



Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Policies and Procedures Manual

Overview

The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (Ohio BoSCoC) for its Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Implementation develops these policy standards and subsequent procedures of data usage for all Balance of State HMIS (BoSHMIS) users and user agencies. This purpose of this manual is to guide and clarify federal regulations related to HMIS for BoSCoC agencies in their daily operations. It in no way, should serve as a substitute for any federal regulations outlined and updated by HUD in its Data and Technical Standards. All BoSCoC agencies are responsible for maintaining their own compliance with federal regulations as well as any outside applicable regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards.

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I. Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio

Policy: The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) is responsible for system administration and project management of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: COHHIO will act as the lead agency for the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. COHHIO will help agencies to gain access to the database system, as well as provide training and technical assistance to the HMIS participants.

B. Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee

Policy: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will consist of staff members from the HMIS and CoC departments at COHHIO. The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will work with the Advisory Committee (see F below) in setting and adhering to HMIS Policy.

Procedure: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will meet on a routine basis to plan for trainings and HMIS implementation, discuss issues from end-users or covered homeless organizations (CHO) and trouble shoot problems with the database system.

Policy: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee is responsible for relevant and timely communication with each CHO regarding the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: Communications from the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will be directed towards the Agency Administrator (see E below). The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will be available for communication via email, phone, and mail. The ServicePoint “System News” feature will also be used to distribute HMIS information. Members of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will review all documents including emails, web postings and manuals.

C. Covered Homeless Organization (CHO)

Definition: Any organization (including all its affiliates) that records or uses or processes PII from clients experiencing homelessness or those at risk of experiencing homelessness for an HMIS (Section 4.1.1, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Policy: Any agency participating in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will abide by all policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

Procedure: Any agency, organization or group who has signed an HMIS Agency Agreement with COHHIO will be given access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS database through trained HMIS End Users (see E. HMIS End Users below).

Policy: CHOs are responsible for communicating needs and questions regarding the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS directly to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee.

Procedure: Users at CHOs will communicate needs, issues and questions to the COHHIO HMIS Department. If the CHO is unable to resolve the issue, he/she will contact the COHHIO CoC Department.

D. HMIS End Users

Policy: Any individual who uses ServicePoint must have a signed HMIS End User Agreement on file with COHHIO and abide by all policies and procedures in this Manual. The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will grant the following permissions to HMIS End Users according to the below hierarchy:

NOTE: These user permission levels are specific to ServicePoint and do not necessarily relate to agency positions.

1. System Administrator
2. Agency Administrator
3. Case Manager
4. Read Only

Procedure:

At each new user training, CHOs are responsible for identifying the employee's role in regard to permissions within the HMIS system.

The System Administrator access level is limited to COHHIO staff only.

An Agency Administrator is responsible for ensuring quality, timely data entry; staying knowledgeable about HUD and ODSA regulations as they change; being a point of contact to System Administrator; notifying a System Administrator of any changes in user access to HMIS, provider address, contact information, or bed count data, if applicable; plus all the responsibilities listed for Case Manager.

A Case Manager is responsible for adhering to policies and procedures in data collection and privacy and security practices, ensuring quality, timely data entry, and correcting errors as they become known. Note: if an Agency Administrator is not assigned the Case Manager will assume the responsibilities of the Agency Administrator until one is assigned.

Directors or managers who do not wish to become an HMIS End User but who are ultimately responsible for their agency's HMIS data may attend HMIS trainings as desired and receive aggregate reporting from users they oversee. It is recommended that directors who wish to run reports out of HMIS either become a licensed user (likely an "Agency Administrator") or attend an ART training and then train staff to forward reports as necessary so that another license is not necessary. Any director or manager who will see any client-level data MUST get an HMIS license and a login.

Individuals from non-HMIS participating agencies, such as those funded by the VA, may request read only access to HMIS for the purposes of service coordination only. Read only licensees are subject to the same training and compliance requirements as all other HMIS End Users. Read only licenses can be assigned at the Case Manager or Agency Administrator level. All requests to access the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS are subject to approval by the Core Team.

E. HMIS Advisory Committee

Policy: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will have an HMIS Advisory Committee to provide community feedback on HMIS implementation related activities and issues.

Procedure: Members of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will invite users to join this committee on an as needed basis. The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will convene meetings of this group as necessary.

II. Privacy Standards

A. Personally Identifying Information (PII)

Definition: Any information maintained by or for a member of the Ohio BoSCoC or other Covered Homeless Organization about a living homeless client or homeless individual which:

- Identifies, either directly or indirectly, a specific individual;
- Can be manipulated by a reasonably foreseeable method to identify a specific individual; or
- Can be linked with other available information to identify a specific individual (Section 4.1.1, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Policy: A CHO will enter into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS a required set of data variables for each client, including all universal and program specific data elements, which are specified in the HUD HMIS Data and Technical Standards (see Appendix A for list of Data Elements).

Procedure: All HMIS End Users will be trained in appropriate and accurate procedures for entering PII into HMIS. This training is provided by the HMIS Department.

B. HMIS Uses and Disclosures

Policy: A CHO may use or disclose PII from an HMIS under the following circumstances:

- To provide or coordinate services to an individual;
- For functions related to payment or reimbursement for services;
- To carry out administrative functions, including but not limited to legal, audit, personnel, oversight and management functions; or
- For creating de-identified PII (Section 4.1.3, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: All CHOs must comply with or consult COHHIO before providing any information outside of the above stated standards. Disclosure questions should be addressed and documented with COHHIO.

C. Applying the Standard

Policy: All standards described in this manual pertain to any homeless assistance organization that records, uses or processes personally identifying information (PII) for the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS and/or identify as a CHO. One exception exists to this policy: any CHO covered under HIPAA is not required to comply with the standards in this manual if the CHO determines that a substantial portion of its PII about homeless clients or homeless individuals is protected health information as defined in the HIPAA rules (Section 4.1.2, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: A CHO must comply with HIPAA rules instead of HMIS policies if it determines that a substantial portion of its PII about homeless clients or homeless individuals is protected health information as defined in the HIPAA rules. Exempting HIPAA covered entities from the HMIS privacy and security rules avoids all possible conflicts between the two sets of rules.

D. Other Allowable Uses and Disclosures

Policy: Provided below are additional uses and disclosures of information allowable by HUD standards. It should be noted that these additional uses and disclosures are permissive and not mandatory (except for first party access to information and any required disclosures for oversight of

compliance with HMIS privacy and security standards). However, nothing in this standard modifies an obligation under applicable law to use or disclose personal information (Section 4.1.3, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: A CHO must comply with below standards for additional disclosure to applicable entities. All other disclosures must first be approved by ODSA.

1. Legal

Policy: A CHO may use or disclose PII when required by law to the extent that the disclosure complies with and remains within the boundaries of said law, in response to a lawful court order, court-ordered warrant, subpoena or summons issued by a judicial officer, or a grand jury subpoena.

Procedure: A CHO must take immediate actions to notify COHHIO about all legal disclosures. If uncertainty exists about the CHO's authority to disclose, or the action is not specified in this document, the CHO must contact the CoC Director at COHHIO before approving any disclosure.

2. Health and Safety

Policy: A CHO may, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, use or disclose PII if:

- The CHO, in good faith, believes the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual or the public; and
- The use or disclosure is made to a person reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.

Procedure: A CHO must take immediate actions to notify COHHIO about all legal disclosures. If uncertainty exists about the CHO's authority to disclose, or the action is not specified in this document, the CHO must contact COHHIO before approving any disclosure.

3. Law Enforcement

Policy: A CHO may, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, disclose PII to a law enforcement official under any of the following circumstances:

- In response to a request for the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person and the PII disclosed consists only of name, address, date of birth, place of birth, Social Security Number, and distinguishing physical characteristics.
- If the official is an authorized federal official seeking PII for the provision of protective services to the President or other authorized persons OR for the conduct of investigations authorized by 18 U.S.C. 871 and 879 (threats against the President and others).

Procedure: A CHO must take immediate actions to notify COHHIO about all legal disclosures. If uncertainty exists about the CHO's authority to disclose, or the action is not specified in this document, the CHO must contact COHHIO before approving any disclosure.

III. Privacy Requirements

Policy: All CHOs must comply with the baseline privacy requirements described here with respect to: data collection limitations; data quality; purpose and use limitations; openness; access and correction; and accountability. A CHO may adopt additional substantive and procedural privacy protections that exceed the baseline requirements for each of these areas in its privacy notice. A CHO may maintain a common data storage medium with another organization (including but not limited to another CHO) that includes the sharing of PII. When PII is shared between organizations, responsibilities for privacy and security may reasonably be allocated between the organizations (Section 4.2, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: All CHO policies regarding privacy requirements must at a minimum include the criteria following in this document. Additional requirements may be added at the discretion of each CHO.

A. Limits on Data Collection

Policy: A CHO may collect PII only when appropriate to the purposes for which the information is obtained or when required by law. A CHO must collect PII by lawful and fair means and, where appropriate, with the knowledge or consent of the individual (Section 4.2.1, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: A CHO must post a sign at each intake desk (or comparable location) that explains generally the reasons for collecting any and all information. Data allowable includes all HUD mandated data as well as any other data deemed necessary and approved by the CHO which complies with federal regulations and the policies and procedures of this document.

Additional Privacy Protections

1. Client Confidentiality

Policy: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS System Administrator and CHOs will ensure the confidentiality of all client data. No identifiable client data will be entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS without client consent, and no identifiable client data will be shared outside of the limits of that consent.

Procedure: Access to client data will be tightly controlled using security technology and restrictive access policies. Only individuals authorized to view or edit individual client data will have access to that data.

2. Informed Consent

Policy: CHOs will collect and retain signed client consent forms before any client PII will be entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. CHO staff will thoroughly explain the client consent to each client.

Procedure: Client consent forms must be completed with each individual or household accessing services before any information is entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. Consent forms should be stored in a secure place.

Policy: CHOs will collect and document verbal consent before any client PII is entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS when clients call a Coordinated Entry Access Point with a housing crisis.

Procedure: Verbal consent to data collection and sharing must be documented by the person receiving the call from the client in housing crisis. If a client presents to an agency for Diversion or Referral, written consent should be sought and obtained before any additional data is collected and entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. Both documentation of verbal consent and subsequent signed consent forms should be stored in a secure place.

3. Additional User Privacy Measures

Policy: A CHO may, in its privacy notice, commit itself to additional privacy protections consistent with HMIS requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Restricting collection of personal data, other than required HMIS data elements;
- Collecting PII only with the express knowledge or consent of the individual (unless required by law); and
- Obtaining oral or written consent from the individual for the collection of personal information from the individual or from a third party (Section 4.2.1, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: All additional privacy measures must comply with federal regulations and the policies and procedures of this document.

Policy: Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will be responsible for maintaining updated and accessible privacy notices and other procedures.

Procedure: All user policies must be available to staff members and clients. Changes to privacy notices should be given in advance to all clients and employees using a designated procedure developed by the CHO.

B. Required Data Collection

Policy: CHOs will collect all required sets of data variables for each client as determined by HUD HMIS Data and Technical Standards (see Appendix A for Required Data Elements).

Procedure: Appendix A will contain a listing of data elements to be collected for each client contact in accordance with federal regulations. These data elements may change as HUD HMIS Data and Technical Standards are revised and updated. For consistency in data collection and more accurate reporting, all participating programs may be held to the most stringent or numerous program-specific data collection requirements. The decision to add a data element to an assessment will be made by the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee with input from the HMIS Advisory Committee.

C. Appropriate Data Collection

Policy: PII collected by a CHO must be relevant to the purpose for which it is to be used. To the extent necessary for those purposes, PII should be accurate, complete and timely. Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will only collect client data relevant to the delivery of services to people experiencing a housing crisis in Ohio Balance of State or surrounding Continuums (Section 4.2.2, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will refer to policies outlined in the Data Quality Standards for timelines, accuracy and completeness. Users will ask the COHHIO System HMIS Department for any necessary clarification of appropriate data collection.

D. Privacy Notice - Identifying Purpose and Use Limitation

Policy: A CHO must specify in its privacy notice the purposes for which it collects PII and must describe all uses and disclosures. A CHO may use or disclose PII only if the use or disclosure is allowed by this standard and is described in its privacy notice (Section 4.2.3, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: A CHO may infer its ability to consented use and disclosure of any item specified in the notice. Except for first party access to information and any required disclosures for oversight of compliance with HMIS privacy and security standards, all uses and disclosures are permissive and not mandatory. Uses and disclosures not specified in the privacy notice can be made only with the consent of the individual or when required by law. A CHO must take immediate actions to notify COHHIO about all legal disclosures.

1. Additional Uses

Policy: A CHO may, in its privacy notice, commit itself to additional privacy protections consistent with HMIS requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Seeking either oral or written consent for some or all processing when individual consent for a use, disclosure or other form of processing is appropriate;
- Agreeing to additional restrictions on use or disclosure of an individual's PII at the request of the individual if the request is reasonable. The CHO is bound by the agreement, except if inconsistent with legal requirements;
- Limiting uses and disclosures to those specified in its privacy notice and to other uses and disclosures that are necessary for those specified;
- Committing that PII may not be disclosed directly or indirectly to any government agency (including a contractor or grantee of an agency) for inclusion in any national homeless database that contains personal protected information unless required by statute;
- Committing to maintain an audit trail containing the date, purpose and recipient of some or all disclosures of PII;
- Committing to make audit trails of disclosures available to the homeless individual; and
- Limiting disclosures of PII to the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of the disclosure (Section 4.2.3, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: Additional privacy protections beyond the baseline requirements are permissible, as exemplified in this policy. Protections should, however, be documented in the privacy notice at all times and approved by COHHIO if potentially beyond reasonable scope of authority.

E. Anonymous Clients

Rationale: Anonymous clients in HMIS negatively affect data quality for the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and other HUD reports. HUD does allow for anonymous clients, but they also count that data as missing, and HUD funding is increasingly being tied to data quality. There is certainly a need to accommodate clients who need services, but who do not feel comfortable sharing their personally identifying information in HMIS. Having a clear understanding of the Ohio BoSCoC Privacy Policies is a necessity when explaining to clients what purpose their data fills and how it is protected. Based on previous years' data, the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS providers have an average of less than 1% of clients not fleeing domestic violence being entered as anonymous.

Policy: The CHO's current year (October to September) percentage of anonymous clients not currently fleeing domestic violence shall not exceed 1% of its total clients served during the same period.

Procedure: Refer to the Data Quality Standards for information on how to find the percentage of anonymous clients not currently fleeing domestic violence for a given CHO.

F. Ethical Data

Policy: Data contained in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will only be used to support the delivery of homeless and housing services in Ohio Balance of State and surrounding continuums. Each HMIS End User will affirm the principles of ethical data use and client confidentiality contained in this document.

Procedure: All HMIS End Users will sign an HMIS End User Agreement before being given access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. Any individual or CHO misusing, or attempting to misuse HMIS data will be denied access to the database, and his/her/its relationship with the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will be terminated.

G. Termination

Policy: All HMIS End Users and CHOs are subject to the privacy and confidentiality terms outlined in this document as well as the federal regulations in the HUD Data and Technical Standards. At any point if a breach of rules and/or policies occurs the user may be penalized by loss of access and/or membership in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: The CHO or HMIS End User shall inform the System Administrator in a timely manner of any breach to the privacy and security policies outlined in this document or the HUD Data and Technical Standards. The System Administrator will investigate the issue and determine a proper course of action for correction. If a permanent resolution is unforeseen or the System Administrator deems it necessary, a CHO and/or user termination may occur:

- The Partner Agency will be notified in writing of the intention to terminate their participation in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.
- The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS System Administrator will revoke access of the HMIS End User or CHO staff to Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.
- The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. System Administrator will keep all termination records on file.

1. Voluntary Termination

Policy: Should the CHO or HMIS End User decide not to comply with the rules and policies of this document and regulations in the HUD Data and Technical Standards for any reason, they may voluntarily terminate their user agreement with the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: The CHO must use the following measures to terminate participation in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS:

- The CHO or HMIS End User shall inform the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS System Administrator in writing of their intention to terminate their agreement to participate in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.
- The System Administrator will inform partners and any other relevant parties of the change.
- The System Administrator will revoke access of the CHO and/or HMIS End User in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.
- The System Administrator will keep all termination records on file.

H. Openness and Disclosures

Policy: A CHO must publish a privacy notice describing its policies and practices for the processing of PII and must provide a copy of its privacy notice to any individual upon request. If a CHO maintains a public web page, the CHO must post the current version of its privacy notice on the web page. A CHO must state in its privacy notice that the policy may be amended at any time and that amendments may affect information obtained by the CHO before the date of the change. (Section 4.2.4, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: All amendments to the privacy notice must be consistent with the requirements of these privacy standards. A CHO must maintain permanent documentation of all privacy notice amendments. Copies of the current privacy notice must be available to all clients, including a sign stating the availability of its privacy notice to any individual who requests a copy. In addition, CHOs who receive federal financial assistance shall provide required information in languages other than English that are common in the community, if speaker of these languages are found in significant numbers and come into frequent contact with the program. *CHOs are also reminded that they are obligated to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities throughout the data collection process.

*Note: This obligation does not apply to CHOs who do not receive federal financial assistance and who are also exempt from the requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act because they qualify as “religious entities” under that Act.

Policy: A CHO may, in its privacy notice, commit itself to additional privacy protections consistent with HMIS requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Giving a copy of its privacy notice to each client on or about the time of first data collection.
- Adopting a policy for changing its privacy notice that includes advance notice of the change, consideration of public comments, and prospective application of changes (Section 4.2.4, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: All additional privacy protections must remain consistent with current HUD requirements and be present on the privacy notice.

I. Access and Correction

Policy: A CHO must consider any request by an individual for correction of inaccurate or incomplete PII pertaining to the individual. A CHO is not required to remove any information but may, in the alternative, mark information as inaccurate or incomplete and may supplement it with additional information. A CHO can reject repeated or harassing requests for access or correction (Section 4.2.5, *2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards*).

Procedure: In its privacy notice, a CHO may reserve the ability to rely on the following reasons for denying an individual inspection or copying of the individual’s PII:

- Information compiled in reasonable anticipation of litigation or comparable proceedings;
- Information about another individual (other than a health care or homeless provider);
- Information obtained under a promise of confidentiality (other than a promise from a health care or homeless provider) if disclosure would reveal the source of the information; or
- Information, the disclosure of which would be reasonably likely to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

A CHO must document requests for changes to an individual’s PII.

A CHO that denies an individual's request for access or correction must explain the reason for the denial to the individual and must include documentation of the request and the reason for the denial.

Below are the different parties' access levels to data and sharing capabilities. Any additional questions or concerns should be discussed with the System Administrator.

1. Covered Homeless Organization

Policy: CHOs will have access to retrieve any individual and aggregate data entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. When generating reports, users will be able to generate data from any records.

Procedure: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS is a system with shared visibility between HUD, SSVF, and PATH providers. All client acknowledgement of data collection and consent to share data forms used by CHOs must indicate that the data entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS is viewable by all users of the system.

2. System Administrator

Policy: The System Administrator will have access to retrieve all data in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. The System Administrator will not access individual client data for purposes other than maintenance and checking for data integrity. Any client-level data submitted to the Ohio Human Services Data Warehouse or to other parties for data analysis will be de-identified and encrypted. All other HMIS submitted to funders or published will be aggregated.

Procedure: System Administrators will only publish or submit to funders aggregate data from the HMIS. If client-level data is submitted to a third party for research purposes, it will be de-identified and encrypted.

3. Client

Policy: Any client will have access on demand to view, or keep a printed copy of, their own records contained in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. All requests for client information will follow agency policy guidelines for release of information. The client will also have access to a logged audit trail of changes to those records. No client shall have access to another client's records in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. PII of minors is not entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS without the consent of a parent. In cases where a parent provides consent to share the PII of a minor, but the minor disagrees with that consent, the wishes of the minor to keep their data private will be honored. Upon turning 18, an individual served by a CHO as a minor may choose to begin sharing previously unshared data or to relinquish consent to further sharing of data collected on them in the past. Should the parent of an individual who was served by a CHO as a minor request a copy of that data, COHHIO will obtain consent from the individual before releasing any historical data to their parent.

Procedure: A client will provide a signed written request to a case manager to see the client's own record. The case manager, or any available staff person within Ohio BoSCoC HMIS access, will verify the client's identity and print all requested information. The case manager can also request a logged audit trail of the client's record from the Agency Administrator. The

Agency Administrator will contact the System Administrator who will print this audit trail and with agency approval forward to the Agency Administrator for distribution to the client.

4. Public

Policy: COHHIO staff will address all requests for data from entities other than CHOs or clients. No individual client data will be provided to any group or individual that is neither the CHO, which entered the data, nor the client without proper authorization or consent.

Procedure: All requests for data from anyone other than a CHO or client will be directed to COHHIO staff. As part of the System Administrator's regular employment functions, periodic public reports about homelessness and housing issues in the Ohio BoSCoC will be issued. No PII data will be released in any of these reports.

5. Inter-Agency Data Sharing

Policy: All client data entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS except Case Notes and locked records are viewable by all users.

Procedure: All client acknowledgements of data collection and consent to share data forms used by CHOs must indicate that the data entered into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS is viewable by all users of the system.

6. Access to Core Database

Policy: No one will have direct access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS database unless explicitly given permission by COHHIO.

Procedure: In contract with COHHIO, Mediware will monitor access of the database server and employ security methods to prevent unauthorized database access.

7. On-Site Review

Policy: The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee may perform annual on-site reviews at each CHO of data processes related to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: This review may be done as part of the renewal of the HMIS Agency Agreement or End User Agreements.

J. Accountability

Policy: A CHO must adhere to confidentiality, privacy and security standards. A CHO must establish a procedure for accepting and considering questions or complaints about its privacy and security policies and practices.

Procedure: Each CHO must develop and maintain a written copy of procedures for accepting and considering questions or complaints. This must be accessible to all staff members and updated as needed to comply with all HUD regulations. A CHO must require each member of its staff (including employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and associates) to sign (annually or otherwise) a

confidentiality agreement that acknowledges receipt of a copy of the privacy notice and that pledges to comply with the privacy notice (Section 4.2.6, 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards).

1. Additional Protections

Policy: A CHO may, in its privacy notice, commit itself to additional privacy protections consistent with HMIS requirements. Additional corrections include but are not limited to:

- Establishing a method, such as an internal audit, for regularly reviewing compliance with its privacy policy;
- Establishing an internal or external appeal process for hearing an appeal of a privacy complaint or an appeal of a denial of access or correction rights; and/or
- Designating a chief privacy officer to supervise implementation of the CHO's privacy standards.

Procedure: Any additional privacy protections should comply with all federal HUD HMIS Data and Technical Standards and policies in this document. Additional protections must be written out in each CHO's policies and procedures documents.

K. Client Grievance

Policy: Clients will contact the CHO with which they have a grievance for resolution of HMIS problems. CHOs will report all HMIS-related client grievances to the COHHIO HMIS staff.

Procedure: Clients will bring HMIS complaints directly to the CHO with which they have a grievance. CHOs will provide a copy of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual upon request, and respond to client issues. CHOs will send written notice to the COHHIO HMIS staff of any HMIS-related client grievance. The COHHIO HMIS staff will record all grievances and will report these complaints to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee.

Policy: If the client is not satisfied with the results of the grievance with the CHO, the client may contact the COHHIO HMIS staff for further assistance.

Procedure: Clients bringing HMIS complaints to the COHHIO HMIS Staff will provided a copy of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual upon request. COHHIO HMIS staff will send written notice to the Core Team of any HMIS-related client grievance. The COHHIO HMIS staff will record all grievances and will report these complaints to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee.

L. User Grievance

Policy: Users will contact COHHIO with any grievance regarding HMIS. COHHIO will report all HMIS-related user grievances to ODSA.

Procedure: Users will bring HMIS complaints directly to COHHIO. COHHIO will provide a copy of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual upon request, and respond to any user issues.

Policy: If the user is not satisfied with the results of the grievance with the HMIS Lead, the user may contact the Ohio BoSCoC for further assistance.

Procedure: Users bringing HMIS complaints to COHHIO will be provided with a copy of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual upon request. COHHIO will record all grievances and will make a final recommendation about how to respond to the grievance.

IV. Security Standards

A. System Security

Policy: A CHO must apply system security provisions to all the systems where personally identifying information is stored, including, but not limited to, a CHO's networks, desktops, laptops, mainframes and servers (Section 4.3.1, 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards).

Procedure: Each CHO must apply and maintain security provisions in the form of virus protection, firewalls, and other provisions listed below in this section to ensure the confidentiality of its clients.

1. Additional Security Protections

Policy: A CHO may commit itself to additional security protections consistent with HMIS requirements by applying system security provisions to all electronic and hard copy information that is not collected specifically for the HMIS. A CHO may also seek an outside organization to perform an internal security audit and certify system security (Section 4.3.1, 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards).

Procedure: Additional security protections may be utilized as each CHO believes necessary, but must be compliant with HMIS requirements.

2. Hardware/Software Requirements

Policy: CHOs will provide their own computer and method of connecting to the Internet, and thus the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: It is the responsibility of the CHO to provide a computer and connection to the Internet. If desired by the CHO, the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS System Administrator will provide advice as to the type of computer and connection.

3. Data Access Location

Policy: Users will ensure the confidentiality of client data, following all security policies in this document and adhering to the standards of ethical data use, regardless of the location of the connecting computer. All users are prohibited from accessing the HMIS database from any location other than the designated and approved work site.

Procedure: All Policies and Procedures and security standards will be enforced regardless of the location of the connecting computer. All HMIS related data entry will be processed at a designated and approved work site. A System Administrator will provide any additional clarification.

4. User Access

Policy: Only authorized users will have access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS via a user name and password. Users will keep their access information confidential.

Procedure:

System Administrators will provide user names and initial passwords to each user upon completion of training and signing of user agreements and receipt of this Security and Privacy Policies and Procedures document. Written information specifically pertaining to user access (e.g., username and password) may not be stored or displayed in any publicly accessible location. User names will be unique for each user and will not be exchanged with other users. The sharing of username and passwords will be considered a breach of policy resulting in access being revoked. Passwords will be reset every 45 days. Agencies will notify a System Administrator immediately of employee reassignment to non-HMIS job responsibilities or termination so the login can be inactivated. Users not accessing Ohio BoSCoC HMIS within three months may have their login inactivated.

5. Virus Protection

Policy: A CHO must protect systems that access HMIS from viruses by using commercially available virus protection software. It may also commit itself to additional security measures beyond this standard if in line with HMIS regulations.

Procedure: A CHO must regularly update virus definitions from the virus software vendor. Virus protection must include automated scanning of files as they are accessed by users on the system where the HMIS application is accessed.

6. Firewalls

Policy: A CHO must protect systems the access HMIS from malicious intrusion behind a secure firewall. It may also commit itself to additional security measures beyond this standard if in line with HMIS regulations.

Procedure: Each CHO must maintain its own up to date firewall, however, each individual workstation does not need its own firewall, as long as there is a firewall between that workstation and any systems, including the Internet and other computer networks, located outside of the organization.

7. User Licenses

Policy: User licenses are controlled by COHHIO regardless of program access.

Procedure: Licenses are assigned once training is completed successfully.

8. HMIS End User Agreements

Policy: Each End User will sign an HMIS End User Agreement before being granted access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. End User agreements must be updated annually in order to retain access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS. This process will coincide with annual privacy training for each user.

Procedure: Each year, a System Administrator will instruct users on the process for completing the annual privacy training and obtaining and submitting an updated HMIS End User Agreement to COHHIO. These instructions will be sent to HMIS End Users via the Balance of State HMIS listserv.

The annual privacy training will be followed by a quiz that tests users on their understanding of Balance of State HMIS privacy and security issues. All users will be required to pass the quiz in order to receive the End User Agreement. Upon receipt of the agreement by COHHIO, the user account will be updated to reflect that all requirements have been met.

End Users who fail to send the updated agreement by the date specified in the instructions will lose access to HMIS until their agreement is received.

9. HMIS Agency and Agency Administrator Agreements

Policy: Each agency participating in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will sign an HMIS Agency Agreement and Agency Administrator Agreement before any data may be entered for its clients. This agreement will be updated annually.

Procedure: Each year, a System Administrator will instruct agencies on the process for completing and submitting an updated HMIS Agency Agreement and Agency Administrator Agreement to COHHIO. These instructions will be sent to HMIS End Users via the Balance of State HMIS listserv. They will also be sent to Ohio BoSCoC contacts via the Ohio BoSCoC listserv.

Upon receipt of the agreements by COHHIO, the agency records will be updated to reflect that all requirements have been met.

Any agency that fails to send the updated Agency agreements by the date specified in the instructions will lose access to HMIS at the user level until the agreement is received.

10. Training

Policy: All users must be trained by COHHIO and sign an End User Agreement prior to receiving a login to the HMIS. Also all users must complete an Annual Privacy Training and renew any agreements in order to maintain access to the HMIS.

Procedure: CHO Agency Administrators or Executive Directors can sign up new or current users for HMIS training by emailing hmis@cohhio.org. COHHIO HMIS staff will provide training to all new users. Agency Administrators will be given additional training relevant to their position. The System Administrator will provide periodic training updates for all users. The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee will be responsible for ensuring that users are instructed in both policies and security.

Procedure: All users are required to complete an annual security and privacy training. Failure to complete this training may result in revocation of access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

11. Data Retrieval

Policy: Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will maintain the security of any client PII data extracted from the database and stored locally, including all data used in custom reporting. Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will not electronically transmit any PII client data across a public network.

Procedure: PII data extracted from the database and stored locally will be stored in a secure location and will not be transmitted outside of the private local area network. Security questions will be addressed to a System Administrator.

B. Hard Copy Security

Policy: A CHO must secure any paper or other hard copy containing PII that is either generated by or for HMIS, including, but not limited to reports, data entry forms and signed consent forms. CHO may commit itself to additional security protections consistent with HMIS requirements by applying hard copy security provisions to paper and hard copy information that is not collected specifically for the HMIS (Section 4.3.2, 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards).

Procedure: A CHO must supervise at all times any paper or other hard copy generated by or for HMIS that contains PII when the hard copy is in a public area. When CHO staff is not present, the information must be secured in areas that are not publicly accessible. Written information specifically pertaining to user access (e.g., username and password) must not be stored or displayed in any publicly accessible location.

C. Physical Access

Policy: A CHO must staff computers stationed in public areas that are used to collect and store HMIS data at all times. When workstations are not in use and staff is not present, steps should be taken to ensure that the computers and data are secure and not usable by unauthorized individuals. A CHO may commit itself to additional security protections consistent with HMIS requirements.

Procedure: A CHO must take steps to secure each computer by automatically turning on a password protected screen saver when the workstation is temporarily not in use. If staff from a CHO will be gone for an extended period of time, staff should log off the data entry system.

1. CHO Technical Support Requirements

Policy: CHOs will provide their own technical support for all hardware and software used to connect to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Procedure: CHOs will provide technical support for the hardware, software and Internet connections necessary to connect to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS according to their own organizational needs.

V. Data Quality

A. Data Entry

Policy: Ohio BoSCoC HMIS End Users will be responsible for the accuracy of their data entry.

Procedure: The CHO must maintain standards for periodically checking data for completeness, accuracy and timeliness. The Ohio BoSCoC HMIS maintains Data Quality Standards to help all CHOs manage the monitoring of their data quality. The HMIS Data Analyst runs data quality and desk time reports monthly. The HMIS team contacts the End Users for the projects with the highest percentage of errors. If the End Users do not respond, COHHIO staff will reach out to the HMIS Administrator and/or Executive Director of the agency. If an agency does not adequately respond to the request for improvement, the issue will be raised with the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Management Committee at the next monthly meeting and an action plan determined. If the agency still does not adequately respond to the request for improvement, the CoC Director may contact the appropriate funding agency regarding the issue and continued access to the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS may be jeopardized.

B. Data Quality Plan

Policy: The Data Quality Standards, designed by COHHIO in collaboration with the Ohio BoSCoC, is the official document pertaining to all data quality measures including but not limited to accuracy, completeness and timeliness. This should be referenced for all data quality standards. Any questions about materials in this document or items that are unclear should be addressed with COHHIO.

Procedure: The Data Quality Standards should be referenced and followed for all data quality procedures. Each CHO must retain copies of this document and have available for all relevant staff members. If questions are left unaddressed, they should be brought to the attention of COHHIO in a timely manner.

C. New Provider Data

Policy: All new programs, projects or providers are to be entered into HMIS by a System Administrator.

Procedure: New programs, projects or providers are to send requested additions to the Ohio BoSCoC at ohioboscoc@cohhio.org using the Housing Inventory Count Verification Report available in HMIS. Once approved, COHHIO HMIS staff will enter the appropriate data into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

Policy: All provider data including but not limited to name, project type, bed counts, address, and contact information in HMIS must be kept up to date.

Procedure: Any requests to change a provider's data are to be sent to the Ohio BoSCoC at ohioboscoc@cohhio.org. Once approved, COHHIO HMIS staff will enter the appropriate data into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

VI. HMIS Participation Fees

A. HMIS Fees

Policy: Effective January 1, 2017, all CHOs participating in the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS will be required to pay HMIS participation fees. Refer to the current Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Participation Fee Policy, available at <http://hmis.cohhio.org/index.php?pg=kb.page&id=103>, for details.

Procedure: CHO's will pay for their HMIS participation as outlined in the participation fee policy referenced above.

Appendix A: Data Elements

Universal

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Date of Birth
4. Race
5. Ethnicity
6. Gender
7. Veteran Status
8. Disabling Condition
9. Living Situation
10. Project Start Date
11. Project Exit Date
12. Destination
13. Relationship to Head of Household
14. Client Location
15. Housing Move-In Date

Program-Specific Data Elements

1. Income and Sources
2. Non-Cash Benefits
3. Health Insurance
4. Physical Disability
5. Developmental Disability
6. Chronic Health Condition
7. HIV/AIDS
8. Mental Health Problem
9. Substance Abuse
10. Domestic Violence
11. Contact
12. Date of Engagement
13. Veterans Information
14. Services Provided
15. Financial Assistance Provided
16. Referrals Provided
17. Housing Assessment Disposition
18. PATH Status
19. Connection with SOAR
20. RHY-BCP Status
21. Sexual Orientation
22. Last Grade Completed
23. School Status
24. General Health Status
25. Employment Status
26. Pregnancy Status
27. Formerly a Ward of Child Welfare / Foster Care Agency
28. Formerly a Ward of Juvenile Justice System
29. Family Critical Issues

30. Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Sex Trafficking
31. Labor Exploitation/Trafficking
32. Aftercare Plans
33. Project Completion Status
34. Counseling
35. Safe and Appropriate Exit
36. Dental Health Status
37. Mental Health Status
38. Medical Assistance
39. T-Cell (CD4) and Viral Load
40. Percent of AMI (SSVF Eligibility)
41. Percent of county median income
42. Last Permanent Address
43. SSVF HP Targeting Criteria
44. VAMC Station Number
45. SSVF HP Targeting Criteria
46. County in which client is being served
47. County of Residence Prior
48. Referral Source