Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Overview

A **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** is a locally administered information system used to record and analyze individual client and family data, services, and housing data for those experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. The power of the HMIS is its capacity to integrate and induplicate data, within a community who contribute data in HMIS, across all homeless assistance and homelessness prevention projects.

In 2001, recognizing the importance of managing local homelessness services and client information, Congress directed the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop of a system to analyze data that can better report on the extent of homelessness across the Nation. HMIS grew out of these mandates along with the ability to develop unduplicated local-level counts of clients served, analyze individual homeless assistance entry and exit patterns of use, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those systems.

HMIS in Idaho began in 2002, after IHFA received a grant from HUD. The HEARTH Act passed in 2009 and amending the McKinney-Vento Act, required HMIS participation for recipients and subrecipients of Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funds. Each Continuum of Care became responsible for designating an HMIS that complies with the requirements of the Data and Technical Standards Final Notice (Federal Register Vol. 69 No. 146).

To meet the goal of ending homelessness a community must have a better understanding of the characteristics of those who are experiencing homelessness as well as what is working in the community and what is not. HMIS produces reliable aggregate data at multiple levels that contribute to that understanding: project, system, local, state and national. HMIS is used to measure project performance and participate in benchmarking of the national effort to end homelessness.

HMIS Data Collection Requirements
The HUD HMIS Data Standards Manual outlines the requirements for data collection.

The Universal Data Elements (UDE) are collected in HMIS by all projects regardless of funding type. The UDEs establish the baseline data collection for all contributing CoC projects.

- Name
- Social Security Number
- Date of Birth
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Veteran Status
- Disabling Condition
- Project Start Date
- Project Exit Date
- Destination
- Relationship to Head of Household
- Client Location
- Housing Move-In Date
- Prior Living Situation

Program Specific Data Elements (PSDE) are collected across most federal partner programs. PSDEs provide information about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided, and client outcomes. They include the following:

- Income and Sources
- Non-Cash Benefits
- Health Insurance
- Physical Disability
- Developmental Disability
- Chronic Health Condition
- HIV/AIDS
- Mental Health Problems
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Current Living Situation
- Date of Engagement
- Bed-Night Date
- Coordinated Entry Assessment
- Coordinated Entry Event
- Destination (at Exit)
- Reasons for Leaving

HMIS – A Community Resource
HMIS has the capacity to incorporate data from all service providers in the community and to capture basic descriptive information on every person served. HMIS assesses and documents the community's progress in reducing homelessness. By banding together and using the HMIS system, we can:
- Bring the power of the most current up-to-date computer technology to the day-to-day operations of individual homeless assistance providers
- Share client level information with other affiliated service providers in the state
- Knit together providers within a local community in a more coordinated and effective housing and service delivery systems
- Strengthen community planning and resource allocation
- Obtain and report critical aggregate information about the characteristics and needs of homeless persons

How is HMIS data used?
The data collected in HMIS is used mainly for reporting purposes to HUD and many other organizations. **Only non-identifying aggregate and statistical level data is reported.** Affiliated service providers are the only agencies with access to shared client-level data.
- Annual Progress Reports (APR) for CoC Subrecipient
- Annual Progress Reports for ESG grantees (HUD)
- Annual Point in Time (PIT) Count of the Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless (HUD)
- Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA)
- Consolidate Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) (HUD)
- System Performance Measurement Report
- Individual Service Provider and CoC requests for customized reports
- Idaho's Annual State of Homelessness Report
- Misc. Requests (News organizations, non-profits, federal and state government, and other funding sources)

HMIS Software
Idaho Housing and Finance Association administers the HMIS program and uses ServicePoint/Community Services by WellSky: a web based software.
- ServicePoint/Community Services is Secure. All data entered is encrypted for secure transmittal and storage, ensuring that all client and service provider data is secure at all times. Information can be locked or unlocked, viewed or not, depending on the level of security of the viewer.
- ServicePoint/Community Services is a robust system. It enables staff: to assess & refer clients, coordinate care, plan & manage programs, gather statistics, and share data with others - all in real-time. It also enables the capture of information necessary to secure funding for high in demand/low in supply services.
- ServicePoint/Community Services is Flexible. Custom assessments and intake forms can be created to capture data specific to your organization and meet the needs of your agency (more than homeless information such as chapel service).
- ServicePoint/Community Services is Web-based. There is no software to install.
- ServicePoint/Community Services has complete detailed reporting features. Choose from standard, preformatted reports or custom reports to meet the needs of your agency.
- ServicePoint/Community Services allows you to monitor changes in income, employment living situations, service history, cost of service, source of funds, and more.
- The ShelterPoint module manages inventory. It allows housing providers to monitor shelter bed usage and availability.