VA Programs
HMIS Manual

Veterans Affairs Programs

Health Care for Homeless Veterans
VA Funded Transitional Housing
Supportive Services for Veteran
Families

U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs

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Release & Update Information

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Introduction

The *VA Programs HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and VA program grantees. This manual provides information on HMIS program setup and data collection guidance specific to the VA Programs that use HMIS.

The guidance provided in this document aligns with requirements around using HMIS as stated by the VA and refers to the data elements required for VA grantees in an HMIS as established in the 2014 HMIS Data Standards. This document not intended to replace the HMIS Data Dictionary or the Data Manual, but to provide additional information about VA-specific HMIS requirements. This document only addresses the use of HMIS for VA programs and is not a replacement for any specific program guidance, requirements, regulations, notices, or training materials on VA Programs.

For additional assistance please refer to the following:

- Some information about VA homeless programs can be found on-line at the VA Homeless Programs page.

- To ask a question about any VA Programs HMIS requirement 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." HUD and VA program staff are working together to answer questions that come in on the AAQ related to the VA programs and HMIS.

- Information on HMIS is located in the HMIS Section on the HUD Exchange.

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., Grant and Per Diem Program funding for ABC Transitional Housing project).

1. Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all of the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive VA funding. The VA Medical Center (VAMC) serving your community should be aware of all funding awarded to your CoC. VA has also posted their [Directory of Veteran Service Organizations](#) online, which will assist with contact information.

2. Identify the VA Program Funding each Project

Identify the **program** for each VA-funded project serving veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and operating within the continuum. The VA funds projects under six relevant programs:

- The **Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR)** program is designed to assist homeless Veterans in returning to competitive employment. These transitional housing projects **do not participate in HMIS**, but their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Grant and Per Diem (GPD)** program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing (up to 24 months) and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability. These transitional housing projects have been directed by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Residential Services (HCHV/CERS)** program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness. These emergency shelter projects have been directed by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Community Contract Safe Haven (HCHV/SH)** program provides an early recovery model of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless individuals. These safe haven projects have been directed by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (VADOM)** provides active clinical rehabilitation and treatment activities

with shelter. Projects funded under this program **do not participate in HMIS**, but their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program provides case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, as well as time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. SSVF serves veteran families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness without SSVF assistance. These projects are required to **participate in HMIS**; two separate projects – one with a type of Homelessness Prevention and one with a type of Rapid Re-Housing must be set up in HMIS. Data for the RRH project must be included in the continuum's HIC.

Every project receiving funding through these programs must be included in a continuum's Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. In communities that use HMIS to generate the HIC, all projects funded under these programs must be entered into HMIS, regardless of HMIS participation. In communities that generate HIC data outside of HMIS, it will only be necessary to set up projects participating in HMIS.

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 setup of the following Project Descriptor Data Elements:

- **Organization Identifiers (2.1)** – The name of the agency/organization receiving VA funding 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.

- **Project Identifiers (2.2)** – The Project ID is generated by the HMIS software; the Project Name identifies the 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 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. In communities where HMIS is used to generate the HIC, VA project names must include the prefixes specified in HUD's Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and Point-in-Time (PIT) Data Collection Notice:

VA Program	HMIS Project Name Prefix
Compensated Work Therapy – Transitional Residence	CWT/TR
Grant and Per Diem	GPD

VA Program	HMIS Project Name Prefix
HCHV Contract Emergency Residential Services	HCHV/CERS[1]
HCHV Community Contract Safe Haven	HCHV/SH
Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans	VADOM
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	SSVF

- **Continuum of Care Code (2.3)** - Each CoC is associated with a geographic area and has a code assigned by HUD. VA-funded projects may be funded to operate in a single CoC or they may be funded to operate in a wider geographic area that covers multiple CoCs. Projects funded to operate in multiple CoCs should be associated with all of the CoC codes for which they will be entering client-level data into the HMIS. For example if a SSVF project is expected to provide financial assistance to everyone in the catchment area then all of the CoC codes which cover the area must be selected. However, if the SSVF project only provides services to people in City X, and City X has a single CoC code, then select the code that applies to City X's CoC only. If a project is funded to operate in multiple CoCs and is participating in the HMIS implementations of each separate CoC with a separate project created in each, only the CoC Code relevant to the HMIS implementation need be entered.

- **Project Type (2.4)** – *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. VA project types should be set up as follows:

VA Program	Project Type
CWT – Transitional Residence	Transitional Housing
Grant and Per Diem	Transitional Housing[2]
HCHV Contract Emergency Residential Services	Emergency Shelter
HCHV Community Contract Safe Haven	Safe Haven
Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans	Emergency Shelter
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	Homelessness Prevention Rapid Re-Housing *(two separate projects)[3]*

- **Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter Utilization (2.5)** – Among VA programs, this data element is only relevant for projects funded under the HCHV/CERS program; these projects should be set up using the Entry/Exit Date method.

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[1] This program was formerly two separate components: Community Contract Emergency Housing and Community Contract Residential Treatment Program. These have been combined into the HCHV CERS program.

[2] All beds funded by GPD must be associated in HMIS with a project with a Project Type of Transitional Housing. In some cases, GPD-funded beds may be physically located and managed jointly with emergency shelter beds, but they must be set up separately in HMIS. There are no exceptions.

[3] A third project with a project type of 'Other' may be used to track individuals with whom grantees are engaged in outreach; this is not required at this time.

- **Federal Partner Funding Sources (2.6)** – Projects funded in whole or in part by VA funds are to be identified based on the VA program. Select the appropriate VA program for each project:

  - **Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residence**

  - **VA: Grant and Per Diem Program**

  - **VA: Community Contract Emergency Housing**

  - **VA: Community Contract Safe Haven Program**

  - **VA: Domiciliary Care**

  - **VA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families**

  For VA projects the **Grant Identifier** field should include the VA grant number, along with the corresponding Grant Start Date and Grant End Date.

  With the exception of SSVF, projects that operate as a single entity but are funded under multiple VA programs or grants may be set up as a single project in HMIS, as long as the project type (as shown in 2.4 Project Type above) is the same and each of the funding sources is recorded in HMIS. For SSVF, multiple VA grant identifiers should only be associated with a single project when a grant is renewed. Organizations operating with more than one VA grant at the same time must have separate projects set up for each grant.

- **Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.7)** – This data element should be completed for VA-funded projects consistent with the policies of the HMIS implementation.

- **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. Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the HMIS Data Standards Manual.

Data Collection Requirements

All VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are required to collect and enter Universal data elements. SSVF projects are required to collect and enter additional Program-Specific data elements; detailed information about HMIS data collection for SSVF may be found in the SSVF HMIS Data Collection section of the VA Data Guide, available on VA's SSVF University website.

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

There are several special data collection issues that apply to VA funded projects of which both System Administrators and HMIS users should be aware.

Emergency Shelter

- None; collect and enter Universal data elements.

Transitional Housing

- None, collect and enter Universal data elements.

Safe Haven

- None; collect and enter Universal data elements.

Homelessness Prevention

- See the SSVF HMIS Data Collection section beginning on page 11 of the VA Data Guide, available on VA's SSVF University website.

Rapid Re-Housing

- See the SSVF HMIS Data Collection section beginning on page 11 of the VA Data Guide available on VA's SSVF University website.