ: And us is Fran Ledger, she/they, from the SNAPS office. Meradith Alspaugh, she/her, from the Partnership Center. Genelle Denzin, she/her, from Abt Associates. Jesse Jorstad, he/him, from Abt Associates. Brian Roccapriore, from Cloudburst, he/him. And I'm Mary Schwartz, she/her, from Abt Associates. Lauren today is in the background as well, she/her, from Abt Associates, helping us with tech. And we have some special guests too, which I will introduce when we get closer to that point of the agenda.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So, with that, we're gonna jump into what our agenda is today. We'll go over our standard reporting timelines and reporting submission status report outs that we can give you. And then we're going to deep dive right in, Meradith has some Coordinated Entry APR results to share with you from the first submissions of CE-APR data in Sage. She'll also touch on the HMIS data standards timeline again.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Then Jesse and Fran coming at you with an LSA feedback feedback. You provided us feedback on the LSA process in February, and we are now giving the results of that feedback back to you so you can be on the same page with us as to what is going to change, if anything, in the future with LSA.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Then we'll get to our community spotlights and we're going to hear from Georgia folks on the capacity building grant. And from Kentucky and Missouri folks on some of the comparable database work that they're doing locally. So that is very exciting. And I'm happy that everybody was able to make time and space for this. Welcome to all of you who are on the call and maybe missed some of that intro, but you're here and we're gonna get started. So Fran, would you like to head in to the reporting slides for us.

FRAN LEDGER: Absolutely, and I just want to take a moment and thank you all for being here. This is an extremely difficult time right now and I appreciate the work that you do, the labor that you do, and the communities that you support. So appreciate that and appreciate you.

FRAN LEDGER: So real quick on the timeline. You'll see here the Stellavi-, I still can't say this word, Stellavization, it's available now in HDX 2.0. And you can see the RHY Q3 is coming up and ESG-CV is due on the 30th and, of course, SSVF reporting for June will start June 1st.

FRAN LEDGER: On the next slide you'll see some results from some of our reporting. So, let me go ahead pick up with the...there we go. So this is great. On all of these we're in up over 90%. So we're in the high nineties for submissions for the HIC/PIT, for RHY quarter 2, and for SSVF, look at that 99% of the grantees successfully submitted. And then for ESG-CV reporting for the last time it was 90% so this is amazing. I was excited to see all of this. I'm going to hand it off now.

FRAN LEDGER: So, I don't know who has to take control.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: I'll come grab it.

FRAN LEDGER: Perfect. Thanks.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Thank you. Hey everyone, Meredith Alspaugh from the Partnership Center.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Like Mary mentioned, we're going to do just a little bit of chatting here about Coordinated Entry APR. There is a new resource that was just posted to the HUD exchange yesterday or the day before. Genelle, thank you for linking that in the chat. What this document is, this, it's a couple of things. It's something that we wanted,

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Sorry I'm seeing a clapping hand in my face there, and it confused me. Maybe it thinks I'm clapping. That's what I get from using my hands too much.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Anyway. This document is available on the HUD exchange. The purpose of this document is multi-fold. One, it is a, it's a brief overview of the key features of an effective Coordinated Entry system. It's very similar, those of you that are familiar with the Coordinated Entry Core Elements Guide, you'll see a lot of some similarity in there. This is only a handful of pages as opposed to, you know, the Coordinated Entry guide is pretty significant. This is about 7 or 8 pages so it's not quite as comprehensive, but it hits some real highlights of the key features of an effective system.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: We also did some analysis of the 1st 4 months' worth of Coordinated Entry APRs that were submitted in Sage, and there were some interesting findings which we're going to talk through in the next couple of slides.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: But really, you know, in the development of this and conversations with HUD, really, the goal was not to keep this limited to HMIS leads, right? Like, we know you all have such a critical, play such a critical role in implementing Coordinated Entry in your HMIS, but it's also really important for your Coordinated Entry staff, your CoC lead staff, your data leadership folks, other people in the community to take a look at this.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: And to use some of the information available in here to step back and look at maybe your own Coordinated Entry system. Look at one, how it's operating, how the data's being collected, and also look at it for evaluating system performance. What information is available to communities, to your CoC's and CE staff that could be used to make improvements in your Coordinated Entry system.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So, just a, I've got a couple key findings here. One thing that we thought was interesting, you know, we talk a lot about the different ways that Coordinated Entry is set up in different communities across the country. There is a question in the APR that asks where is the data being collected in your system? So where are the Coordinated Entry events and assessments being collected in your CoC.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Almost 60%, you'll see, it's being recorded in HMIS in a single CoC project. So one project, one CE project for the entire CoC. Then we've got about 18% in HMIS, but at individual agencies where the agencies are capturing the assessment information as part of the project data. So, when we think about this, like, you know, no wrong door kind of approach, there are about 18% where it's set up that way.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: There's also then 17% in HMIS in more than one Coordinated Entry project, so maybe like a regional setup or something like that. About 4% in a comparable database and then interestingly 3% are not being recorded in a comparable database or in an HMIS. Keep in mind that it should be in an HMIS or comparable database. But this is what the data's telling us so far.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: And we know that this is, you know, a small sample. This is just looking at APRs that have been submitted since October 1st, since this APR became live. But it is information that we found helpful and thought was worth sharing.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: We also took a look at Coordinated Entry Q10, it's the, you know, the question in the APR about all of the activity that occurred in a particular ,in the CE systems in this date range for the reports. So we looked at how many different referrals were done. We looked at the percentages of successful referrals, unsuccessful referrals because a client rejected the referral versus unsuccessful referrals where a provider rejected their referral, and then where there was no outcome recorded. And it was really interesting you can see, especially in the shelter opening referrals, there were a lot where there was not an outcome reported. 42% had nothing recorded.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So, you know, if you're not yet looking at your Coordinated Entry APR results in your community, now might be a really great time to start. Look at this data. Look at the outcomes of the referrals in your system. If you're seeing, like we can see here in transitional housing. There's a lot of, a high percentage of clients that are either rejecting themselves or being rejected by the provider.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: This would be potentially a really good opportunity to look at your referral processes. Are clients well informed about the referrals that they're being given. Are providers aware of

the clients, you know, that they're being, that they're receiving referrals for. Is it clear to Coordinated Entry what the requirements of the projects are, right? Like, we really want to see successful referrals. Obviously it's not going to be perfect every time. But what can we do to make those referrals as successful as possible? Really, with that thought of reducing the length of time people are experiencing homelessness, reducing the number of times they're getting bounced around to different referrals or different projects.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So, yeah. This again, this is on the first APRs. This is the initial data that we're seeing. We know it's not perfect. But take an opportunity locally, now again not just you. With your CoCs, with your coordinated entry staff and take a look at what's your data telling you?

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: The other piece that we put in here, in this document that you'll see, we did pull a community example. This is an anonymous community, but it's a real community. There's different data sources available for you to analyze, to look at. There's the APR obviously. There's this age, bed and unit inventory report. There's the AHAR, there's different pieces of data. You can use your HIC, looking at your vacancy, looking at your occupancy. And analyzing again, how can there be improvements made in your Coordinated Entry system to cover some of these issues?

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So, if you're looking at a vacancy rate of about 13, what is that, 11 to 15%, 13% on average. You know, what potentially could be updated or revised in your referrals, processes, to make sure that those vacancies are being filled more quickly. So that you don't have 15% of your units sitting unoccupied over the course of the year. Again, there's more detail in the document. I just wanted to hit these couple things.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: The last slide I want to hit on here, System Performance Measures. Also taking a look at your System Performance Measures, taking a look at the performance of your system. Looking at length of time homeless. Again looking back on successful referral rates. Are people moving quickly through your system, getting to the right project at the right time. Thereby, potentially, very likely reducing your length of time homeless across your entire CoC. Looking for those trends, looking again to see the effectiveness of your Coordinated Entry system.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Again there's the returns to homelessness, how many times are people returning to a homeless situation after exiting. Total number of homeless people, jobs and income growth, and then people who are homeless for the first time.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So looking at your diversion activities. If you've integrated diversion into Coordinated Entry, or however that's working in your system, are you seeing a reduction in those folks that are becoming homeless?

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So, again, I highly encourage you to go check it out. I think Genelle sent the link in the chat. Please feel free to forward that along to folks. And hopefully that is helpful information.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Moving on to data standards timeline for real. We realized that there was a typo in this last timeline that we showed you all. Generally speaking, it's all the same and I think we said the right things. But just to be extra crystal clear, when we talk about the FY 2024 data standards going live, they will go live on October 1st 2023. I think it said 2024 before. It is 2023. Fiscal year 2024 begins on October 1st of 2023. One of my favorite things to do is try to remember how the federal fiscal year works.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: So everything else is the same. If you do have feedback, if you have comments or questions, anything related to data standards changes, please do submit an AAQ by the end of this calendar year. We would very much appreciate that. Okay, I think that is it. I'm going to give it to you, Jesse.

JESSE JORSTAD: All right. Thanks, Meradith.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Unless you don't want to take it.

JESSE JORSTAD: I can. Just give me one second.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: I can't get it on there, I'm sorry.

JESSE JORSTAD: I cannot seem to either. Exciting. Lauren, can you help us out?

LAUREN PHILLIPS-THORNE: Jesse, you are now presenter.

JESSE JORSTAD: Great, thanks.

JESSE JORSTAD: All right, so, you know, a little bit about me. I grew up in the Midwest and for people who grew up in the area where I was growing up, everyone remembers the great snow storm of 1991 that happened on Halloween called the Halloween snowstorm. And if you grew up in that area, everyone knows what you're talking about and they remember where they were and how shocking it was.

JESSE JORSTAD: Right? And I feel like similar to that we had an experience a couple months ago on this call that we can henceforth call the "Mural Board of 2022" and we'll all know if you were here, what mural board we're talking about.

JESSE JORSTAD: Following that call, what happened next. So there were 360 comments on the board and we exported all of them off that board and put them in a CSV and started sorting through them. So, those comments were examined, and we identified both key and secondary words so that way we kind of group things into categories and start sorting through everything.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then we assigned a rating of positive, negative, neutral or both, in terms of, like, what the flavor of a particular comment was. And then any comments that contained a suggestion, we marked it as such. And then we took all those suggestions, and then the remaining comments, they were grouped by those keywords, and the rating was reviewed with the associated internal teams that deal with those various tasks. And then, of course, the AHAR management team.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, just real quick kind of an overview of what we heard from all of you. So, here we can see that in terms of positive comments we came in at 20, I think it was 21%. All right, so putting that in some context, if we think about the way in which people feel about dogs, so if we were taking a survey and we wanted comments about dogs I think it was like 74% would come in feeling positive about dogs. Cats a little bit lower. So, 41% of folks like cats. I just estimate that I'm somewhere in between the LSA and cats, so, a little bit more popular than the LSA, not as popular as cats.

JESSE JORSTAD: So this graph is really just about showing you where we aspire to. Right? So we want to go from the less than Jesse Jorstad space up into the dog space. But I also think it's important to note that liking things isn't everything because as we were doing our research over at Abt Associates to bring you these amazing statistics here, I found that 47% of people own cats though only 41% of people like cats. So. We obviously have some tolerance for putting up the things we don't like.

JESSE JORSTAD: All right also want to just say that just because you made a single positive comment about the LSA, we're not interpreting that as you being a particular fan of the LSA. This is mostly just a joke. All right.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, I also want to point out that any time a change happens, it results in stress. Like, that's just how we're wired as human beings. And so, even if we were to have just like the very highest level of change management imaginable, there would still be that feeling of friction and stress around really not knowing what's coming next and kind of some anxiety with that.

JESSE JORSTAD: And so I just want to kind of pause and acknowledge that. Now that's not to say that we think we did a perfect job, 'cause there's a lot of room for improvement. But, just to know, that some of that stress is a sign of progress.

JESSE JORSTAD: All right, so what did you tell us that we can use to transform how we do this? So. Well, I mentioned that 21% of feedback was positive. 43% of it was negative.

JESSE JORSTAD: The feedback generally falls into 7 different buckets. So, around communication, flags, the process itself. HDX 2.0, which is the interface that you all use to report your data and respond to flags. Then tools beyond that interface. Guidance and then things having to do with the HIC. Obviously, there were some comments that didn't fit into any of those, but those were the primary categories.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, I actually want to pause here and we want to kind of lift up the hood a little bit and give you guys some additional information that maybe you weren't aware of kind of during the process. So, I'm going to send a couple of questions to Fran. They're going to send a couple of questions to me, and we're just going to have a little discussion here before we go through the rest of the data.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, Fran, one of the things that's interesting about this last time around, you know, since the fiscal year '18, which was the original LSA data submission, there has always been an extension at the end of the data collection, period, or two or seven, or however, I'm not sure what the record is that we set in one year but, there were extensions. And so I think a lot of folks, we got to the end, and it was a surprise that there wasn't an extension.

JESSE JORSTAD: And some of that is some administrative changes that happened. And those administrative changes had a bunch of other impacts. What do you think would be helpful for people to know about that whole process? And what some of the implications were.

FRAN LEDGER: Yeah, so this is this is the ugly, painful part right here for us internally at HUD.

FRAN LEDGER: So, yeah, lifting up the hood a little bit. What happened was, you know, HUD has to manage these projects, you know, internally with our budgets. This includes both our AHAR HDX project, Sage, data lab, all of these different things that help us understand what's going on with homelessness around the country and our projects.

FRAN LEDGER: And through review process we were informed we needed to make some adjustments in how we fund these projects. And so we have gone through a really kind of arduous, painful process of making some shifts. And what that caused was a period of time in which we were really constrained with what we could do and how we could do it.

FRAN LEDGER: And this put a lot of pressure on our TA firms, including Abt Associates, which was very limited in what and how they could do things for the AHAR for a short period of time. And you saw this in the data lab potentially, and maybe some of our other stuff too and. And we at SNAPS, we were not allowed, we could not do extensions this time around.

FRAN LEDGER: So, you know, this is Congressionally mandated, but because of some decisions that were kind of outside of our purview, there were things that we just weren't able to do at this time. However, we've been working really hard in the background to make a change. So we should not see this hopefully moving forward. We've done some things that will create some better flexibilities and moving us back into the way that we normally have operated these systems and supported communities of being able to submit this data. So, hopefully much better work, moving forward so.

FRAN LEDGER: That's a little bit of that part. That was painful. And I know painful for you guys on your end. And hopefully it'll feel better in the future.

FRAN LEDGER: Jesse, I'll lob some questions to you. So the error flags were integrated into HDX 2.0 this time around and got rid of those really horrible Excel spreadsheets. You know it was our first time out, it's what we tried. We wanted to give information but it ended up being way too much information and really hard to be useful for communities and so I want you to talk a little bit about that. What are some of the pain points that that integration addressed, new issues that it created, and what's going to be done differently.

JESSE JORSTAD: Yeah, great. That's a great question. I do feel like the integration of the flags in HDX was simultaneously, like, our greatest success. Like, it was such a huge step forward, but it also was one of our fumbles at the same time. And so what I mean by that is, you know, we were able to get the error flags integrated, which was a huge undertaking, but we weren't able to get the warning flags in there as well.

JESSE JORSTAD: And so we were like that's cool we can pivot and handle that, we'll run another project, or another program with external code and we'll import those warning data, but that process did not go as smoothly as we thought it was going to. Getting that code converted and then getting the documents back into a format that was compatible with the import process for HDX 2.0 was more complex than we had anticipated. And it caused a lot of delays that had a big impact on everybody's data collection experience during the process.

JESSE JORSTAD: So I want you to know that we all, that was definitely not what we were aiming for and it was also painful for us and we really appreciate all the grace that you afforded us and you're 'stick to it'-iveness, if you will, as we tried to navigate that really substantial shift in the process.

JESSE JORSTAD: Some of the things that we heard that were positive for people in that change, though, was the ability to, like, sort the flags within HDX and to be able to, I guess, mostly just get away from those Excel spreadsheets. I know that when I was in HMIS admin when I got my first spreadsheet. I did

think what in the fresh hell is this, okay, that's a direct quote out in my mind. So we do appreciate exactly how overwhelming those spreadsheets were. So we were glad to be rid of them.

JESSE JORSTAD: In terms of what's coming for the next year, we are very much committed to getting the warnings into HDX. So that way, as soon as you upload things, you are going to get your warnings and your errors, you know, at that time. And you're not gonna have to wait those couple of days while we're running code and importing it back and, you know, having issues with that whole thing.

JESSE JORSTAD: The other thing I wanted to mention is that it made the communication and the version tracking a lot easier too to have things in HDX because we weren't sending spreadsheets back and forth in email. So, that will also be the case for this coming year.

JESSE JORSTAD: But we also heard that there is need for improvement in the interface. So, while you can, like, sort by flags and whatnot, people are desiring a little bit more functionality. And I think one of the other issues was the view itself was a little bit hard to manage. So we want to try to make that a little bit more robust in terms of its flexibility. So that you can see what is relevant to whatever task you're trying to complete a little more easily.

JESSE JORSTAD: We also heard that there's more flexibility and, like, nuance needed in terms of, with this last round, you had to submit things for review and then wait to get them back before you could proceed. And that that, I think, added a lot of time for a lot of folks while people were waiting around so we have a lot of things planned for that whole HDX experience and we're very much looking forward to it.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, Fran, my next question for you, you know, back before we had the LSA and we were just hand entering little values into HDX 1.0, back in the day, acceptance of your AHAR table shells was a big deal, right? It was part of funding decisions. It also was like clout for the HMIS admins. Right? We were like, oh, all my shells got accepted, right? And then every other HMIS admin knew that you were the bomb, and it was established, it was documented, right?

JESSE JORSTAD: That's not how things roll anymore, right? So, could you help explain the decision to not include usability ratings for the last few rounds of funding, and then help us understand what your, what HUD's expectation is when it comes to participation in the LSA. And, you know, that supports a generation of the AHAR.

FRAN LEDGER: Yeah, so there, you know, there are probably quite a few of you that don't remember the table shells, but, you know, first and foremost, remember, this is a Congressionally mandated report. So we're always working on making sure that we can get data in that is usable data for us, for the report. That's where we're driving, right, towards. And so, back in the day, we did table shells. And it was, we tied that into our competition. Now, I can only talk a little bit about past competition. I cannot talk about future competitions, I'm prohibited from doing that. So, in the past competition, we, yeah, we assigned points to how many table shells can you get in and it was definitely clout, right, if you could get them all in.

FRAN LEDGER: Once we switch to the LSA data, that was a much heavier lift and whenever HUD switches and does something new, we tend to ease in around competition and scoring around new things, new ideas, new processes. And so really, we were just looking at can you submit the LSA data on time by the deadline.

FRAN LEDGER: And then, you know, over time, we're gonna want to see things, we're going to want to make sure that what we're receiving is actually something that can really help support this Congressionally mandated report and that it's, you know, good, useful information. In the past what we were looking is for LSA, can you get the data into us by the deadline? This new really very complex dataset. Focusing on submission.

FRAN LEDGER: Just like you see with the PIT/HIC and SPMs, those things change in the competition over time and you'll likely to see that with LSA over time and questions with the LSA.

FRAN LEDGER: But what's really important for us is for when you're thinking about usability, that you're thinking about it for your own community, you having LSA that's useful is for us, first and foremost, can you use it for your community, for your purposes and for things like Stella, right? To help you inform project decisions for you making, once we have system modeling available, can you use it for doing system modeling in your community? So it's really critical to have some good data for that.

FRAN LEDGER: So, one of the things we're going to do that's new and we've been asked for quite a bit is to release whether we determined if your data was usable for the AHAR. So we are going to issue each CoC, their usability results for this past LSA data set that we received, so all CoCs will get that. It will just go directly to the CoCs. In the future that stuff will be published, but this first go around, we're just going to submit it.

FRAN LEDGER: We don't have a process yet. This is brand new information. This is just, HUD has been working on this for a while to make this determination. We've just landed on this determination, so I don't have a lot more information to tell you at this point but once we do have that information. We will make the announcement, so you have the information. When we get to the point of actually making public releases in the future, we will get your feedback on that process down the road.

FRAN LEDGER: But this first one will be just to the CoCs so you can get a chance to see what it looks like, what you're data, you know, what your data, the usability of your data looks like.

FRAN LEDGER: So I am going to switch up and ask you, Jesse, a question about some of the tools that we created this time around. The common flag library and the CSV data quality tool. Are there some plans to expand these tools?

JESSE JORSTAD: Great yeah, so, I'm super attached to both of those tools. I think that they are super helpful.

JESSE JORSTAD: We recognize that the flags are really technical and there are so many reasons why you could be getting any certain flag, right? And because the LSA gets aggregate data we can't tell you what the reason is you're getting it, right?

JESSE JORSTAD: But we did recognize that we need to provide more documentation to help you all think through what could be causing those things. And so we started that effort with the common flags library.

JESSE JORSTAD: You know, it might seem like from a community perspective that we are able to start planning for the next LSA immediately following the close of the last one. But there's actually a pretty

big delay because of, like, how funding works and whatnot. And so there were certain projects that we were like oh we really want to do this, but we weren't able to start until later on in the year and so we were only able to get to as much content as we could get to but for the flag library, we will be continuing to build that out to be able to cover more of the flags and issue additional guidance there.

JESSE JORSTAD: Regarding the data quality tool, which is my baby, I love that thing. We've got a lot of exciting things that we're working on. So, one of the things is we did not do utilization this last round so, in our next version, that's something that we're going to work on tackling.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, it's interesting cause of like, differences between what's useful to know as an HMIS admin about utilization versus what's needed to know in the AHAR to develop estimates, there's a little bit of a gap there. So we've been having some interesting conversations as a team about like how we might sort of approach that to make sure that it's useful to you all, both in, you know, managing your systems, but also useful to you in submitting your LSA data. So that's something that we're working through.

JESSE JORSTAD: We've also gotten some feedback from folks, you know. Excel macros is not able to be run on max cause they don't have the correct driver. And so there are some folks who are not able to access that tool because of the platform that it's on. So we've been thinking about if there's ways to pivot to a different option.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then the last thing that we've been thinking about is we want to make it easier for you all to kind of bundle together the data quality issues that you've got popping up by organization, or by project, right. So we're thinking about how could we create something that will kind of batch that all together? So you could just send it to your favorite frontline staff, who are causing all your data problems, to make sure they get their own little, their own little batch of data quality issues.

JESSE JORSTAD: So those are the things that we've been thinking through and working on, and we look forward to the next few months, cranking all that out.

JESSE JORSTAD: All right, so I do want to dig a little bit further into the feedback that we got from all of you now that we've kind of talked a little bit about some things that were happening behind the scenes. So this is just, again, a high level kind of negative, positive, by category. You can see in terms of, like, proportion the process probably had the most or the highest proportion of negative to positive right? So that's interesting and understandable.

JESSE JORSTAD: There were about 150 suggestions within those 360 comments that we received. So, again, in terms of, like, trying to kind of chunk those out, we have a document that groups all of these things for the teams that they impact, but I wanted to kind of go through some of the larger categories with you and make sure that you all knew that we heard this feedback and that we are gonna investigate different ways that we could alleviate these stressors.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, folks needed more specific communication from their liaisons earlier on in the process So, it sounds like, as we went along in general, things did get more specific and that that was helpful. But they needed that earlier on.

JESSE JORSTAD: Folks would like to have regular calls with their liaisons, which is kind of combined with a little bit further down here. We have this kind of open office hours. So we're kind of thinking about

how do we kind of combine those ideas. So that you all have increased access to somebody live to help you think through what some of these issues might be that you're having with your data submission.

JESSE JORSTAD: There's a desire to be able to have review team review without submitting for review. I should have reread that sentence after I wrote it. I didn't know you could put review in a sentence that many times, but I've done it. Success. So, again, that flexibility in HDX 2.0.

JESSE JORSTAD: More detailed notes from liaisons, submission guidance should be updated if the processes are changed to ensure alignment. It sounds like our submission guide got a little bit out of sync with how things were actually operating.

JESSE JORSTAD: An opportunity to sign up for a mailing list, rather than using an HDX user account. So right now all of the emails that we generate are all based on who is an HDX user so it sounds like we need to kind of open that up a little bit. So, that way other folks can stay informed about the process.

JESSE JORSTAD: People also wanted more videos and webinars that had step by step instructions in addition to the written documentation that we issued.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then what we're also hearing from you is that when we do tell you that you need to talk to your vendor. It would be helpful to have more guidance from us about what we think that conversation needs to entail.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, that was all recognized.

JESSE JORSTAD: The next biggest topic was flags. So again, clearer flag descriptions. This is something that we've been chipping away at as we've gone along but there's still need for additional information there. And so we were actually wondering if what we need to pivot to, and we've heard this feedback from all of you, is that maybe a detailed description and then also a simple summary. So sort of a plain language, and then a more detailed, technical explanation of the flag would be helpful.

JESSE JORSTAD: People need clear communication about any flags, which may be under review. So this last year we did have that Weebly site where we were able to let you all know what was being reviewed.

JESSE JORSTAD: One of the challenges that we haven't quite figured out how to address this yet but we are thinking about it is, you know, let's say that a vendor reports that they're concerned about a flag, there is a period of time that we need in order to determine if there is any kind of an issue at all. Before we would put it on the site of, like, okay, now it's actually, we think there might be an issue and now we're actually reviewing it, right? So there's a little bit of triage time. So we're trying to think about how do we make that all clear for everybody who's involved.

JESSE JORSTAD: There is a desire to group flags when they all stem from the same issue. So, sometimes you'll have something that is getting triggered at, like, sort of every single place in the hierarchy, and so you'll end up with 7 flags that are all because of the same, perhaps, client record. So figuring out a way to kind of bind those things together to make it easier for you all to investigate and to respond to things.

JESSE JORSTAD: People need warning flags to be integrated into HDX 2.0. So do we, we are super excited about getting that going.

JESSE JORSTAD: A request for a status where you could put that the vendor's not able to address something.

JESSE JORSTAD: More guidance on how to troubleshoot the flags. So, again, I've talked about the flag library. I think it's probably the main mechanism that we'll use to do that.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then more insight into inventory in order to resolve the HIC and inventory discrepancies. This was definitely something that was an oversight on our part, as we switched out from the Excel spreadsheets where we provided essentially an HMIS generated HIC in comparison to the HIC that you actually reported. And we thought that the detail that you all would need would be included in the flags themselves. But we found that when it wasn't project specific it was difficult for you all to have insight into what we thought all the numbers were that were going into that bigger number. So, we acknowledge that, and we look forward to fixing that next year.

JESSE JORSTAD: Okay, the last topic I'm going to get into in depth here is around the process. So the timeline stress. So one of the questions that I got over in my chat here. Is if there's any plans to try and open the LSA earlier than December in the future. And maybe, I don't know Fran if you want to jump in here at all about timeline stuff, but I'll just start with the answer and then you let me know if you want to add anything.

JESSE JORSTAD: So there are timelines by which we have to have generated AHAR Part 2 for Congress and so that's sort of like the final deadline. And then we start backing up from that. And then from the other direction, we have constraints around, like for this last year, there was a change in data standards, a change in specifications and so that's we're creeping up on the back end, right? So we need vendors have enough time to get all of that implemented. And then, in between, we got to collect the data super fast, right? So those are sort of the things that that we are trying to balance as we move through the timeline. I think that in a perfect world, I feel like things would probably open around, I don't know, maybe October 15th, right? But we have not been able to get the things in place that early due to a number of different changes. So.

JESSE JORSTAD: Fran is there anything else you want to add about those types of timeline issues?

FRAN LEDGER: No, and I think that really captured well, like, what we deal with when there's, when we have both the change in the data standards and the data collection part going on. But we had that additional thing happening, you know, that I described earlier with how funding was happening with the project itself. Which we won't have, you know, once we really start getting into this cycle. So we won't have that issue. That issue will be different.

JESSE JORSTAD: I do promise that we are not sitting in the backroom thinking like, how can we wreck everyone's holiday season? Right? We also don't want to be collecting data throughout November and December. So if there were a way to have that not happen, I guarantee you we would pursue that. So.

FRAN LEDGER: Yeah, absolutely everything we can do in HUD, we absolutely try to avoid that. That is not something we want to do.

JESSE JORSTAD: Other things related to timeline that were stressing folks out. Again, the warnings fumble on our part in terms of getting that integrated, even in the non-integrated integration that we did in terms of importing those warnings that cost us a lot of time and was really stressful for folks.

JESSE JORSTAD: People would like us to be more cognizant of last minute changes that are impacting things like the code and what not in terms of people being able to get that final submission in. And then people wanted more advanced notice regarding deadlines.

JESSE JORSTAD: There's also a request by quite a few folks for an ability to run the flags throughout the year. So right now, in order to generate those flags, it's only available during the data collection cycle and it's only available for official use files.

JESSE JORSTAD: There's definitely a need to expand that functionality for a couple of different reasons, one of which is related to Stella, right? If you want to create a local use file that's maybe for a different time period and you want to Stellavise that. It could be helpful to know if there are any data quality issues with those, with that data. But then, also just to be able to work through, maybe some of those issues that you weren't able to resolve during data collection. So that the next time around, you're able to do that. So, having a lot of conversations about that. I do think that that is a longer term project, just in terms of it's not like we can just turn those on outside of the period and then just, like, move on with our day. There's actually a lot of dependencies that we're trying to work through and figure out how we want to pursue that.

JESSE JORSTAD: There's a need for the ability to have more than one person be able to submit. So we have historically restricted that to just be one person. And it sounds like that's not meeting the need. Folks want more vendor testing ahead of the submission and I think ahead of the data collection cycle.

JESSE JORSTAD: More clarity on who should be focused on what and when. So we've been talking about, you know, is there something like a newsletter or something that is happening every Friday, and we're like, hey, this is where we're at in the process. This is what your focus should be on. Here's anything that happened this week, right? A little digest for folks to be able to stay up to speed on.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then people want an opportunity to provide feedback throughout the process, not just at the end. So, I do think that we've done a good job of collecting feedback after the submission period has ended, but folks want to have some sort of avenue to be able to provide that feedback during the process and let us know when there's problems coming up. You can certainly do that through your liaison but it sounds like there needs to be some other options as well.

JESSE JORSTAD: Just have a couple more slides here. Thanks for staying with me.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, I talked earlier about how there are internal teams that work on the AHAR that have various focuses that they are working on. I think it's really a good sign that those internal teams had a lot of overlap in terms of what we thought the feedback was going to be, or what we thought the pain points were, in terms of what you all thought the pain points were. So here are some of the things that we all identified as issues.

JESSE JORSTAD: So, A desire to integrate HDX 1.0 into 2.0. Updates to the descriptions of flags. Improving the flag error warning viewability and the immediacy of warnings. In terms of data collection, more consistent communication throughout the process. That desire to upload the data more than once a year. And then having information about the process all in one place. So having it be a little bit less scattered and more centralized.

JESSE JORSTAD: In terms of the analysis. Folks wanting access to those usability determinations. So it's really exciting that that is a decision that HUD's made that will be working through how that actually happens. I know that's something that you are all very interested in.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then expanding and building on the importance of the final report to a broader audience. I do think that because there is a delay in terms of when the data collection happens and then usability determinations are done and then estimates are done and then the report is written and it gets released. I can see how for HMIS admins that seems really super disconnected. And so we want to make sure that when the AHAR gets published that we bring it back to you in this call and make sure that you all know, like, what some of those main takeaways were. And because it's the reason that we're collecting the data in the first place.

JESSE JORSTAD: There were areas though that you all brought up that we were not aware of. And so here they are. So, having the ability to rename files in HDX 2.0, we didn't realize that that was going to be a need. So that's noted.

JESSE JORSTAD: More clarification on note statuses and/or the addition of new statuses.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then making the submit for review process, more dynamic. So I talked about that a little bit before.

JESSE JORSTAD: In terms of data collection, the timeline being a challenge, right? Whether it's because it's over the holidays, or it's because there are so many competing priorities during that time. Or even just the communication around timeline, there were a lot of stressors related to that.

JESSE JORSTAD: And then you all just having general vendor issues, not to be confused with gender vendoral issues. Yes. Okay. So general vendor issues.

JESSE JORSTAD: So that is all the information that I have for you all, I don't know, to the rest of the TA team. Were there any questions that came up that would be helpful for me to address verbally.

BRIAN ROCCAPRIORE: I don't think there's any questions that came up that we need to address, but I do just want to raise one comment that came in. As complicated and frustrating as the LSA can be I am so grateful for all of you, Jesse, Fran, and everybody, who not only took our feedback seriously but clearly cared deeply about what you do and remain thoughtful about those of us who are serving case managers at the frontlines of homelessness. You're appreciated. LSA is still a struggle but good to know that you're also in the midst of it.

BRIAN ROCCAPRIORE: Not all of the feedback on the LSA is always cheery. So I thought we could all use a positive LSA comment.

JESSE JORSTAD: Absolutely, well we super appreciate all your hard work. I know that it's a very dynamic, challenging process, and we appreciate your willingness to continue to be communicative and let us know the things that we can be doing to make it easier on all of you. So we will be working in the background here, trying to get ready for the next cycle to make it as easy as possible.

JESSE JORSTAD: Thanks everybody.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Thank you Jesse. And guess what, we should be here at 1:50, and we are here with this slide at 150. So, how good can you be? You need to go buy a lottery ticket.

JESSE JORSTAD: Today is my day.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Today's your day. Okay. Well, I am just super excited to welcome the friends that we have on this call today.

MARY SCHWARTZ: And the team pointed out earlier, you know, you all asked for more community spotlights throughout the year on these calls and so May was our first opportunity to slate some time for that and we're very excited.

MARY SHCWARTZ: We're going to have 3 different communities spotlighted today. They are all going to be introduced by me, I'll hold on to the slides so that they can all just tell me "next slide" when it's when we move on from one to the next.

MARY SCHWARTZ: I wanna start with our friends in Georgia, Abby Burgess and Melissa Austin. They are going to be presenting on some of the results of the capacity building grant and I just wanna make sure I give them the proper introduction.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So Melissa Austin is the Chief Operating Officer for Partners For Home. And Abby Burgess, you all know and love her probably already, Special Projects Manager, Institute for Community Alliance. So Abby and Melissa, why don't you go next and I'll get it to your first slide.

MELISSA AUSTIN: Sure, thanks for having us. Hi everyone, this is Melissa Austin. Have to say this meeting has been very interesting. I'm glad I got the opportunity to join and sit in on more of the technical aspects of the work. So thank you.

MELISSA AUSTIN: We were awarded a capacity building grant for our HMIS system. And I can just share with you great impact that this has had on our system and the ability to house more individuals. Prior to having what we have now in place with our HMIS system, we were really struggling. We knew as a system we wanted to be data driven. But we didn't really have the skills or the expertise to move in that direction.

MELISSA AUSTIN: And then also, as a side note, it seems that HMIS and performance related tasks always got pushed aside, because there was always a urgent crisis that had to be handled and people would get pulled off of that. So that was happening a lot.

MELISSA AUSTIN: And when we got the capacity building grant, we contracted with Institute for Community Alliances and got Abby, which has been just a tremendous turn around.

MELISSA AUSTIN: We are on a statewide implementation in Georgia so there's other challenges with that. The advances in using and working with our vendor have not only impacted Atlanta, but the entire state has benefited from us having a capacity building grant because of the changes that had been made. I'm not going to go on and on about how great it's been, but it really has made a huge huge impact.

MELISSA AUSTIN: We contracted with them. We are now in the process of transitioning Abby and team internally. So we are committed to having the same resources for FTEs dedicated to this work. We're just bringing it internal over a transition period of a year. So we're really excited about that.

MELISSA AUSTIN: And so, hey, I'm just going to throw this out here anyways. We do have a position open for HMIS, if you know of anyone that wants to come to a very warm climate in Atlanta. We welcome that.

MELISSA AUSTIN: But just very grateful for the grant and the direction it has taken us. We are now able to make real time decisions and we saw the greatest impact of this recently with the housing surge that we did and we're able to house 860 households in a very short period of time and that was due to being able to use the HMIS data to guide our decisions and to shift our implementation strategy.

MELISSA AUSTIN: So I will turn it over to Abby, who has led the work with ICA and we are going to be so sad to have to separate from her in the upcoming year. So, Abby.

ABBY BURGESS: Thanks Melissa, as Melissa said that, we're going to report on activity outcomes here but the benefits of this grant have gone well beyond the activity that we actually were able to do during the grant period. The grant was written for staffing, training, data quality, and within that, of course, we had to do some policies and procedures updates.

ABBY BURGESS: So we can go to the next slide Mary and just talk through...Again, Melissa mentioned this, We hired 2 dedicated HMIS system administrators. And I think the key word there is dedicated, right? Because when there are competing interest for CoC staff and you're not dedicated to your project and you get pulled off on those emergencies that can make it really difficult to come back to the ground and get data focused.

ABBY BURGESS: We conducted so many trainings during the capacity building grant, 66 trainings over 800 attendees. That is a duplicated number for those of you who are curious about that and we utilized, we created helpdesk procedures. We're on, we're utilizing our software to receive tickets directly and had a help desk telephone, dedicated telephone number, put up as well as office hours. So, in addition to that, we were able to do one on one trainings, data quality sessions, and some ad hoc stuff. So lots of lots of activity there.

ABBY BURGESS: We also trained the performance staff, Melissa mentioned this as well, is training the CoC staff on how they can use HMIS for performance. And that was key. To blend our teams and come up with that intersection together where we could spend time, dedicated time, on what performance types of reporting and, of course, there's a dashboard now that was published that is public in Atlanta for their community to view their performance at the project level. Reporting staff, adding capacity to have the time, the dedicated reporting staff, as well.

ABBY BURGESS: The big piece for policy that GAHMIS navigated with us, which is the HMIS lead, was to give the CoC's access to the ad hoc query tools. So we began writing our own queries at the CoC level instead of having to put the pressure on either the vendor or the HMIS lead to be able to navigate those report requesting and publish them locally.

ABBY BURGESS: We also expanded then really quickly as soon as we had access to queries, of course, then the requests start coming and people say, well, you have data, you have my data, so we wrote a lot

of reports in the first several months after we got access to that tool and we continued to expand the custom report menu in the software.

ABBY BURGESS: Melissa mentioned that that then, you know, benefits the entire state, because we have other CoCs that then can copy our queries and we share and do a lot of workshopping together across the CoCs in the state.

ABBY BURGESS: And of course, you can't forget to do the documentation. Really important that when you start adding reports and queries and things to your HMIS to document how those were built and the specifications behind them.

ABBY BURGESS: And then finally, I think, you know, we really just put the procedures in place to conduct HMIS Lead evaluation, to conduct HMIS software evaluation. Those, we say approval required here of course, are the local governing committees you know, need to adopt those into the policies and procedures. And so we got some procedures up and running.

ABBY BURGESS: We started participating more fully on the statewide Data, Reporting, and Evaluation Committee. And then we're able to actually write, publish, and implement a data quality plan and the related procedures for the agencies to begin to submit their data quality and be monitored. Lots of big stuff, short amount of time.

ABBY BURGESS: We're, you know, a year, almost what 6, 7 months out from this now and are still working to engage the providers and fully see the fruits here. But, it was a big deal and we thank you HUD for finding the funding to make sure that we could do this. And I think the Atlanta agencies are really grateful for the extra support as well.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Thank you so much Abby and Melissa. As a reminder, HUD funded this about, it's been 4 years now or so ago they put out the NOFA. It was a one-time funding opportunity and there was an assessment done for lower capacity CoCs to be the recipients of these funds. And this is just one great example of that work and what occurred over the years of the project so congratulations to you.

MARY SCHWARTZ: One thing we wanted to point out in case anybody is like, how do I get to do this? I want to do this, too. One of the big outcomes on the guidance side of the capacity building grant was the creation of the HMIS Lead series of tools and products. So those nine tools and products that are out there on the HUD exchange are there because we saw through the process of the capacity building grant, and rolling out the improvements there, that there was a need for this wider set of guidance and tools for onboarding new HMIS staff or just refreshing everybody's understanding of, you know, what it means to do data quality planning, what it means to do contract management what it means to do evaluation and monitoring.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So good job, Atlanta. Good job. Thank you. Moving on.

MARY SCHWARTZ: I'm going to welcome Danielle and Katie to the show. So Danielle Humes is the Data Analyst and System Supervisor for the Kentucky Housing Corporation and Katie French is the Senior Program Specialist for the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

MARY SCHWARTZ: And I did forget to say. We will, if you have questions specifically about what any of our community spotlight folks are sharing today, details about their exact implementation or questions

that you need clarified, feel free to share those via the Q and A, but we aren't gonna spend much time in Q and A with our community spotlight folks. We can follow up with you afterwards.

MARY SCHWARTZ: What we really want and hope, and especially for these next 2 presenters from Kentucky and then the group from Missouri, is that you all kind of ruminate on what they're sharing as examples of how to move the comparable database and partnering with VSPs in your community, how to move that work forward and some practical ways that that might be accomplished.

MARY SCHWARTZ: And what we plan to have on June's call then is the technical assistance experts to answer to answer the really deep questions that we know you are going to have as you think about how to implement the different requirements around this topic in your own communities.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So, sit back and enjoy as Danielle and Katie talk us through one example of partnering between the CoC and the victim service provider community.

DANIELLE HUMES: Thanks Mary. Jesse, I feel like you've set me up for, I'm never going to be as funny or as cool as you on your slides. So I enjoy that so much. But with that said, I'll try to keep it interesting, a little bit.

DANIELLE HUMES: I'm sure some of you all have a similar situation to what I feel like we in Kentucky were in a couple of years ago, where you find it difficult to partner with your victim service providers. They have a comparable database that might be different than yours. So that's kind of what we're here to share about how we have tried to overcome that recently.

DANIELLE HUMES: So just a little bit of history when, you know, a couple years ago when we started trying to work towards a better partnership with Katie who we have here with us, with our Coalition Against Domestic Violence here in Kentucky we were, as the HMIS Lead, trying to do the best that we could, with not being able to see the data that our VSPs were entering into their system, not having the insight on what that comparable database looks like, not really having our connection with their vendor and the partnerships were, they just weren't there at the moment. So lots of opportunities for improvement.

DANIELLE HUMES: Immediately we saw a need for upgrading the comparable database. So we partnered quickly with KCADV and Katie to kind of figure out what comparable databases were out there that would work well for our communities.

DANIELLE HUMES: We ran into issues with providing technical support. Not being able to see the system, not really knowing the vendor, what their system looked like, we would get help desk tickets in all the time and we're just like trying to muddle through. Like, I'm not really sure where the error is. I can't tell you where to click, but here's kind of what it is on our end. Hopefully that helps at some point. So, there, you know, opportunities for improvement there.

DANIELLE HUMES: We talked about vendor relationship building, just not really having that connection. Knowing who their contracts were with, who to contact if there were issues. The HUD data standards, we ran into that pretty much every year. Lots of areas for opportunity, for improvement there.

DANIELLE HUMES: Unfortunately, we got to reporting time one year, and this was kind of like our big like "oh, okay, we've got to figure something out here", was when it came time to doing a federal report

and the comparable database was not up to par. They, you know, several months after the October deadline and we're like "okay, well, that actually should have been changed back in October, now it doesn't work correctly on the report".

DANIELLE HUMES: So that was one of our big red flags. Like, what can we do to improve this? Of course that affected our federal reporting and our data quality as well.

DANIELLE HUMES: So if you'll advance the slide, Mary.

DANIELLE HUMES: So that leads us to recommendations. Like, what did we do next after we got to this point where we're like, this is just not working well. So that's why we actually have Katie here with us today. Because that is kind of where we went next is we do have a, you know, Katie, with the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence, where they already had an existing partnership with some of the VSPs across the state.

DANIELLE HUMES: And so we quickly realized that it would behoove us to have a position where it was similar to like a broker or a liaison between us and the VSPs, and the HMIS lead and the comparable database vendor. So, that is kind of what Katie's role has done for us.

DANIELLE HUMES: So, immediately we provided monetary assistance to upgrade the comparable database to make sure that there was a vendor in place that could meet the data standard requirements, security measures, all of that kind of stuff. So, that's something that I would recommend that you do as a partnership between the HMIS Lead, the CoC and to support your VSPs.

DANIELLE HUMES: Additionally, it was really helpful like, relationships were key. Like, we needed to partner with Katie. So Katie has access to, on her end, what that system looks like. So not necessarily, she can't get into the PII of the agencies but she can, she knows what the system looks like, knows how to navigate it. Whereas we use a completely different HMIS. So, that kind of helps with the ticketing.

DANIELLE HUMES: But one of the major things before I turn it over to Katie so she can talk about kind of what her role is and how she's been able to assist us as the HMIS lead is making sure that the expectation is said up front. As the funder, you need to set the expectations, set the role, of this position like we've set Katie to do.

DANIELLE HUMES: You have to kind of spotlight them and say like, it is the expectation that you work directly with the Coalition of Domestic Violence to work with data quality, to ensure that you're working directly with them and the vendor, that your system is up to date. So there is expectation upfront that you as the HMIS lead can provide that says, like, okay, we are sub granting money, because that's how we do it here, we take some of our HMIS funds to fund a portion of Katie's position and we kind of let them know, like Katie is going to be your contact person. You can submit questions to her, she will work with your vendor and then we also have Katie as on our side instead of having to work directly with each of the VSPs at all of the different agencies across the state. Like, we can contact Katie. And she kind of does that liaison for us.

DANIELLE HUMES: So, hopefully, that gives you some ideas of where to start and kind of what we have done, some recommendations that we have for you. And then I'll turn it over to Katie so that she can talk a little bit about how this role has impacted the VSPs and what she does for us here in Kentucky.

MARY SCHWARTZ: And we have about one minute, Katie, before I want to switch the Missouri folks, so we have enough time for them.

KATIE FRENCH: I'll be very quick then. Thank you, Danielle.

KATIE FRENCH: I just want to reinforce the importance that the financial investment made, both in helping us to purchase our initial comparable database as well as in funding about, I'm not sure, a third or a quarter of my salary has been really important to be able to help keep me focused in this role.

KATIE FRENCH: As she said, that broker part of my job is really important. Building strong relationships with advocates across the state that are working on our data entry and reporting so that when I'm doing data quality checks, you know, it just helps encourage them to want to fix the errors. If you've got a good relationship, then people want to work for you, basically.

KATIE FRENCH: And then also, they don't hesitate to come to me to ask questions or to get input or help, or support on things. And they're also a lot more comfortable coming to me than they are going to our database vendor for support. So, that's why those relationships are so important.

KATIE FRENCH: So, I think those are my biggest plugs. Thank you.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So much, you two. Thank you so much. We are going to turn it over now to our friends from Missouri. So we have Janelle and Heidi here. Janelle with a J, not Genelle with a G. We've had fun all morning getting the difference down pat there.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Janelle Williams, who is the Grant Management Specialist with the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Domestic and Sexual Violence. Sorry, Janelle. And Heidi Coleman, who's our Member Services Specialist at the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. And they're here to basically, you know, give you some, another, just another example as to what Danielle and Katie shared, how it works for the Missouri folks to incorporate and integrate HMIS and CoC work with the VSP organizations. Janelle? Heidi?

HEIDI COLEMAN: Thank you so much, so just to give you a little bit of background about what the Missouri Coalition has done is we are a Technical Assistance and training for our members. And we also do some work with VOCA recipients and different things like that. But our main focus are our members, and we have about 124 member programs throughout the state of Missouri.

HEIDI COLEMAN: So one of the first things that we had done is we were part of the governor's committee to end homelessness. We were actually a co-chair for that. We are part of the HMIS statewide committee, and we've been involved with the Missouri Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Missouri Balance of State.

HEIDI COLEMAN: So we also provided training as well to homeless service providers to screen and to refer individuals to domestic violence services as a webinar. And you can go ahead with the next slide.

HEIDI COLEMAN: So our roles and responsibilities at MOCADSV, Janelle and I had the great opportunity to work with a vendor and we actually, our coalition was able to partner up with Elements 74, with Vela, and we help to create a comparable database for HMIS, for VOCA reporting, for all of the different reporting for domestic violence agencies.

HEIDI COLEMAN: And with that, we do provide technical assistance with all of those types of reporting. And we also work with Vela to be able to go into those agencies' database and be able to walk them through.

HEIDI COLEMAN: Another part of Janelle and I, we have worked with several different vendors in the past, in our former lives with being at VSPs ourselves. So we were able to bring that to the coalition, so that we know what the reports do look like in all of those other vendors.

HEIDI COLEMAN: But for our future roles, too, is that we're going to hopefully be able to expand domestic violence, domestic and sexual violence collaboration and representation with local CoCs. So we mostly deal with the big picture of Missouri, and then we ask our members to partner up with the local CoCs.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: Next slide. All right so, I'm Janelle, I'm the Grants Management Specialist and really all these things, we've really taken off on in the last 4 years. It was kind of an informal collaboration, Heidi and I both coming on fairly close together as VSP providers moving into the coalition. Seeing a need for additional training and technical assistance for the service providers to be able to collect data, report on data, and really understand what is being asked of them.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: So some of the things that that we've really developed and we've really worked on and we've identified as areas and needs within our state is this training aspect. Doing cross training with each other, with the local CoCs, with the local homeless agencies, with the domestic and sexual violence agencies, doing this cross training and finding all those areas that overlap that we're, we can share information, share resources, share best practices and really build a collaborative relationship that is stronger and more robust than it currently is.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: We also provide that technical assistance. A lot of I feel what Kentucky was talking about is a lot of what we're seeing. So we've got the VSPs, that they understand their database in their system. They've never been in HMIS. They've never seen one in action. A lot of the words are foreign to them, a lot of the acronyms are foreign to them, the concepts. So when they feel, when they're reaching out for help, they're like, they keep saying these things to me, but it's like Greek. I have no idea what they're talking about. And so we're able to play like a translator role.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: One of the benefits that I have is that I also am on the board of a local homeless agency and so I've lived in both worlds. I've got a foot in both worlds and so I'm able to kind of partner with agencies and help them understand that the words that are being used, the acronyms, the concepts all mean things that they're already doing we just call them by different names. And really being able to help support them and make more sense of it to them.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: So that technical assistance also around the grant management. Having never seen a database, an HMIS database, the programs are struggling when they are told that their reports are incorrect, that there's errors within the reports. And so they don't understand what to do to fix them.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: Like Heidi said, the two of us have touched about every database in some point, in some fashion, that is considered a comparable database. And in addition to developing a database that, because we heard all those problems, everything Kentucky just identified as a problem we went into Vela knowing were problems. And so that's why we really focused, really put the time, energy, and the

finances into developing a comparable database for VSP. So that grant management was a critical piece for what we do.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: Also, really promoting those best practices and then referring to our local CoCs and our providers and really building those connections between the local agencies or local CoCs, the state level, and ourselves, making sure that everyone knows who everyone is at the table and where to go to ask questions.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: Go to the next slide. So kind of touched on, but those are some of the biggest things that we've taken away that we've learned over the last several years as we kind of work through this process is that there's just a different terminology, there's a different language, and both groups intimately know their language and their terminology but they don't understand their partners.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: And so no matter how much they want to work together, no matter how much they want to partner together, there's a fear, and there's an uncertainty about moving forward, about reaching out for help, about asking questions because the language is just so different. So really having that person that can play that go between, to kinda help facilitate those conversations and break that language down, so each party knows what's going on, it's been really critical.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: Also understanding how the requirements of domestic and sexual violence programs, and how they operate and how they operate a little bit differently and they have different requirements really can be able to communicate and have open honest discussions about what those look like. And not that they are barriers, not that they are ways to shut down domestic and sexual violence programs from participating, but they're opportunities to be able to figure out new ways of working together.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: And so understanding those requirements and working through solutions, instead of using them as a wall and say, I can't do this because of my confidentiality requirement. I can't do this because of the way my program operates. Really facilitating those conversations and saying, okay, we understand the requirement. What are some solutions? What are some options? So we can work through this and collaborate together. So I really facilitated those.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: And then really working on those data collection best practices and funder compliance on a local level. We started doing some grant management training, which has gone over really well. Just helping the agencies, 'cause a lot of the executive directors, grant, data collection, reporting specialists, those positions within your victim service provider is, someone was promoted there because they were super great advocates not because they know how to manage data. And so it's been really key and critical for us to help bring them up and help give them those skills to understand how to do this, so they can be good partners with their local homeless service providers.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: And so that leads us to some things that we can work on together. So really working with your CoC and your local coalition or your local victim service provider, really identifying those language barriers, those terminology. Really working on that outreach and connecting to them knowing that they're in the community and bringing them in and communicating regularly with them.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: That's one big question I hear, and I answer a lot of technical assistance is how do I even get my foot in the door? It's a really complex system with a lot of words, and a lot of different people meeting doing a lot of different things. I don't even know where to get started. So really reaching

out to your victim service providers, helping walk them through that process and including them. And then really working together on that data collection, helping them understand in a language. So know what their system looks like or know how to walk them through, or know somebody that knows somebody.

JANELLE WILLIAMS: We always say around here you don't have to know everything. You just have to know who to go and ask. So really build those relationships to be able to help them with their system and their processes, to be able to do it in a way that might be a little different than what you're used to.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Thank you so much Heidi and Janelle, I really appreciate your time. Thank you to everyone, Katie, Danielle, Abby and Melissa as well. So, again, I hope that everybody on the call was able to kind of listen to some examples on the ground. We are going to have some experts, technical assistance providers, on our June call to dig into this a little bit more. What does it look like to collaborate between victim service provider organizations and HMIS and CoC. Thank you thank you.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Real quick. Let me just wrap up our call. Remember we have a set of resources that we always try and link you to. We add any of the newest resources to the slide this week or this month. We talked about, Meradith talked about the coordinated entry data and system performance guidance, which is now live on HUD exchange. So you can link to that there. We had a couple of questions come in around EHV's again this month so there's a link to that. Of course, the lead series tools and products that I mentioned earlier. So all of that is there for you to access.

MARY SCHWARTZ: We will see you again on June 15th. And any other suggestions for topics for next month. I did hear from Alissa that they're ready to gear up for the next round of community workshops. So we may be able to hear from her again. If you have any other suggestions, please enter them into the Q and A right now, or send us an HMIS AAQ, as you know, those are our favorites.

MARY SCHWARTZ: I do need Meradith back on, because I'm going to remember to tell the joke this time. And because I almost forgot last time, Fran gave me permission to do two and a little further setup is, that these are jokes made up by kiddos in our community so I'm going to give a shout out to Nate and Ollie and William for jokes that they came up with and I think they're fantastic.

MARY SCHWARTZ: So, Meradith.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Yes.

MARY SCHWARTZ: You know how it's like allergy season and so, what do you call a day when you're both snotty and sneezy from allergies?

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: Oh, gosh. Um, I don't know.

MARY SCHWARTZ: That day is snot-eezy.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: It's snot-eezy. That's a good one.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Here we go. What, oh let's see, how are dogs and cell phones the same.

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: See, I know this one, because you already told me this one.

MARY SCHWARTZ: You could say it!

MERADITH ALSPAUGH: They both have caller/collar ID.

MARY SCHWARTZ: Yes! All right that is our show, thanks so much for all your time and attention today all the fantastic presentations and of course, my panelists, and Fran Ledger, and everybody who cares. We care too. Thanks so much.