

Pima County

**Homeless Management Information System
(HMIS)**

Privacy Plan

Approved August 26, 2014

COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information will be collected for HMIS only when it is needed to provide services, when it is needed for another specific purpose of the agency where a client is receiving services, or when it is required by law. Personal information may be collected for these purposes:

- To provide or coordinate services for clients
- To find programs that may provide additional client assistance
- To comply with government and grant reporting obligations
- To assess the state of homelessness in the community, and to assess the condition and availability of affordable housing to better target services and resources

Personal information is collected with the knowledge and consent of clients through the signing of the HMIS Client Consent to Release Information form. It is assumed that clients consent to the collection their personal information as described in this notice when they seek assistance from an agency using HMIS and provide the agency with their personal information. An implied consent is acceptable in certain situations, such as during Point-in-Time Street Count interviews.

If an agency reasonably believes that a client is a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence, or if a client reports that he/she is a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence, special precautions should be taken to protect the client and their personal information.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the agencies that fund programs require the use of HMIS when assisting people in need. Clients must give consent before their personal information is used or disclosed for any purpose. Each agency should provide their clients a list of HMIS Participating Agencies.

All agencies in the Pima County HMIS share the following information: name, date of birth and last four digits of the social security number. This sharing avoids the duplication of client records.

Personal information may be used or disclosed for the following purposes:

1. To provide or coordinate services to individuals and families. Agencies that may share client records with other organizations have a data sharing agreement, separate privacy policies and that may allow different uses and disclosures of the information. Clients may ask these agencies for the specific uses of their information. Some agencies work together (collaborate) on programs and share more detailed information. All agencies participating in HMIS must keep client information confidential and only use it for program purposes.
2. To carry out administrative functions such as required reports, legal audits, personnel, oversight, and management functions.
3. When required by law. Personal information will be released to the extent that use or disclosure complies with the requirements of the law.
4. To avert a serious threat to health or safety if:
 - a. 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
 - b. the use or disclosure is made to a person reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.
5. To comply with government reporting obligations for homeless management information systems and for oversight of compliance with homeless management information system requirements.

Clients may withdraw permission to share their personal information in HMIS at any time. This request must be made in writing to the agency providing assistance. The agency where the client receives services will offer to explain any information that a client may not understand.

If the information listed in HMIS is believed to be inaccurate or incomplete, a client may submit a verbal or written request to have his/her information corrected. Inaccurate or incomplete data may be deleted, or marked as inaccurate or incomplete and supplemented with additional information.

LIMITS ON COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Only personal information relevant for the purpose(s) for which it will be used will be collected. Personal information must be accurate and complete.

Client files become a permanent record in HMIS. Personal information may be retained for a longer period if required by statute, regulation, contract or another obligation.

LIMITS ON PARTICIPATING AGENCY USE OF HMIS CLIENT INFORMATION

The Pima County HMIS allows the sharing of some personal information and is an open data system. This system allows Participating Agencies to share client information in order to coordinate services for clients. However, Participating Agencies may not limit client service or refuse to provide service in a way that discriminates against clients based on information the Partner Agency obtained from HMIS.

COMPLAINTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Questions or complaints about the privacy policies and practices may be submitted to the agency where the client receives services. If no resolution can be found, the complaint will be forwarded to the agency's executive director.

Complaints specific to HMIS operation should be submitted to hmishelp@pima.gov. If no resolution can be found, the complaint will be forwarded to Pima County HMIS System Administrator, Pima County CSET Department.

All other complaints will follow the agency's grievance procedure as outlined in the agency's handbook.

All HMIS users (including employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and associates) are required to comply with this privacy notice. Users must receive and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this privacy notice.

Public Privacy Notice (Posted Sign)

**Pima County Homeless Management Information System
PRIVACY NOTICE**

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND
DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THAT INFORMATION.
PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY**

Effective Date: _____

Our Duty to Safeguard your Personal Information:

_____ (Agency Name) collects information about which clients utilize services that we provide. We will ask for your permission to enter the information we collect about you and your family (as applicable) into a program called the HMIS. Although the HMIS helps us keep track of your information, individually identifiable information about you is considered Personal Information. We are required to protect the privacy of your identifying information and to give you notice about how, when and why we may use or disclose the information.

We are also required to follow the privacy practices described in this Notice, although _____ (Agency Name) may have additional privacy practices. You may request a copy of this notice at any time.

How We May Use and Disclose Your Information:

We use and disclose aggregate information for a variety of reports. We have a limited right to include some of your information for reports on homelessness and services needed by those who are homeless. Personal identifying information may not be used without your specific consent. We will not turn your information over to a national database. We must have your consent to use or disclose your information unless the law permits or requires us to make the use or disclosure without your permission. Please review the client consent form for further details.

Your Rights Regarding Your Information:

- You have the right to receive services even if you choose NOT to participate in the Pima County HMIS. However, clients may be refused program entry for not meeting other agency eligibility criteria.
- You have the right to ask for information about who has seen your information.
- You have the right to view your information and change it, if it is not correct.

Pima County
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
Mandatory Collection Notice

We collect personal information directly from you for reasons that are discussed in our privacy statement. We may be required to collect some personal information as mandated by law or as requested from organizations that fund this program. Other personal information we collect is necessary to operate programs, improve services, and better understand the needs of homelessness. We collect appropriate information only. A Privacy Notice is available upon request.

HMIS Client Consent To Release Information
Homeless Management Information System in Pima County

_____ (AGENCY) participates in the Homeless Management Information System (“HMIS”). HMIS is a secure computer database kept for the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (“TPCH”), a group of agencies which work together to provide services for the homeless. Any information entered into HMIS is protected by passwords and encryption technology. Steps are taken to safeguard the information that is entered into HMIS, but no system is foolproof.

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the agencies that fund our programs require us to use HMIS when assisting people in need. We also have to prepare reports from HMIS. The reports do not require the release of your personal identifying information.

Some agencies work together (collaborate) on programs and share more detailed information about their clients through HMIS. Collaborating agencies may share your information to better provide you with services. Any agency that views your information on HMIS must keep it confidential and use it only for program purposes.

Three things from HMIS are shared among all agencies that provide services to the homeless in Pima County. These are: your name; birthday; and the last four digits of your social security number. This sharing avoids the creation of more than one record about you in HMIS. Our Notice of Privacy Practices describes the ways in which your personal information could be used and disclosed by this agency.

By signing this form, you agree to let this agency enter your personal information into HMIS. YOUR NAME, BIRTHDAY AND LAST FOUR DIGITS OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER WILL BE SHARED WITH ALL OF THE AGENCIES ON THE ATTACHED LIST. If this agency has an agreement to collaborate with another agency to share additional information about you, this agency will, at your request, provide specific information about this collaboration.

I understand that:

- I am not required to sign this Consent to Release Information. My treatment, payments or eligibility for benefits will not be affected if I do not sign. If I do not sign my information will not be entered into HMIS.
- I understand that if this agency has a collaborative data sharing agreement it may share data entered into HMIS.
- This consent will not expire. I have the right to withdraw this permission to share my information at any time. I must give this agency written notice that I no longer want my information shared.
- This agency, TPCH, and the HMIS project cannot control, and are not responsible for, how another agency uses or discloses my information.

[] I would like a copy of this signed consent form.

[] I would like a copy of this agency’s Notice of Privacy Practices.

Client Signature

Date

Printed Client Name

Agency Staff Signature

Date

Printed Agency Staff Name

HMIS Participating Agencies:
(as of June 1, 2014)

American Red Cross
Arizona Housing and Prevention
Arizona Youth Partnership
Bowman Systems
Catholic Community Services
Chicanos por la Causa
City of Tucson
CODAC Behavioral Health Services
Pasadera Behavioral Health Network (Compass Healthcare/SAMHC)
Compass Affordable Housing
Cope Community Services
Community Partnership of Southern Arizona
Esperanza en Escalante
Exodus Community Services
Gospel Rescue Mission
La Frontera
La Paloma
Old Pueblo Community Services
Open Inn, Inc.
Our Family Services
Pima County
Primavera Foundation
Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation
The Salvation Army of Tucson
TMM Family Services
Tucson Preparatory School
Youth On Their Own