



Continuum of Care (CoC) HMIS Program Manual

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Contents

Introduction	3
Additional Resources	3
HMIS Project Setup Steps	4
1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS.....	4
2. Identify Funding Components for each Project	4
3. Set Up Projects in HMIS	5
Data Collection Requirements	10
Universal Data Elements (UDE).....	10
Common Data Elements	11
Special Data Collection Instructions.....	12
Homelessness Prevention	12
Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing	12
Permanent Housing to Permanent Housing Transfers	13
Supportive Services Only	14
Supportive Services Only - Street Outreach.....	14
Transitional Housing:	15

Revision History

March 2015	First Release
December 2016	Second release; version update to align with 2014 HMIS Data Standards V5 documents.
September 2017	Third release; version update to align with 2017 HMIS Data Standards documents.

Introduction

The *CoC (Continuum of Care) Program HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and CoC program recipients. This manual provides information on HMIS project setup and data collection guidance specific to the CoC Program and the legacy programs: Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care (S+C) and Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless (SRO) that have not yet renewed under the CoC Program.

This document is not a replacement for any specific program guidance, requirements, regulations, notices, and training materials on the CoC Program. This manual only addresses the use of HMIS for CoC Program-funded projects.

Additional Resources

CoC Program: Guidance about the CoC Program and its requirements can be found online at the HUD Exchange on the [CoC Program](#) page.

Ask A Question: To ask a question about any CoC Program HMIS requirement, go to the [Ask A Question](#) section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select “HMIS Program” for your question under “My Question is Related To.”

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	<p>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.</p> <p>The dictionary also includes critical information about data collection stages, federal partner data collection required elements, project descriptor data elements, and metadata data elements.</p>
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

Communities need to 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. CoC Program funding for ABC Transitional Housing project). For data collection purposes, HUD and its federal partners refer to categories of funding within a program as **components**. For the CoC Program, there are five program components under which communities can establish and operate projects: permanent housing, transitional housing, supportive services only, HMIS and, in some cases, homelessness prevention. Additionally, there are Safe Haven projects with previous funding under the Supportive Housing Program that will be renewed under the CoC Program, and the legacy programs: Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care (S+C) and Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless (SRO) that have not yet renewed under the CoC Program. A **project** is the group of activities on the ground delivering services or housing for the homeless client (e.g. XYZ Shelter, Homeless Street Outreach, etc.).

1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive CoC Program funding or still receive their original funding through HUD legacy programs (Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care (S+C) and Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless (SRO)) and have not renewed under the CoC Program yet. Include projects funded with 15- or 20-year use requirements that have not yet expired and do not receive operating funding from the CoC Program. HUD posts the annual awards on HUDExchange.info under the [Continuum of Care](#) page.

2. Identify Funding Components for each Project

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

Permanent Housing (PH) has two distinct types:

- **PH: Permanent Supportive Housing** offers permanent housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability (individuals with disabilities or families in which one adult or child has a disability) to live independently.
- **PH: Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** provides housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

The **Supportive Services Only (SSO)** component of the CoC program provides services to homeless individuals and families not residing in housing operated by the recipient. Funds may be used to conduct outreach to sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and families, link clients with housing or other necessary services, and provide ongoing support.

The **Transitional Housing (TH)** component of the CoC program provides housing and accompanying supportive services to homeless individuals and families for up to 24 months to assist with stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing.

The **Homelessness Prevention (HP)** component is limited to recipients in “High Performing Communities Only”. HUD has not designated any High Performing Communities as of September 2017, thus no projects have been funded for Homelessness Prevention, to date, under the CoC Program.

The **HMIS** component of the CoC program may be used only by HMIS lead agencies for costs associated with HMIS. No HMIS project setup is required for grants funded under the HMIS component.

The **Safe Haven (SH)** program is a component that can be renewed from the SHP Program under the CoC Program. However, no new Safe Haven projects have been funded since 2011. All Safe Haven projects can be renewed to continue ongoing eligible costs and must be included in HMIS.

Legacy Program Information:

The **Supportive Housing Program (SHP)** is not a component under the CoC program. No new SHP projects have been funded since 2011. Most, if not all, SHP grants in a CoC have either been renewed under the CoC Program or been deactivated.

The **Shelter Plus Care (S+C)** program is not a component under the CoC program. No new S+C projects have been funded since 2011. However, some of the older multi-year grants are still in effect. All S+C projects may be renewed under the CoC Program and should be included in HMIS.

The **SRO** program is not a component under the CoC program. No new SRO projects have been funded since 2011. Existing SRO projects continue to be renewed under the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997 and should be included in HMIS.

The **Joint TH and PH-RRH** component project is a new project type in the FY 2017 CoC Program Competition that includes two existing program components – TH and PH-RRH in a single project to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

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 Identifier (2.1) – The name of the agency/organization receiving CoC funding must be entered or identified with the CoC 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. 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 CoC funding must be entered or identified with the CoC 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.
- **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.
- **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. For example, if the project operates in City X, which is part of a CoC consolidated application, select the CoC Code that was identified for each project in the annual grant application. For projects that cross multiple CoC jurisdictions, (e.g. the project is in a City and County, and both have an active CoC), the code for each CoC must be entered.

Project Type (2.4) –

- All CoC Program funded projects are part of the Continuum of Care and should be marked as “yes” to whether they are Continuum Projects.
- Each project must be identified with a single HMIS project type. Select the correct project type for each project in the HMIS-- no single project within an HMIS may have two project types.

CoC Program Component	HMIS Project Type
Permanent Housing (PH)	PH: Permanent Supportive Housing
Permanent Housing (PH)	PH: Rapid Re-Housing
Supportive Services Only (SSO)	See SSO Chart Below
Transitional Housing (TH)	Transitional Housing
Homelessness Prevention (HP)	Homelessness Prevention
Safe Haven (SH)	Safe Haven
Joint TH and PH-RRH	PH: Rapid Re-Housing
Legacy Programs	HMIS Project Type
Supportive Housing Program – Permanent Housing	PH: Permanent Supportive Housing
Supportive Housing Program – Supportive Services Only	See SSO Chart Below
Supportive Housing Program – Transitional Housing	Transitional Housing
Shelter Plus Care	PH: Permanent Supportive Housing
Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless	<u>If services are provided</u> – type as PH: Housing With Services
Single Room Occupancy for the Homeless	<u>If services are not provided</u> – type as PH: Housing Only

There are a wide variety of Supportive Services Only projects within the CoC Program. Many SSO projects that were incorrectly classified were able to reclassify their project in 2014 and [change their component type](#) from SSO to a Housing Project Type (e.g. SH, TH or PH) depending on the relationship of their services to specific housing. HMIS administrators should update those SSO projects that changed component types in 2014 or later so that their HMIS project setup reflects the affiliated residential HMIS Project Type.

For SSO projects whose services are designed to serve all persons in the residential facility, and where the project’s housing and service providers are able to share data, HMIS administrators should adjust the system so that there is only a single project within the HMIS, using the residential HMIS Project Type. In this situation, both the housing provider and the service provider would have access to the clients’ project record and would be able to enter data and run reports on the same client. Merging these projects together within the system eliminates the occurrence of duplicate client records and double counting for inventories and system-wide outcomes. If the housing and service providers cannot share the same record due to community confidentiality policies or domestic violence restrictions, then the HMIS administrator should update the services project as a Supportive Service Only project and identify in the Project Type element which HMIS Project ID (which residential project) it is affiliated with.

The following applies to **SSO projects affiliated with a residential project in HMIS that either 1) did not change component types or 2) provides services only to Emergency Shelter clients:**

Way the affiliation works	Affiliated with one residential project & either does not offer to provide services for all of the residential project clients Or only serves clients for a portion of their project stay (e.g. provides classes) Or information sharing is not allowed between residential project and service provider.	Affiliated with multiple residential project of the same project type (e.g. multiple PH:PSH) & either does not serve all of the all residential project clients. Or information sharing is not allowed between residential projects and service provider.	Affiliated with multiple residential project of different project types (e.g. PH: RRH and PH:PSH) OR Affiliated with Emergency Shelter(s)
2.4 Project type to use	Services Only		
2.4 A – Affiliated with a residential project	Yes		
2.4 B – ID of Affiliated Project	List the HMIS Project ID of the residential project		

For an **SSO whose primary work is street outreach**, use the HMIS Project Type "Street Outreach."

For an **SSO that operates a Coordinated Entry/Assessment** project funded under the CoC Program, use the HMIS Project Type "Coordinated Assessment."

For an **SSO that is a standalone supportive service**, use the HMIS Project Type "Other." A standalone supportive service is typically provided in a facility or office designated for the sole purpose of providing that service, and administered by providers that are trained and/or licensed in the field, e.g. child care centers and employment training centers. These SSOs will generally be the APR SSOs without Housing Outcomes. "Other" means that this project will not be considered in systemwide performance measurements or cause duplicate HIC/PIT counts.

Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization (2.5) – This element is not relevant for CoC Projects since the CoC Program does not fund Emergency Shelter projects.

Federal Partner Funding Sources (2.6) – projects funded in whole or in part by CoC Program funds are to be identified based on the CoC Program component. Select the appropriate CoC component for each project:

- **HUD: CoC – Permanent Supportive Housing [also for legacy SHP-PSH and S+C]**
- **HUD: CoC – Rapid Re-Housing**
- **HUD: CoC – Supportive Services Only**
- **HUD: CoC – Transitional Housing [Use also for legacy SHP-TH]**
- **HUD: CoC – Safe Haven**
- **HUD: CoC – Single Room Occupancy**
- **HUD: CoC – Homelessness Prevention (High Performing Communities Only)**

Projects awarded funding in the FY 2017 CoC Competition for the joint component TH and PH: RRH Projects should select both the **HUD: CoC – Transitional Housing** and **HUD: CoC – Rapid Re-Housing** Federal Partner Funding Sources.

Enter a grant identifier for each CoC Program grant that the project receives, along with the grant's operating start and end dates.

The grant identifier for a CoC Program in HMIS may be whatever identifier the HMIS Lead believes is appropriate to assign to further identify the program. It may, but does not have to be, the fixed grant number (i.e. the grant number minus that last 4 digits which change annually with renewal). Safe Haven, SRO and old S+C grants will have different grant number configurations.

The grant must be identified with the Grant Start Date (the first time a CoC grant was provided to this project). When a project is not renewed by the CoC, it must be identified with a grant end date. Projects still in operation with unexpired 15- or 20-year use terms that no longer receive operating funds would not "end" until the use term is completed. Grant start dates and end dates for CoC funded projects are critical to identifying them for system performance measurement.

Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.7) – HMIS administrators must complete the bed and unit inventory information for projects that provide lodging (Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-housing, and Safe Haven). 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 entire project, which may be more beds/units than are funded by the CoC Program.

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 Project 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.

Data Collection Requirements

Universal Data Elements (UDE)

All CoC funded projects are required to collect all Universal Data Elements, which include:

- 3.1 Name
- 3.2 Social Security Number
- 3.3 Date of Birth
- 3.4 Race
- 3.5 Ethnicity
- 3.6 Gender
- 3.7 Veteran Status
- 3.8 Disabling Condition
- 3.10 Project Start Date
- 3.11 Project Exit Date
- 3.12 Destination
- 3.15 Relationship to Head of Household
- 3.16 Client Location
- 3.20 Housing Move-in Date
- 3.917 Living Situation

Special notes about UDEs:

A portion of these elements constitute the basic demographics about a client that are critical to an HMIS's client search functionality and the HMIS's ability to unduplicate client records. HUD required reports check and report on Data Quality for many of these basic demographic elements.

Two elements (3.8 and 3.917) are required to identify a client as chronically homeless. Because street outreach and emergency shelter projects are critical in the identification of chronically homeless clients, HMIS administrators should pay special attention when training street outreach and emergency shelter end users on 3.8 and 3.917 data entry.

Project Start Date replaces Project Entry Date and employs a new definition of the point of entry for some PH projects. HMIS administrators should provide end users in the affected PH project types with additional information on when each project type is expected to enter a Project Start Date. The following rules apply to Project Start Date for non-PH projects:

- **Street Outreach projects** – Date of first contact with the client.
- **Emergency Shelters** – Night the client first stayed in the shelter for the consecutive shelter period from entry to exit. Night by night shelters, which use a bed-night tracking method, will have a project start date for the night the client first stayed and will allow clients to re-enter as necessary without “exiting and restarting” for each stay for a specified period.
- **Safe Havens and Transitional Housing** – Date the client moves into the residential project (i.e. first night in residence).
- **All Permanent Housing project types, including Rapid Re-Housing** – Date that the client was admitted into the project. See the Special Data Collection Instructions for Rapid re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing for additional information on Project Start Date for PH projects.

- **All other types of Service projects (including but not limited to: services only, day shelter, homelessness prevention, coordinated assessment, health care)** - Date the client first began working with the project and generally received the first provision of service.

Common Data Elements

Common data elements are collected by most projects funded by a federal partner. CoC funded projects must collect most of the common data elements and are necessary to generate the Annual Performance Report. The following chart indicates which elements are required for each of the CoC components:

	HMIS Program Specific Data Element	Homelessness Prevention	Permanent Supportive Housing	Rapid Re-Housing	Supportive Services Only	Transitional Housing
4.2	Income and Sources	X	X	X	X	X
4.3	Non-Cash Benefits	X	X	X	X	X
4.4	Health Insurance	X	X	X	X	X
4.5	Physical Disability	X	X	X	X	X
4.6	Developmental Disability	X	X	X	X	X
4.7	Chronic Health Condition	X	X	X	X	X
4.8	HIV/AIDS	X	X	X	X	X
4.9	Mental Health Problem	X	X	X	X	X
4.10	Substance Abuse	X	X	X	X	X
4.11	Domestic Violence	X	X	X	X	X
4.12	Contact				Only for SSO-Street Outreach	
4.13	Date of Engagement				Only for SSO-Street Outreach	
4.18	Housing Assessment Disposition	*	*	*	*	*
W5	Housing Assessment at Exit	X				

X = data collection is required

* Data collection is optional and determined by how the CoC has structured the Coordinated Entry/Assessment process in their area. Placement of the element would be required for any project(s) conducting assessments as part of the Coordinated Entry process. This may be across multiple projects or sited in a single access point or coordinated intake center.

Refer to the [HMIS Data Standards Manual](#) for information on rationale, collection point, and subjects.

Special Data Collection Instructions

HMIS administrators and users should be aware of several special data collection issues that apply to CoC Program funded projects:

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing are two separate projects in an HMIS. They may not be combined into one project.

In addition to collecting 3.12 (*Destination*), Homelessness Prevention projects must also collect W5 (Housing Assessment at Exit) information to more accurately reflect the housing situation of clients at exit.

Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons who have been in the project for one year or more. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or 30 days after the one-year anniversary of the head of household's *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent 'update' or any other 'annual assessment.'

Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing

Beginning October 1, 2017, the project start date is the date that client(s) were admitted to the project. This means the client has made application and they have been "admitted" to the project. In this context, the requirements for admittance must be:

- Information provided by the client or from the referral provider indicates that the client meets the criteria required for admission to the project. This does not mean that all or any of the documentation has been gathered that may be required for the project.
- The client has indicated they want to be housed in this project.
- The client is able to access services and housing through the project. This means that there is an expectation that within a reasonably short period of time the project expects to have an opening (rental subsidy available for scattered site or unit available for site-based).

Housing move-in must be completed for all clients who have moved into housing. Move-in means a lease arrangement has been made, the client has a key or entry ability to the unit and that the client has physically slept in the unit. Beginning October 1, 2017, projects must discontinue the pre-entry method of housing and use the project start date and housing move in date together instead.

HUD strongly recommends HMIS administrators and PH projects monitor data entry accuracy and use of the housing move-in date. Housing move-in timeliness and accuracy will impact project and system performance outcomes for the point-in-time information for the Housing Inventory Chart, project Annual Performance Reports (APR); System Performance Measures and other federally mandated reports that collect project outcomes.

Clients without a housing move-in date are still considered and should be counted as homeless (living on the streets, in-shelter, etc.).

The project start date is not intended to generate a "waiting list" for housing. It is intended to provide CoCs with additional data about clients' paths to permanent housing. HUD understands that everyone

with a project start date will not move into a unit. Success rates will vary by community and project, and the CoC can use this data as a starting place to identify barriers to housing and take steps to remove those barriers when possible. HUD has not developed a data element to provide information to answer why clients do not move into housing and encourages CoCs to consider and develop ways to determine the issues to inform continuous improvement strategies.

Similarly, CoCs and projects should be reviewing the length of time from project start to housing move-in as a diagnostic tool to identify areas where the CoC or project could reduce the time from project start to move in.

Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in the project for one year or more. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or after the anniversary of the head of household's *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent 'update' or any other 'annual assessment.'

Permanent Housing to Permanent Housing Transfers

Under certain circumstances, a client may be better served by transferring from one permanent housing project to another permanent housing project. End users should follow the usual discharge and intake process when exiting a participant from one permanent housing project and entering them into a different permanent housing project.

HUD recognizes that certain circumstances can arise where project eligibility requirements and data collection requirements in HMIS do not perfectly align. For instance, a participant retains eligibility for a permanent housing project dedicated to serving the chronically homeless when transferring from one PSH project to another. However, the client's residence prior to the second PSH project entry (which was a permanent housing situation) might flag the client as potentially ineligible in a report. HUD understands this misalignment, and data entry in HMIS should reflect the actual prior living situation (i.e. in data element 3.917), even though this might flag the client as potentially ineligible for the project. Documentation of continued eligibility for the new PSH project should be retained on file for the client for monitoring purposes and as backup to explain the apparent discrepancy in the HMIS record.

HMIS Leads or HMIS software providers also may need to administratively merge client records in instances when, for instance, two or more permanent housing projects merge together. HUD recommends merging client records into one project to keep the entire client history in PH intact and avoid negatively impacting the client's chronic homeless status, income outcomes, etc. HMIS softwares vary in their ability to merge client records, so HMIS administrators should work with their HMIS software provider to determine how to merge records.

Each time a project merger or similar change happens, considerable time and attention go into considering all the ramifications of the change and the best way to execute the change. For instance, making a change likely will affect system and project-level performance measures. HUD encourages HMIS administrators to carefully consider whether the change is absolutely necessary, and whether administrative transfers of an entire client record or using exit/entry will have the lesser impact on performance reporting.

Supportive Services Only

SSO projects are often the most complicated to set up and manage in an HMIS. Consideration of the CoC's privacy and security policies for the HMIS will often determine how the project is set up. Pay careful attention to the project typing instructions.

Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in the project for one year or more. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or after the one-year anniversary of the head of household's *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent 'update' or any other 'annual assessment.'

Supportive Services Only - Street Outreach

- **Data Collection Challenges:** A street outreach project is likely to encounter difficulty engaging homeless persons. Street outreach projects may record a project start with limited information about the client and improve on the accuracy and completeness of client data over time by editing data in an HMIS as they further engage the client. The initial entry may only include the project start date, a "made-up" name (e.g., "Redhat Tenthstreetbridge") that would be identifiable for retrieval by the worker in the system, and gender. Over time, the data must be edited for accuracy and completeness (e.g., replacing "Redhat" with "Robert") as the worker learns more about the client.
- **De-Duplication of Client Records:** It is possible in a street outreach setting that a single client may be contacted by multiple street outreach workers over a period of time in different locations. Local protocols should be established to determine how coordination among street outreach projects effectively manages the identification of and data collection for clients. In smaller CoC, it may be possible to coordinate street outreach efforts and reduce duplication of client records through case conferencing or other efforts to coordinate within outreach and with other services in the CoC. In all CoC, a "client search" functionality may be available in HMIS so that street outreach workers can perform queries or client searches by "made-up" name or alias, or other informal identifiers shared with street outreach workers in order to manage the identification of clients. The use of temporary "made-up" names should not be an excuse for excessive de-identified clients or poor data quality. Street Outreach projects and local HMIS leadership should work together to minimize the use of "made-up" names and attain high data quality.
- **Contacts:** A street outreach project is expected to record every contact made with each client in the HMIS. In 2017, Contact was changed to include a new conditional data element "Staying on Street, ES or SH". A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client designed to engage the client. Contacts include activities such as a conversation between the street outreach worker and the client about the client's well-being or needs, an office visit to discuss their housing plan, or a referral to another community service. A contact must be recorded anytime a client is met, including when an engagement date or project start date is recorded on the same day.

- **Engagements:** Per the HMIS Data Standards and by agreement across all federal partners, an engagement date is the date on which an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or the beginning of a case plan. The date of engagement should be entered into HMIS at the point that the client has been engaged by the outreach worker. This date may be on or after the project start date and must be prior to project exit. If the client exits the project without becoming engaged, the engagement date should be left blank. The date of engagement will also be recorded as a contact with the same date.
- **Data Quality:** Reporting on data quality for street outreach projects is limited to clients with a date of engagement. Therefore, it is important that outreach workers record the engagement date and also review all Universal Data Elements and applicable Program Specific Data Elements for completeness and accuracy. The Date of Engagement coincides with the requirement for HMIS data quality; therefore, all Universal Data Elements should be entered into HMIS at or before the Date of Engagement.
- **Project Exit:** Project exit represents the end of a client’s participation with a project. The project exit date should coincide with the date that the client is no longer considered to be participating in the project. This standard should be applied consistently across all Street Outreach projects. Reasons to exit a client include any of the following:
 - The client has entered another project type (e.g., TH, PSH) or otherwise found housing;
 - The client is engaged with another outreach worker or project;
 - The client is deceased; or
 - The outreach worker has been unable to locate the client for an extended period of time and there are no recorded contacts.
 - If this situation arises, and the client is to be exited from the project due to a lack of regular contact the project exit (3.12) should be listed as “No Exit Interview Completed.”
 - The possibility that the client may not be seen again is not a reason to exit a client from a project, and project exit should only be recorded once project participation has ended, or after the locally-determined period of time has passed without a contact with the client.
- **Annual Assessments:** Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in the project one year or more. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or after the one-year anniversary of the head of household’s *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent ‘update’ or any other ‘annual assessment.’

Transitional Housing:

Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in the project one year or more. Data elements required for collection at annual assessment must be entered with an *Information Date* of no more than 30 days before or after the one-year anniversary of the head of household’s *Project Start Date*, regardless of the date of the most recent ‘update’ or any other ‘annual assessment.’