



HMIS UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS

RATIONALES FOR COLLECTION

Collection of the Universal Data Elements is **required for all** projects participating in HMIS, **regardless of funding source.**

The Universal Data Elements (UDEs) are the basis for producing **unduplicated estimates** of the number of people experiencing homelessness, identifying the basic demographic characteristics of people experiencing homeless, and analyzing for patterns of service use. The collection of personal information is **critical** to distinguish unique individuals from one another to make these counts as accurate as possible.

Universal Identifier Elements

One and Only One Value per Client Record

Data elements 3.1 to 3.7 are required to be collected **once per client only**, regardless of how many project stays they have – therefore, incorrect or outdated **data must be corrected in the original record.**

3.1 Name

Rationale To support the unique identification of each person served.

3.2 Social Security Number

Rationale Significantly supports the unique identification of each person served.

- » 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.

3.3 Date of Birth

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

3.4 Race

Rationale 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.

3.5 Ethnicity

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

3.6 Gender

Rationale 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.

3.7 Veteran Status

Rationale 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 understanding veterans' service needs.

Universal Project Stay Elements

One or More Value(s) Per Project Stay for a Client or Household
Data elements 3.8 and up are REQUIRED to be collected **at least once per project stay.**

3.8 Disabling Condition

Rationale To indicate whether or not clients have a disabling condition. This data element is to be used with other information to identify whether a client meets the criteria for chronic homelessness.

3.10 Project Start Date

Rationale To determine the start of each client's period of participation with a project. All projects need this data element for reporting time spent participating in the project. Paired with 3.20 *Housing Move-In Date*, it becomes possible to determine the length of time from project start to housing placement for all PH clients, not just clients in RRH.

3.11 Project Exit Date

Rationale To determine the end of a client's period of participation with a project. All projects need this data element for reporting time spent participating in the project.

3.12 Destination

Rationale To identify where a client will stay just after exiting a project for purposes of tracking and outcome measurement.

3.15 Relationship to Head of Household

Rationale To identify one person to whom all other household members can be linked to at the time they enter a 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.

3.16 Client Location

Rationale To link client data to the relevant CoC to ensure accurate counts of persons served within a CoC.

3.20 Housing Move-in Date

Rationale 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 (in emergency shelter, Safe Haven, transitional housing, or on the street) as they prepare to move into an available unit from households which have already moved into permanent housing.

3.917 Prior Living Situation

Rationale To identify the type of living situation and length of stay in that situation just prior to project start for all adults and heads of households. This data element is to be used with other information to identify whether a client appears to meet the criteria for chronic homelessness at various points of enrollment.