

# Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care

## Homeless Management Information System Participation Fee Policy

*Approved May 27, 2016*

### Introduction and Background

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A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used to record and store client - level information about the characteristics and needs of persons who use homeless housing and supportive services and for persons who receive assistance for persons at risk of homelessness. HMIS is also used to provide aggregate data about the extent and nature of homelessness over time; produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons; understand patterns of service use; and measure the effectiveness of homeless assistance projects and programs. All state and federally funded homeless assistance projects are required to participate in HMIS (victim service providers being the exception). The data produced is used for planning and education.

The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) uses ServicePoint as the application to administer the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. Individuals working at an Ohio BoSCoC homeless service provider organization may have access to ServicePoint to enter and maintain client data. Each person who has access to ServicePoint has a user license, username, and password associated with their account; these people are called end users. Furthermore, all HMIS end users must participate in New User Training, take and pass an HMIS security quiz, sign a user agreement, and abide by the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Policies and Procedures and Data Quality Standards.

### Purpose of This Document

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This document explains the fees and related processes associated with participating in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

### HMIS Participation Fee Policy

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#### Overview

By 2017, all HMIS participating providers will be charged participation fees. The policy outlined in this document reflects the transition from a system in which HUD participating providers pay nothing to participate in HMIS, to one in which all providers as well as the CoC shoulder the costs associated with maintaining a high quality and useful HMIS. This policy will reflect the HMIS participation fee structure and the billing/payment process that applies to all HMIS participating agencies.

Details about who must pay participation fees as well as what those fees cover and how fees will be billed/collected is outlined in the following sections.

#### Organizations Required to Pay HMIS Participation Fees

Effective January 1, 2017, all organizations participating in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will be required to pay HMIS participation fees. This includes both organizations with HMIS end users in-house, and those who work with partner agencies to ensure client-level data entry.

Organizations with a current HMIS participation contract with COHHIO, including Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), and Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, will be given pro-rated HMIS participation contracts lasting through the end of 2016. Then, beginning January 1, 2017, they will be charged for HMIS participation according to the fee structure and process outlined in this policy.

## HMIS Participation Fee Structure

Effective January 1, 2017, all HMIS participating organizations (as described above) will be required to pay for their HMIS participation on either a per license basis or according to a percentage of their overall federal and state grant amount. This fee includes license costs for ServicePoint and the Advanced Reporting Tool (ART), administration of licenses and participation agreements, training and technical assistance, building and running of reports and data quality monitoring, and ensuring overall quality and compliance of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS implementation.

### Payment Options

#### 1. Per License

Agencies choosing to pay for participation by license are charged annually for each HMIS license they request. Pricing is based on the number of licenses an agency purchases.

Agencies that have no end users associated with their agency – typically because data entry is handled by a partner agency – will be charged the Basic Rate. This helps ensure that all organizations benefiting from HMIS are contributing to its support and operation. See detailed fee structure below.

### Per License Pricing Structure

Fee Rate	Cost
Basic Rate* – 0 to 2 licenses	\$600 for up to two licenses
RATE A – Up to 4 additional licenses	\$475 per additional license, up to 4
RATE B – 5 to 10 additional licenses	\$400 per additional license, up to 10
RATE C – more than 10 additional licenses	\$375 per additional license, more than 10

\*All HMIS participating organizations will be charged the Basic Rate of \$600 at minimum, which allows for up to 2 HMIS license. Organizations requesting more than 2 HMIS licenses, will be charged the Basic Rate PLUS either Rate A, B or C, depending on how many additional license they need.

Example 1: Hope House needs 10 HMIS licenses total. Under the new fee structure, they will be charged \$600 for the first two licenses, and they will be charged \$400 for each of the additional 8 licenses (Rate B). This brings their total annual cost for HMIS participation to \$3800 for a total of 10 HMIS licenses.

Example 2: Ohio CAA needs 4 HMIS licenses total. Under this fee structure, they will be charged \$600 for the first two licenses, and they will be charged \$475 for each of the additional 2 licenses (Rate A). This brings their total annual cost for HMIS participation to \$1550.

Example 3: Ohio PHA is the grantee for a Permanent Supportive Housing project, but their service provider partner agency manages all the HMIS data entry for PSH clients. In this case, Ohio PHA will be charged \$600 annually (Basic Rate) since they have no HMIS licenses for staff at their organization. The service provider partner agency will pay for HMIS participation on a per license basis (or as a proportion of their total federal and state grants).

## 2. By percentage of grant award

Agencies choosing to pay for participation based on a percentage of their total annual federal and state homeless assistance grant award pay 1% of their overall grant award for unlimited participation in HMIS for that grant period. The grant amounts considered in calculating costs include CoC, Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP), Supportive Housing Program (SHP), HOPWA, SSVF, PATH and RHY grants. There is a \$600 minimum charge for any agency selecting this payment option.

### **HMIS Participation Fee Due Dates**

Ohio BoSCoC HMIS participating organizations must submit a Fee Structure Election Form to COHHIO by August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Agencies beginning HMIS participation after that date submit their Fee Structure Election Form before being added to HMIS.

Ohio BoSCoC HMIS participating organizations must submit payment for all desired HMIS licenses by March 1, 2017. Participating agencies are billed annually. If an agency wishes to switch fee structures, they must notify COHHIO in writing at least 30 days before the conclusion of the billing cycle (December 1<sup>st</sup>). Agencies may not switch fee structures mid-billing cycle. Payment should be submitted to:

COHHIO  
Attn: HMIS Billing  
175 S. Third St., Ste 580  
Columbus, OH 43215

Organizations failing to submit payment by the payment due date will have all current HMIS licenses deactivated until payment is received.

### **Fee Determination**

While every effort was made to determine a sufficient but fair fee for HMIS participation, it is understood that the fee structure may need to be adjusted in future years because of annual increases in operating costs, including software and staffing. All fee changes are subject to approval by the CoC Board, and fees will never increase more than 15% in a single year. Notifications of fee changes will be submitted to all participating agencies by June 30th of the year preceding the change.

### **Numbers of Licenses Allowed**

Ohio BoSCoC organizations will be permitted to request (and pay for) as many licenses as they desire, so long as they continue to abide by all security, privacy, and data quality policies and standards. Agencies paying per license may purchase additional licenses at any point in the billing cycle for full cost. Agencies paying by grant percentage should notify COHHIO in writing if they want to add a license.

### **Transferring HMIS User Licenses**

An Ohio BoSCoC organization can request to have an existing license transferred from one user to another at any time. The executive director or supervisor of the project must submit a written request to the COHHIO HMIS team. The request must provide the names of the current and prospective end users and the date the transfer should be made effective. If one of the users is a new hire that person must attend new user training before the transfer is completed. REMEMBER, usernames and passwords cannot be shared under any circumstances. If the license is transferred to another end user that person will receive their own unique username and password.

### **Cancelling HMIS User Licenses**

If an Ohio BoSCoC organization wishes to cancel a user license, the agency's executive director or supervisor must contact the COHHIO HMIS team directly to make the request. For agencies paying per license, if a license is canceled before the tenth month of the calendar year (October), the fee will be prorated and a partial refund provided, if appropriate. License cancellation requests made October 1<sup>st</sup> or later will not receive a refund of any kind. For agencies paying by grant percentage, proration and partial refund is available at the same schedule only if the agency will no longer be participating in HMIS.

## **Deactivating HMIS User Licenses**

COHHIO may deactivate an Ohio BoSCoC organization's user licenses if payment for those licenses is not received within 30 days of the payment due date (August 1st of the current calendar year). The licenses may be reactivated once full payment has been received. Neither refunds nor partial refunds will be given to any agency when a user license is deactivated or terminated due to a violation of HMIS policies and procedures or failure to make payment.