OHIO BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE
Meeting Data Collection and Reporting Requirements
for Victim Services Agencies

Background and Introduction

Organization of the Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care
The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BOSCOC) is comprised of the 80 rural counties in Ohio and represents diverse populations, needs, and capabilities. The 80 counties within the Ohio BOSCOC are further organized into 18 Homeless Planning Regions that engage in collaborative planning around homeless programming. A map of the Ohio BOSCOC Homeless Planning Regions can be found at http://www.cohhio.org/programs/boscoc.

The Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Development and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) serve as the Collaborative Applicant and CoC Staff Lead for the Ohio BOSCOC. ODSA also serves as the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Lead Agency.

COHHIO provides staff support for all activities pertaining to the Ohio BOSCOC including facilitating CoC committee meetings, collecting and submitting Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count data to HUD, preparing the annual Ohio BOSCOC CoC application, and implementing all processes related to program performance management and improvement. Additionally, through a contract with ODSA, COHHIO administers the Ohio BOSCOC HMIS and provides technical assistance to providers on the Ohio BOSCOC HMIS, basic programmatic issues, and other housing and homelessness related issues as needed.

Purpose of this Document

This document is intended to provide Ohio BOSCOC victim services agencies funded through ODSA or HUD for homeless services provision with information about software solutions that can help them meet state and federal data collection and reporting requirements, as well as the Ohio BOSCOC performance monitoring requirements.

Federal and State Homeless Programs Data Collection and Reporting

HUD and ODSA require all homeless service providers to utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in their CoC to collect data on participants and report on homeless services provision. HUD requires communities and providers to use this data to report on project and system performance via Annual Performance Reports (APRs) and the annual Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count. The Ohio BOSCOC further uses HMIS data to monitor performance of homeless assistance projects on specific CoC measures, and to evaluate projects as part of renewal funding determinations.

The Violence Against Women (VAWA) and Family Violence Prevention (FVPA) Acts bar victim service providers serving people and families experiencing homelessness from sharing personally identifying information with the HMIS. Instead, victim service providers must enter their data into a comparable database. A comparable database allows the provider and the CoC to obtain the needed aggregate data while respecting the sensitive nature of client-level information. The comparable database must collect client-level data over time and generate unduplicated aggregate reports based on that data. The comparable database may not be a database that records only aggregate information. Additionally, comparable databases must comply with all HMIS data information, process, technical, and security standards as established in rule or notice by HUD.

Software Solution Recommendations for Victim Services Agencies

After much research and conversation with state and federal victim services networks and coalitions, the Ohio BOSCOC is not recommending that all Ohio BOSCOC state and federally funded victim services agencies serving persons experiencing homelessness use one specific product. There are a range of products on the market that vary in cost. Microsoft Excel is not a sufficient product because it does not

have the functionality to create the appropriate reports required from a comparable database. Two products currently on the market include Apricot by Community Techknowledge and WS by Osnium.

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