

MEMORANDUM

To: The Bay Area Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing

From: HomeBase

Date: April 16, 2010

Re: Final Revised HMIS Data Standards

BACKGROUND

The RSC has taken interest in Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) since they were first contemplated. The RSC addressed the topics of confidentiality and security first in 1994 in a workshop called "Housing California Confidentiality of Client Information" and revisited in two papers presented in 1995 entitled "Legal and Policy Issues in Shared Client Information" and "Confidentiality of Client Information." In July of 1998, the RSC was given a presentation on freestanding programs entitled "Homeless Services Information Management Systems." Then, in September 2001, the group reviewed best practices and design steps communities needed to take to implement and expand HMIS. Throughout 2002 and 2003, the RSC remained looped into a series of technical assistance workshops and conferences as communities began to implement these systems. In particular, in September 2003 the RSC analyzed the Draft National Uniform HMIS Standards, prepared feedback on the Standards, then continued to track the Standards once officially published in June 2004. In 2005, looking to the future of information systems, the RSC supported the development of RHINO (Regional Homeless Information Network Opportunity), one of the only regionally focused HMIS in the nation. Finally, in October 2008, the RSC reviewed the draft HMIS Data Standard revisions. The following Data Standards are the final version of those 2008/2009 proposals.

NEW DATA STANDARDS

This memorandum summarizes the final revisions to the HMIS Data and Technical Standards (69 FR 146, July 30, 2004). HUD published this document in March 2010. The Notice adds a new set of Program Description Data Elements. In addition, the Notice presents revisions to Data Standards for Universal Data Elements and Program-Specific Data Elements. These sections replace Section 2 (Universal Data Elements) and Section 3 (Program-Specific Data Elements) of the 2004 Notice. All other sections of the 2004 notice remain in effect.

The Revised Standards Notice is lengthy and very detailed. This memorandum highlights key changes and compares the final standards to draft standards published in October 2008 and May 2009. The Standards provide guidance on what

information must be collected under Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP). *Any agency and/or Continuum of Care tasked with implementing the new Standards must read the original HUD document.* Importantly, the Revised HMIS Data Standards only amend the Data Standards portion of HMIS Technical Standards. Proposed revisions for HMIS Technical Standards related to privacy, security and other topics will be issued in a subsequent Notice.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2009 Notice adds a set of *program descriptor data standards* – that is, data to be collected about all homeless assistance and HPRP programs in the CoC. The purpose of these new data standards is to ensure that the HMIS is the central repository for all information about homelessness in the CoC, including both programs and clients. These data elements are needed for the following HUD reports: the Annual Performance Report (APR), the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) for HPRP funded programs, the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) and the Housing Inventory that is submitted as part of the annual CoC application for funding.
- Certain data elements, such as *Income and Sources* and *Non-Cash Benefits*, must now be collected at least once annually in addition to being collected at program entry and at exit.
- A follow-up question has been added to data elements that relate to disabilities to determine whether a client is currently receiving services for a condition or received services prior to exiting the program.
- The response categories for “Don’t Know” and “Refused” have been added to all relevant data elements to ensure consistency in APR reporting.
- The *Reasons for Leaving* and *Services Received* data elements (renamed *Services Provided*) are no longer required for programs completing APRs. The change for *Reasons for Leaving* is different than proposed changes in the 2009 Notice.
- There are two new data elements required for street outreach programs that complete APRs. These are: 1) a *Date of Contact* data element that is used to count the number of persons contacted during a program’s operating year; and 2) a *Date of Engagement* data element that is required to count the number of homeless persons engaged by an outreach program during the operating year.
- The first substantial change between the 2009 draft Standards and the final 2010 Standards relates to a self-sufficiency measure. Programs are NOT required to collect information about clients’ progress on one or more domains. That portion of the 2009 draft Standards was not approved.

- The second substantial change between the 2009 draft Standards and the final 2010 Standards relates to definitions of *Housing Status*, previously called *Homeless Status*. *Housing Status* has been added in order to distinguish persons who are literally homeless from those who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless or in a stable housing situation.

Are these changes surprising to you?

Will any of the changes be a burden to you?

Some of the changes seem to really make sense, like collecting income information annually, and tracking date of contact and engagement for outreach workers. Do you think these changes will enhance your community's use of HMIS?

HPRP SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Exactly as foreshadowed in the 2009 draft Standards, the final Standards include data elements specifically for HPRP. These data elements include:

- 1) A program descriptor data element, *Grantee Identifier*, to be used to uniquely identify HPRP grantees and sub-grantees;
- 2) Two specific service data elements, *Financial Assistance Provided* and *Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services Provided*, that are required for HPRP funded programs in order to track assistance provided to HPRP clients and complete the QPR and APR.

VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS

In the 2004 Data Standards, HUD made the following policy regarding domestic violence providers:

After careful consideration, HUD has determined that it is essential for domestic violence providers to participate in HMIS and that technological and administrative solutions are available that will adequately protect data on victims of domestic violence. Therefore, domestic violence programs that receive HUD McKinney-Vento funding are required to participate in local HMIS and must submit client-level information to obtain an unduplicated count of homeless persons at the CoC level. CoC representatives are

instructed to meet with domestic violence program staff in their communities with the goal of developing a plan for participation that includes protocols that address the concerns of domestic violence programs and ensures adequate protection of data.

That policy has remained hotly contested. In March 2007, HUD published a notice on the applicability of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to HUD programs. In that notice, HUD stated:

The new Confidentiality provision directs victim service providers not to disclose, for purposes of HMIS, personally identifying information about any client. In accordance with this statutory requirement, victim service providers must maintain the confidentiality of personally identifying information of the providers' clients... It is important to note, however, that the VAWA 2005 amendment does not affect current aggregate reporting under the Annual Progress Reporting (APR) process covering the Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, and Section 8 SRO programs.

The final 2010 Data Standards define *victim service providers*¹ and make the following guidelines these providers.

- Victim service providers that are funded under HUD's Supportive Housing Program are instructed not to disclose personally identifying data about any client for purposes of HMIS, per the requirements of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-162) (VAWA).
- HPRP sub-grantees that are victim service providers must collect and record all of the data elements that are required for HPRP sub-grantees on all clients served with HPRP funds in a comparable database, and should not directly or indirectly enter personally identifiable information about HPRP beneficiaries in an HMIS.
- HUD does not expect victim service providers funded through other sources to disclose personally identifying information for the purposes of HMIS, therefore HMIS coverage will be calculated excluding victim service providers from the universe of homeless assistance programs.
- Regardless of funding sources, Program Descriptor data for each homeless assistance program within the CoC operated by a victim service provider must be recorded in the HMIS (either by provider staff member or by the

¹ A nonprofit or nongovernmental organization including rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other programs whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

HMIS system administrator), with the exception of a street address for a facility that provides victim services to clients.

Standards for DV providers are inline with what the practice has been for several years. Does this work in your community?

PROGRAM DESCRIPTOR DATA ELEMENTS

With few exceptions, the CoC must collect program information in the HMIS on all CoC Programs within its jurisdiction, regardless of whether the program participates in the HMIS. Homeless assistance and HPRP homelessness prevention programs that operate in multiple CoCs must be established as distinct programs within each CoC's HMIS. Data elements 2.1 through 2.5 are all new data elements.

The program descriptor data elements are:

- 2.1 Organization Identifier
- 2.2 Organization Name
- 2.3 Program Identifier
 - The Program Identification Information data element in the 2004 Notice will no longer be used for HUD reporting purposes.
- 2.4 Program Name
- 2.5 Direct Service Code
 - HUD added this element to differentiate CoC Programs in the HMIS that provide direct services from organizations that do not provide direct services (such as HMIS Lead Agencies, organizations that oversee or support CoC Programs, or software solution providers). The Direct Service Code has been added so that all client-level HMIS records are linked to a specific direct service program.
 - If clients can directly enroll in the program then the Direct Service code is 'Yes.' If the program does not enroll clients directly, then the Direct Service code is 'No.' CoC Programs that provide direct services to clients but do not have a formal enrollment process or period (e.g. 211 Information & Referral programs, street outreach, drop-in centers, food pantries, or other supportive services) should code 'Yes.'
- 2.6 Site Information
 - Programs must record
 1. Site address
 2. Geocode
 3. Site type
 4. Housing type
 - Programs may choose to record the Site Information data element for each site or facility operated by the program. For example, if a single emergency shelter program operates two mass shelter facilities, the

- program may choose to record site information for two sites. The HMIS must have the capability of allowing programs to enter site information for multiple sites.
- The site address and geocode replaces the FIPS code requirement that was part of the Program Identifier code in the 2004 Notice.
 - Domestic Violence service providers are exempt from recording address information.
- 2.7 Continuum of Care Number
 - The CoC number was previously included as part of the Program Identification Number and is now treated as a separate data element.
 - 2.8 Program Type Code
 - Two response categories (Safe Haven and Permanent Housing) have been added. The “Outreach” response category has been changed to “Homeless Outreach,” and the “Homeless Prevention” response category has been changed to “Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing.”
 - SPECIAL NOTE: Programs funded in 2009 by HUD’s Rapid Re-housing Demonstration program must select 2: Transitional Housing. HPRP funded programs must select 5: Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing.
 - 2.9 Bed and Unit Inventory Information
 - *This section of the Standards should be read carefully in order to accurately complete the e-HIC.*
 - The inventory data elements are: Household Type, Bed Type, Availability, Bed Inventory, Unit Inventory, Inventory Start and End Dates, HMIS Participating Beds, and HMIS Participation Start and End Dates. Permanent supportive housing programs must also record the Chronic Homeless Bed inventory.
 - The bed inventory includes the *total* number of beds for each household type, bed type, and the availability of those beds throughout the year. For example, if a program has 50 year-round facility-based beds as of October 1, 2008, the inventory record should reflect 50 year-round beds. If 50 new year-round facility-based beds are added on January 1, 2009, an end date of December 31, 2008 should be recorded and a new record should be created with a total inventory of 100 year-round facility-based beds and a start date of January 1, 2009. If a year-round program closes, the Bed and Unit Inventory Information record must be updated to show an end date equal to the last date of program operation.
 - 2.10 Target Population A
 - 2.11 Target Population B
 - 2.12 Method for Tracking Residential Program Occupancy
 - Taken together, the Program Entry Date and Program Exit Date may be used for tracking length of stay in homeless assistance programs. However, tracking length of stay using these two data elements can be problematic for some programs, especially large shelter programs that experience a high degree of client turnover on a nightly basis. Two alternative methods for tracking length of stay are described in the

Standards. These methods are called *Bed Management Model*² and *Service Transaction Model*.³

- 2.13 Grantee Identifier
 - A unique Grantee Identifier must be assigned to each distinct organization that receives a HPRP sub-grant awarded for HPRP homelessness prevention or homeless assistance. All sub-grantees of the source grantee will receive the same Grantee Identifier as the federal grantee. The Grantee Identifier is the federal grant or other identifying number assigned by HUD.

UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS

The Universal Data elements establish the baseline data collection requirements for all Contributory CoC Programs.⁴ All Universal Data elements must be obtained from each adult and unaccompanied youth who applies for a homeless assistance service, with the exception of *Veteran Status*.

Most universal data elements are also required for children under 18 years of age. Where a group of persons apply for services together (as a household or family), information about any children under the age of 18 can be provided by the household head who is applying for services. The children do not need to be present at the time the household head applies for services. However, information should not be recorded for children under age 18 if it is indicated that these children will not be entering the program on the same day as the household head. Information for these children should be recorded when the children join the program. Information on any other adults (18 years of age or older) who are applying for services as part of the household will be obtained directly from that adult. Generally, one adult should not provide information for another adult.

The universal data elements are:

3.1 Name

3.2 Social Security Number

- Under federal law (5 U.S.C. Section 552a), a government agency cannot deny shelter or services to clients who refuse to provide their SSN, unless the

² If the software bed management functionality can store historical information on the actual night(s) of occupancy separately for each client, bed management modules can be used to track the actual nights a client stays in a residential program. For instance, a seasonal emergency shelter might enroll a client in a program using the Program Entry Date the first time the person stays in the shelter. The program might then prefer to track the actual nights the person stayed throughout the season using a bed management module, rather than entering and exiting the individual every time the person left the program. At the end of the season, or after a specified period of non-attendance, the person would be exited from the program designating a Program Exit Date.

³ The service transaction approach is a system where each night of shelter is listed as a “shelter service provided” to the client wherever “services received” are recorded.

⁴ Contributory CoC Programs are defined as: A homeless assistance program or homelessness prevention program that contributes PPI or other client-level data to an HMIS.

requirement was in effect before 1975 or SSN is a statutory requirement for receiving services from the program. No HUD-administered McKinney-Vento Act program qualifies under this exception, therefore McKinney-Vento clients cannot be denied service for refusing to provide a SSN.

3.3 Date of Birth

3.4 Race

3.5 Ethnicity

3.6 Gender

- Transgendered has been added as an official response category for the gender data element. As such, gender should be assigned based on the client's self-perceived gender identity. Transgender is defined as identification with, or presentation as, a gender that is different from the gender at birth.

3.7 Veteran Status

- Data elements 3.7 to 3.11 may need to be updated in the course of subsequent client contacts as this information can change over time. The new information should be captured without overwriting the information collected previously.

3.8 Disabling Condition⁵

- To comply with Fair Housing laws, this information must be collected *after* the client has been admitted into the program unless disability is required to determine eligibility for the program.

3.9 Residence Prior to Program Entry

- Safe Haven has been added as a response category.
- Several response values have been eliminated and added to specifically distinguish rental and ownership situations where no housing subsidy exists from those that were supported by an ongoing subsidy.

3.10 Zip Code of Last Permanent Address

3.11 Housing Status at Program Entry

- Potential responses include:
 - literally homeless
 - imminently losing their housing
 - unstably housed or at risk of losing their housing
 - stably housed
- A client cannot be in multiple reporting categories.

The definitions for "housing status" are different than those proposed for "homeless status" in 2009 as well as those listed in HEARTH. Below is a side-by-side comparison of the HMIS and HEARTH definitions.

⁵ Disabling condition means: (1) a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act; (2) a physical, mental, or emotional impairment which is (a) expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, (b) substantially impedes an individual's ability to live independently, and (c) of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions; (3) a developmental disability as defined in Section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act; (4) the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or any conditions arising from the etiological agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; or (5) a diagnosable substance abuse disorder.

HMIS Definition	HEARTH Definition
<p>Persons who are <i>literally homeless</i> include people who at program entry or program exit are in one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; • A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for homeless persons); • A hospital or other institution, if the person was sleeping in an emergency shelter or other place not meant for human habitation (cars, parks, streets, etc.) immediately prior to entry into the hospital or institution; • Fleeing a domestic violence situation. 	<p>HEARTH expands the statutory definition of homelessness to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements, including hotels or motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for long-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing. (This section, more than expanding the definition merely modifies language about hotels.) • An individual who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided. • An individual or family who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Will imminently lose their housing, including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, as evidenced by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A court order resulting from an eviction action that notifies that individual or family that they must leave within 14 days ii. The individual or family having a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days. iii. Credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and any oral statement from an individual or family seeking homeless assistance that is found to be credible B. Has no subsequent residence identified C. Lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing <p>Additionally, any individual or family who is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.</p> <p>The definition of homelessness also includes: Unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes and who meet all of the following:</p>

	<p>A. Have experienced a long-term period without living independently in permanent housing</p> <p>B. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period</p> <p>Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or a youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.</p>
<p>Persons who are <i>imminently losing their housing</i> include people who at program entry or program exit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are currently housed and not literally homeless, per above definition; • Are imminently losing their housing, whether permanent or temporary; • Have no subsequent housing options identified; AND • Lack the resources or support networks needed to retain current housing or obtain temporary or permanent housing. <p>Examples of imminent housing loss include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being evicted from a private dwelling unit (including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations); • Being discharged from a hospital or other institution; • Living in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer considered meant for human habitation 	<p>No equivalent definition</p>
<p>Persons who are <i>unstably housed and at-risk of losing their housing</i> include people who at program entry or program exit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are currently housed and not literally homeless or imminently losing their housing, per above definitions; • Are experiencing housing instability, but may have one or more other temporary housing options; AND • Lack the resources or support networks to retain or obtain permanent housing. <p>Housing instability may be evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent moves because of economic reasons; • Living in the home of another because of economic hardship; 	<p>HEARTH defines <i>at risk of homelessness</i> as an individual or family who meets all 3 criteria below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income is below 30% of AMI; • Insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability, and • Meets at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has moved frequently because of economic reasons ○ Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship ○ Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated ○ Lives in a hotel or motel ○ Lives in severely overcrowded housing ○ Is exiting an institution <p>Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homeless</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being evicted from a private dwelling unit (including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations); • Living in a hotel or motel not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations; • Living in severely overcrowded housing; • Being discharged from a hospital or other institution; OR • Otherwise living in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness. 	
<p>Persons who are <i>stably housed</i> are in a stable housing situation and not at-risk of losing this housing (i.e., do not meet the criteria for being precariously housed, imminently at-risk of becoming literally homeless, or literally homeless).</p>	<p>No equivalent definition.</p>

3.12 Program Entry Date

- Two methods are suggested below for noting and tracking supportive services provided/received by a client prior to *Program Entry*. It may be useful to record these service events for case management purposes although they would not be included in the APR (for a HUD funded homeless assistance program) or other reports that define clients served based on program entry and exit dates associated with the program.
- The methods for collecting data are the *Service Transaction Model* and the *Separate Program Model*.

3.13 Program Exit Date

- For HPRP programs the *Program Exit Date* may be the same as the *Program Entry Date* if the participation in the service begins and ends on the same day. For a client receiving short-term or medium-term rental assistance for two or more consecutive months, the *Program Exit Date* should be equivalent to the last day of the last month for which the rental assistance payment applies.

3.14 Personal Identification Number

3.15 Household Identification Number

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC DATA ELEMENTS

Program-specific data elements provide information about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided, and client outcomes. These data elements must be collected from all clients served by programs that are required to report this information to HUD. Specifically, programs that receive funding through HUD's

Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy Dwellings (SRO) Program, and the homeless programs funded through the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

Some general points:

- In the 2004 Notice, HUD established requirements for maintaining client privacy and data confidentiality to ensure that this information remains confidential and secure. These requirements remain in effect.
- Many of these data elements represent transactions or information that may change over time. Previously, some of these categories were only collected at entry or only at entry and exit. Now, most program-specific data elements should be captured at program entry and exit, and a few must be captured at program entry, exit, and on an annual basis (including income, non-cash benefits, and disability).
- Programs may decide when to collect the information on an annual basis, but HUD encourages programs that are required to complete an APR to update these data elements near the end of their APR operating year.
- For some of the categories, a third part of the question related to treatment has been added.
- As mentioned earlier, data is now collected for children (in addition to adults and unaccompanied youth) where relevant, i.e. disability.

The program-specific data elements that are needed for HUD reporting include:

4.1 Income and Sources

- A general question on whether any income has been received has been added, as well as response categories to determine whether a client is receiving income from each source.

4.2 Non-Cash Benefits

4.3 Physical Disability⁶

4.4 Developmental Disability⁷

4.5 Chronic Health Condition⁸

4.6 HIV/AIDS

4.7 Mental Health⁹

⁶ Physical disability means a physical impairment which is (a) expected to be of long, continued and indefinite duration, (b) substantially impedes an individual's ability to live independently, and (c) of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

⁷ Developmental disability means a severe, chronic disability that is attributed to a mental or physical impairment (or combination of physical and mental impairments) that occurs before 22 years of age and limits the capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

⁸ Chronic health condition means a diagnosed condition that is more than three months in duration and is either not curable or has residual effects that limit daily living and require adaptation in function or special assistance. Examples of chronic health conditions include, but are not limited to, heart disease (including coronary heart disease, angina, heart attack and any other kind of heart condition or disease); severe asthma; diabetes; arthritis-related conditions (including arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia); adult onset cognitive impairments (including traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic distress syndrome, dementia, and other cognitive related conditions); severe headache/migraine; cancer; chronic bronchitis; liver condition; stroke; or emphysema.

4.8 Substance Abuse ¹⁰

- The “dually diagnosed” response category has been changed to “Both alcohol and drug abuse.”

For physical disability, developmental disability, and chronic health condition, an HMIS user must record

- (a) if the client has the particular condition (i.e. physical disability), and
- (b) if the client is currently receiving services or treatment for this disability or received services or treatment prior to exiting the program.

For mental health and substance abuse, an HMIS user must determine

- (a) if the client has a mental health/substance abuse problem,
- (b) if the problem is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration *and* substantially impedes a client’s ability to live independently, and
- (c) if the client is currently receiving services or treatment for the condition or received services or treatment prior to exiting the program.

If the response to any of these (4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8) data elements is yes, *the case manager records must document the disability/health condition/mental health or substance abuse problem*. Documentation includes written verification from a state-licensed professional, such as a medical service provider or a health-care provider, the Social Security Administration, or the receipt of a disability check (i.e., SSDI check or VA disability benefit check).

4.9 Domestic Violence

- An HMIS user must determine (a) if the person has ever been a victim of domestic violence, and (b) if so, how long ago did the person have the most recent experience.

4.10 Destination

- At the request of the Department of Veterans Affairs, programs are now asked to track subsidies provided through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program as a separate destination type.
- Tenure and housing subsidy type information have been incorporated into the destination field, and non-VASH housing subsidy types have been combined.
- The term “Transitional” has been changed to “Temporary.”
- Response categories have been revised to refer specifically to destinations where no housing subsidy exists, destinations with temporary tenure, destinations that include ongoing subsidies, and destinations with permanent tenure.
- Two other new response categories were added: “Safe Haven” and “Deceased.”

⁹ A mental health problem may include serious depression, serious anxiety, hallucinations, violent behavior or thoughts of suicide.

¹⁰ There is no specific definition of substance abuse in the Standards.

4.11 Date of Contact

- This is a new data element and is required for street outreach programs only.
- The definition of a client contact may vary among programs and communities. In general, a contact is defined as an *interaction* between the street outreach worker and the client. This may include the distribution of brochures or other materials, a verbal conversation between the street outreach worker and the client about the client's well being or service needs, or a referral to service.
- The contact must include a time stamp (hour and minute), because multiple contacts may occur in one day.

4.12 Date of Engagement

- This is also a new data element required for street outreach programs only.
- The definition of a client engagement may vary among programs and communities. In general, an engagement is defined as an interactive client relationship that results in a deliberate client assessment.

4.13 Financial Assistance Provided

- This is a new data standard and is required for HPRP-funded programs only.
- *The information on how to collect this data appropriately is very important to read.* The instructions can be found on pages 88-91 of the Data Standards.

4.14 Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services Provided

- This is a new data element and is required for HPRP funded programs only.

4.15 Optional Data Elements

In addition to the data elements that are required for APR reporting, a team of HMIS practitioners, federal agency representatives, and researchers has recommended additional program specific data elements. These data elements are based on best practices that are currently being implemented at the local level.

The optional data elements are:

4.15A Employment

- An HMIS user must determine:
 1. If the client is currently employed
 2. If currently employed, how many hours did the client work in the last week
 3. If currently employed, is the work permanent, temporary, or seasonal¹¹
 4. If the client is not currently working, if they are currently looking for work and/or increased work hours.

4.15B Education

- An HMIS user must determine:
 1. If the client is currently in school or working on any degree or certificate
 2. Whether the client has received any vocational training or apprenticeship certificates
 3. What is the highest level of school that the client has completed

¹¹ Seasonal employment is work that can, by the nature of it, ordinarily only be performed during a certain season in the year. Temporary employment is work for a limited time only or for a specific piece of work and that work will last a short duration. Permanent employment is work that is contemplated to continue indefinitely.

4. If the client has received a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), what degree(s) has the client earned. The system allows clients to identify multiple degrees.

4.15C General Health Status

- This data element permits the self-reported health status of clients (and the health of minors with the household, if applicable) in comparison to other people of the same age.

4.15D Pregnancy Status

4.15E Veteran's Information

- An HMIS user must determine:
 1. Which military service era did the client serve
 2. How many months did the client serve on active duty in the military
 3. If the client served in a war zone
 4. If the client served in a war zone, the name of the war zone
 5. If the client served in a war zone, the number of months served in the war zone
 6. If the client served in a war zone, whether the client received hostile or friendly fire
 7. What branch of the military did the client serve in
 8. What type of discharge did the client receive

4.15F Children's Education

- For each child, the HMIS user must determine:
 1. If the child is currently enrolled in school
 2. If the child is currently enrolled, the name of the school
 3. If the child is currently enrolled, indicate if the child is connected with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act school liaison
 4. The type of school
 5. If the child is not currently enrolled in school, what date was the child last enrolled in school
 6. What problems has the head of household had in getting the child enrolled into school

4.15G Reason for Leaving

- Reason for leaving is used, in part, to identify the barriers and issues clients face in completing a program or staying in a residential facility, which may affect their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- This data element is now optional.

4.15H Services Provided

What do you think of the optional data elements? Are they a burden to collect? Do they add beneficial elements to the data collected in your community?

*For more information, please contact Danielle Wildkress, Staff Lawyer
415.788.7961 ext 301 or Danielle@HomeBaseccc.org*