

# HMIS DATA ELEMENTS

The 5 W's of HMIS Data Collection

October 1, 2017

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## The 5 W's of HMIS Data Collection

### HMIS Data Standards Overview

This manual is designed for HMIS Users to help them understand the data elements that are required in an HMIS to meet participation and reporting requirements established by HUD and the federal partners.

The HMIS Data Standards were first published by HUD in 2004 as the HMIS Data and Technical Standards. The original standards served as the foundation for software developers in constructing HMIS applications. In March 2010, HUD updated the Data Standards (March 2010 HMIS Data Standards), primarily to reflect data collection requirements for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). HUD, in collaboration with its federal partners, updated the HMIS Data Standards again in 2014 with the release of the 2014 HMIS Data Standards Manual and Data Dictionary. Both documents superseded the previously released HMIS Data Standards. Together, the 2017 HMIS Data Standards Dictionary and Manual are the documentation of requirements for the programming and use of all HMIS systems and comparable database systems, effective October 1, 2017.

### UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS

HMIS Universal Data Elements are elements required to be collected by all projects participating in HMIS, regardless of funding source. Projects funded by any one or more of the federal partners must collect the Universal Data Elements, as do projects that are not funded by any federal partner (e.g. missions) but are entering data as part of the Continuum of Care's HMIS implementation.

The Universal Data Elements are the basis for producing unduplicated estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness, accessing services from homeless assistance projects, basic demographic characteristics of people experiencing homeless, and patterns of service use, including information on shelter stays and homelessness over time.

The Universal Data Elements are the foundation on which the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is developed. The AHAR provides Congress the national estimates of the current state of homelessness across the United States and the use of homeless assistance programs. It is used locally to inform communities on how their specific homeless information compares nationally and to understand changes within communities over time. The AHAR is used a critical resource for informing the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and other federal partners on the nature of homelessness in the United States and provides a unique longitudinal lens to inform homelessness policy nationwide. Universal Data Elements also help local communities to better target resources, and position programs to end homelessness

**What:** Project Start Date

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine the time a client spent in a project

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**What:** Client Location

**Who:** Head of Household in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To link client household data to the relevant CoC. Necessary for projects that operate across multiple CoC's for data export purposes and to ensure accurate counts of persons who are served within a CoC.

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**What:** Name

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To support the unique identification of each person served

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**What:** Social Security Number

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To support the unique identification of each person served. Where data is shared across projects, the SSN greatly facilitates the process of identifying clients who have been served and allows projects to de-duplicate at program start. Where data is not shared across projects, CoC's rely on unique identifiers to produce an unduplicated count in the central server once the data is sent to the HMIS Lead.

Also, an important objective for ending homelessness is to increase access and utilization of mainstream programs by persons who are experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness. Since SSN is a required data element for many mainstream programs, projects may need the SSN in order to help their clients access mainstream services.

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**What:** Gender

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To indicate whether clients self-identify as male, female, transgender female, transgender male, or gender non-conforming. Supports system planning, local, and national understanding of who is experiencing homelessness.

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**What:** Date of Birth

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To calculate the age of persons served at the time of project start or at any point during project enrollment and to support the unique identification of each person served

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**What:** Race

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To indicate clients' self-identification of one or more of five different racial categories. Supports system planning, local, and national understanding of who is experiencing homelessness.

More detailed information regarding the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity" can be found [here](#)

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**What:** Ethnicity

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To indicate clients who do and do not identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Supports system planning, local, and national understanding of who is experiencing homelessness.

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**What:** Veteran Status

**Who:** All persons 18 and older in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To indicate whether clients are veterans of the United States armed forces. Allows for an accurate count of how many veterans experience homelessness. Useful for screening for possible housing and service interventions and for gaining understanding of veterans' service needs

For persons who turn 18 while during program enrollment this information is to be recorded in the Face Sheet Record.

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**What:** Disabling Condition

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To indicate whether a client has a disabling condition, meaning a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment cause by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury, or the disease of HIV/AIDS that is expected to be long continuing or of indefinite duration, substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently, and could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions. This data element is used with other information to identify whether a client meets the criteria for chronic homelessness.

If a client's disabling condition status changes at any time during program enrollment this information is to be updated within the Admission Record, regardless of whether it was true at the time of Project Entry or not.

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**What:** Living Situation

**Who:** All persons 18 and older in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To identify the type of living situation and length of stay in that situation just prior to project start. This data element is to be used with other information to identify whether a client appears to meet the criteria for chronic homelessness.

For persons who turn 18 while during program enrollment this information is to be recorded in the Face Sheet Record.

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**What:** Housing Move-in Date

**Who:** Head of Household in all Permanent Housing projects

**When:** At Occurrence Point – When a household moves into any type of permanent housing

**Where:** Information can be recorded in the Admission Record or the Face Sheet Record

**Why:** To document the date that a household admitted into a Permanent Housing project moves into housing. This data is critical to point-in-time and housing inventory counts as it differentiates households which are enrolled in a Permanent Housing project but are still literally homeless as they prepare to move into an available unit from households which have already moved into permanent housing.

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**What:** Relationship to Head of Household

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record as well as the Face Sheet Record

**Why:** To identify one person to whom all other household members can be linked to at the time they enter the project. This facilitates the identification and enumeration of households. In addition, specifying the relationship of household members to the head of household facilitates reporting on household composition.

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**What:** Project Exit Date

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Discharge Record

**Why:** To determine the time a client spent in a project

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**What:** Destination

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Discharge Record

**Why:** To identify where a client will stay just after exiting a project for the purposes of tracking and outcome measurement.

## Program Specific Data Elements

To meet the statutory and regulatory requirements of federally funded programs using HMIS, additional elements are required for different funding sources. The Program Specific Data Elements are elements that are required by at least one of the HMIS federal partner programs.

Some of the program specific data elements are collected across most federal partner programs. These are called “Common” Program Specific Data Elements. The HMIS Federal Partners have cooperatively developed these elements. For each Program-Specific Data Element, multiple response categories are provided. For reporting purposes, an HMIS must be able to produce required reports using the response categories exactly as they are presented in this section.

## Individual Federal Partner Program Elements

These elements are listed under the federal partner program which maintains the element. There are elements maintained by one partner and shares with one other. When combined with UDE’s and Common Elements these elements form that basis of data collection requirements for specific project level reporting generated by an HMIS

More information regarding the rationale of the Individual Federal Partner Programs can be found:

[CoC Program Manual](#)

[ESG Program Manual](#)

[RHY Program Manual](#)

[PATH Program Manual](#)

[HOPWA Program Manual](#)

[VA Program Manual](#)

[HUD VASH Program Manual](#)

**What:** Income and Sources

**Who:** All persons over 18 in all projects except RHY BCP/Prev and RHY SOP

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record, the Face Sheet Record, and the Discharge Record

**Why:** To determine whether households are accessing all income sources for which they are eligible at the time of project start and to allow for analyzing the changes in the composition of income between project start and exit. Increase in income is a key performance measure of most federal partner programs. Collecting income information throughout a project stay supports plans to link clients with all income sources and benefits for which they are eligible, and helps the CoCs improve system design and partnerships by analyzing cross-systems connections to ensure access to additional income sources.

For persons who turn 18 while during program enrollment this information is to be recorded in the Face Sheet Record.

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**What:** Non-Cash Benefits

**Who:** All persons over 18 in all projects except RHY SOP

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record, the Face Sheet Record, and the Discharge Record

**Why:** To determine whether households are accessing all mainstream program benefits for which they are eligible at the time of project start and to allow for analyzing changes in the composition of non-cash benefits.

For persons who turn 18 while during program enrollment this information is to be recorded in the Face Sheet Record.

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**What:** Health Insurance

**Who:** All persons in all projects

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record, the Face Sheet Record, and the Discharge Record

**Why:** To determine whether households are accessing all mainstream program benefits for which they are eligible and to ascertain a more complete picture of changes to economic circumstances between project start and exit.

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**What:** Physical Disability

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev and SSVF RRH

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients have a physical disabling need that contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Developmental Disability

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev and SSVF RRH

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients have a developmental disabling need that contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Chronic Health Condition

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev and SSVF RRH

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients have a chronic health condition need that contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** HIV/AIDS

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev, SSVF RRH, and all RHY projects

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients' HIV/AIDS status contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Mental Health Problem

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev and SSVF RRH

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients' mental health problem contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Substance Abuse

**Who:** All persons in all projects Except SSVF Prev and SSVF RRH

**When:** At Project Entry, Update, Annual Assessment, and Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients' substance abuse contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Domestic Violence

**Who:** All persons over 18 in all projects Except SSVF Prev, SSVF RRH and all RHY projects

**When:** At Project Entry and Update

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record and the Face Sheet Record

**Why:** To determine whether clients' substance abuse contributes to their experience of homelessness or may be a factor in housing

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**What:** Contact

**Who:** All persons over 18 in Street Outreach Projects

**When:** At Occurrence Point – Time of contact

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To provide information on the number of contacts required to engage the client

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**What:** Date of Engagement

**Who:** All persons over 18 in Street Outreach Projects

**When:** At Occurrence Point – Time of contact

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Admission Record

**Why:** To record the length of time between project start and client engagement after one or more contacts

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**What:** Housing Assessment Disposition

**Who:** Head of Household in CoC, ESG, SSVF, and GPD projects that provide Coordinated Assessment

**When:** Project Exit

**Where:** Information is recorded in the Discharge Record

**Why:** To track client disposition following a brief assessment of critical housing needs.

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HMIS DATA ELEMENTS | 10/1/2017

Element	HOPWA PH	All PATH	RHY BCP/ES	RHY BCP/P	RHY MGH	RHY SOP	RHY TLP	HUD VASH	SSVF Prev	SSVF RRH	VA GPD
Housing Assesmnt at Exit	X								X		
Services Provided	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Financial Assistance Prvd	X								X		
Medical Assistance	X										
T-cell and Viral Load	X										
Referrals Provided	X										
PATH Status		X									
Connection with SOAR		X							X		
Referral Source			X	X	X		X				
BCP Status			X	X							
Sexual Orientation			X	X	X	X	X				
Last Grade Completed			X	X	X		X	X	X		
School Status			X	X	X		X				
Employment Status			X	X	X		X	X			
General Health Status			X	X	X		X	X			
Dental Health Status			X	X	X		X				
Mental Health Status			X	X	X		X				
Pregnancy Status			X	X	X	X	X				
Frmr Ward of CW/FCA			X	X	X		X				
Frmr Ward of JJS			X	X	X		X				
Family Critical Issues			X	X	X		X				
Comm Sexual Exploitation			X	X	X	X	X				
Labor Trafficking			X	X	X	X	X				
Project Completion Status			X	X	X		X				
Counseling			X	X	X		X				
Safe & Appropriate Exit			X	X	X		X				
After Care			X	X	X		X				
Veteran's Information								X	X		X
Percent of AMI									X		

Last Perm, Address								X	X		
VAMC Station Number								X	X		
HP Targeting Criteria								X	X		