HMIS System Administrator Checklist

This resource is prepared by technical assistance providers and intended only to provide guidance. The contents of this document, except when based on statutory or regulatory authority or law, do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

HMIS System Administration Overview

Staffing patterns for HMIS vary from CoC to CoC. HMIS staff may or may not be responsible for all the roles related to the collection and use of data. A CoC may have a subcommittee whose purpose is the management of the CoC's data system, including general oversight of the HMIS Lead agency, review/approval of HMIS-generated reports, management of data quality, privacy, and security plans, and management of monitoring processes. There are generally six basic roles related to the HMIS and its data. These are:

- **Project management:** Oversees the general management of the HMIS project. May also supervise HMIS staff. Usually interacts with CoC leadership, program leadership, and the HMIS Lead agency's leadership.
- **System administration:** Manages the technical aspects of the day-to-day operations of the HMIS. Works directly with the end users and the HMIS software vendor to ensure authorized access to client information, accessibility of the HMIS software, software performance, correct set up and monitoring of system security, and adherence to CoC privacy policies within the software.
- **Training:** Develops, conducts, and documents training for HMIS users and data collectors.
- **Helpdesk support:** Receives, triages, and resolves technical issues in the HMIS experienced by the end users. Works with the system administrator to identify HMIS software issues and with HMIS training staff to identify end user training needs.
- **Data analysis and reporting:** Analyzes data for the CoC, including non-HMIS data. Interprets, visualizes, and presents data to the CoC. Ensures CoC reporting requirements are met.
- **Communications:** Disseminates information to the community and manages communications related to data on behalf of the CoC.

How to Use This Checklist

This checklist outlines the duties generally performed by an HMIS System Administrator. CoCs can use this checklist as a reference to identify key responsibilities as well as needed skill sets of an HMIS System Administrator. This checklist can also provide an outline for the policies, procedures, and agreements that govern the responsibilities of the various data stakeholders within the CoC.

It is recognized that HMIS System Administrators are often required to perform additional roles, particularly when staffing is limited. For instance, the responsibility for generating, reviewing, and reporting anomalies in audit logs is the responsibility of the HMIS System Administrator. However, the development and management of policies and procedures related to auditing the software for unauthorized access or use is usually the responsibility of the CoC's HMIS or data committee but may also be assigned to the HMIS System Administrator. This checklist acknowledges this situation by listing activities specific to the system administrator role while also listing additional responsibilities of a system administrator, as assigned.

To understand if you are required to implement a comparable database, review the Victim Service Provider Comparable Database and Reporting Requirements and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) guidance on when to use a comparable database.

Activity/Task	System Administrator Role	Notes
Technical Expertise		
Maintain knowledge of HMIS data and technical requirements		
Attend HMIS training opportunities		
Attend software training opportunities		
Get connected to HMIS related distributions/listservs/social media		
Participate in HMIS regional collaborations		
System Administration		
Work with HMIS staff to implement an HMIS operations plan to ensure all responsibilities are fulfilled in a timely manner		
Maintain a calendar of events, such as report due dates, training dates, monitoring dates, data committee meeting dates, annual recertification due dates, to support ongoing and cyclical HMIS operational activities		
Ensure the HMIS network infrastructure is up and running		
Ensure hosting, storage, and back-up procedures are completed in accordance with CoC expectations (if a vendor function, the system administrator should verify)		
Add, remove, or update user account information, reset passwords, set and monitor end user access levels		
Ensure correct set up of projects in the HMIS		
Customize/configure workflows within the capacity of the software, as authorized by the CoC, and in accordance with the CoC Privacy Plan, Privacy Notice, and data use and disclosure agreements.		
Assess and conduct HMIS software performance for improvement		
Work with HMIS staff and software vendor to develop and implement custom project work plans		
Manage HMIS software updates		
Test, monitor, and validate software fixes		
Ensure technical requirements are incorporated into planning for special software projects		
Ensure the existence of current software technical documentation, such as system configuration and a local HMIS specific data dictionary		

Activity/Task	System Administrator Role	Notes
System Administration Continued		
Remove or archive client data from HMIS as authorized by the CoC		
Work with software vendor/ensure presence of a disaster protection and recovery plan for data hosting sites, including back-up sites and accessibility protocols		
Develop and manage a disaster recovery protocol for System Admin/HMIS Lead paper and electronic HMIS documents and agreements		
Support non-HMIS programs with a comparable database		
Install and configure new hardware and software related to the HMIS for the HMIS Lead		
Technical Support		
Develop and establish HMIS support structure, helpdesk, HMIS Policies and Procedures		
Conduct HMIS support and help desk activities within the scope of established HMIS policies, procedures, and protocols		
Respond to technical queries and assist end users		
Troubleshoot and resolve HMIS issues/bug/default tracking with HMIS software vendor		
Monitor data collection and review report compliance with HUD standards and federal partner requirements, when applicable		
Manage communication with the HMIS software vendor; report ongoing issues in accordance with HMIS Policies and Procedures		
Work with HMIS software vendor to plan and implement software upgrades and fixes		
Design and implement a customer feedback forum (HMIS User group)		
Manage HMIS public website and community dashboard reporting		
Support the HMIS Lead and CoC leadership's outreach to project and community leadership to cultivate and maintain support and understanding of HMIS		

Activity/Task	System Administrator Role	Notes
HMIS Security		
Establish policies, procedures, and conduct security standard monitoring, including HMIS related hard copy documents, such as completed intake forms, printed By Name Lists, printed documents with Personal Identifying Information (PII), and filing systems used to house these documents		
Create and implement a system security plan		
Implement technical safeguards to protect HMIS data, assuring devices used for HMIS are password protected, have up-to-date antivirus software, have locking screensavers, have individual or network firewalls, and physical device locations are secure		
Ensure that the HMIS software is configured correctly to ensure compliance with CoC established security policies and procedures		
Monitor audit logs for unauthorized access to client records and report deviations from security protocol according to an established channel of communication		
Ensure security of data during any electronic transfer of data		
Conduct security standard monitoring in accordance with established policies and procedures		
HMIS Privacy		
Establish policies, procedures, and monitoring plan for the Privacy Notice; client authorization form (Release of Information); and electronic and paper documents containing personal identifying information (i.e. intake forms, assessment tools, By Name Lists, referral forms, etc.).		
Ensure that the HMIS software is configured correctly to ensure compliance with CoC established privacy policies and procedures		
Conduct monitoring for compliance to established policies, procedures, and plans and report deviations from privacy protocol according to an established channel of communication		
Data Quality		
Establish and maintain data quality policies and procedures		
Develop and maintain a data quality improvement/maintenance plan		
Test, monitor, validate, and verify the HMIS software can collect required data elements		

Activity/Task	System Administrator Role	Notes
Data Quality Continued		
Monitor data quality in accordance with CoC established Data Quality Management Plan		
Work with end users to identify and resolve data quality issues		
Perform data integrity maintenance, such as record deduplication/merger, as authorized by the CoC		
Develop and operate a data quality monitoring plan to ensure the HMIS collects required data as per the most recent HUD specifications, including federal partner requirements		
Establish, maintain, and monitor data and hardware disposal policies and procedures		
Training		
Develop and implement a regular training plan for HMIS end-users, that ensures all required HMIS participants have received training and orientation on regulations pertaining to their funding		
Develop and implement a regular training plan for HMIS software data entry and capabilities		
Provide training on system security, privacy, and HMIS policies and procedures		
Provide training on report generation, relevant to audience (CoC Annual Performance Report, System Performance Measures, Emergency Solutions Grant Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report)		
Reporting		
Manage data imports and exports		
Create and maintain documentation of custom reports		
Extract, compile, and analyze HMIS data, in accordance with CoC policies and procedures, including creation and submission of HUD required reporting on behalf of the CoC		
Extract, compile, and analyze HMIS data, in accordance with CoC policies and procedures, to support service program staff in the creation and submission of federal project reports		
Contribute to and/or prepare and submit the HMIS APR		