



Kansas Statewide
Homeless Coalition

2020

Governance Charter for
Kansas Balance of State Continuum of Care
Homeless Management Information System



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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Governance Charter is to confirm agreements between the Kansas Balance of State Continuum of Care (COC), Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition (KSHC) and Kansas Housing Resource Corporation (KHRC). As such, the Governance Charter set forth the general understandings and specific responsibilities of each party relating to key aspects of the governance and operation of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This Governance Charter is effective upon execution of the HMIS Lead Agency agreement signed by KSHC and KHRC.

Background

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a collaborative project of the Continuum of Care (CoC), Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition (KSHC) as the CoC Lead Agency, Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) as the HMIS Lead Agency and participating Partnering Agencies. HMIS is a data collection application designed to capture information about the numbers, characteristics and needs of homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness over time. Use of HMIS is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other federal partners for all communities and agencies receiving HUD Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grant, SAMSHA Path and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs for agencies receiving SSVF funds.

The Continuum of Care system includes homelessness prevention assistance, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent affordable and permanent supportive housing, supportive services, specialized program and outreach for designated homeless subpopulations, and integration with mainstream programs. HMIS enables homeless service providers to collect uniform client information over time. HMIS is essential to efforts to streamline client services and inform public policy decisions aimed at addressing and ending homelessness at local, state, and federal levels. Through HMIS, homeless people benefit from improved coordination in and between agencies, informed advocacy efforts, and policies that result in targeted services. Analysis of information gathered through HMIS is critical to the preparation of a periodic accounting of homelessness in Kansas, which may include measuring the extent and nature of homelessness, the utilization of services and homeless programs over time, and the effectiveness of homeless programs. Such an unduplicated accounting of homelessness is necessary to service and systems planning, effective resource allocation, and advocacy. The parties to this Governance Charter share a common interest in collaborating to end homelessness and successfully implementing and operating the HMIS.

General Understandings

Continuum of Care Governance

The Kansas Balance of State Continuum of Care (KS BoS CoC) is responsible for the governance of the HMIS. The CoC is the lead-planning group for efforts to end homelessness and for implementing and operating homeless service delivery systems in the 101 counties that make up the CoC. As such and under HUD policy 24 CFR part 580, the CoC is responsible for HMIS oversight and implementation, including planning, software selection, HMIS lead agency designation and setting up and managing the HMIS in compliance with HUD and other federal partners as per the 2020 HMIS Standards located at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/>. The

COC's oversight and governance responsibilities are carried out by the HMIS committees (described below) which reviews and approves all HMIS policies and procedures.

HMIS Lead Agency Designation

The COC designates the HMIS Lead Agency to manage HMIS operations on its behalf, and to provide HMIS administrative functions at the direction of the COC through the COC Board and the HMIS committees. The HMIS Lead Agency is designated by the COC during the annual COC NOFA through the process of reviewing and approval of the Letter of intent, NOFA application process and rank and review process. As per 24 CFR 580.9 the duties of the HMIS Lead are:

- Developing written policies and procedures for all Covered Homeless Organizations (CHO's),
- Executing and HMIS participation agreement with each CHO,
- Serving as the applicant to HUD for any HMIS grants that will cover the Continuum of Care geographic area,
- Monitoring compliance by all CHO's of the Continuum of Care

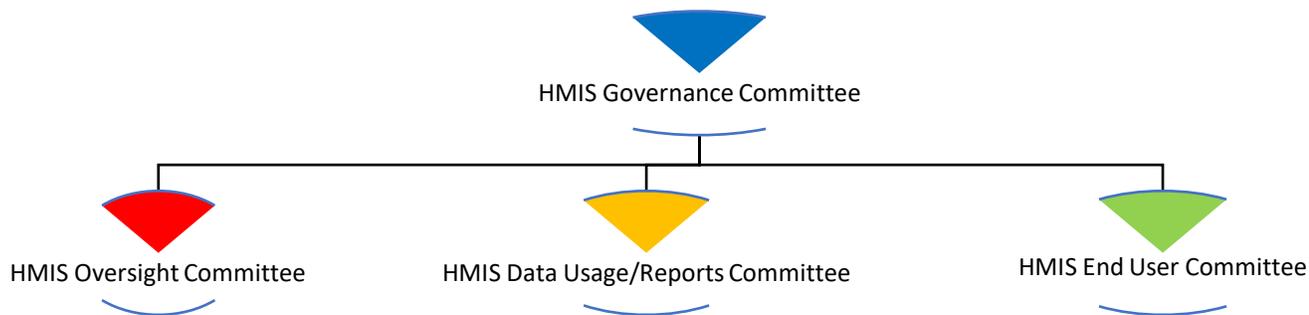
Homeless Management Information System Committees

The COC members and the HMIS Partnering Agencies actively participate with the HMIS Lead Agency through the HMIS Committees in the management and implementation of the HMIS. The HMIS Committees are responsible for establishing policies, procedures, and protocols for functions essential to the viability and success of the HMIS, including, but not limited to, data privacy, data quality, analysis, reporting and data sharing protocols. All COC HMIS participating agencies will be represented on the HMIS committees to ensure shared responsibilities and accountability.

A. HMIS Committee Responsibilities

- a. Meetings - Committee meeting will be held at least quarterly. Important HMIS policy items that emerge in between meetings will be handled by the appropriate committee via email, conference call or an online meeting.
- b. Attendance – Committee members are required to attend all meetings. A majority of the Committee is one half plus one of the members present at the meeting when the vote is taking place. If a committee member cannot attend the meeting, they will give advance notice and send an appropriate stand in.
- c. Accessibility – Committee members will be publicly identified and available for contact by the HMIS users and agencies throughout the state.
- d. Policies and Procedures – Approval of policy, procedures and HMIS protocols will be attempted through consensus and conversation but will ultimately be decided by the simple majority of the appropriate committee. All committee ratified policies, procedures and protocols are effective upon the date of the committees vote but will be subject to review for compliance by the COC/KSHC Board.
- e. Committee Membership – Committee memberships are volunteer positions and any COC member, CoC Board Director or Participating Agency staff are welcome to participate on the HMIS committees.

B. HMIS Committees Structure, Composition and Committee Specific Responsibilities



- a. HMIS Committees Governance Structure - The Governance structure has a bidirectional communication flow between all committees at all times.
- b. Funding - Funding for the software and operations of the HMIS shall be provided by the COC through a HUD Continuum of Care program HMIS grant and other funding from the COC and Participating Partnering Agencies. Partnering Agencies will be required to pay user fees for the HMIS software and reporting licenses assigned to their agency/users. In the event there is a shortfall of funding for the software or operation of the HMIS it is the responsibility of Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition at the direction of the HMIS Governance Committee to explore options to increase revenue.
- c. Software and Hosting - The COC has selected a single software product to serve as the sole HMIS software application. In this current implementation the COC has selected Bitfocus Clarity Humans Solutions. All Partner/ Agencies agree to use the product as configured for the COC.
- d. Compliance with Homeless Management Information System Standards - The HMIS is operated in compliance with the HMIS Data and Technical Standards and any other applicable laws. The parties anticipate that HUD will release revised HMIS Standards periodically. The parties agree to make change to the Governance Charter, Policies, Procedures, Protocols and other HMIS operational documents to comply with the revised standards with the HUD specified timeframe.
- e. Operational Policies and Agreements - The HMIS operates within the framework of agreements, policies, procedures, and protocols that been developed and approved over time by the HMIS Lead Agency and HMIS Governance Committee and reviewed for compliance by the COC/KSHC Board. These agreements, policies, procedures, and protocols include but are not limited to the HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual, Privacy Policies and Consumer Notice, Partner Agency Agreements and Agency/End User Agreements. All operational agreements, policies, procedures, and protocols are reviewed annually by the HMIS Governance Committee and the COC/KSHC Board to comply with HMIS Standards or otherwise improve the HMIS implementation.
- f. Data Ownership - The data entered into the HMIS is owned by the Partnering Agencies responsible for entering the client level information. The COC/KSHC Board, HMIS Lead Agency, KSHC Staff and all Partner Agencies are jointly responsible for ensuring that the HMIS data processing capabilities, including the collection, maintenance, use, disclosure, transmission and destruction of data comply with the HMIS Privacy, Security and Confidentiality Policies and Procedures. The Partner Agencies have the final authority to

approve or disapprove the use of the client level data that is contained in the HMIS. Use of aggregate level data decisions will reside with the HMIS Lead Agency, HMIS Committees and KSHC Staff.

HMIS Governance Committee (Meets at least quarterly or as needed)

- A. Composition – The HMIS Governance committee shall consist of:
- Oversight Committee Chairperson or Committee Designee
 - Data Usage/Reports Committee Chairperson or Committee Designee
 - End User Committee Chairperson or Committee Designee
 - HMIS Lead Agency Representative(s) - KHRC Staff
 - COC Lead Agency Representative(s) – KSHC Staff
 - COC Elected Committee Chair
 - i. HMIS Governance Committee Chair will be elected by the COC on a regularly scheduled monthly call at the first meeting of the calendar year in January during the HMIS update portion of the agenda. Elections will be conducted by a simple vote unless it is necessary to utilize the chat feature of the virtual meeting platform for clarification of the vote. The nominee with the largest total of votes will be considered the HMIS Governance Chairperson for that calendar year.
 - ii. Nominations for the position will occur during the last regularly scheduled monthly call at the end of the year in December during the HMIS update portion of the agenda. Nominations must be presented, seconded and the nominee must accept the nomination for the nomination to stand. Nominations will be placed on the agenda for HMIS update for the following meeting.
- B. Responsibilities – The HMIS Governance Committee shall be the overall governing body for the HMIS implementation including but not limited to agency/end user access, user access levels, policies, procedures, protocols, security, data quality, data sharing and training.
- C. Any concerns/issues presented to the HMIS governing committee by any subcommittee or the COC will be investigated regarding any violations or impacts regarding the HMIS policies, procedures and protocols or HUD and other federal partners' HMIS Standards.
- D. In the event that the concerns/issues presented require modification/amendment of the implementation/policies, procedures or protocols this committee is tasked with the responsibility to enact necessary changes. Any user(s)/agency found to be in violation of COC policies, procedures or protocols or HUD and other federal partners standards will be given thirty (30) days to rectify the situation. In the event that this situation is not rectified with the thirty (30) day parameter the committee may choose, at its sole discretion, to limit/cease the user(s)/agencies access to part or the whole of the HMIS implementation.

HMIS Oversight Committee (Meets at least quarterly or as needed)

- A. Composition – The membership shall consist of
- ESG Programs Director or Designee (Kansas Housing Resource Corporation Staff)
 - COC Programs Director or Designee (Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition Staff)
 - PATH Programs Director or Designee (KDADS Staff)
 - SSVF Programs Director or Designee (One from each grantee)
 - Coordinated Entry Program Manager or Designee

- B. Responsibilities – The HMIS Oversight Committee shall be responsible for the oversight of agencies/users program specific requirements of the HMIS and the initial point of contact for HMIS policies, procedures and protocols issues/concerns.
- Oversight Committee will have access to any and all reports submitted to the Data Usage and Reporting Committee including any issues/concerns raised by the Data Usage and Reporting Committee and the Users Committee
 - Oversight Committee shall be the initial point of contact for any findings through the HMIS process to agencies. Agencies will have 30 days to fix the presented issues without any further action necessary. Agencies unable to fix issue will be sent to the HMIS Governance Committee for official review
 - Oversight Committee shall regularly review compliance for all agencies utilizing the HMIS for compliance to policies, procedures, protocols and standards, notify agencies of any issues and followup on any issues presented to the agencies.

HMIS Data Usage & Reports

- A. Composition – Committee members will be appointed by the program directors of the Oversight Committee. COC, ESG, PATH and SSVF will have two (2) appointed positions on the committee. The committee must maintain the minimum of eight (8) members.
- B. Responsibilities – This committee will perform routine data quality checks on reports submitted by the agencies on a monthly basis. The committee will review the reports and note any discrepancies within the data. Any discrepancies within the data will be reported to both the agency and the oversight committee. Agency will have thirty (30) days to review/fix/respond to the noted discrepancies of the committee. The agency is responsible for answering the committee once the data has been reviewed and corrected.

HMIS End User Committee (meet at least quarterly or as needed)

- A. Composition – The membership shall consist of all end users throughout the Continuum. Committee will elect a chair at the first meeting of each year.
- B. Responsibilities – This committee will meet to discuss issues within the implementation and policies and report them to the HMIS Governance Committee.

Specific Responsibilities of the Parties

Balance of State Continuum of Care/Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition

Responsible for oversight, project direction, formalizing policy setting and guidance for the HMIS project. It is the responsibility of the COC to:

- Designate the HMIS Lead Agency, the software to be used for HMIS, and approve any change to the HMIS Lead Agency or software.
- Request revision to any HMIS operational agreement, policy, procedure or protocol developed and approved by the HMIS Governance Committee.
- Conduct outreach to homeless assistance agencies not using HMIS and encourage these agencies and other mainstream programs serving homeless people to participate in HMIS.
- Work to inform elected officials, government agencies, the nonprofit community and the public about the role and importance of HMIS and HMIS data.
- Promote the effective use of HMIS, including its use to measure the extent and nature of homelessness, the utilization of services and homeless programs over time, and the effectiveness of the homelessness programs.

- Provide all local information as necessary for compilation of the Continuum of Care Housing Inventory County and coordinate and work alongside the HMIS Committees and the HMIS Lead Agency in preparation and submission of the System Performance Measures (SPM's) and the Longitudinal Data Analysis (LSA).
- Invoice Partner Agencies and jurisdictions for HMIS fees approved by the HMIS Policies and Procedures.

HMIS Lead Agency/Kansas Housing Resource Corporation

Kansas Housing Resource Corporation currently serves as the HMIS Lead Agency for the Kansas Balance of State Continuum of Care, managing and administering all HMIS operations and activities. The HMIS Lead Agency exercises these responsibilities at the direction of the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition and the HMIS Committees. These responsibilities are contingent on receipt of the appropriate funding from the COC and Partnering Agencies. The responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency include:

A. General

- Obtain and maintain the contract with the COC selected vendor.
- Notify and solicit feedback from the COC the HMIS Committees of vendor contract negotiation
- Determine the parameters of the HMIS as it relates to continuity of service, ability to limit access to the data, housing responsibilities, general security and maintenance issues, data storage, back-up and recovery, customization, compliance with HUD data standards, reporting needs, training and technical support.
- Provide overall staffing for the operation of the HMIS.
- Develop and maintain all HMIS operational agreements, policies and procedures on behalf of, and at the direction of, the HMIS committees.
- Obtain signed Partner Agency Agreements and End User Agreements for agencies/users who have been approved by the HMIS Committees.
- Monitor Partner Agencies and users to ensure compliance with HMIS operational agreements, policies and procedures on behalf of, and in coordination with the HMIS Committees and KSHC.
- Actively participate with the HMIS Governance Committee meetings.
- Provide and maintain the HMIS website in conjunction with the COC selected HMIS vendor.
- Participate as a voting or non-voting member of the COC.
- Attend other HMIS committee meetings as needed.
- Oversee compliance of the HMIS with all federal HMIS Standards (including anticipated change to the HMIS Standards) and all other applicable law.
- Apply as the project applicant for all HUD COC Program HMIS Projects within the COC.
- Serve as the liaison with HUD regarding all HUD HMIS grants.

B. Administer the software, including:

- Ensure the software vendor complies with the responsibilities designated below in Section D.4.
- Report any concerns with the software vendor to the HMIS Committees

- Inform COC and agencies how each software release will change or impact current workflow and operations
 - Protect confidential data (in compliance with the federal HMIS standards, local privacy policies and other applicable law), and abide by any restrictions clients have place on their own data.
 - In accordance with and by all HUD regulations and policies
 - Inform HMIS Users fo any system bugs and work arounds.
- C. Administer HMIS end users, including:
- Provide and manage end user licenses, including authorizing usage and the level of access to HMIS for all users as approved by the HMIS committees.
 - Add and remove partner agency administrators as approved by they HMIS committees.
 - Facilitate all training and user guidance needed to ensure appropriate system use, data entry, data reporting, data security and confidentiality.
 - Facilitate training for agency administrators and end users.
 - Establish training requirements for users and agency administrators in conjunction with COC HMIS Committees.
 - Maintain documentaiton of user training completion.
 - Outreach to Partner Agencies to facilitate end user support.
 - Develop and maintain in coordination with the HMIS committees a how-to manual that provides data entry guidance for users.
 - Ensure maintenace of an email helpdesk for user support.
 - Communicate at least monthly with COC through regularly scheduled monthly call to provide information on upcoming regulatory changes, software upgrades, current HMIS news, grants, training, etc.
- D. Ensure Data Quality
- Ensure all client and homeless program data are collected in adherence to the HUD HMIS Data Standards, the HMIS Policies and Procedures and local additional requirements.
 - Customize the HMIS application to meet local data requirements (within reason and within constraints of budget and other duties).
 - Develop and implement a data quality plan.
 - Monitor data quality and generate data quality reports under the data quality plan.
 - Assist Partner Agencies and users to rectify data quality concerns.
 - Carry out aggregate data extraction and reporting under the guidance of the HMIS Advisory Board.
 - Assist Partner Agencies with agency-specific data collection and reporting needs, such as the Annual Progress Report and other program reports (within reason and within constraints of budget and other duties).
 - Develop HMIS data entry workflow and requirements for HMIS data and reporting to meet Partner Agency reporting requirements.
- E. Reporting
- Complete, or help with the completion of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report, HUD CoC Program Notice of Funding Availability, Consolidated Annual Performance

Evaluation Report, CoC 10 Year Plans, Partner Agency Annual Performance Reports, and other reports to funders from agencies federally mandated to use HMIS.

- Ensure the HMIS policies and procedures and recommend data entry workflow align with collecting the data necessary to complete the reports listed above in Section D.3.IV.a.
- Construct, run and publish all necessary system-wide reports to meet federal and local reporting compliance.
- Provide aggregate reports to groups or stakeholders requesting HMIS information within the constraints detailed in the HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual.

Satisfactory Assurances Regarding Confidentiality and Security

It is understood that the HMIS will contain client information that may be subject to the privacy and security protections and requirements of federal HMIS Standards, HIPAA Privacy Rule, other law, and local HMIS privacy and security policies and procedures. The HMIS Lead Agency hereby agrees that it will use protected client information only for purposes permitted by agreement with Partner Agencies and as permitted by the applicable law and Standards. Further, the HMIS Lead Agency agrees it will make use of all safeguards required by HUD Privacy Standards, HIPAA Privacy Rule, where appropriate, other law, and local HMIS privacy and security policies and procedures to prevent any unauthorized disclosure of protected client information.

- Develop and implement security and confidentiality plans required by the HUD HMIS Standards.
- Assist Partner Agencies to rectify agency data security and privacy concerns

Software Vendor

The selected software vendor and HMIS database must meet all HUD and other federal partners regulations and policies, and the following requirements:

- Ensure the HMIS design meets the federal HMIS Data Standards.
- Develop a codebook and provide other documentation of programs created.
- Provide ongoing support to the HMIS Lead pertaining to the needs of end users to mine the database, generate reports and other interface needs.
- Administer the product servers, including web and database servers.
- Monitor access to HMIS through auditing.
- Monitor functionality, speed, and database backup procedures.
- Provide backup and recovery of internal and external networks.
- Maintain the system twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
- Communicate any planned or unplanned interruption of service to the HMIS Lead Agency.
- Take all steps needed to secure the system against breaches of security and system crashes.

Period of Agreement and Modification/Termination

Period of Operation and Termination

This Governance Charter shall remain in effect until terminated by the parties. Each party shall have the right to terminate this agreement as to itself only upon 30 days prior written notice to the HMIS

Governance Committee. Violation of any component may be grounds for immediate termination of this Agreement.

Amendments

Amendments, including additions, deletions or modifications to this Governance Charter must be agreed to by all parties to the Agreement and review/updated annually.