HOPWA Program HMIS MANUAL

A Guide for HMIS Users and System Administrators

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Introduction

The *HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) HMIS Program Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and HOPWA program grantees. This manual provides information on HMIS project setup and data collection guidance specific to the HOPWA Program.

The guidance provided in this document aligns with requirements around using HMIS as stated by the HOPWA office and refers to the data elements required for HOPWA in an HMIS as established in the 2017 HMIS Data Standards. This document is not a replacement for any specific program guidance, requirements, regulations, notices, and training materials on the HOPWA Program. This manual only addresses the use of HMIS for HOPWA.

Additional Resources

- **HOPWA Program** Guidance about the HOPWA program and its requirements can be found on-line at the HOPWA Program page.

- **Ask A Question:** To ask a question about any HOPWA Program 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 HOPWA program staff are working together to answer questions that come in on the AAQ related to HOPWA 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.

Manual Name & Link	Intended Audience	Contents
HMIS Data Standards Dictionary	HMIS Vendors & HMIS Lead Agencies	The dictionary provides the detailed information required for system programming on all HMIS element and response required to be included in HMIS software. It delineates data collection requirements, system logic, and contains the XML and CSV tables and numbers. The dictionary also includes critical information about data collection stages, federal partner data collection required elements, project descriptor data elements, and metadata data elements.
HMIS Data Standards Manual	HMIS Lead Agencies & HMIS Users	The manual provides a review of all of the Universal Data Elements, Project Descriptor Data Elements, and Common Program Specific Data Elements. It contains information on data collection requirements, instructions for data collection, and descriptions that the HMIS User will find as a reference.
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., HOPWA Program funding for ABC Permanent Housing project).   For data collection purposes, HUD and its federal partners refer to categories of funding within a program as **components**.

1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive HOPWA funding. HOPWA provides funding to grantees in two different ways:

- **Formula Program** (90% of national funds) awards are provided to certain states and cities that constitute the most populous unit of general local government in the Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA). The formula grantees receive formula allocations based on their State or metropolitan population and proportionate number of cases of persons with AIDS, and then allocate the funding to project sponsors across the EMSA or State. Formula Program providers report program accomplishments through the HOPWA section of the major city in the EMSA or State's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

- **Competitive Program** (10% of national funds) awards are provided based on a national competition to areas that are not eligible for formula funding and to projects demonstrating innovative models that address special issues or sub-populations. Competitive Program providers report program accomplishments through the HOPWA Annual Performance Report

(HOPWA APR). In the event a single project receives funding from multiple HOPWA grants (e.g. 2 separate competitive grants or 1 competitive grant and 1 formula grant), separate projects should be created so that tracking expenditures and accomplishments by funding source can easily be conducted.

2. Identify Funding Components for each Project

Identify the **component** for each project funded through the HOPWA Program *per the project's grant agreement*. The HOPWA Program includes eight eligible components:

- The **Hotel/Motel (H/M)** component of HOPWA funds are designed to provide motel and hotel vouchers for up to 60 days if no appropriate shelter beds are available and subsequent rental housing has been identified but is not immediately available for move-in by the program participants. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, hotel and motel vouchers are categorized under "Transitional/Short Term Housing Subsidy Assistance."

- The **Housing Information (HI)** component of HOPWA provides counseling, information, and referral services to assist in locating, acquiring, financing and maintaining housing. This component is consistent with the category used for HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR.

- The **Permanent Housing (PH)** component of HOPWA supports facility-based housing (operating or leasing) and Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA). Both methods of permanent housing assistance, enable clients to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, facility-based permanent housing and TBRA are delineated as separate HOPWA housing subsidy assistance types.

- The **Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)** component of HOPWA helps to establish a new permanent residence where continued occupancy is expected. This program covers costs associated with housing referrals, tenant counseling, application fees and credit checks, first month's rent and security deposit, and one-time utility connection fees and processing costs. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, PHP is considered a housing subsidy assistance category under the HOPWA program.

- The **Short-Term Housing (STH)** component of HOPWA supports temporary shelters (facility based housing – leasing) to allow for opportunity to develop an individualized housing and service plan to guide the client's linkage to permanent housing. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, STH is combined with transitional housing as a single housing subsidy assistance category.

- The **Short-Term Rent, Mortgage Utility Assistance (STRMU)** component of HOPWA is time-limited housing financial assistance designed to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability of the tenant or mortgagor of a dwelling. Grantees may provide assistance for a period of up to 21 weeks in any 52 week period. The amount of assistance varies per client depending on funds available, need, and program guidelines. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, STRMU is listed as a separate housing subsidy assistance category.

- The **Transitional Housing (TH)** component of HOPWA supports facility-based housing (operating or leasing) providing up to 24 months of housing as individuals and families move to permanent housing. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, TH is combined with short-term housing as a single housing subsidy assistance category.

- The **Supportive Services** component of HOPWA supplements housing with services that help clients manage their HIV/AIDS condition. For the HOPWA annual performance reporting through the HOPWA CAPER and APR, supportive services are categorized separately from the housing subsidy assistance types.

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:

- **Organizational Identifiers (2.1)** – The name of the agency/organization receiving HOPWA funding and providing the direct services to clients must be entered or identified with the HOPWA specific project. The HMIS generates an identification number. The HMIS must maintain only one single record for each agency/organization, regardless of how many projects they operate. For most formula-funded projects, this is the HOPWA project sponsor organization, unless the grantee themselves provides direct service with HOPWA funds. Depending on the local program design under the HOPWA competitive program, this could be the grantee or the project sponsor. In the HMIS Data Standards, HUD strongly recommends that the name of the organization is the actual legal name of the entity and not an abbreviation or other derivative of the name, since the name is being transmitted in reports.

- **Project Identifiers (2.2)**
  - Project ID: The HMIS must assign a Project ID to each project via a system generated number or code, which serves as a distinct identifier that is consistently associated with that project.
  - Project Name: The name of the project receiving HOPWA funding must be entered or identified with the HOPWA 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. HMIS 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.

- o Operating Start Date: Beginning in October 2017, the Operating Start Date of a project must be completed in the HMIS on all projects. 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 operating start date may be estimated if not known.
  - o 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 (CoC) Code (2.3)** – Select the CoC code based on the location in which the project operates. HOPWA-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 STRMU project is expected to provide financial assistance to everyone in the EMSA then all of the CoC codes which cover the EMSA must be selected. However, if the STRMU 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 listed below. Appropriate project types will be critical to the CoC's ability to produce System Wide Performance measures. HOPWA project types must be set up as follows:

HOPWA Program Component	HMIS Project Type
Permanent Housing TBRA	PH – Permanent Supportive Housing
Permanent Housing Facility-Based	PH – Permanent Supportive Housing
Transitional Housing (TH)	Transitional Housing
Short Term Housing (STH)	Emergency Shelter
Hotel/Motel (H/M)	Emergency Shelter
Supportive Services Only *not in conjunction with housing (SSO)*	Services Only
Housing Information (HI)	Services Only
Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)	Services Only
Short Term Rent, Mortgage, Utility Assistance (STRMU)	Homelessness Prevention

No single project within an HMIS may have two project types. Recipients of grant awards consisting of multiple components which fund activities that fall under separate project types must have separate projects set up in HMIS for each project type. For example, if TBRA and STRMU are both provided by the same HOPWA-funded entity, there must be two different projects in HMIS: one for PH – Permanent Supportive Housing (TBRA) and one for Homelessness Prevention (STRMU).

HMIS Project Type	HOPWA Program Component	IDIS Activities
Facility-Based (Site based or Scattered site)		
PH – Permanent Supportive Housing	Permanent Housing Facility-Based (PH)	**Activity Category:** Facility-Based Housing Subsidy Assistance **Housing Type Drop Down:** Permanent housing
Transitional Housing	Transitional Housing (TH)	**Activity Category:** Facility-Based Housing Subsidy Assistance **Housing Type Drop Down:** Short term shelter or Transitional supportive housing facility/units
Emergency Shelter	Short Term Housing (STH)	**Activity Category:** Facility-Based Housing Subsidy Assistance **Housing Type Drop Down:** Short term shelter or Transitional supportive housing facility/units
Emergency Shelter	Hotel/Motel (H/M)	**Activity Category:** Facility-Based Housing Subsidy Assistance **Housing Type Drop Down:** Short term shelter or Transitional supportive housing facility/units
Not Facility-Based		
PH – Permanent Supportive Housing	Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	**Activity Category:** TBRA **Housing Type Drop Down:** N/A
Services Only	Housing Information (HI)	**Activity Category:** Housing Information Services
Services Only	Supportive Services Only	**Activity Category:** Supportive Services **Housing Type Drop Down** N/A
Services Only	Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)	**Activity Category:** Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)
Homelessness Prevention	Short Term Rent, Mortgage, Utility Assistance (STRMU)	**Activity Category:** Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, Utility Assistance (STRMU)

- **Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization (2.5)** – In the HOPWA Program, this data element is only relevant for projects funded under the Hotel/Motel and Short Term Housing Emergency Shelters components; these projects must utilize the Entry/Exit method -which enables HMIS records to run from the entry into the hotel or short term housing situation until the client exits.

- **Federal Partner Funding Sources (2.6)** – projects funded in whole or in part by HOPWA are to be identified based on the HOPWA component type. Select the appropriate HOPWA component for each project:
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Hotel/Motel Vouchers**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Housing Information**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Permanent Housing (facility based or TBRA)**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Permanent Housing Placement**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, Utility Assistance,**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Short-Term Supportive Facility**
  - **HUD:HOPWA – Transitional Housing (facility based or TBRA)**

Enter a grant identifier for each HOPWA grant the project receives along with the grant start and end dates.

Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.7) – HMIS administrators must complete the bed and unit inventory information for projects that provide lodging (Hotel/Motel, Transitional Housing, and all forms of Permanent Housing – facility based or TBRA). 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 HOPWA project. For projects operating in multiple CoCs but entering data into a single HMIS, each site information record must be associated with a single CoC.

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 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. If these projects wish to complete other address fields, they may use mailing or administrative address information.

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.

  - **Target Population (2.8 Field 4)** – Where HMIS is used to generate the HIC, target population should be selected if the project is designed to serve that population and at least three-fourths (75 percent) of the clients served by the project fit the target group descriptor.

Data Collection Requirements

Formula and Competitive Programs may enter data into HMIS. Grantees that use homelessness or chronic homelessness in their program design as primary criteria for eligibility <u>must</u> use an HMIS to track the services for their homeless clients. Additionally, some competitive awards also require grantees to use HMIS, per the grant agreement. While these grantees are required to use HMIS, all grantees – regardless of target population – are strongly encouraged to participate in a local HMIS, or equivalent, to track beneficiary-level data and outcome data. All HOPWA projects using HMIS are required to collect all of the Universal Data Elements and a select number of Program-Specific Data Elements, which are shown below for each program component:

4.2	Income and Sources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3	Non-Cash Benefits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.4	Health Insurance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.5	Physical Disability	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.6	Developmental Disability	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.7	Chronic Health Condition	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.8	HIV/AIDS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.9	Mental Health Problem	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.10	Substance Abuse	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.11	Domestic Violence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
W1	Services Provided – HOPWA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
W2	Financial Assistance – HOPWA					X	X		
W3	Medical Assistance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
W4	T-cell (CD4) and Viral Load	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
W5	Housing Assessment at Exit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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

Notes on elements specific to HOPWA

Living Situation (3.917) and Destination (3.12) include responses that show that a client is transferred from another HOPWA-funded program.

Health Insurance (4.4) includes HOPWA-specific fields collecting the reason a client may not have a particular type of health insurance or medical assistance.

Medical Assistance (W3) is designed to collect information on assistance provided to clients with HIV/AIDS.

Special Data Collection Instructions

There are several special data collection issues that apply to HOPWA-funded projects of which both System Administrators and HMIS users should be aware.

Hotel / Motel

- Hotel/Motel projects should be set up in an HMIS the same as an Emergency Shelter utilizing the entry/exit method.

Permanent Housing

- Element W1 Services provided includes the response "Food/meals/nutritional services". A service record for each instance of a residential meal provided is not required or intended. This response is only intended to capture information about food/meals being provided outside of the "operating costs" of the housing program. (Any preparation of food off-site is considered a supportive service.)   Do not use this response for a daily meal program prepared on-site in a housing project. Provision of food from non-housing projects would be considered "Supportive Services."

Permanent Housing Placement

- Use data element Financial Assistance – HOPWA (W2) to record costs associated with moving a person into permanent housing including security deposits, utility deposits, and fees for credit checks.

Short Term Rent, Mortgage, Utility Assistance

- Use data element Financial Assistance – HOPWA (W2) to record Rental assistance, Utility payments, and Mortgage assistance. STRMU does not cover security deposits or utility deposits which PHP does cover and depending on HMIS software may appear as an option.

Transitional Housing

- Element W1 Services provided includes the response "Food/meals/nutritional services". A service record for each instance of a residential meal provided is not required or intended. The intention of the food response is to capture when food is provided through non-housing projects, not daily meals in a housing project. Provision of food from non-housing projects would be considered "Supportive Services." Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the HMIS Data Standards Manual.

Supportive Services

- Element W1 Services provided includes the response "Food/meals/nutritional services". A service record for each instance of a residential meal provided is not required or intended. The intention of the food response is to capture when food is provided through non-housing projects, not daily meals in a housing project. Provision of food from non-housing projects would be considered "Supportive Services."