

Pima County Homeless Management Information System

Protocol for the Governance of the Homeless Management Information System in Pima County, Arizona

I. Purpose

Pursuant to the requirements established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), this Protocol sets forth the intended governance structure for the operation of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Pima County, Arizona. This Protocol defines the intended roles of the various entities that provide services to homeless people in Pima County. In order to ensure an effective, efficient, and secure system, this Protocol includes: general parameters for the system, confidentiality and security practices, network operations, and HMIS user training availability.

II. Glossary

Agency

Administrator: An HMIS user who is designated by a participating agency as the primary contact for all communication regarding Pima County HMIS at that agency and to fulfill the responsibilities of that designation.

AHAR: Annual Homeless Assessment Report, an official report to the U.S. Congress

APR: Annual Performance Report, a report required by HUD

Client: An individual who is receiving homeless or homelessness prevention services from an HMIS participating agency about whom service data is tracked in HMIS.

CoC: The Continuum of Care

CSET: Pima County Community Services, Employment and Training Department

Continuum of Care: A geographically based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the Continuum of Care program, as directed by the HUD Continuum of Care Program Regulations (24 CFR Part 578.) In Pima County, the Continuum of Care is the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness.

Data

Subcommittee: The purpose of the Data Subcommittee is to develop HMIS policies and procedures and to coordinate and analyze data for the monitoring of the continuum performance.

Grantee: Pima County through CSET

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System; electronic database utilized by member agencies to track the provision of services to and needs of homeless people within the geographic boundaries of Pima County.

HMIS Committee: The HMIS Committee provides guidance to TPCH, including planning, software selection, implementation and administration of the database according to HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards. Active participation on this Committee is mandatory for all organizations that have licensed users of HMIS.

HMIS Lead

Agency: Pima County, HUD HMIS Grantee responsible for coordination of the HMIS.

HMIS Users: Members of participating agencies authorized to access and enter data into HMIS

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

NOFA: Notice of Funding Availability issued by HUD for CoC funds

Participating

Agencies: Community and faith-based organizations, government entities, businesses and individuals that participate in the CoC and provide services to homeless persons.

TPCH: Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness, a coalition of community and faith-based organizations, government entities, businesses and individuals committed to the mission of reducing homelessness and to addressing the challenges associated with homelessness in Pima County. TPCH is the Continuum of Care in Pima County and is the lead decision-making group for homeless services funded by the HUD Continuum of Care Program, which includes HMIS, and represents the geographic area of Pima County.

Vendor: Bowman Systems, L.L.C., contractor providing ServicePoint, the HMIS software, a contractor to Pima County

III. Background

The Pima County HMIS meets the HUD requirements to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. This system utilizes a software application called ServicePoint, which is operated by the vendor. Pima County CSET provides technical assistance and support. The CoC brings together homeless assistance providers within the community to create a more coordinated and effective housing and service delivery system.

In order to meet the federal requirements for HUD CoC funding, the CoC utilizes HMIS to collect client information, to prepare the APR, and to report aggregate community-wide data as required.

Non HUD funded homeless service providers are encouraged to participate in HMIS to provide a comprehensive source of available services and identify gaps in services within Pima County.

All HMIS participating agencies are required to be members of the CoC and attend the monthly HMIS committee meetings. All HMIS participating agencies are required to complete an Agency Agreement and accept the conditions, requirements, and regulations of HMIS participation. Each agency is encouraged to identify a high-level user who can accept the responsibility of an Agency Administrator and complete the required training.

IV. General Parameters and Goals for HMIS Implementation and Use

- A. HMIS Lead Agency and the CoC shall work cooperatively to:
1. Develop HMIS policies, procedures, and support to meet HUD requirements and to maximize the utility of HMIS.
 2. Prioritize use of HMIS funding to meet HUD requirements. Uses will include, but are not limited to: determination of license distribution, user access levels, training, reporting, technical support, and addition of software modules components.
 3. Develop and submit the CoC application.
 4. Develop strategies to secure local match funds.
 5. Regularly review HMIS data and reports required by HUD.
 6. Encourage participating agency compliance with all Federal and State laws and regulations relating to the operation of HMIS.
 7. Encourage HMIS user compliance with HUD HMIS Data Standards relating to the collection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of client data.

8. Encourage the use of HMIS data to inform policy decisions and to establish CoC performance measures.
9. Adhere to the HMIS grant parameters.
10. Select an HMIS software system and technical support provider.

B. HMIS Lead Agency will:

1. Designate liaison(s) to coordinate HMIS efforts with HUD and the CoC.
2. Attend and, when appropriate, provide input at TPCH HMIS Committee meetings.
3. Provide the CoC with reports regarding HMIS utilization.
4. Pursuant to County procurement policies and procedures, procure and administer the vendor and consultant contracts related to the HMIS grant and abide by the terms and conditions of such contracts.
5. Remain in good standing with HUD as an HMIS Grantee.
6. Submit reports required of the HMIS Grantee to HUD in a timely manner.
7. Prepare of the AHAR and provide AHAR to the CoC.
8. Provide HMIS data to the CoC.
9. Upon request and approval of the CoC, provide HMIS data to local, state or Federal entities.
10. Be the sole contractor for HMIS software and services with Vendor.

C. The CoC will:

1. Ensure that:
 - a. The CoC approves and submits the HMIS and CoC application.
 - b. Participating agencies implement HUD HMIS standards.
2. Monitor HMIS and review successes and failures to validate system effectiveness.
3. Elect a CoC member representative to chair the HMIS Committee and serve as liaison for coordinating HMIS efforts with the HMIS Lead Agency, HMIS Committee and participating agencies.

4. Educate and instruct participating agencies through the HMIS Committee:
 - a. To collect accurate data from consenting clients as mandated by HUD.
 - b. Not to transmit information in violation of any Federal or State laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, copyright law, protected trade secrets, obscenity, or threats.
 - c. Not to release HMIS data to any person, agency, or organization other than the CoC, other participating agencies, HUD, and the HMIS Lead Agency, unless specific consent is received from the client and approved by the CoC.
 - d. That HMIS Lead Agency is the sole contractor for HMIS software and services with Vendor and that participating agencies and HMIS users cannot instruct Vendor to act outside the scope of their contracts with Pima County.
5. Develop HMIS policies and procedures in conjunction with the HMIS Lead Agency, as required by HUD.

V. Network Operations

A. Pima County/HMIS Lead Agency

1. With regard to the HMIS Vendor, Pima County as HMIS Lead Agency:
 - a. Retains all authority for the administration of vendor and consultant contracts.
 - b. Will be the sole liaison with the Vendor for any contract performance issues.
 - c. Will monitor performance of Vendor to ensure that necessary technical support and the appropriate training to HMIS users is provided.
 - d. Will ensure that Vendor is required to provide an Information Services Help Desk for HMIS-related questions from participating agencies.
2. Will monitor software and license use. Pima County or the Vendor, in consultation with Pima County, may restrict participating agency access to HMIS for inappropriate use or terminate a participating agency's licenses to maintain the integrity of the HMIS.

3. Will provide HMIS implementation, operations and expansion services, as required by HUD.
4. Will provide trained and qualified personnel to assist all users with the following services and support:
 - a. Training
 - b. Reporting
 - c. Meetings/Facilitation
 - d. Security
 - e. Project Management
 - f. Technical Assistance & Support
 - g. Data Quality Monitoring
 - h. System Administration
 - i. Data Analysis Support
 - j. HMIS Regulatory Compliance
 - k. Support for all HUD programs including, but not limited to: CoC Programs, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).

B. Participating Agency

Each participating agency will be required to:

1. Complete an HMIS Participating Agency Agreement.
2. Identify an Agency Administrator, if appropriate, and submit an Agency Administrator Agreement.
3. **Warrant that all individuals entering or accessing HMIS data have completed HMIS training, signed User Agreement and are approved by both the participating agency and the HMIS Lead Agency prior to being allowed to use HMIS.**
4. Ensures that no user shares his or her login and password under any circumstance.
5. Establish and enforce agency-level HMIS policies and procedures.
6. Maintain an electronic data security program, Internet connectivity, and computer equipment to meet data standards and regulations.
7. Take all necessary precautions to prevent any destructive or malicious program from being introduced to the System, including virus protection software.

8. In the event that a virus, worm or other malicious code is introduced to HMIS through the agency's computer network, notify Pima County immediately and employ all appropriate resources to efficiently disinfect the systems as quickly as possible.
9. Immediately notify Pima County either prior to, or immediately upon, user change.
10. Monitor use of HMIS and insure HMIS users comply with license requirements.
11. Recognize that the HMIS Lead Agency is the sole contractor for HMIS software and services with Vendor and that participating agencies and HMIS users cannot instruct Vendor to act outside the scope of their contracts with Pima County.
12. Execute and comply with the terms of:
 - a. HMIS Participating Agency Agreement; and
 - b. The HMIS Data Sharing Agreement.

VI. Security

A. Pima County:

1. Will assign HMIS user licenses and login IDs.
2. May deny HMIS access to any HMIS user.
3. Will maintain copies of all HMIS Agreements.
4. Monitor license usage including inactivating, deleting, or terminating users as required.
5. Reset passwords.
6. Create and manage "Enter Data As" (EDA) and reporting groups set up.
7. Assign ART licenses as required.
8. Set up and maintain visibility settings for data sharing/data security for all assessments and data types as directed.
9. Maintain security setup as required by HUD technical standards.

B. TPCH:

1. Will identify each participating agency authorized to use HMIS.
2. Through the HMIS Committee, will monitor each participating agency to insure that:
 - a. HMIS users are properly trained in HMIS use and security.
 - b. Participating agencies agree to keep login IDs and passwords confidential and assure that HMIS users do not share with anyone.
 - c. Internal security protocols are established and followed to prevent unauthorized utilization, access or transmission of HMIS data.
 - d. That HMIS equipment, data, and software is secured and access is limited only to users who have completed training and have a specific job-related need.
3. Will develop a process for dealing with the violations of any of the HMIS information security protocols.
4. Will immediately notify Pima County of any deletion of an authorized participating agency to insure timely deactivation of the HMIS user IDs and passwords.

VII. Amendments

Amendments, including additions, deletions, or modifications to this Protocol may be proposed in writing by either TPCH or Pima County. Proposals will be presented to the CoC for consideration. If approved by the CoC, TPCH and Pima County will amend the Protocol. Amendments will be effective only when in writing and executed by the Parties.


VIII. Attachment

The following documents are important to the functioning of HMIS and are, therefore attached:

- A. Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness – Operating Policies (most recently amended version)
- B. HMIS Participating Agency Agreement
- C. Pima County HMIS Agency Administrator Agreement
- D. HMIS User Agreement
- E. HMIS Data Sharing Agreement

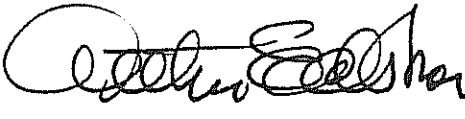
IX. Agreement

This Protocol, signed by Pima County, as the HMIS Lead Agency, and TPCH defines the governance roles in relation to HMIS. Both Parties acknowledge that this Protocol shall serve as the written agreement between the Continuum of Care and the HMIS Lead Agency required by HUD.

 1/16/14

TPCH Chair Date
Tucson Pima Collaboration to End
Homelessness
David Roun

Print TPCH Chair Name

 1-16-14

Art Eckstrom Date
Director
Pima County Community Services,
Employment and Training Department
2797 E. Ajo Way, 3rd Floor
Tucson, Arizona 85713