



# ESG Program HMIS Manual

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Emergency Solutions Grants Program

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
Development

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## Introduction

The *ESG (Emergency Solutions Grants) Program HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and ESG recipients and subrecipients. This manual provides information on HMIS program setup and data collection guidance specific to the ESG Program.

The guidance provided in this document aligns with requirements around using HMIS as stated in the [Emergency Solutions Grant \(ESG\) Program interim rule](#) and refers to the data elements required in an HMIS as established in the [2014 HMIS Data Standards](#). This document is not intended to replace the HMIS Data Dictionary or the Data Manual, but to complement them and relate ESG Program-specific requirements. This document is not a replacement for any specific program guidance, requirements, regulations, notices, and training materials on the ESG Program. This manual only addresses the use of HMIS for ESG.

For additional assistance please refer to the following:

- Guidance about the ESG Program and its requirements can be found on-line at the HUD exchange on the [ESG Program](#) page.
- To ask a question about any ESG Program requirement, go to the [Ask A Question](#) section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select “ESG Program” for your question under “My Question is Related To.”
- Information on HMIS is located in the [HMIS Section on the HUD Exchange](#).
- To ask an HMIS-specific question go to the [Ask A Question](#) section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select “HMIS” for your question under “My Question is Related To.”

## HMIS Project Setup Steps

It is important to be sure that communities 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., ESG Program funding for ABC Emergency Shelter project). For data collection purposes, HUD and its federal partners refer to categories of funding within a program as **components**.

### 1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive ESG funding. For example, if the ESG recipient is a county that funds two subrecipients, Shelter A with emergency shelter funds and Nonprofit B with rapid re-housing funds, then that local HMIS implementation has two projects: Shelter A and Nonprofit B.

### 2. Identify Funding Components for each Project

Identify the **component** for each project funded by the ESG recipient (a local jurisdiction: city, county or state). Following the example above, Shelter A receives funding under the emergency shelter component and Nonprofit B receives funding under the rapid re-housing component. The ESG Program includes four eligible components:

- Activities under the ESG **Street Outreach** component are designed to meet the immediate needs of unsheltered homeless persons by connecting them with Emergency Shelter, housing and/or emergency health services.
- Activities under the ESG **Emergency Shelter** component include three distinct activity types which may be funded through ESG for an Emergency Shelter:
  - **Shelter Operations** are funds provided for a shelter's basic operating costs (e.g., maintenance, rent, utilities, food, etc.) or for hotel/motel vouchers when no appropriate shelter is available.
  - **Essential Services** are funds provided for a variety of direct services to homeless persons in the Emergency Shelter.
  - **Renovations** are funds provided for the rehabilitation of a shelter or the conversion of a building into an emergency shelter.
- The **Homelessness Prevention** component of ESG funds short- and/or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services (financial assistance and service costs) designed to prevent an at-risk individual or family from moving into an Emergency Shelter or living in a place not meant for human habitation.
- The **Rapid Re-Housing** component of ESG funds short- and/or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services (financial assistance and service costs)

designed to quickly move homeless individuals and families from emergency shelter or places not meant for human habitation into permanent housing.

### 3. Set Up Projects in HMIS

For projects new to HMIS, the System Administrator will need to follow whatever normal setup procedures are required for the particular HMIS. All projects with existing HMIS records should be checked for accuracy and consistency with the 2014 HMIS Data Standards and this guidance. This must include the following Project Descriptor Data Elements:

- Organizational Identifiers (2.1)** – The name of the agency/organization (subrecipient or subrecipient) receiving ESG funding and providing the direct services must be entered. An identification number will be generated by the HMIS. There should be a single record in HMIS for each agency/organization, regardless of how many projects they operate. The organization identified here should be the organization operating the project, and not the ESG recipient, if there is a difference.
- Project Identifiers (2.2)** – The name of the project receiving ESG funding and providing the direct service must be entered or identified with the ESG-specific project (e.g., Shelter Name XYZ). 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 Housing Inventory Chart (HIC). System 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.
- Continuum of Care (CoC) Code (2.3)** – Select the CoC code based on the location of the project. For example, if the project operates in City X, which is part of a CoC consolidated application and the State is providing ESG funding, select the CoC Code that would be used for the CoC application.
- Project Type (2.4)** - Select the correct project type for each project. Each project in an HMIS must be set up for the correct project type. No single project within an HMIS may have two project types. Recipients of grant awards consisting of multiple components which fund activities that fall under separate project types must have separate projects set up in HMIS for each project type. Therefore, no agency that receives an award consisting of multiple components may have both components set up in the HMIS as the same project.

**Continuum Project** should be answered ‘Yes’ for all projects funded under programs listed below. Appropriate project types will be critical to the CoC’s ability to produce System Wide Performance measures. ESG project types should be set up as follows:

Street Outreach	Street Outreach
Emergency Shelter – Shelter Operations	Emergency Shelter Day Shelter*

ESG Program Component - Activity	HMIS Project Type
Emergency Shelter – Essential Services	Emergency Shelter Day Shelter* Transitional Housing**
Emergency Shelter - Renovations	Emergency Shelter
Homelessness Prevention	Homelessness Prevention <sup>1</sup>
Rapid Re-Housing	PH: Rapid Re-Housing

**\*Project Type: Day Shelter** – Projects that receive ESG funding under the emergency shelter component where the activity is carried out in a Day Shelter should select Project Type: Day Shelter instead of Emergency Shelter. Day Shelters are defined as projects that offer daytime facilities and services (no lodging) for persons who are homeless. All Day Shelter projects are required to collect data and report outcomes like those of any Entry/Exit Shelter

**\*\*Project Type: Transitional Housing** – There are some Transitional Housing projects that were funded under the Emergency Shelter Grants program in FY2010, which are “grandfathered” into ESG funding. In such cases, accomplishments for these projects will be reported under “Emergency Shelter” for the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) but must continue to be identified within the HMIS as Project Type: Transitional Housing.

- **Special ESG notes on Project Type:**

- Projects funded by ESG may receive **funding from multiple jurisdictions** (e.g., an award from a State and another award from a City). In such cases the following rules apply:
  1. Projects funded under Street Outreach, Homelessness Prevention or Rapid Re-housing which receive an ESG award from more than one jurisdiction must create separate projects within an HMIS for the separate grant sources (e.g., City-funded RRH and State-funded RRH) in order to distinguish clients for reporting purposes.
  2. A single project which receives an ESG: Emergency Shelter award from more than one jurisdiction does not need to separate its clients into two separate projects within the HMIS. Each distinct Emergency Shelter, or Day Shelter, or Transitional Housing project may combine all of their clients in one project within the HMIS. (e.g., Shelter XYZ receives City and State ESG funding. The shelter is set up in HMIS as one shelter, and there is no need to distinguish between which client was served with each ESG funding source.) HUD understands that this will cause the individual served in the emergency shelter to be counted in both the state and the city reports.
- **Project Type: Services Only** – For ESG-funded projects, only legal services providers may be set up in HMIS (or their comparable database) with a project type of ‘Services Only.’ In the event that the legal services provider receives funding from multiple sources, a separate

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<sup>1</sup> Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing components operating after October 1, 2014 MUST be set up in HMIS as two separate projects; the obsolete combined project type may not be used.

project must be set up for clients receiving services funded under ESG such that reporting includes only clients served with ESG funds.

In all other cases, essential services funded under the Emergency Shelter component of ESG must be categorized under the Emergency Shelter, Day Shelter or Transitional Housing project type, as applicable.

*Additional note: Whether using ESG funds for shelter operations, essential services, and/or renovation, ESG recipients are required to report in the CAPER the number of all persons served in ESG-funded Emergency Shelter, Day Shelter and grandfathered Transitional Housing projects. Because the CAPER does not require a breakdown of the number of participants who received essential services and those who only utilized a bed during their stay at the shelter, there is no need or way to distinguish between eligible ESG emergency shelter activities (i.e., essential services, shelter operations, or renovation) in HMIS. For these reasons, essential services should not be set up as a “Services Only” project type in HMIS.*

- **Comparable Database (Victim Services Providers or Legal Services Providers (if applicable))**
  - Projects funded under ESG where the subrecipient is a victim services provider may not enter client-level data into an HMIS; instead, they must use a comparable database to collect client-level data over time and generate unduplicated aggregate reports based on that data. Legal services providers are not prohibited from entering client-level data into an HMIS as victim services providers are, but if they have concerns about client confidentiality, the CoC may allow them to use a comparable database.
    - A comparable database must be compliant with HMIS Data Standards for all required Project Descriptor, Universal, and Program-Specific data elements for any project as identified in this manual and in the HMIS Data Dictionary, as well as all HUD-defined standards for security, privacy, software functionality, and data quality.
    - Projects must enter client-level data; entry of aggregate data is not sufficient.
    - ESG-funded providers using a comparable database must follow the same HMIS project typing rules as noted in this manual for each ESG-funded component they carry out.
    - Client data entered into a comparable database by victim services providers must not be entered directly into or provided to an HMIS.
- **Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization (2.5)** – The Entry/Exit method should be used for all ESG-funded emergency shelters unless:
  - The shelter serves a large number of clients on a nightly basis;
  - Clients are permitted to spend nights at the shelter on an irregular basis; and
  - There is a high degree of client turnover;

ESG-funded shelters which meet the criteria above may be set up in HMIS to use the Night-by-Night method<sup>2</sup> to track emergency shelter utilization. Due to the different nature of these

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<sup>2</sup> While ESG permits the use of the Night-by-Night method for shelters which meet specific criteria, this is not true of all federal funders. Regardless of the nature of the shelter operation, projects receiving HOPWA Short Term

projects, shelters which meet the criteria for using the Night-by-Night method also have different data collection requirements, as detailed in the special data collection instructions.

Regardless of the method used to track emergency shelter utilization, it must be possible to determine who and how many people were served by any ESG-funded shelter for any given night based on HMIS data. Please see the [HMIS Project Descriptor Data Elements Manual](#) for additional information.

- **Federal Partner Funding Sources (2.6)** – Projects funded in whole or in part by ESG are to be identified based on the ESG component type. Select the appropriate ESG component for each project:
  - **HUD:ESG – Emergency Shelter (operating and/or essential services)**
    - Projects that receive renovation funding from ESG are to be listed under **HUD: ESG Emergency Shelter (operating and/or essential services)**. These projects are expected to report on all persons sheltered in the facility that was renovated just like projects which receive operating and/or essential services support.
    - If a project receives ESG Program funding through multiple grants (e.g. funding for both operating or essential services and renovation funding), it should be set up as a single project in HMIS, as long as both funding sources (grant identifiers) are associated with that project and the client population is identical.
    - Projects that received operating or essential services support and are “grandfathered” Transitional Housing projects must select **HUD:ESG-Emergency Shelter** as the funding source.
  - **HUD:ESG – Homelessness Prevention**
  - **HUD:ESG – Rapid Re-housing**
  - **HUD:ESG – Street Outreach**

Enter a grant identifier for each ESG grant that the project receives along with the grant start and end dates.

- **Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.7)** – projects which provide lodging (Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Rapid Re-housing) must complete the bed and unit inventory information on all residential projects funded through ESG. This information should match the information provided by the CoC for the Housing Inventory Chart Count (HIC). The bed and unit information in HMIS is based on the number and type of beds in the entire project, which may be more beds/units than are funded under ESG.

Note: The CAPER is consistent with HMIS in that it requires recipients to report on all beds in ESG-funded emergency shelters; HUD does not require emergency shelters to track each bed by funding source. The CAPER does not require recipients to report on bed/unit information for Rapid Re-housing. However, when reporting in their CAPER on the persons served by Rapid Re-

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Housing, HOPWA Hotel/Motel, RHY Basic Center Program, or VA Contract Emergency Residential Services funding MUST be set up to use the Entry/Exit method.



housing, recipients must only count those persons served by Rapid Re-housing funded by the ESG program.

- **Site Information (2.8)** – Where HMIS is used to generate the HIC, site information should be entered consistent with HIC guidance and the policies of the HMIS implementation.
- **Target Population (2.9)** – Where HMIS is used to generate the HIC, target population should be selected if the project is designed to serve that population and at least three-fourths (75 percent) of the clients served by the project fit the target group descriptor.

### Data Collection Requirements

All ESG recipients and subrecipients are required to collect all of the Universal Data Elements and a select number of Program-Specific Data Elements, which are shown below for each program component:

	HMIS Program Specific Data Element	Emergency Shelter – Night-by-Night	Emergency Shelter – All Others	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Re-Housing	Street Outreach
4.2	Income and Sources		X	X	X	X
4.3	Non-Cash Benefits		X	X	X	X
4.4	Health Insurance		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	X				X
4.13	Date of Engagement	X				X
4.17	Residential Move-In Date				X	
4.19	Housing Assessment at Exit			X		

Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the [HMIS Data Standards Manual](#).

### Special Data Collection Instructions

System Administrators and HMIS users need to be aware of the following special data collection issues that apply to ESG-funded projects:

#### Street Outreach

- **Data Collection Challenges:** A street outreach project is likely to encounter difficulty engaging homeless persons. Street outreach projects may record a project entry 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 engage the client. The initial entry may be as basic as the project entry 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 (e.g., replacing “Redhat” with “Robert”) as the worker learns that detail.

- **Contacts:** A street outreach project is expected to record every contact made with each client in the HMIS. A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client designed to engage the client. Contacts may 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 entry date is recorded on the same day.
- **Engagements:** An engagement date is the date when an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan. The date of engagement should be entered into HMIS at the point when the client has been engaged by the outreach worker. This date may be on or after the project entry date and must be prior to project exit. If the client exits without becoming engaged, the engagement date should be left blank. If the client was contacted on the date of engagement, a contact must also be entered for that date.
- **Data Quality:** Reporting to HUD on data quality for street outreach projects is limited to clients with a date of engagement. Therefore, it is important that when a worker records the date of engagement he/she also reviews all of the Universal Data Elements and applicable Program Specific Data Elements for completeness and accuracy.

## Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelters should be set up to collect all data required. However, HUD understands that often shelters are not able to collect exit data. Persons who leave/disappear without completing an exit interview are to be recorded with an exit destination as: “No exit interview completed”.

- **Night-by-Night (NBN) shelters:**
  - **Night-by-Night** shelters should be set up to collect all data required for Emergency Shelters. However, HUD understands that often NBN’s are not able to collect exit data. Persons who leave/disappear without completing an exit interview are to be recorded with an exit destination as: No exit interview completed.
  - **Contacts:** NBN shelters must record contacts they have with each person served. A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client designed to engage the client. Contacts may 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 entry date is recorded on the same day.
  - **Engagements:** NBN shelters are to record engagements. An engagement date is the date when an interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment or beginning of a case plan. The date of engagement should be entered into HMIS at the point when the client has been engaged by the shelter worker. This date may be on or after the project entry date and must be prior to project exit. If the client exits without becoming engaged

the engagement date should be left blank. If the client was contacted on the date of engagement, a contact must also be entered for that date.

- **Performance Measures:** HUD plans to establish different performance measures for mass shelters (set up using the Night-by-Night Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization) and other shelters (set up using entry/exit model) in updated ESG-only CAPER screens, which have not yet been released. Shelters set up using the Entry/Exit model will be measured on an increase in income from entry to exit and placement into housing post shelter. Shelters set up using the Night-by-Night model will be measured based on contacts, the number of persons engaged, and those that move into more stable housing. HUD will provide additional guidance on future updates to the ESG-only CAPER template screens prior to the release date, which is still to be determined.
- **Day Shelters:** Data collection and performance measurement for Day Shelter and Entry/Exit Shelters are the same, so no other changes in setup or for data collection are required. Follow the visibility requirements for Entry/Exit Shelters in this document when setting up Day Shelters.
- **Annual Assessment:** Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in a project one year or more.

### Homelessness Prevention

- Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing must be set up as two separate projects in an HMIS. They must not be combined into one project.
- Recipients and sub recipients are not required to maintain financial assistance payment information within an HMIS. Recipients or subrecipients may elect to continue to maintain financial assistance as part of a case management record within the HMIS if the software allows for that type of data collection. However, HUD expects that recipients will use other recipient and subrecipient financial records rather than HMIS for financial reporting in the CAPER.
- Recipients or subrecipients must re-evaluate and to update information on Homelessness Prevention clients once every 3 months. Information required to be updated in the HMIS, if changes have occurred, include: 4.2 (Income and Sources); 4.3 (Non-Cash Benefits); and 4.4 (Health Insurance).
- In addition to the Universal Data Element – 3.12 (Destination) Homelessness Prevention projects must also collect 4.19 (Housing Assessment at Exit) information to more accurately reflect the housing situation of clients at exit.

### Rapid Re-housing

- Rapid Re-housing assistance usually begins prior to the client entering housing. Depending on the HMIS setup, data collection may occur in one of two ways:
  - Method 1: Identifying Residential Move-In Date
    1. The Project Entry Date is the date the person eligible for ESG Rapid Re-housing assistance is admitted to the project, even only in initial stage of engagement. Rapid Re-housing is the only residential program that allows the project entry date to be earlier than the client's move in date.
    2. At project entry, record the Universal Data Elements and any other information required at project entry.

3. Enter “no” in the Residential Move-In Date (4.17) field until the client is housed under the Rapid Re-housing project.
4. When the client moves into housing, update the Residential Move-In Date (4.17) field to “yes” and enter the date the client physically moved into the housing unit.

**Note:** In this method, the HMIS must be programmed to exclude from all point-in-time or residential services counts all persons with a “no” in Residential Move-In Date (4.17).

○ Method 2: Using a pre-entry project (using a project type of Service Only)

1. Enter all Universal Data Elements and any other information required at entry beginning with the first encounter when the client is entered into a pre-entry Rapid Re-housing project in HMIS.
2. When the client physically moves to housing, exit him/her from the pre-entry Rapid Re-housing project and enter him/her into the Rapid Re-housing residential project in HMIS.

**Note:** In this method, the HMIS must exclude all pre-entry project clients from all point-in-time or residential services counts. The Residential Move-In Date (4.17) is equal to the Project Entry Date (3.10) of the Rapid Re-housing residential project.

- Data collection must include an annual assessment for all persons in the project one year or more.