Title: 5.1. HMIS Governance

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Approved By: Governing Council	Reviewed: March 8, 2023

Purpose

This section covers the policies and procedures surrounding the Memphis & Shelby County Homeless Consortium (MSCHC) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). For policies and procedures surrounding operation of the HMIS system, please refer to the HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual.

Introduction

The MSCHC and HMIS Lead Agency operates the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to record and store client-level information with regard to numbers, characteristics, and needs of persons who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless and utilize shelter, housing and supportive services within the Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium (MSCHC).

HMIS is used to:

● aggregate data about the extent and nature of homelessness over time;
● produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons;
● understand patterns of service use; and
● assist the MSCHC to measure the effectiveness of homeless assistance projects and programs.

Data produced is used for planning, education, and submission to HUD. The purpose of this Charter is to delineate how the HMIS operates.

Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium (MSCHC) Responsibilities

The MSCHC is responsible for:

● Designating a single information system as the official HMIS software for Memphis/Shelby County;
● Designating an HMIS Lead to administer the HMIS;
● Providing for governance of the HMIS Lead Agency, including the requirement that the HMIS Lead Agency enter into written HMIS Memorandum of Agreements with each Partnering HMIS Agency (PHA) requiring them to comply with federal regulations
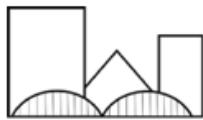
regarding HMIS and imposing sanctions for failure to comply;

- the participation fee, if any, charged by the HMIS;
- Maintaining documentation evidencing compliance with this part and with the governance charter; and
- Reviewing, revising, and approving the policies and plans required by federal regulation.

Designations

HMIS Software

The MSCHC and HMIS Lead Agency designates the software operated by Bitfocus, known as Clarity Human Services, as the official HMIS for Memphis/Shelby County.

HMIS Lead Agency

The MSCHC votes annually to designate the HMIS Lead Agency to administer the HMIS. The current Lead Agency designation and agreement with the MSCHC is located in charter section 3.7.3.

Responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency The

HMIS Lead Agency is responsible for:

- Ensuring the operation of and consistent participation by recipients of MSCHC and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program funds, along with Federal Partner programs including SAMHSA PATH and VA SSVF Partnering HMIS Agencies, including oversight of the HMIS and any necessary corrective action to ensure that the HMIS is in compliance with federal requirements;
- Developing written HMIS policies and procedures in accordance with §24 CFR 580.31. These policies and procedures must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations, and applicable state or local governmental requirements. The HMIS Lead Agency may not establish local standards for any PHA that contradicts, undermines, or interferes with the implementation of the HMIS standards as prescribed in this part.
- Executing a written HMIS Memorandum of Agreement with each PHA, which includes the obligations and authority of the HMIS Lead and PHA, the requirements of the security plan, and privacy policy with which the PHA must abide, sanctions for violating the HMIS Participation Agreement and an agreement that the HMIS Lead and the PHA will protect identifying information consistent with the agreement;
- Serving as the applicant to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Continuum of Care (CoC) grant funds to be used for HMIS activities for the HMIS Lead Agency, as directed by the MSCHC, and entering into grant agreements with HUD to carry out the HUD-approved HMIS activities;

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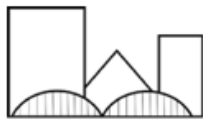
- Monitoring and enforcing compliance by all PHAs with HUD requirements and reporting on compliance to the MSCHC and HUD;

- Monitoring data quality and taking necessary actions to maintain input of high-quality data from all PHAs;
- At least once annually, or upon request from HUD, submitting to the MSCHC an unduplicated count of clients served and an analysis of unduplicated counts, when requested by HUD;
- Submitting all continuum-level reports to HUD as required;
- Submitting a security plan, an updated data quality plan, and a privacy policy to the MSCHC for approval within six (6) months after the effective date of the HUD final rule establishing the requirements of these plans, and within six (6) months after the date that any change is made to the local HMIS. The HMIS Lead must review and update the plans and policy at least annually. During this process, the HMIS Lead must seek and incorporate feedback from the MSCHC and PHA. The HMIS Lead Agency must implement the plans and policy within six (6) months of the date of approval by the MSCHC; and
- Implementing procedures to ensure and monitor its compliance with applicable agreements and the requirements of this part, including enforcement of sanctions for noncompliance.

HMIS Standards

The HMIS Lead Agency, in contracting an HMIS vendor, must require the HMIS vendor and the software to comply with HMIS standards issued by HUD as part of its contract.

Privacy Policy

The HMIS Lead Agency must develop a privacy policy. At minimum, the privacy policy must include:

- data collection limitations;
- purpose and use limitations;
- allowable uses and disclosures;
- openness description;
- access and correction standards;
- accountability standards;
- protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; and
- such additional information and standards as may be established by HUD.

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HMIS Committee Bylaws

The MSCHC HMIS Committee is an advisory body that supports and enhances the overall mission of the HMIS Project by advising HMIS Project staff on functions related to HMIS Project policies   and guidelines. HMIS Committee Bylaws are located in charter section 2.5: CoC Committees.

Responsibilities of the HMIS Committee

The HMIS Committee will work with the HMIS Lead Agency to:
- Develop annually, and review as necessary, for Governing Council approval: o   a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS, as well as any other HMIS policies and procedures required by HUD.
  - o a plan for monitoring the HMIS to ensure that:
    - ▪ Recipients and subrecipients consistently participate in HMIS;
    - ▪ HMIS is satisfying the requirements of all regulations and notices issued by HUD; and
    - ▪ The HMIS Lead Agency is fulfilling the obligations outlined in its HMIS Governance Charter and Agreement with the MSCHC, including the obligation to enter into written memorandum of agreements with each contributing to the HMIS agency.
- Oversee and monitor HMIS data collection and production of the following reports:

  - Sheltered point-in-time count
  - Unsheltered point-in-time count
  - Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)
  - Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA)
  - System Performance Measure (Sys PM)
  - Quarterly Reporting
  - Annual Performance Reports (APRs)

Responsibilities of the Partnering HMIS Agency (PHA)

A PHA must comply with federal regulations regarding HMIS. A PHA must comply with Federal, state, and local laws that require additional privacy or confidentiality protections. When a privacy or security standard conflicts with other Federal, state, and local laws to which the PHA must adhere, the PHA must contact the HMIS Lead and collaboratively update the applicable policies for the PHA to accurately reflect the additional protections.

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Joint HMIS Lead Agency & PHA Responsibility for Privacy

The HMIS Lead Agency and the PHA using the HMIS, are jointly responsible for ensuring that HMIS processing capabilities remain consistent with the privacy obligations of the PHA.