

July 9th, 2013**NEW DRAFT DATA STANDARDS AND THEIR EFFECT ON YOUR HMIS SYSTEM:**

HUD revised the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Data Standards of March 2010. The 2013 Draft Data Standards were released to us in April 2013 and include changes in data elements necessary to support data collection and reporting for projects funded under Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act), as amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009.

All comments on the new 2013 Draft Data Standards were due by June 3rd, 2013 and HUD is currently working through these comments to identify any adjustments that might be needed to the 2013 Draft Data Standards.

In HUD's continuing efforts to standardize data definitions and standards across federal agencies, HUD solicited recommendations on changes and updates to the data standards from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration for Children, and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing.

The HMIS Data Standards were updated to accommodate use by these other federal agencies and support their data collection and reporting. This further supports the goals identified in *Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.

New screens to be added to the HMIS System:

1. According to HUD, the CoC must record project information on ALL their CoC projects within its jurisdiction, regardless if the project is a Contributing HMIS Organization (CHO) or not. To accommodate this we will add a section to the HMIS System for the "Project Descriptor Data Standards". This will include the data to be recorded about each CoC project in the CoC jurisdiction and must be updated in the HMIS at least annually. It will also assist in tracking bed utilization and calculate rates of HMIS participation.
2. We will also be adding a new "Health insurance / Medical Assistance" screen to the HMIS System. The purpose is to determine whether a client currently has health insurance coverage and is accessing all mainstream project medical assistance benefits for which they are eligible, and to ascertain a more complete picture of their economic circumstances. This data is required for all Head of Households and Adult household members at project entry and exit and at least once annually during project enrollment if the period between entry and exit exceeds 1 year.

Changes in the Data Standards that will affect the entire HMIS System:

1. The 2013 Draft HMIS Data Standards no longer include data elements specific to the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.
2. “Program” now refers to the Federal, State and Local Funding Source (ESG, CoC, PATH, VA etc.) – Previously according to the 2010 Data Standards “Programs” referred to what is now call “Projects” in the 2013 Draft Data Standards.
3. In our dropdown lists, the responses “Don’t Know” and “Refused” will be changed to “Client does not know “ and “Client Refused”. The intent is to emphasize that the Client indicated it and not that the case manager or data entry person does not know the client’s response.
4. Special Needs will still be captured for ALL clients, including children, at project entry and exit and at least once annually during project enrollment if the period between entry and exit exceeds 1 year.
5. Under the 2013 Draft Data Standards all Income and Sources of Income (including non-cash benefits):
 - a. Will only be collected for the Head of Households and Adult household members at project entry and exit and at least once annually during project enrollment if the period between entry and exit exceeds 1 year. Previously under the 2010 Draft Standards this information was required for ALL clients including children, even if they received \$0.00 Income.
 - b. Income received by or on behalf of a minor child should be assigned to the head of household. In the event that a minor child enters or leaves the household and the household monthly income changes as a result, an update to the head of household’s record must be entered to reflect that change.
 - c. Previously, projects were required to identify all sources of income received during the past 30 days, regardless of whether the client was still receiving income from a particular source on the date the information was collected; this has been changed. Projects are now required to record only sources of income that are expected to be ongoing on the date that the information is collected.

What to expect:

1. In our dropdown lists, the responses “Don’t Know” and “Refused” will be changed to “Client does not know “ and “Client Refused”.
2. We will build the new screens for the “Project Descriptor Data Standards” for all CoC Projects.
3. We will build the new screen for “Health insurance / Medical Assistance” at entry, interim and at exit.
4. In regards to the Income and Sources of Income (including non-cash benefits) changes, HUD is currently developing the new Income screens and Questions in e-snaps. It will be available in e-snaps on September 1st, 2013. They will supply the Programming Specs for the screens and Question 23 and 24 on Income, as well as Question 36 Income Outcomes for the HUD APR to the Vendors no later than August 1st, 2013.

Definition of CoC Projects:

- A CoC Project may or may not be HUD funded, and provides services and/or lodging.
- Lodging Project:
 - Provides overnight accommodation and whose primary purpose is to meet specific needs of people who are homeless
 - Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing and Permanent Housing
- Service Projects:
 - Does not provide lodging and whose primary purpose it is to provide services to meet specific needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Homelessness Prevention, Street Outreach, Day Shelter, Services Only and Other

The new Data Standards and Questions to facilitate data collection and reporting for specific federal agencies were also added to the 2013 Draft Data Standards. We will contact each of our clients to let them know which fields, screens and/or reports we can build and add to their HMIS systems, depending on the programs they currently use in their CoC (for example HOPWA, PATH, VA).

We do not currently have a date on which the HMIS System must comply with the new Data Standards or when the Draft Data Standards will be finalized. We will however let you know of any changes that we are planning on making to your HMIS System and keep you updated on any changes to the 2013 Draft Data Standards.

The customizability of our system will ensure that you will not experience any down time due to development from our side. We also encourage you to let us know if we can be of any assistance in making the system more efficient for you or if you would like to add screens for data collection specific for your Agency needs that will make things a little easier for you.

Thank you.

The Bell Data Team