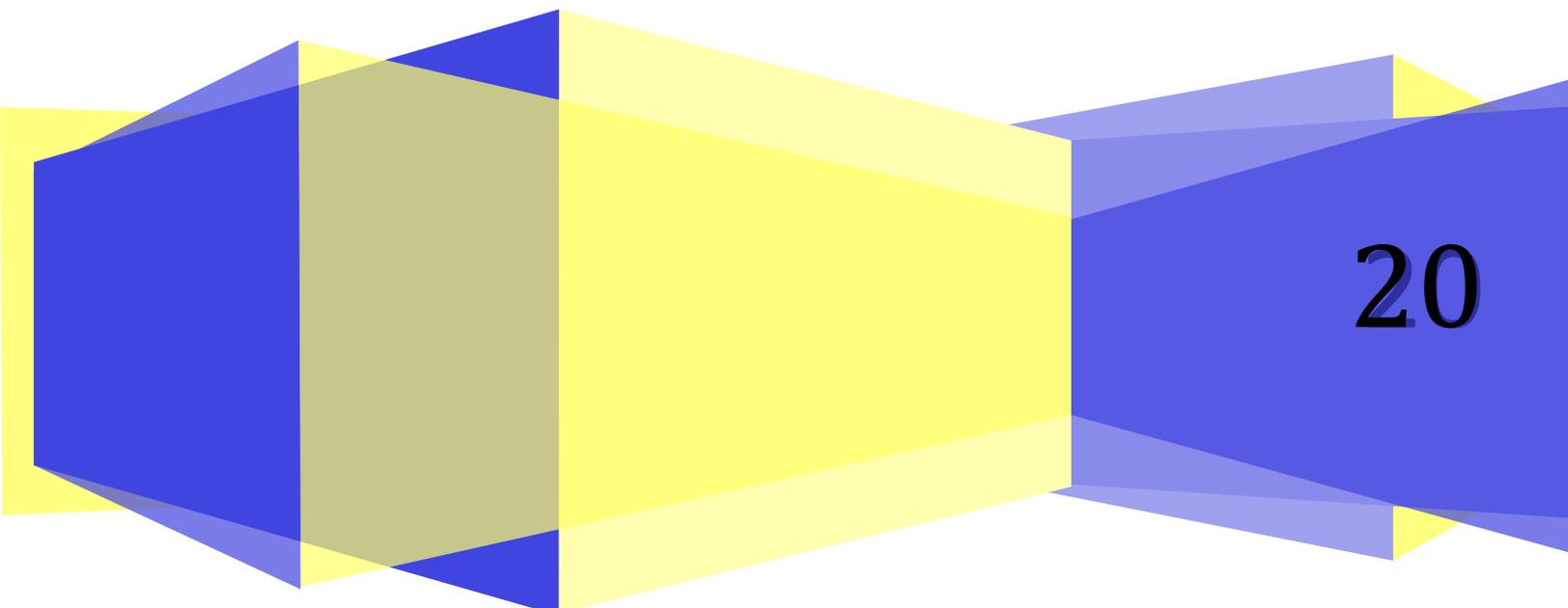


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# Philadelphia Homeless Management Information System (PHILAHMIS)

## GOVERNANCE CHARTER



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Adopted on: Philadelphia CoC PA-500  
Version: [1]

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## OVERVIEW:

As the CoC has the ultimate responsibility to select their own HMIS solution, collaborating in a single HMIS provides certain advantages. By participating collaboratively, system administration can be separated from local administration: CoC have the ability to focus on more specific local solution needs without the need to devote effort to making sure that the standardized information is being collected in a manner that is compliant with federal, state and local requirements. Participating collaboratively also provides cost benefits due to an economy of scale. Additionally, while participating collaboratively can offer benefits, it also requires a balanced approach to ensure that the solution is able to maintain these benefits, long term stability, and operability while minimizing the chance of one CoC making system altering solution or policy changes that could adversely affect other CoCs.

The following are the objectives related to the HMIS Lead Agency:

- 1) provide a vehicle through which the participating Continuum of Care (CoC) provider agencies have an equal voice in creating and maintaining the high level policies and procedures that govern the use of the HMIS implementation;
- 2) ensure a data collection system to support a coordinated entry process for clients accessing housing services;
- 3) allow CoC to collaboratively provide input into the way in which the HMIS implementation is managed concerning issues that affects the CoC as a whole;
- 4) ensure the future financial success of the HMIS implementation while providing an economy of scale to reduce financial burden on the CoC;
- 5) provide an opportunity for the CoC to find common ground and agree on a unified direction when it comes to collecting data on homelessness and understanding the problem;
- 6) identify ways to help provider agencies in recording, reporting on, and improving their services through use of the HMIS implementation;
- 7) provide flexibility while ensuring that one service provider doesn't implement changes that adversely affect the other service providers within the Continuum;
- 8) Create a forum through where participating CoC programs can share ideas or identify new methods for use of the HMIS implementation that could benefit the rest of the collaborative.

Other Federal regulations are as follows.

**FEDERAL REGULATIONS.** The following laws, statutes, and regulations govern this agreement:

- a) The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the [2020 HMIS Data Dictionary](#) and [2020 HMIS Data Manual](#) on October 1, 2019, updating the 2017 HMIS Data Standards, when these standards are updated the

subscriber will comply with all changes. The 2020 HMIS Data Standards outlined in these two documents provide communities with baseline data collection requirements developed by HUD, HHS, and VA. The [2004 HMIS Data and Technical Notice](#) were put into place on July 30, 2004 and once this notice is updated the subscriber will comply with all changes.

**The effective date of the 2020 HMIS Data Standards is October 1, 2019.**

This joint release is a product of collaboration between the three agencies to update the HMIS Data Standards to allow for standardized data collection on homeless individuals and families across systems. Because this is a collaborative effort between HUD, HHS, and the VA, the standards are no longer presented in a HUD Notice format. Communities must collect the data included in the standards in order to comply with each federal partner's reporting requirements. The documents are structured so that communities can easily determine which data elements are required for each federal partner's program.

- b) The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and all rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the authority granted therein, including but not limited to, those set forth in 45 C.R.F. §§ 160-164 (2003), all as supplemented, replaced and amended from time to time.
- c) Federal confidentiality regulations as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, 42 C.F.R. Part 2 regarding disclosure of alcohol and/or drug abuse records. In general terms, the federal rules prohibit the disclosure of alcohol and/or drug abuse records unless disclosure is expressly permitted by written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by CFT Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose.
- d) Pursuant to the HUD Data and Technical Standards Final Notice published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2010 and the PA-HMIS policies and procedures, each Grantee will prominently display a PA-HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices or a notice developed by the Grantee that incorporates the content of the Grantee approved PA-HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices form, in its program offices where intake occurs, and will provide written copy of the Notices to all Clients enrolling in the Grantees programs and services. The Grantee will update its Notice of Privacy Practices as needed to comply with federal law and regulations and with the PA-HMIS policy changes.

The CoC shall at all times comply with the HMIS Program Regulations in addition to all of the a fore stated regulations, codes, statutes, laws, associated Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, other applicable Federal regulations, and all future revisions and amendments to the same. The Grantee shall become thoroughly familiar with all of the foregoing requirements as applicable and shall ensure that the use of the Services complies in all respects.

## **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the Charter is to identify the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the Philadelphia Homeless Management Information System ("PHILAHMIS") implementation for

participating agencies in the Philadelphia Continuum of Care (“CoC”). The PHILAHMIS implementation collects aggregate data to better understand the issues and gaps around person’s at-risk or experiencing homelessness throughout the City of Philadelphia. The CoC must comply with the following Federal and State regulations while funded through the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) program and Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program opportunities.

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the State to gather, compile and report certain information regarding the homeless population and services provided to that population. HUD has developed Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Requirements under the Proposed Rule, dated December 9, 2011, **24 CFR Parts 91, 576, 580, and 583** and requires the State to participate in the reporting of information in accordance with all HMIS requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Philadelphia, through the Office of Homeless Services (“Homeless Services”), administers PHILAHMIS, while administering funding for homeless prevention and assistance programs through the PHILAHMIS implementation, in compliance with HMIS regulations.

## **ARTICLE 1: HMIS LEAD AGENCY**

The CoC through the Collaborative Applicant identifies the HMIS Lead Agency (“HMIS LA”) through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) where PHILAHMIS will be administered.

## **ARTICLE 2: STAKEHOLDERS**

### **PHILAHMIS Governing Board**

The PHILAHMIS Governing Board known in this charter as the Collaborative is the governing body made up of key stakeholders throughout the CoC. This Board meets on a quarterly basis to review compliance and performance of the CoC participating agencies in the PHILAHMIS implementation.

### **CoC Collaborative Applicant (CA)**

The CoC Board will identify the CA for the CoC, in conjunction with the selection to house the HMIS Lead Agency within the same administrative entity.

### **HMIS Vendor**

The HMIS LA selects the platform that the HMIS will be built on through a request for proposal procurement process.

## ARTICLE 3: COLLABORATIVE LOCATION

The principal location of the HMIS is facilitated by the CA's HMIS LA. Any change to the location of the principal location shall not be considered an amendment to this charter.

## ARTICLE 4: HMIS LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

In support of the mission of the Continuum of Care and pursuant to Section 578.7 of the interim rule, the Responsibilities of the HMIS LA include:

*A. Assure an effective performance management system through HMIS to ensure progress in meeting established project and continuum outcomes*

The HMIS LA is charged with the responsibility of implementation and maintenance of the HMIS for the CoC. Specifically, the HMIS LA must:

**1. Designate a single HMIS software solution for the geographic areas;**

- The HMIS LA will identify the contracted software solution vendor. Whenever the term "Vendor" is used in this charter, it shall mean HMIS Vendor designated as the single HMIS software solution that is used for the CoC.

Vendor is responsible for:

- Providing the Internet-based PhilaHMIS software and database;
- PhilaHMIS software upgrades;
- Hosting (maintaining, securing, performing backups, and ensuring availability);
- Providing training and technical support to PhilaHMIS Administrators and IT personnel;
- Compliance to contractual obligations

**2. Designate a single eligible applicant to serve as the HMIS Lead Agency to manage the HMIS and apply for HMIS funding;**

- Currently the HMIS LA serves as the Collaborative Applicant that manages the Collaborative and applies for Collaborative funding for the Philadelphia Continuums of Care ("PA-500").

As the HMIS LA the responsibilities for activities include:

- Setup / configuration of the system;
- Defining policies and procedures within the federal guidelines, best practices, and PhilaHMIS participating agency input;
- Advocating PhilaHMIS software enhancements on behalf of participating agencies;
- Initial and on-going training for PhilaHMIS;
- Providing data quality assurance for the PhilaHMIS participating agencies
- Fulfilling Federal, State and Local reporting requirements;
- Providing technical support through the PhilaHMIS Help Desk.

**3. Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD, HHS, and VA;**

The PhilaHMIS has established an Agency Participation Agreement with all participating agencies within the Collaborative that outlines procedures and is not limited to the following requirement:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the CoC to gather, compile and report certain information regarding the homeless and services provided to that population. HUD has developed Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Requirements under the Proposed Rule, dated December 9, 2011, 24 CFR Parts 91, 576, 580, and 583 and requires the CoC to participate in the reporting of information in accordance with all HMIS requirements.

**4. To the extent possible, ensure that projects using an alternate data collection system (such as Victim Service Providers) are compliant with maintaining a “comparable database” and collecting the necessary HMIS data elements.**

The HMIS LA has established Agency Participation Agreement with all participating agencies that if they are funding any programs under other federal statute and/or state legislation that requires those programs to enter into a comparable database to be in compliance with the following:

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the 2017 HMIS Data Dictionary and 2017 HMIS

Data Manual with an effective date of October 1, 2017. Although, currently the CoC must also comply with the 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Notice.

**5. In consultation with the CoC, the HMIS LA has reviewed, revised, and approved:**

- **PhilaHMIS PRIVACY & SECURITY PLAN - Appendix A**
- **PhilaHMIS DATA QUALITY AND FUNCTIONALITY PLAN - Appendix B**
- **CoC Data Quality Assurance Plan - Appendix D**

**6. Ensure the consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients in the CoC.**

The HMIS LA coordinates with the Continuums of Care provider agencies, grant recipients and sub-recipients, and other participating organizations to establish performance targets appropriate for its populations and program types. Also we review periodic reports on performance of Continuum.

*B. Establishment of a Coordinated Entry System using HMIS*

PhilaHMIS can be used as the tool to support the operation of the Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (“CEA-BHRS”) that provides a centralized method by which the housing, services, and needs of individuals and families within the Continuum are assessed. In coordination with the Continuum of Care, the Continuum will develop and maintain a policy that guides consistent operation of the CEA-BHRS, with respect to how the system triages and addresses the particular safety needs of individuals and families who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness. In addition, the policy will state how the system will address the needs of individuals and families that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or sex trafficking. The coordinated entry system will:

- i. Cover the geographic area served by the Continuum of Care;
- ii. Include a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool;
- iii. Provide a way for participating agencies to prioritize clients in need of serves.

*C. Reports an annual assessment of needs and resources through Point in Time Counts and Housing Resource Inventory*

In coordination with the CoC, the HMIS LA annually reports on the needs of homeless persons within the CoC through a generated report of a coordinated point in time counts, an on-going assessment of trends, and an assessment of homeless needs and housing/service resources available within the CoC. The CoC will then use the data reported on to conduct a gaps analysis to determine unmet needs within the CoC.

The point-in-time count of homeless persons within the CoC enumerates:

1. the number of homeless persons who are living in places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for humans (unsheltered homeless persons);
2. the number of homeless persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects (sheltered homeless persons); and
3. other reporting requirements established by HUD by Notices.

## ARTICLE 5: Governance of HMIS

HMIS governance is managed collaboratively throughout the CoC. The HMIS LA also known as, The Office of Homeless Services (“OHS”) coordinates governance with representatives from each HMIS participating agency and is governed by this Charter. The responsibilities of OHS as outlined previously is to advise the CoC with recommendations to determine performance driven decisions on the progress of creating new or maximizing resources within the CoC.

## ARTICLE 6: Funding Allocation

Funding for the PhilaHMIS is allocated through a variety of sources from grants, including:

- Continuum of Care(CoC) competition;
- Emergency Solutions Grant;

### A. Reduction of a Specific Grant

In the event that the CoC, no longer has funding to support the existing cost of the PhilaHMIS implementation through the CoC HMIS allocation, the agency participation agreement with each active agency within the CoC, may be amended to state that *“individual agencies will be responsible for the cost of their own licenses to access PhilaHMIS”*. The Collaborative strongly encourages participating agencies to leverage funds from other non-CoC competition funding sources to help support the Collaborative implementation.

### B. Across the Board Funding Reductions

In the event that the CoC determines that there is insufficient funding to service all existing grants and that funding reductions are required, as an option only of last resort, any such funding reductions shall not be applied to the direct cost of the PhilaHMIS implementation, considering that HUD mandates the CoC use of an HMIS database for data collection requirements.

## ARTICLE 7: Governance Charter

### A. Adoption

The initial Draft Charter will be published and distributed internally at OHS for comments. Comments will be reviewed and considered, and then adopted by majority vote of a Final Governance Charter for the PhilaHMIS. The Charter will be presented to the CoC Board for approval, and then published on the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services website. The adoption of the initial Policies, Procedures and Standards will follow this same process.

*B. Annual Updates*

This Charter and all referenced policies and procedures, in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, will be reviewed and updated by OHS on an annual basis. Any proposed changes will be provided to the OHS internally for comments. By a vote of the majority of the Board, proposed modifications to this charter and its appendices will be approved and distributed to the membership.

**ARTICLE 8: Charter Version History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version #</b>	<b>Comments/ Change Log</b>
05/13/2019	1.0	Initial Draft

*Update Log*

Created: May, 2019

Reviewed and Reapproved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Elizabeth G. Hersh  
*Director, City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services*

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 Date

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 Chairperson, Philadelphia Continuum of Care Board

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 Date