
HMIS: A Benefit For Your Organization and Your Community

What is HMIS?

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a computerized data collection tool specifically designed to capture client-level, system-wide information, over time, on the characteristics and services needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. Although efforts to collect information on the homeless population on a national level started in the early 1990's, the term HMIS was not coined until the year 2000.

In 2001, Congress directed the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on the need for data analysis on the extent of Homelessness and the effectiveness of the McKinney-Vento Act programs. The mandate required HUD to:

- ❖ Develop unduplicated counts of clients served at the local level
- ❖ Analyze patterns of use of people entering and exiting the homeless assistance system;
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of these systems.

Idaho currently receives over three million dollars from the McKinney-Vento Act for our emergency shelters, and permanent and transitional homeless programs. While HMIS is a requirement for all agencies that receive HUD funding, all homeless service providers and public and private organizations that provide homeless and/or homeless prevention services are actively invited and encouraged to participate in HMIS in order to gain a comprehensive picture of homelessness in Idaho.

Over the last 20 years, many federal and state agencies have implemented plans to eliminate homelessness and reduce the impact of poverty. Measuring the success of the programs is often difficult because organizations lack the resources to collect data and the data that is collected is not in a standard or reliable format. In order to effectively combat homelessness and poverty, policy makers need reliable data to gain a full understanding of homelessness, its underlying issues, trends, and the overall impact on the community. Without reliable information, it is difficult to more appropriately target resources, monitor the use of homeless services over time, and ensure that critical services are offered to those who need it most.

What is the basic information needed to collect for HMIS?

The Universal Data elements, as identified in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): Data and Technical Standards Final Notice (Federal Register Vol. 69 No. 146), are required to be entered into HMIS by all participating agencies regardless of funding source.

Universal Data Elements

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ Name | ➤ Residence Prior to Program Entry |
| ➤ Social Security Number | ➤ Zip Code of Last Permanent Address |
| ➤ Date of Birth | ➤ Program Entry Dates |
| ➤ Race | ➤ Program Exit Dates |
| ➤ Ethnicity | ➤ Unique Person Identification Number |
| ➤ Gender | ➤ Program Identification Number |
| ➤ Veteran Status | ➤ Household Identification Number |
| ➤ Disabling Condition | |

In addition, in order to identify the Chronically Homeless, data on the extent of homelessness and household characteristics is also collected.

Please Note: Agencies who are recipients of HUD McKinney-Vento Act program funds must also collect program specific data elements to meet the requirements of their grant. They include the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Services Received | ➤ Physical Disability |
| ➤ Mainstream Referrals | ➤ Developmental Disability |
| ➤ Income and Sources | ➤ HIV/AIDS |
| ➤ Non-Cash Benefits | ➤ Mental Health |
| ➤ Reasons for Leaving | ➤ Substance Abuse |
| ➤ Destination at Exit | ➤ Domestic Violence |

If you are interested in participating in HMIS and using ServicePoint, or would like more information specific to the needs of your agency, please contact Jennifer Otto, HMIS Administrator, 208 424-7015 (toll free 877-447-2687) or email jennifero@ihfa.org.

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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 one state wide 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 but many other organizations also use HMIS data. Data is reported only at a non-identifying aggregate and statistical level. Affiliated service providers are the only agencies with access to shared client-level data. If an agency chooses not to share information with other Service Providers, they will still have access to the client-level data for their agency.

- ❖ Annual Progress Reports (APR) for ESG, SHP and ShelterPlus Care grantees (HUD)
- ❖ SuperNofa application for Idaho's two Continuums of Care (HUD)
- ❖ Annual Point in Time Count (PIT) of the Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless (HUD)
- ❖ Annual Homeless Assessment (AHAR) (HUD)
- ❖ Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) (HUD)
- ❖ Draw requests and provider specific reports for grantees
- ❖ Idaho's Action Plan to Reduce Homelessness (Executive Order No. 2005-11)
- ❖ Misc. Requests (News organizations, non-profits, federal and state government, and other funding sources)

ServicePoint Software

Idaho Housing and Finance Association administers the statewide HMIS program and uses a web-based software called ServicePoint (Bowman Systems).

- ❖ ServicePoint is Secure. Data is encrypted for secure transmittal and storage. It ensures 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 is a robust. It enables staff to assess, refer & track clients; coordinate care; plan & manage programs; gather statistics; and share data with others - all in real-time. It also enables you to track & capture the information necessary to secure funding for services that are low in supply, yet high in demand.
- ❖ ServicePoint 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 is Web-based. There is no software to install.
- ❖ ServicePoint has complete detailed reporting features. Choose from standard preformatted reports or custom reports can be written to meet the needs of your agency.
- ❖ ServicePoint tracks client history. It 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

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