



VA Programs HMIS Manual

Federally-Funded Programs for Homeless Veterans

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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Release & Update Information

Date	Version	Description
3/2015	1.0	First Release
9/2017	1.2	Second Release <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removed the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (VADOM) program due to its reclassification as a residential treatment program• Replaced HCHV Contract Emergency Residential Services (HCHV/CERS) program guidance with Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Housing (HCHV/EH) and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Treatment (HCHV/RT) guidance• Updated Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program Guidance on Transition In Place (TIP) projects• Updated to 2017 Data Standards v1.2

Introduction

The *VA Programs HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) program grantees.

This manual provides information on HMIS program setup for VA funded projects. Data collection instructions and other standard guidance for VA funded projects will be provided in an additional document, the VA Data Guide, which will be published prior to implementation of the October 1, 2017 updated data standards. While the VA Data Guide is meant to convey all data management requirements to VA grantees, necessary tools to properly meet those requirements and information needed to help manage program data, the VA Programs HMIS Manual is meant to help system administrators and HMIS Lead staff ensure that VA funded programs are properly set up in HMIS.

Additional Resources

- **VA Homeless Programs:** Guidance about the VA homeless programs and requirements can be found online at the [VA Homeless Programs](#) page.
- **Ask A Question:** To ask a question about any VA Programs HMIS requirement go to the “[Ask A Question](#)” section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select “HMIS” for your question under “My Question is Related To.” HUD and VA program staff are working together to answer questions that come in on the AAQ related to the VA programs and HMIS.
- **HMIS:** There are a variety of documents available on the HUD Exchange [2017 HMIS Data Standards](#) page that comprise the suite of HMIS Data Standard resources, which are highlighted in the table below. Each of the documents has a specific purpose and intended audience. The HMIS Lead should be familiar with all of the documents and collectively use them as their HMIS reference materials along with specific materials provided by the software vendor.

Document Name	Intended Audience	Contents
HMIS Data Standards Dictionary	HMIS Vendors & HMIS Lead Agencies	The Dictionary provides the detailed information required for system programming of each HMIS element and the responses required for an HMIS software. It delineates data collection requirements, system logic, and contains the XML and CSV tables and numbers. It also includes critical information about data collection stages, federal partner data collection required elements, and metadata data elements.
HMIS Data Standards Manual	HMIS Lead Agencies and HMIS Users	The manual provides data collection instructions for the Project Descriptor Data Elements, Universal Data Elements, and the Common Program Specific Data Elements. It contains information on project set up, client-level data collection requirements, and detailed descriptions of each data element.
HMIS Standard Reporting Terminology Glossary	HMIS Lead Agencies	The HMIS Standards Reporting Terminology Glossary is the standard report document for HMIS implementations. The glossary is designed to provide HMIS and their programmers a foundation for HMIS-required reports.

HMIS Project Setup Steps

It is important to be sure that communities understand the difference between a **program** and a **project** because they have distinct meanings in this context. A program is the source of funding that the organization is receiving to run its project (e.g., Grant and Per Diem Program funding for ABC Transitional Housing project).

1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all of the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive VA funding. The [VA Medical Center \(VAMC\)](#) serving your community should be aware of all funding awarded to your CoC. VA has also posted their [Directory of Veteran Service Organizations](#) online, which will assist with contact information.

2. Identify the VA Program Funding each Project

Identify the **program** for each VA-funded project serving Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and operating within the continuum. The VA funds projects under six relevant programs:

- The **Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR)** program is designed to assist homeless Veterans in returning to competitive employment. These transitional housing projects **do not participate in HMIS**, but their data must be included in the continuum’s HIC and PIT Count.
- The **Grant and Per Diem (GPD)** program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing (up to 24 months) and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve

residential stability. These transitional housing projects have been **strongly recommended by VA to participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- **Note:** A limited number of GPD projects use the "Transition in Place" (TIP) model. VA has clarified that these projects should be classified as "Permanent Housing Only" project type in HMIS. These projects have been strongly recommended by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC, identified as "Other Permanent Housing" (OPH).
- Other models of GPD projects include:
 - GPD: Bridge Housing
 - GPD: Low Demand
 - GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing
 - GPD: Hospital to Housing
 - GPD: Clinical Treatment
- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Housing (HCHV/EH)** program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness. These emergency shelter projects have been **strongly recommended by VA to participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.
 - **Note:** As of the release of the 2017 Data Standards, HCHV/EH and HCHV/RT have been combined into one response under 2.6 Federal Partner Funding Sources called "VA:CRS Contract Residential Services," and may be referred to in some parts of the Data Dictionary as "HCHV CRS: EH."
- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Treatment (HCHV/RT)** program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness with serious mental health or substance use disorders. These emergency shelter projects have been **strongly recommended by VA to participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.
 - **Note:** As of the release of the 2017 Data Standards, HCHV/EH and HCHV/RT have been combined into one response under 2.6 Federal Partner Funding Sources called "VA:CRS Contract Residential Services," and may be referred to in some parts of the Data Dictionary as "HCHV CRS: EH."
- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Community Contract Safe Haven (HCHV/SH)** program provides an early recovery model of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless individuals. These safe haven projects have been **strongly recommended by VA to participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.
 - **Note:** As of the release of the 2017 Data Standards, the name of this program in 2.6 Federal Partner Funding Sources is changed to "VA:Community Contract Safe Haven Program" and may be referred to in some parts of the Data Dictionary as "HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven."

- The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program provides case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, as well as time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. SSVF serves veteran families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness without SSVF assistance. These projects are **required to participate in HMIS**; two separate projects – one with a type of Homelessness Prevention and one with a type of Rapid Re-Housing must be set up in HMIS. Data for the RRH project must be included in the continuum’s HIC.

Every project receiving funding through these programs must be included in a continuum’s HIC and PIT Count. In communities that use HMIS to generate the HIC, all projects funded under these programs must be entered into HMIS, regardless of HMIS participation. Furthermore, every project in a CoC’s HIC is required to be set up in HMIS regardless of collection of client level data in HMIS or not. This is to facilitate AHAR participation.

3. Set Up Projects in HMIS

One of the most critical steps in accurate data collection and reporting is ensuring that a project is set up properly in an HMIS. Incorrect project setup will jeopardize recipients’ ability to produce accurate, reliable reports and will affect the community’s ability to generate community wide reports like System Performance Measures.

HMIS System Administrators should follow the procedures established for their particular HMIS when setting up projects in the HMIS. These setup procedures must include, at a minimum, the following:

1. The HMIS includes Project Descriptor data elements for all residential continuum projects, regardless of their participation in HMIS; and
2. The HMIS Lead, in consultation with the CoC, reviews project descriptor data at least once annually and updates that data as needed.

The following are required Project Descriptor Data Elements:

Organization Identifiers (2.1) – The name of the agency/organization receiving VA funding must be entered. An identification number will be generated by the HMIS. There may be only one record in HMIS for each agency/organization, regardless of how many projects they operate. In the HMIS Data Standards, HUD strongly recommends that the name of the organization is the entity’s legal name - not an abbreviation or other derivative since the name is transmitted in reports.

Project Identifiers (2.2) –

- **Project ID:** A Project ID must be assigned to each project via a system generated number or code. Each project must receive a distinct identifier that is consistently associated with that project.
- **Project Name:** The name of the project receiving VA funding and providing the direct service must also be entered or identified with the VA-specific project. HMIS administrators should note that often the name of the project on the grant agreement is not the same as the name the project is called by the organization and/or the common name in the community and often not

the same name as is used on the HIC. System administrators should maintain mapping information to correlate grant names, HIC names, and common names with the project identifiers either within the HMIS itself or separately.

- **Operating Start Date:** Beginning in October 2017, the Operating Start Date of a project must be completed on all projects within the HMIS. The Operating Start Date of the project is defined as the first day the project provided services and/or housing. Thus, this date must be no later than the date the first client served in the project was entered into the project. For projects which began operating prior to October 1, 2012, the start date may be estimated if not known.
- **Operating End Date:** An Operating End Date must be entered when a project closes. The Operating End Date must be the last day on which the last client received housing/services. The Operating End Date should be left empty if the project is still in operation (refer to the specific HMIS instructions on project close out in an HMIS).

Continuum of Care Code (2.3) – Select the CoC code based on the location in which the project operates. VA-funded projects may be funded to operate in a single CoC or they may be funded to operate in a wider geographic area that covers multiple CoCs. Projects funded to operate in multiple CoCs should be associated with all of the CoC codes for which they will be entering client-level data into the HMIS. For example, if a SSVF project is expected to provide financial assistance to everyone in the catchment area then all of the CoC codes which cover the area must be selected. However, if the SSVF project only provides services to people in City X, and City X has a single CoC code, then select the code that applies to City X’s CoC only. If a project is funded to operate in multiple CoCs and is participating in the HMIS implementations of each separate CoC with a separate project created in each, only the CoC Code relevant to the HMIS implementation need be entered.

Project Type (2.4) – Continuum Project should be answered ‘Yes’ for all projects funded under programs

Component	Project Type #	Project Type Name
SSVF: RRH	13	PH - Rapid Re-Housing
SSVF: Homelessness Prevention	12	Homelessness Prevention
HCHV CRS: EH	1	Emergency Shelter
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Bridge Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Low Demand	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Hospital to Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Transition in Place	9	PH - Housing Only
CWT/TR	2	Transitional Housing (For purposes of HIC and PIT only; no ongoing data collection requirement)

listed below. Appropriate project types will be critical to the CoC’s ability to produce system wide performance measures. VA project types should be set up as follows:

Special Note for GPD Grantees: GPD grantees that were not selected for funding under the 2017 round received a one year extension of their existing GPD grants. In FY 18 there will be projects that will be operating under their prior awards. These awards do not technically fall under any of the new housing models but are instructed to be set up under GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing.

Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization (2.5) – Among VA programs, this data element is only relevant for projects funded under the HCHV CRS: EH program component; these projects should be set up using the Entry/Exit Date method.

Federal Partner Funding Sources (2.6) – Projects funded in whole or in part by VA funds are to be identified based on the VA program. Select the appropriate VA program for each project:

Component	Federal Funder Source #	Federal Funder Source Name
CWT/TR	32	VA:Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residence
GPD: Bridge Housing	37	VA:Grant Per Diem – Bridge Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	40	VA:Grant Per Diem – Clinical Treatment
GPD: Hospital to Housing	39	VA:Grant Per Diem – Hospital to Housing
GPD: Low Demand	38	VA:Grant Per Diem – Low Demand
GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	41	VA:Grant Per Diem – Service Intensive Transitional Housing
GPD: Transition in Place	42	VA:Grant Per Diem – Transition in Place
HCHV CRS: EH	27	VA:CRS Contract Residential Services
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	30	VA:Community Contract Safe Haven Program
SSVF: Homelessness Prevention	33	VA:Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SSVF: RRH	33	VA:Supportive Services for Veteran Families

For VA projects the **Grant Identifier** field should include the VA grant number, along with the corresponding Grant Start Date and Grant End Date. With the exception of SSVF, projects that operate as a single entity but are funded under multiple VA programs or grants may be set up as a single project in HMIS, as long as the project type (as shown in 2.4 Project Type above) is the same and each of the funding sources is recorded in HMIS. For SSVF, multiple VA grant identifiers should only be associated with a single project when a grant is renewed. Organizations operating with more than one VA grant at the same time must have separate projects set up for each grant.

Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.7) –

HMIS administrators must complete the bed and unit inventory information for projects that provide lodging (Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-housing, and Safe Haven). This information should match the Housing Inventory Count (HIC). The bed and unit information is based on the number and type of beds in the entire project, which may be more beds/units than are funded by the VA Program.

HMIS Leads should consult their HMIS vendor regarding the specific way to complete this element to meet all of the requirements. Correct set-up is critical for accurate reporting in the new Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) beginning in 2018.

- **Additional Project Information (2.8)** – Each residential project must have at least one record of *Additional Project Information*. ‘Geocode,’ ‘Project ZIP code,’ and ‘Project Street Address’ fields must reflect the location of the project’s principal lodging site or, for multiple site projects, the area in which most of the project’s clients are housed. Tenant-based scattered site projects and Victim Services Providers are only required to complete the geocode and ZIP code fields and may use mailing or administrative address information if they wish to complete the remainder of the address fields.

HMIS Leads should consult their HMIS vendor regarding the specific way to complete this element to meet all of the requirements. Correct set-up is critical for accurate reporting in the new Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) beginning in 2018.

Data Collection Requirements

Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the [HMIS Data Standards Dictionary and Manual](#).

All VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are required to collect and enter Universal Data Elements and relevant Program-Specific Data Elements. The Program Specific Data Elements to be collected by each VA-funded project are shown below:

Data Collection Requirements by Program Component:

#	Name	SSVF: RRH	SSVF: HP	HCHV: CRS EH	GPD: All
3.1-3.917	Universal Data Elements	X	X	X	X
4.2	Income and Sources	X	X	X	X
4.3	Non-Cash Benefits	X	X	X	X
4.4	Health Insurance	X	X	X	X
4.5	Physical Disability			X	X
4.6	Developmental Disability			X	X
4.7	Chronic Health Condition			X	X
4.8	HIV/AIDS			X	X
4.9	Mental Health Problem			X	X
4.10	Substance Abuse			X	X
4.11	Domestic Violence			X	X
V1	Veteran's Information	X	X	X	X
V2	Services Provided – SSVF	X	X	O	O
V3	Financial Assistance – SSVF	X	X		
V4	Percent of AMI (SSVF Eligibility)	X	X		
V5	Last Permanent Address	X	X		
V6	VMAC Station Number	X	X		
V7	SSVF HP Targeting Criteria		X		
P4	Connection with SOAR	X	X		
R4	Last Grade Completed	X	X		

X = Data collection required

O = Data collection optional at the discretion of grantee

For HCHV Low Demand Safe Haven and Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residence Programs, HMIS data collection is not required. Therefore, collection requirements have not been specified by the VA for those programs. If they choose to participate in HMIS data collection locally, they may collect as many of the program specific data elements listed above as possible, in addition to collecting all universal data elements.

Special Data Collection Instructions

While HUD maintains this data collection manual for consistency with other federal partner materials and to help HMIS Leads perform VA-specific project set up tasks, the VA publishes its own data collection guidance for the VA specific data elements. In an effort to reduce duplication, those detailed instructions are not provided in this manual. Please see the [VA Data Guide](#) for special data collection instructions for VA grantees.

GPD grantees that were not selected for funding under the 2017 round received a one year extension of their existing GPD grants. In FY 18 there will be projects that will be operating under their prior awards. These awards do not technically fall under any of the new housing models but are instructed to be set up under GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing.