VA Training Curriculum

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A. Overview: VA Programs & HMIS Participation

VA Programs & HMIS Participation

In June of 2010 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released a Strategic Plan that identified thirteen major initiatives, one of which is the Elimination of Veteran Homelessness. This major initiative promotes the use of robust management systems to monitor outcomes for individual Veterans as well as the outcomes of programs that serve homeless Veterans. This initiative is consistent with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Federal Strategic Plan and also coincides with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Strategic Planning efforts. As a result of this federal strategic direction and coordination, VA-funded homeless assistance providers will begin participating in local Homeless Management Information Systems within each Continuum of Care.

Given this new VA mandate, CoC leadership and HMIS project staff will need to consider the following:

- The VA released guidance to all VA-funded homeless assistance providers regarding their required participation in HMIS. VA Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Grant program, HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Grant and Per Diem (GPD) programs began HMIS participation as of January 2011.
- Local CoC and HMIS staff will need to coordinate with local VA officials and VA-funded providers to initiate HMIS participation.
- As with any new Contributory HMIS Organization (CHO) that enters Protected Personal Information (PPI) into an HMIS, all applicable privacy and security standards apply. It is good practice to review these standards as new CHOs come on-line with HMIS. In some cases local privacy and security policies may need to be amended.
- VA plans to provide ongoing webinar training to SSVF, GPD, and HUD-VASH providers throughout 2013. Training topics will include a general HMIS overview, HMIS participation requirements, and a review of HUD Data and Technical Standards.
- Currently all VA-funded homeless assistance programs submit client-level data to the VA. This practice of client-level data disclosure to the VA will continue as VA-funded providers participate in HMIS. Although HUD does not expect CoCs to release HMIS client-level data on Veterans served in non-VA funded programs to the VA, CoCs and HMIS staff are expected to coordinate with VA officials to complete regular HMIS data extracts of Veteran data from VA-funded homeless assistance providers.
- HUD understands that new CHOs often have costs associated with HMIS licenses, training, technical support, data storage, system maintenance, and HMIS administration. As with any new initiative, HUD expects HMIS project staff and CoC leadership to assess any HMIS participation costs associated with new users, document the allocation of those costs, and assess any participation fees in a fair and equitable manner.

VA staff and other federal partners will work together to provide additional training materials and technical assistance (TA) support as the VA extends HMIS requirements to all VA-funded homeless assistance providers.

B. Curriculum Introduction and Overview

Deliverable Context

The purpose of the document is to convey all data management requirements to SSVF grantees while providing the necessary tools to properly meet these requirements and manage program data. The reporting requirements in 38 CFR 62.71 have been designed to provide VA with the information required to assess the outcomes associated with grantees' programs. As a result of this, VA anticipates grantees' programs will assist in reducing the number of Veteran families who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

Audience and Scope

The curriculum is designed for use by SSVF grantees, staff, HMIS Administrators and Continuum of Care partners. The purpose of the guide is to provide information and instructions on all aspects of managing SSVF data. The curriculum is divided into six primary sections to include the following:

Section 1: SSVF Data Management- What You Need to Know. This section includes five one-page fact sheets, each of which highlights the key points taken from each section and is designed to be used as a quick reference tool. The section also includes the addition of a newly developed checklist and discussion guide for implementing HMIS, which can be especially useful for new grantees.

Section 2: Data Collection. This section includes information on all specific data elements that must be collected on program participants, when they must be collected, and on whom they must be collected, as well as data collection templates for program entry and exit. Also included are frequently asked questions on data collection.

Section 3: Data Reporting. This section details SSVF reporting requirements, including HMIS, quarterly reports and cover sheets. Also included are the upload and integration specifications and Repository user notes, which include step-by-step instructions on uploading HMIS data into the VA's Repository.

Section 4: Data Quality. This section describes the necessary components of a comprehensive data quality plan. The data quality policy and thresholds are detailed, which outline the minimum acceptable data quality standards for program data. Links to the U.S. Interagency Council on the Homeless resources on developing a sound data quality plan as well as a sample plan are also included.

Section 5: HMIS Privacy and Security. This section describes the standards for privacy and security with SSVF client-level data. Included are external links to resources and toolkits in addition to sample client notification forms.

Section 6: CoC Integration & Planning. This section contains an overview of the function of the Continuum of Care and specific opportunities for collaboration between the SSVF program and the CoC. Topics covered include coordinated assessment, homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) and Housing Inventory Chart (HIC).

C. Description of HMIS Trainings

In addition to the training manual, listed below are five Webinar trainings.

Data Collection and Reporting: The Basics

- Intended target audience: New grantees, new staff of renewal grantees or any staff of renewal grantees desiring a review of the basics of SSVF data collection and reporting. To be presented at the post-award conference.
- Topics include description and goals of HMIS, roles and responsibilities, HMIS set-up, data collection requirements, reporting requirements, and tools and resources for grantees.
- Approximate length: 1 hour

Data Collection and Reporting: Understanding your SSVF Data Better

- Intended target audience: All grantees, presented at post-award conference.
- Topics include description of data quality policy and threshold limits, reading validation results, reviewing seven comma-separated values (CSV) files, interpreting validation results, identifying and correcting data errors, creating and implementing data quality plans and working with data from multiple CoCs and HMIS implementations.
- Approximate length: 1 hour

SSVF Data: The Bigger Picture

- Intended target audience: All grantees. Presented at post-award conference.
- Topics include privacy and security requirements, VA HMIS participation, CoC coordination, and using data for program improvement.
- Approximate length: 45 minutes

Data Collection and Reporting: HMIS Administrator and Software Solution Providers

- Intended target audience: HMIS administrators and software solution providers, presented at program year inception
- Topics include program setup in HMIS, data collection, export requirements, upload validation
- Basics about how Extensible Markup Language (XML) is parsed to CSV, basics about how we report on data
- Data collection (bonus elements from future data standards)
- Approximate length: 60-90 minutes

Developing a Comprehensive Data Quality Plan

- Intended target audience: All grantees. Presented near program year inception and/or during national call.
- Topics include the importance of data quality and how to achieve and maintain it.

- Approximate length: 1 hour

D. Section 1: SSVF Data Management - What You Need To Know

Fact Sheet #1: HMIS & SSVF Basics

What is HMIS?

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a community-based software application that collects and reports on client-level information about the characteristics and needs of people who are served by programs intended to prevent and end homelessness. It is the information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with the HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards and used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals, families and persons at-risk of homelessness.

Grantees are required to enter data into HMIS on all participants, with the exception of "persons fleeing abuse and/or domestic violence who are served by programs that are designated "victim service providers."

Who do you contact to obtain HMIS?

You should contact your local Continuum of Care chairperson. Find a list of CoC contacts on the HUDHRE Web site.

What steps are involved in HMIS set up and implementation?

- Learn about HMIS
- Learn about your CoCs HMIS Implementation
- Implement HMIS
- Create and Monitor Data Quality Standards
- Upload Data into the Repository

For more information, see Section 1, Data Management Basics: HMIS Checklist Discussion Guide for New Grantees.

Who is your HMIS Administrator and what is their role?

Each HMIS implementation designates a system administrator to provide day-to-day management and support to the HMIS project. They provide set up guidance, training and technical assistance support, oversight and monitoring of HMIS operations, management of HMIS documentation, including client consent, privacy and security practices, and other policy and procedures.

Who is your software solutions provider/software vendor and what is their role?

The software solutions provider is the entity that created and/or services the software your HMIS uses. There are many different software solution providers. These providers often release general product use documentation that may be helpful for SSVF program staff.

How does your Continuum of Care (CoC) affect your SSVF program data?

The CoC addresses homelessness for a defined geographic region through coordinated planning, funding and management of homeless assistance resources. They designate an HMIS to track the extent of homelessness and measure program effectiveness. Additionally, they establish a strategic plan for the CoC.

Fact Sheet #2: Data Reporting

What are the SSVF reporting requirements?

1. Repository upload

On a monthly basis, grantees upload client and program level SSVF data from the HMIS system in which SSVF data are managed to a secure SSVF Data Repository ("Repository") managed by VA. Each upload of SSVF data to the Repository will contain a complete data set reflecting program activity from program inception to the date of export. For detailed instructions on how to upload data into the Repository, see Section 3: Data Reporting Toolkit- Repository User Notes.

2. Coversheet

The VA requires SSVF grantees to submit a monthly coversheet to their Regional Coordinator by the 5th business day of the following month. For example, the October monthly coversheet would be due the 5th business day of November. The purpose of the coversheet is to collect information on the data elements that are currently not required in HMIS by the 2010 HMIS Data Standards.

3. Quarterly Reports

In addition to use of HMIS, grantees are also expected to complete quarterly reports addressing programmatic and financial information. See SSVF Web site for more information on the Quarterly Report at http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf_grantee_resources.asp.

How is the data uploaded into the Repository?

See Section 3: Data Reporting Toolkit- Repository User Notes.

1. Create Repository account(s)
2. Export data from HMIS into XML or CSV format
3. Zip the exported file
4. Login to Repository
5. Upload zipped file
6. Receive validation result and notification of success of upload

How does an SSVF staff member access the Repository?

Repository accounts should be created for SSVF staff members who have program authorization to upload data into the VA's Repository system on behalf of the SSVF program. Instructions on accessing the Repository can be found in the Repository User Notes in Section 3.

Who can you contact for questions about exporting data from HMIS?

The first point of contact for questions on working with your HMIS system should be your HMIS Administrator. If questions still exist that are preventing successful reporting of program data, contact your regional coordinator.

Who can you contact for questions about uploading data into the Repository?

Contact the SSVF HMIS technical assistance team to troubleshoot technical questions regarding the Repository. This can include questions about user accounts, XML/CSV data structure, and data usability questions.

Fact Sheet #3: Data Quality

What is data quality and why is it important?

Data quality refers to the reliability and validity of client-level data collected in the HMIS. It's measured by the extent to which the client data accurately reflects actual information in the real world. With good data, the program can accurately "tell the story" of clients served, measure program outcomes and make the case for funding.

What is the VA's policy on data quality?

The purpose of the SSVF Data Quality Policy is to ensure collection of comprehensive and accurate data from beneficiaries of the VA's SSVF program. The policy requires that all SSVF grantees collect and manage beneficiary data in HMIS and maintain a level of data completeness and quality that successfully meets a three tiered system. Tier one data elements must be 100% accurate and complete. Tier two elements must be at least 90% accurate and complete. Tier three elements are important, but will not be monitored for completeness or accuracy. See Section 4 Data Quality Management Standards for more information.

How does the SSVF program enforce data quality?

Data quality standards are enforced through the monthly Repository upload. If the error rate exceeds the maximum number of errors allowable for that data element, the Repository user will be notified that the upload was rejected. The user will then have to correct the data in HMIS and attempt to upload again.

What are the key components of a data quality plan?

- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Accuracy
- Monitoring
- Incentives & Enforcement

For more information, see Section 4: Data Quality Management Standards.

Can the program provide you with sample data quality plans?

Yes, a sample plan is provided in Section 4: Data Quality Management Plan Toolkit. More sample plans can be made available upon request from your Regional Coordinator.

Fact Sheet #4: HMIS Privacy & Security

Where can HUD's standards on privacy and security be found?

The most recent standards published by HUD that address privacy and security standards are located in the 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards are available at:

https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/2004HUDDataandTechnicalStandards.pdf

What is the purpose of the privacy and security standards?

These standards seek to protect the confidentiality of personal information while allowing for reasonable, responsible, and limited uses and disclosures of data. The standards are based on principles of fair information practices and were developed after careful review of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

What are the minimum standards that must be in place for your SSVF program?

- Compliance with other federal, state, and local confidentiality law
- Compliance with limits to data collection (relevant, appropriate, lawful, specified in privacy notice)
- Have written privacy policy, which must be posted on your Web site
- Post sign at intake or comparable location with general reasons for collection and reference to privacy policy
- May infer consent for uses in the posted sign and written privacy policy

Who do the standards apply to?

The privacy standards apply to all agencies, projects and individuals that record, use or process protected personal information for an HMIS. This includes employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and associates, regardless of funding source.

Where can additional resources used to develop privacy and security policies and procedures be found?

Sample participation agreements, end user confidentiality agreements, slides and recorded presentations can be found at https://www.onecpd.info/resource-library/ and https://www.onecpd.info/training-events/courses/hmis-system-administrator-training-hmis-101/.

Fact Sheet #5: CoC Integration & Planning

What is a Continuum of Care (CoC) and how do I contact them?

The CoC addresses homelessness for a defined geographic region through coordinated planning, funding and management of homeless housing and services. They designate an HMIS to track the extent of homelessness and measure program effectiveness. Additionally, they establish strategic plan for the CoC.

You can find your local Continuum of Care chairperson on the HUD's Homelessness Resource Exchange (HRE) Web site at http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts.

What is the relationship between the CoC and the HMIS?

The CoC may operate the HMIS or may designate/authorize a HMIS lead agency to establish HMIS participation guidelines and expectations, establish privacy protections for client data entered into HMIS, establish security protections to create safe and secure HMIS operating environments, monitor, and enforce compliance with participation requirements.

How can the SSVF program benefit from the CoC?

- Ensure your HMIS Administrator sets reasonable participation requirements for your program.
- Resolve HMIS data quality questions and concerns.
- Establish a coordinated assessment and intake process within your CoC so that eligible veterans are appropriately triaged to the SSVF
- Ensure SSVF program participants have access to all needed services available to them in the community.

How should SSVF be involved with the CoC?

Besides the above mentioned activities, the SSVF program should participate in the following four projects conducted within your CoC.

- Point-in-Time (PIT) Count
- Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)
- Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)
- Coordinated Assessment

For more information on these projects, see Section 6: CoC Integration and Planning Standards.

Toolkit: Checklist & Discussion Guide for New Grantees

This comprehensive checklist includes a list of all tasks involved in setting up a new SSVF program with HMIS. The checklist is divided into four major steps, with several tasks and questions to address within each step. The form can be used as a discussion guide to initiate conversation with an HMIS Administrator to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken to implement HMIS successfully.

Step 1: Learn about HMIS

☐ Review federal HMIS participation requirements:

- Review the HMIS Data Standards to understand the HMIS requirements for data collection. (https://www.onecpd.info/resource/1220/final-hmis-data-standards/) (The 2013 Data Standards are currently being promulgated and will not go into effect until 2014.)
- Review the 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards to understand the security and privacy standards for HMIS (https://www.onecpd.info/resource/1318/2004-hmis-data-and-technical-standards-final-notice/)
- Check the OneCPD Resource Exchange page for updates on HMIS. Here grantees can subscribe to receive HUD's e-mail updates on HMIS. (https://www.onecpd.info/mailinglist/)

Step 2: Learn about your CoCs HMIS Implementation

A list of local CoC HMIS points of contact can be found on the HUDHRE Web site. Discuss the following questions:

☐ Contact the CoC Chairperson and HMIS Administrator. (See Section 1: HMIS Basics Fact Sheet for more information on these contacts.)

Gather the following information:

- What are the HMIS participation requirements? Ask for a copy.
- What is the name of the software solutions provider?
- What are the participation costs?
- HMIS project staff and CoC leadership must assess what the costs will be for adding VA-funded homeless assistance programs.
- What participation agreements are required? .
- What are the local data collection, privacy, security, and data quality requirements beyond any federal baseline standards?
  - Are software and/or reporting licenses required? If so, is there a limit on the number of licenses per project?
  - What training or technical support is available? Who will be your contact person?
  - Who would be your contact person for resolving technical questions?

- Communicate your SSVF Reporting Needs to HMIS lead agency, including monthly HMIS export, SSVF specific data elements (optional to collect through HMIS) and troubleshooting. Invite your Administrator to SSVF Administrator & Software Solutions Provider Webinar training.

- Negotiate and execute agreements.

- Administrator provides HMIS trainings including data collection, privacy and security, and reporting training. Set training timeline with Administrator.

Step 3: Implementing HMIS within your SSVF program.

- Request individual login and passwords for all Repository users, including back-up staff. Section 3: Data Reporting Toolkit- Repository User Notes.
- If your SSVF program covers multiple CoC jurisdictions, how will this data be reportable by CoC?
- If your SSVF program has subgrantees, determine whether the prime grantee or subgrantee or both will be entering data directly into HMIS. If subgrantees will upload separately, they will need to request separate Repository logins.
- Establish data collection and HMIS policies and procedures.
- Establish data collection workflow, the process by which data are collected from clients, managed by HMIS staff and entered into HMIS. Test workflow before implementation begins.
    - Who will enter data?
    - Who will upload data monthly to the Repository?
    - Who will monitor data quality regularly?
    - Who will correct data quality errors?
- Develop data collection forms that capture required data elements at program entry, exit and at update from all program participants. See Section 2: Data Collection Toolkit, Data Collection templates.
- Train SSVF staff to consistently collect and record all required information per policies and procedures and workflow.
- Test data entry using HMIS training database.
- Confirm that HMIS can produce all information needed for monthly and quarterly VA reporting.

Step 4: Creating and Monitoring Data Quality Standards

- Develop data quality plan. See Section 4: Data Quality Management Standards
- Establish management and end user accountability for data accuracy, timeliness and completeness.
- Include regular monitoring as part of data collection and entry process to assure information is timely, complete and accurate. Provide feedback to staff, as necessary.

Step 5: Upload Your Data to the Repository

- Before uploading to the Repository:
  - Confirm that all information for the calendar month has been entered into HMIS.
  - Use any available data quality tools to check for missing or erroneous data prior to the end of each month and update records in HMIS.
- Upload to the Repository:
  - Ensure data is uploaded to the Repository BEFORE the last day of the upload cycle (the fifth business day of each month).
  - If data is rejected, correct errors and resubmit data to Repository.

E. Section 2: SSVF Data Collection

SSVF Data Elements

SSVF grantees participate in HMIS on a local level and upload program and client-level data into the Repository. The VA has established data quality standards that may be more rigorous than local data quality standards. The data elements listed below are based upon the March 2010 HMIS data standards. Data requirements will be updated when next revision of HMIS standards is finalized.

Data Elements	SSVF Required	Subjects	When collected
Name	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Social Security Number	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Date of Birth	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Race	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Ethnicity	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Gender	Yes	All Clients	Once per client
Veteran Status	Yes	All Adults	At Program Entry
Disabling Condition	Yes	All Clients	At Program Entry
Residence Prior to Program Entry	Yes	All Adults	At Program Entry
Housing Status	Yes	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Project Entry Date	Yes	All Clients	At Program Entry
Project Exit Date	Yes	All Clients	At Program Exit
Destination	Yes	All Clients	At Program Exit
Household Identification Number	Yes	All Clients	At Program Entry
Zip Code of Last Permanent Address	Yes	All Adults Served	At Program Entry
Income and Sources	Yes	All Adults Served	At Program Entry, Update, and Exit
Non-Cash Benefits	Yes	All Adults Served	At Program Entry, Update, and Exit
Physical Disability	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Developmental Disability	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Chronic Health Condition	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
HIV/AIDS	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Mental Health	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Substance Abuse	Optional	All Clients	At Program Entry and Exit
Domestic Violence	Optional	All Adults	At Program Entry
Services Provided	Yes	All Clients	At any point after program entry
Financial Assistance Provided	Yes	All Clients	At any point after program entry

Toolkit: Data Collection Template

The below program entry and program exit templates can be used to aid in data collection. Your HMIS Administrator, software solutions provider or fellow SSVF grantees may have sample forms available for use as well.

Fill out a separate form for each household member.

Identifying Information

Note: Providing identifying information is an eligibility requirement and is not optional for clients. You must collect and enter into HMIS, at a minimum, a first name, a last name, a Social Security number, and a date of birth for all clients, including household members. If you do not have a valid Social Security number for any member of a household for any reason, you must contact your regional coordinator prior to serving the household.

NAME (First, Middle, Last name, Suffix (e.g., Jr, Sr, III)

First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Suffix	

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ***[All clients]***

			-			-				

DATE OF BIRTH (e.g., 10/23/1978) ***[All clients]***

		/			/			

Month Day Year

SOCIAL SECURITY TYPE ***[All clients]***

☐ Full SSN reported

DATE OF BIRTH TYPE ***[All clients]***

☐ Full date of birth reported

RACE More than one race is permitted. ***[All clients]***

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ White
☐ Asian
☐ Client does not know
☐ Black or African American
☐ Client refused to provide
☐ Native / Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	☐ Client does not know
☐ Hispanic / Latino	☐ Client refused to provide

GENDER [*All clients*]

☐ Female	☐ Other
☐ Male	☐ Client does not know
☐ Transgendered male to female	☐ Client refused to provide
☐ Transgendered female to male	

DISABLING CONDITION ***[All clients]***

☐ No	☐ Client does not know
☐ Yes	☐ Client refused to provide

VETERAN STATUS ***[All adults]***

☐ No	☐ Client does not know
☐ Yes	☐ Client refused to provide

☐ [IF YES] In which military service era did the client serve?

☐ Persian Gulf Era (August 1991 – September 10, 2001)	☐ Between WWII and Korean War (August 1947 – May 1950)
☐ Post Vietnam (May 1975 – July 1991)	☐ World War II (September 1940 – July 1947)
☐ Vietnam Era (August 1964 – April 1975)	☐ Post September 11, 2001 (September 11, 2001 -Present)
☐ Between Korean and Vietnam War (February 1955– July 1964)	☐ Client does not know
☐ Korean War (June 1950 – January 1955)	☐ Client refused to provide

☐ [IF YES] What type of discharge did you receive?

☐ Honorable	☐ Dishonorable
☐ General	☐ Other: (Describe) ____________
☐ Medical	☐ Client does not know
☐ Bad conduct	☐ Client refused to provide

RESIDENCE PRIOR TO PROGRAM ENTRY ***[All adults and unaccompanied youth]***

☐ Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	☐ Place not meant for habitation (e.g. a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)

☐ Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	☐ Other: (Describe) ______________________
☐ Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (such as SHP, S+C, or SRO Mod Rehab)	☐ Safe Haven
☐ Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility	☐ Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
☐ Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	☐ Rental by client, with other (non-VASH) housing subsidy
☐ Hospital (non psychiatric)	☐ Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
☐ Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility	☐ Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
☐ Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house	☐ Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
☐ Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house	☐ Client does not know
☐ Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	☐ Client refused to provide
☐ Foster care home or foster care group home	

LENGTH OF STAY IN PREVIOUS PLACE [*All adults and unaccompanied youth*]

☐ One week or less	☐ One year or longer
☐ More than one week, but less than one month	☐ Client does not know
☐ One to three months	☐ Client refused to provide
☐ More than 3 months, but less than one year	

ZIP CODE OF LAST PERMANENT HOUSING ADDRESS AND TYPE
[All adults and unaccompanied youth]

Zip code ☐☐☐☐☐

☐ Full or partial zip code reported
☐ Client does not know
☐ Client refused to provide

HOUSING STATUS *[All clients]*

☐	Literally homeless	☐	Stably housed
☐	Imminently losing their housing	☐	Client does not know
☐	Unstably housed and at-risk of losing housing	☐	Client refused to provide

INCOME AND SOURCES *[All clients]*

Have you received any income from any source over the last 30 days?

☐	No	☐	Client does not know
☐	Yes	☐	Client refused to provide

[IF YES] Please state whether you have received income from the following sources within the last 30 days. If you have received income from a source, state the amount of income you received in the last 30 days.

Source of income	Receiving income from source?		Amount from source (round to nearest dollar)
Earned income (i.e., employment income)	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Unemployment Insurance	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Veteran's disability payment	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Private disability insurance	No	☐	
	Yes	☐	$. 0 0
Worker's compensation	No	☐	

	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
General Assistance (GA)	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Retirement income from Social Security	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Veteran's pension	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Pension from a former job	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Child support	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Alimony or other spousal support	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Other source	No	☐						
	Yes	☐	$			.	0	0
Total monthly income	Monthly income from all sources		$			.	0	0

NON-CASH BENEFITS *[All clients]*

Did you receive any non-cash benefits over the last 30 days?

☐	No	☐	Client does not know
☐	Yes	☐	Client refused to provide

[IF YES] Which of the following non-cash benefits have you received over the last 30 days?

Received benefit?

No	Yes	Source of non-cash benefit
☐	☐	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Formerly known as Food Stamps)
☐	☐	MEDICAID health insurance program
☐	☐	MEDICARE health insurance program
☐	☐	State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
☐	☐	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
☐	☐	Veteran's Administration (VA) Medical Services
☐	☐	TANF Child Care services
☐	☐	TANF transportation services
☐	☐	Other TANF-Funded Services
☐	☐	Section 8, Public Housing, or other rental assistance
☐	☐	Other source: ______________________________
☐	☐	Temporary rental assistance

Toolkit: Exit Template

Fill out separate form for each family member.

CURRENT NAME (first, middle, last name, suffix (e.g., Jr, Sr, III) [All clients]

First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Suffix	

HOUSING STATUS *[All clients]*

- ☐ Literally homeless
- ☐ Housed and at imminent risk of losing housing
- ☐ Housed and at-risk of losing housing
- ☐ Stably housed
- ☐ Client does not know
- ☐ Client refused to provide

DESTINATION [*All clients*]

- ☐ Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher
- ☐ Places not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)
- ☐ Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
- ☐ Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)
- ☐ Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (such as SHP, S+C, or SRO Mod Rehab)
- ☐ Staying or living with family, temporary
- ☐ Owned by client, no housing subsidy
- ☐ Owned by client, with housing subsidy
- ☐ Foster care home or foster care group home
- ☐ Hospital (non psychiatric)
- ☐ Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment facility or detox

	tenure		center
☐	Staying or living with family, permanent tenure	☐	Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility
☐	Staying or living with friend's, temporary tenure	☐	Safe Haven
☐	Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure	☐	Deceased
☐	Rental by client, no housing subsidy	☐	Other (Describe) ______________________________ ______________________________
☐	Rental by client, other (non-VASH) subsidy	☐	Client does not know
☐	Rental by client, VASH subsidy	☐	Client refused to provide

PROGRAM EXIT DATE *[All clients]*

		/			/				

Month Day Year

F. Section 3: SSVF Data Reporting

HMIS

Grantees are required to enter data on all participants into the HMIS project associated with the CoC geography where the client is physically located at the time of entry, with the exception of grantees who are victim service providers. Some SSVF grantees serve areas larger than a single CoC which may encompass more than one HMIS project. If this is the case, SSVF grantees will need to distribute client data into the appropriate HMIS – the specific HMIS project where the client is located. Client data from separate HMIS projects will be aggregated within the Repository to create a consolidated accounting of total client activity for each SSVF grantee. Other reports such as the Quarterly Report and the Coversheet should reflect total grantee activity regardless of the number of separate HMIS projects involved.

On a monthly basis, grantees will upload client-level SSVF data from the HMIS system in which SSVF Program data are managed to a secure SSVF Data Repository ("Repository") managed by VA. Each upload of SSVF data to the Repository will contain a complete data set reflecting program activity from program inception to the date of export.

The preferred format for the upload of SSVF Program data to the Repository is the HUD HMIS Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format; a subset of the complete set of CSV files will be required. Each of the fields defined in the HUD HMIS CSV documentation must be present in the uploaded files, although not all of the fields must contain data.

The Repository will also accept data in the HUD HMIS XML Format. Data uploaded in the XML format will be parsed into the CSV format using the publicly available HUD-funded CSV to XML Parser prior to further processing. This process will require the intervention of Repository staff and will delay data validation and final acceptance; for this reason, the XML format is not preferred.

Data exported from HMIS systems should be packaged in a ZIP file prior to upload to the Repository. For detailed specifications, upload operating instructions, data quality standards, and data use and disclosure descriptions, please see the VA Repository Data Upload Criteria available in Section 3, Data Reporting Toolkit.

Quarterly Reports

In addition to use of HMIS, grantees are also expected to complete quarterly reports addressing programmatic and financial information. The quarterly reports consist of a series of questions related to grantees' program operations over the course of the quarter – e.g., requests for information concerning significant events that have occurred in the program, major sources of participant referrals, lists of services provided directly and by referral, participant safety issues, best practices, etc. In addition, the quarterly financial report template asks grantees to identify and explain all budget variances, quarterly spending by subcontractor, quarterly draw downs, numbers of participants served, and non- VA funding sources used for SSVF Program activities. Copies of the report template and companion guide for completing these reports can be found on the SSVF Program Web site at http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf_grantee_resources.asp.

Coversheet

The Coversheet report is an Excel spreadsheet used to collect the supplemental data to those elements collected in the Repository. The elements collected in the coversheet may not be collectable in HMIS, so you may have to collect these outside of HMIS. This data is divided into prevention, rapid re-housing, report period and year to date. This report will be submitted until the new data standards are finalized and integrated into HMIS.

This data is required to be sent to the Regional Coordinator on a monthly basis and is due during the first five business days of the month unless otherwise specified by a grantee's regional coordinator.

These data elements include:

- Persons Screened but Not Enrolled
- Households Served with Less Than 30% Area Median Income (AMI)
- Afghanistan/Iraq Veterans Served
- Temporary Financial Assistance

Directions for Completing the Coversheet

1. Enter the grantee's name
   - This is the name of the organization that is on the SSVF contract.
2. Enter the SSVF program number
   - Please ensure that the correct program number is used. The program number can generally be found on the first page of the SSVF contract.
3. Enter the reporting period start date
   - The start date will be the first day of the grant year (10/1/13).
4. Enter the reporting period end date
   - The reporting period end date should be the last day of the month that is being reported.
5. Enter the number of persons screened but not enrolled
   - Data should be entered for both the report period (the month being reported) and year to date (10/1/13 through the month being reported).
   - Any variances should be explained in the variance section.
6. Enter the number of households served that had an income of less than 30% AMI
   - Data should be entered for report period (the month being reported) and year to date (10/1/13 through the month being reported) for prevention, rapid re-housing, and the unduplicated total.
   - Any variances should be explained in the variance section.
7. Enter the number of Afghanistan/Iraq Veterans served
   - Data should be entered for report period (the month being reported) and year to date (10/1/13 through the month being reported) for prevention, rapid re-housing, and the unduplicated total.
   - Any variances should be explained in the variance section.
8. Enter the total Temporary Financial Assistance distributed to households

- Data should be entered for report period (the month being reported) and year to date (10/1/13 through the month being reported) for prevention, rapid re-housing, and the unduplicated total.
- Any variances should be explained in the variance section.

Toolkit: VA Repository Data Upload Criteria

Each upload of SSVF data to the Repository must contain a complete data set reflecting program activity from the grant start date to the date that the data set is exported from the HMIS. This document identifies the data upload format criteria that an uploaded data set must meet in order to be accepted by the Repository.

Data Upload Format

The Repository will accept data in either of the two HMIS data exchange formats that have been defined by HUD: HUD HMIS Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format[1]; (version 3.02 or 3.03) or the HUD HMIS XML Format (version 3.0). Data is to be exported from HMIS applications in one of these two standard formats, packaged in a ZIP file, and uploaded to the Repository.

The Repository will also accept data in the HUD HMIS XML Format. Data uploaded in the XML format will be parsed into the CSV format by the Repository prior to further processing. Once the data is parsed, the resultant CSV files are validated using the same criteria described in this document.

Data exported from HMIS systems should be packaged in a ZIP file prior to upload to the Repository.

HUD HMIS CSV Format

The complete CSV standard includes a broader range of information than is required by the Repository. Only the following files are required when uploading CSV data:

- Export.csv
- AgencyProgram.csv
- Client.csv
- ProgramParticipation.csv
- ClientHistorical.csv
- IncomeBenefits.csv
- ServiceEvent.csv

The Repository will ignore any files other than those that are required. It will also ignore data in fields that are not required. This document does not constitute documentation of the complete HUD HMIS CSV format, nor does it contain all of the information needed to produce a valid CSV export from HMIS data; the documentation published by HUD must be referenced when programming a CSV export.

[1] For complete documentation of the current HUD HMIS CSV format, see http://www.hmis.info/Resources/7527/HMIS-Comma-Separated-Value-(CSV)-Format-V.-3.0-(Based-on-March-2010-Data-Standards).aspx.

Data Integration Criteria

Upon upload of a dataset, the Repository will extract the CSV files from the zip file and run a series of validation checks to determine whether or not the uploaded data is compliant with the HUD CSV specifications and with the data quality requirements established by VA for SSVF grantees.

File Names

File names for a CSV data set must match the names as they are included in this document. For purposes of matching, the Repository will disregard underscores in file names; matching is not case sensitive.

For example, files named ClientHistorical.csv, Client_Historical.csv, client_historical.csv, and even C_L_ienT_HiS_ToRi_CaL.csv are acceptable (and all the same) under the matching criteria and would be accepted for processing by the Repository. Client-Historical.csv and ClientHostorical.csv, however, would not meet the matching criteria (because of the dash in the first and the misspelling of Historical in the second) and would be disregarded by the Repository.

Data Structure

Each of the required CSV files must be included in the uploaded dataset, and each of the files must contain headers (field names) for all of the fields defined for that particular file in the HUD HMIS CSV specifications, however, fields listed in the sections that follow that are in greyed out cells need not contain data, regardless of whether or not data was entered into HMIS for those fields. If the greyed out fields do contain data, the data will be disregarded by the Repository.

Each file should include a header row with field names. Any field that might, under any circumstances, contain a comma must be padded with quotation marks, e.g., "Cheyenne, WY."

Field Names

Field names in the CSV dataset must match the field names as they are included in this document. For purposes of matching, matching is not case-sensitive and will ignore the presence or absence of question marks (?) and virgules (/).

The Repository will scan uploaded datasets to verify that all of the fields are present and that the field names are as defined in the HUD CSV specifications. In the event that one or more fields are missing, the user will be notified that the upload has been rejected (along with the reason).

Data Types

Data values for fields in the CSV files are established by the HUD HMIS Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format Documentation. Allowable types include dates, numbers (whole numbers with no decimal), money (numbers with a decimal), or variable (text fields with no pre-defined format.

Dates should be in the format MM/DD/YYYY (i.e. 10/09/2011). Money data should include digits, an optional decimal, and a maximum of two optional digits after the decimal. In instances where the data types do not align between the uploaded data set and the HUD CSV specifications, the user will be alerted that the upload has been rejected (along with the reason).

The documentation also defines pick lists – sets of values that correspond to a list of pre-defined responses – for many of fields. In most cases, the pick lists are based on the response categories defined for a given field by the HMIS Data Standards. Where the documentation defines a pick list for a required field, values in uploads must correspond to a value in the pick list or the user will be notified that the data set has been rejected.

When an upload is rejected, the Repository will provide a specific reason (or reasons) for the rejection.

Required Fields (Allow Null = "N")

Mandatory fields such as PersonalIdentificationNumber and EntryDate are defined in the HUD CSV specifications with "Allow Null?" set to N (No) in the data formats. Optional fields are marked with Y (Yes). The upload will be rejected in its entirety if there are NULL values in required fields.

Data Quality

The Repository will evaluate the files for data quality. There are set data quality thresholds for critical fields at two levels: Notify and Reject.

At the Notify level, the Repository will require that the user acknowledge that the data quality is below the expected threshold. This will verify that the data quality in the uploaded data set accurately reflects the quality of the data entered into HMIS and that the issue was not created by a faulty export process; it also serves to alert the user to potential data quality issues.

At the Reject level, where data quality is excessively poor, or where missing data indicates that there is a potential defect in the export process, the entire uploaded dataset will be rejected by the Repository. In order to comply with the upload requirement, reject level errors must be corrected in HMIS and the data set must be exported and uploaded again.

Export.csv

This file provides basic information about the export, such as the date that it was generated and the date range that the export covers, along with an identifier (ExportIDStr) for the export itself that must be present in each of the other files. This identifier helps to verify that each of the files was generated by the same export process.

CSV Export File Specifications

EXPORT.CSV	
Field	Notes
ExportIDStr	Required; uploaded dataset will be rejected if this field is blank.
SourceID	(n/a)
SourceName	(n/a)
SourceContactFirst	(n/a)
SourceContactLast	(n/a)
SourceContactPhone	(n/a)
SourceContactExtension	(n/a)
SourceContactEmail	(n/a)
ExportDate	Required. This is the date that the export was generated.
ExportPeriodBegin	Required. This is the start data of the SSVF grant. If the date in this field is blank or is later than the Repository's recorded start date for the program, the uploaded dataset will be rejected.
ExportPeriodEnd	Required; should be equal to the ExportDate.
ExportHashing	Although optional, if there is a value in this field it must be 0 (Not Hashed). Hashed data will not be accepted. This data will not be stored.
SoftwareVendor	Required. This field should contain the name of the HMIS software vendor.
SoftwareVersion	(n/a)
AgencyProgramFile	(n/a)
BedInventoryFile	(n/a)
ClientFile	(n/a)
ClientHistoricalFile	(n/a)
IncomeBenefitsFile	(n/a)
OutcomeMeasuresFile	(n/a)
RegionsFile	(n/a)
ProgramParticipation	(n/a)
ServiceEventFile	(n/a)
SiteInformationFile	(n/a)
DeltaOrRefresh	Although optional, if there is a value in this field, it must be 1 (Refresh). This data will not be stored.

AgencyProgram.csv

This file provides basic information about the program(s) for which data is included in the export.

CSV Agency Program File Specifications

AGENCYPROGRAM.CSV	
Field	Notes
OrganizationID	Optional; may be up to 16 characters long.
OrganizationName	Optional; may be up to 125 characters long.
ProgramID	Required; may be up to 16 characters long.
ProgramName	Required; may be up to 125 characters long.
DirectServiceCode	(n/a)
SiteID	(n/a)
SiteConfigurationType	(n/a)
ProgramTypeCode	(n/a)
TargetPopulationA	(n/a)
TargetPopulationB	(n/a)
TrackingMethod	(n/a)
GranteeIdentifier	(n/a)
ReceivesMcKinneyFunding	(n/a)
DateCreated	(n/a)
DateUpdated	(n/a)
ExportIDStr	Required; must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.

Client.csv

This file provides information about the individuals served by the program(s) identified in AgencyProgram.csv during the date range identified in Export.csv.

Client records without a corresponding record of program enrollment (in ProgramParticipation) will be ignored by the Repository. The Repository will notify the user if there are any such records found at the time of upload.

CSV Client File Specifications

CLIENT.CSV	
Field	Notes
OrganizationID	(n/a)
Personal Identification Number	Every client record must include a value in this field or the upload will be rejected.
LegalFirstName	Every client record must include a first name.
LegalMiddleName	(n/a)
LegalLastName	Every client record must include a last name.
LegalSuffix	(n/a)

CLIENT.CSV	
Field	Notes
SocialSecurityNumber	Every client record must include a complete Social Security number.
SocialSecNumberQualityCode	Required.
DateOfBirth	Every client record must include a date of birth. Data sets with any information in this field that is not formatted as a date (MM/DD/YYYY) will be rejected.
DateOfBirthQualityCode	Required.
PrimaryRace	Required.
SecondaryRace	(optional)
Ethnicity	Required.
Gender	Required.
DateAdded	(n/a)
DateUpdated	(n/a)
UpdateOrDelete	(n/a)
IdentityVerification	(n/a)
ReleaseOfInformation	(n/a)
ExportIDStr	Required. Must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.

ProgramParticipation.csv

This file provides information about program participation (enrollments) during the date range identified in Export.csv for the program(s) identified in AgencyProgram.csv by clients identified in Client.csv.

Validation of some of the fields in this file is contingent on whether or not the client was an adult at the time of program entry. For each record in ProgramParticipation.csv, a client is an adult if s/he was at least 18 years old on the EntryDate in ProgramParticipation. Where there is no valid date in the DateOfBirth field in Client.csv, error checking will assume that the client is an adult.

CSV Program Participation Specifications

PROGRAMPARTICIPATION.CSV	
Field	Notes
PersonalIdentificationNumber	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in Client.csv will be ignored.
OrganizationID	(n/a)
ProgramID	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload

PROGRAMPARTICIPATION.CSV	
Field	Notes
	will be rejected. Records with a value not included in AgencyProgram.csv will be discarded.
SiteID	(n/a)
EntryDate	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected.
ExitDate	Required for clients who have been discharged. Uploads with values in this field that are earlier than the EntryDate or are not in the format MM/DD/YYYY will be rejected.
DateUpdated	(n/a)
VeteranStatus	Required for all adults.
DisablingCondition	Required.
PriorResidence	Required for all adults.
LengthOfStayAtPriorResidence	Required for all adults.
ZIPCode	Required for all adults.
ZIPQualityCode	Required for all adults.
HousingStatusAtEntry	Required. Records with missing, don't know, or refused values will not be included in reporting.
HousingStatusAtExit	Required for clients with an ExitDate.
HouseholdIdentificationNumber	Required.
Destination	Required for clients with an ExitDate.
ReasonForLeaving	(n/a)
RelationshipToHeadOfHousehold	(n/a)
HUDChronicHomeless	(n/a)
ExportIDStr	Required. Must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.

ClientHistorical.csv

This file includes information about whether or not clients are receiving income and/or non-cash benefits and, in some cases, about whether or not clients have specific disabilities.

Collection of data in fields with an asterisk (*) before the field name in the table below is optional for SSVF programs; if the data is entered into HMIS, however, the data should be included in the export consistent with HMIS Data Standards.

CSV Client Historical Specifications

CLIENTHISTORICAL.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
PersonalIdentificationNumber	Every record must contain a value in this field or the

CLIENTHISTORICAL.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
	upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in Client.csv will be ignored.
OrganizationID	(n/a)
ProgramID	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in AgencyProgram.csv will be discarded.
SiteID	(n/a)
AssessmentDate	Uploads with values in this field that are not in the format MM/DD/YYYY will be rejected. In general, the value in this field must match the value in the EntryDate field in ProgramParticipation in order to be considered data collected at program entry and must match the value in the ExitDate field in order to be considered data collected at program exit.
DateUpdated	(n/a)
IncomeTotalMonthly	Values in this field must be in the format of a number with an optional decimal, e.g., 123.45. No dollar signs, letters, or other symbols may be included.
IncomeLast30Days	Required.
NonCashBenefitsLast30Days	Required.
* *PhysicalDisability*	(n/a)
* *ReceivePhysicalDisabilityServices*	(n/a)
* *HasDevelopmentalDisability*	(n/a)
* *ReceiveDevelopmentalDisabilityServices*	(n/a)
* *HasChronicHealthCondition*	(n/a)
* *ReceiveChronicHealthServices*	(n/a)
* *HasHIVAIDS*	(n/a)
* *ReceiveHIVAIDSServices*	(n/a)
* *HasMentalHealthProblem*	(n/a)
* *MentalHealthIndefinite*	(n/a)
* *ReceiveMentalHealthServices*	(n/a)
* *HasSubstanceAbuseProblem*	(n/a)
* *SubstanceAbuseIndefinite*	(n/a)
* *ReceiveSubstanceAbuseServices*	(n/a)
* *DomesticViolenceSurvivor*	(n/a)
* *DVOccurred*	(n/a)
CurrentlyEmployed	(n/a)

CLIENTHISTORICAL.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
HoursWorkedLastWeek	(n/a)
EmploymentTenure	(n/a)
LookingForWork	(n/a)
CurrentlyInSchool	(n/a)
VocationalTraining	(n/a)
HighestSchoolLevel	(n/a)
Degree	(n/a)
HealthStatus	(n/a)
PregnancyStatus	(n/a)
DueDate	(n/a)
ServiceEra	(n/a)
MilitaryServiceDuration	(n/a)
ServedInWarZone	(n/a)
WarZone	(n/a)
MonthsInWarZone	(n/a)
ReceivedFire	(n/a)
MilitaryBranch	(n/a)
DischargeStatus	(n/a)
ChildCurrentlyEnrolledInSchool	(n/a)
ChildSchoolName	(n/a)
ChildMcKinneyVentoLiaison	(n/a)
ChildSchoolType	(n/a)
ChildSchoolLastEnrolledDate	(n/a)
ChildEnrollmentBarrier	(n/a)
ExportIDStr	Required. Must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.
DataCollectionStage	(Optional; identifies the point in the enrollment when data was collected, e.g., at program entry, during enrollment, at program exit, or after program exit.)

IncomeBenefits.csv

This file provides information about specific sources of income and non-cash benefits.

CSV Income & Benefits Specifications

INCOMEBENEFITS.CSV	
Field	**Notes**

INCOMEBENEFITS.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
PersonalIdentificationNumber	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in Client.csv will be ignored.
OrganizationID	(n/a)
ProgramID	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in AgencyProgram.csv will be discarded.
SiteID	(n/a)
AssessmentDate	Uploads with values in this field that are not in the format MM/DD/YYYY will be rejected. In general, the value in this field must match the value in the EntryDate field in ProgramParticipation in order to be considered data collected at program entry and must match the value in the ExitDate field in order to be considered data collected at program exit.
DateUpdated	(n/a)
IncomeBenefitType	All records must have a value in this field.
SourceCode	Uploads that include values not defined in the HMIS Data Standards will be rejected.
SourceOther	(n/a)
MonthlyAmount	Values in this field must be in the format of a number with an optional decimal, e.g., 123.45. No dollar signs, letters, or other symbols may be included.
ExportIDStr	Required. Must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.
DataCollectionStage	(Optional; identifies the point in the enrollment when data was collected, e.g., at program entry, during enrollment, at program exit, or after program exit.)

ServiceEvent.csv

This file includes data about specific services provided to clients by SSVF grantees.

CSV Service Event Specifications

SERVICEEVENT.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
PersonalIdentificationNumber	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in Client.csv will be ignored.
OrganizationID	(n/a)
ProgramID	Every record must contain a value in this field or the upload will be rejected. Records with a value not included in

SERVICEEVENT.CSV	
Field	**Notes**
	AgencyProgram.csv will be ignored.
SiteID	(n/a)
ServiceEventType	Required.
ServiceEventStartDate	Uploads with values in this field that are not in the format MM/DD/YYYY will be rejected. Records with no value in this field will be ignored.
ServiceEventEndDate	Uploads with values in this field that are not in the format MM/DD/YYYY will be rejected. Uploads with values in this field that are earlier than ServiceEventStartDate will be rejected.
ServiceCode	Required
ServiceAIRSCode	(n/a)
IsReferral	(n/a)
QuantityFrequency	(n/a)
FinancialAssistanceAmount	Required for records of financial assistance. Values in this field must be in the format of a number with an optional decimal, e.g., 123.45. No dollar signs, letters, or other symbols may be included.
FundingCategory	(n/a)
GrantIDNumber	(n/a)
IsRecurring	(n/a)
PeriodInterval	(n/a)
AdvanceArrears	(n/a)
ContactTime	(n/a)
ContactSite	(n/a)
ClientEngaged	(n/a)
AssetListID	(n/a)
AssetID	(n/a)
DomainIDCode	(n/a)
DateUpdated	(n/a)
ExportIDStr	Required. Must match the ExportIDStr in Export.csv.

HUD HMIS XML Format

Data uploaded in the XML format must be consistent with the current HMIS XML schema (version 3.0 or later). The Repository will parse XML data into the CSV format prior to further processing. Acceptance of uploaded data will require that the resultant CSV files meet all of the data quality criteria established by VA for SSVF grantees. In order for this to occur, all of the required data must be collected, entered into HMIS, and included in the export.

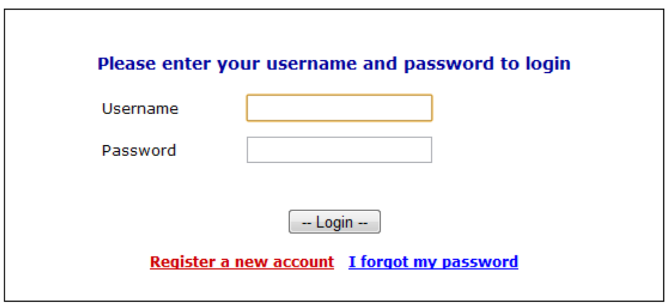
Toolkit: Repository User Notes

Accessing the Repository

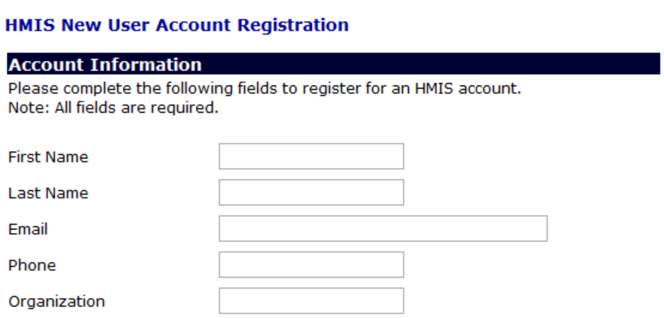
To access the Repository, go to http://www.hmisrepository.va.gov and click on the 'Click here to log in' link.

Creating an Account

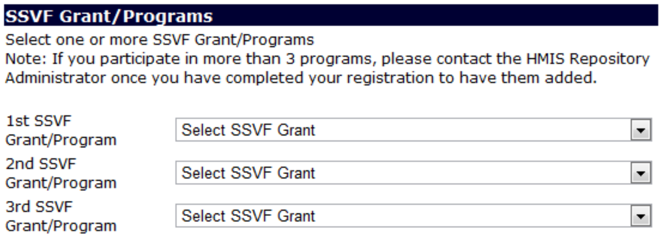
From the log in page, click on the 'Register a new account' link.



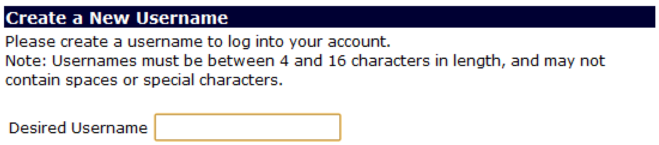
Enter your first name, last name, the email address the Repository should use to send your account confirmation, your work phone number, and the name of the organization that employs you. All of these fields are required. The phone number should include an area code.



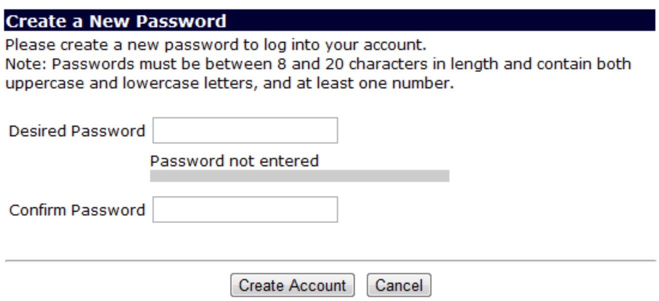
Select the name of the program(s) for which you will be uploading data. In order to create an account, you must select at least one program, and if you only select one program, it must be in the field labeled '1st SSVF Grant/Program.' If you will be uploading more than three data sets each month, select three programs at the time of registration. After your account is created, you will need to contact a Repository Administrator to add the additional grantee programs to your account.



Enter your desired username. Usernames must be between 4 and 16 characters in length and contain only letters and numbers – no spaces or special characters (such as @, $, or &, etc.). Each user must have a unique username, so if the name you choose is a duplicate of an existing username, you will be asked to choose a different one.



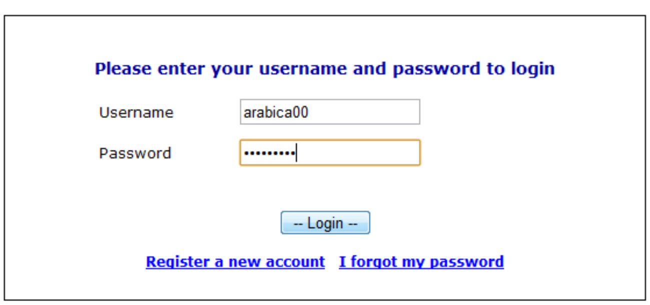
Create a password for your account. The password must be between 8 and 20 characters in length, contain at least one lowercase letter, at least one UPPERCASE letter, and at least one number. Once you've created your password, enter the same password a second time and click 'Create Account.'



Within a few minutes, you should receive an email asking you to confirm your email address.

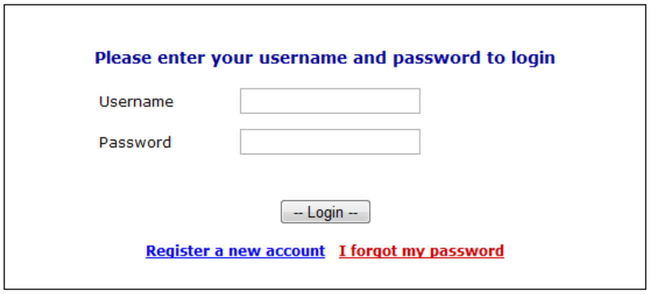
After you've confirmed your email address, a Repository Administrator will have to authorize your account to log in. You may email the VA technical assistance team to request authorization.

Logging In to the Repository



Enter your username and password, and click 'Login'.

Forgotten Username or Password



If you've forgotten your username or your password, click the "I forgot my password" hyperlink on the login page.

Specify whether you've forgotten your username or your password, and provide your name and email address (the same one you used to register). You will receive an email with the information that you need to log in.

Generating an Export of HMIS Data

First, you will need to export your SSVF data from HMIS. The export should include all SSVF data entered into HMIS, regardless of date – the most current and complete picture of your program from the start date of your grant right up to the day you generate the export.

Only data related to the SSVF program should be included in the export.

When you are exporting data, if your HMIS asks you for a start date and an end date for the export:

- The start date should be the start date of your grant.
- The end date should be the date on which you are generating the export – today's date, whatever today is.

Handling More than One Export

Every time you successfully upload a file, it replaces any and all data previously uploaded for your program.

If your program is participating in more than one HMIS implementation or if producing a complete data set for your program requires more than one export for any reason, the Repository must be set up ahead of time with a separate upload program for each of the files that you're going to upload.

Contact the VA HMIS technical assistance team to get set up for multiple uploads.

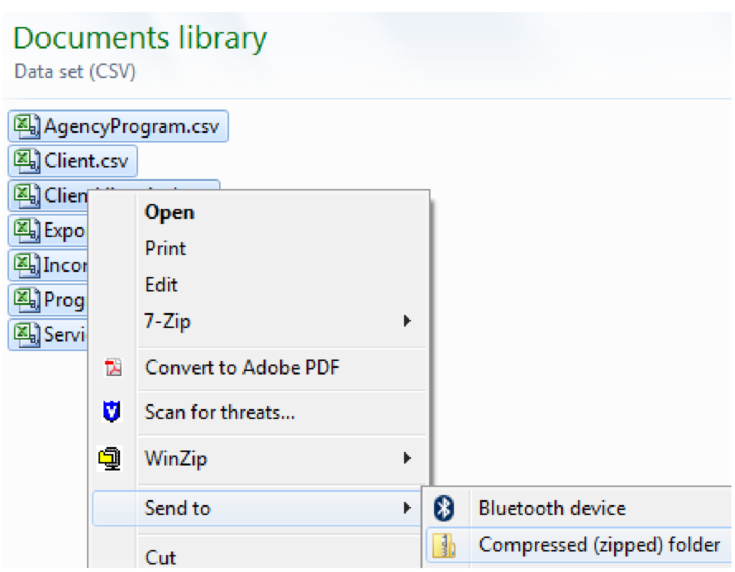
Preparing CSV Data for Upload

A CSV export should include, at a minimum, files with the following names:

- Export.csv
- AgencyProgram.csv
- Client.csv
- ProgramParticipation.csv
- ClientHistorical.csv
- IncomeBenefits.csv
- ServiceEvent.csv

The CSV files generated by your HMIS application must be packaged in a ZIP file using freely available software such as WinZip or 7-zip prior to upload to the Repository.

In Windows, if you select all seven of the CSV files and then right-click on them, you can select 'Send to' and then 'Compressed (zipped) folder' to create a ZIP file – it will be created in the same folder as the CSV files.

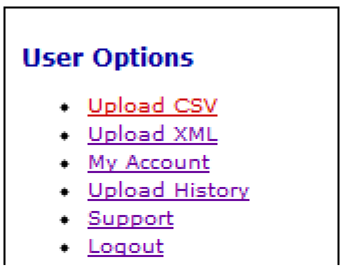


When you zip your files, make sure to zip ONLY the CSV files – don't zip up the folder that they're in.

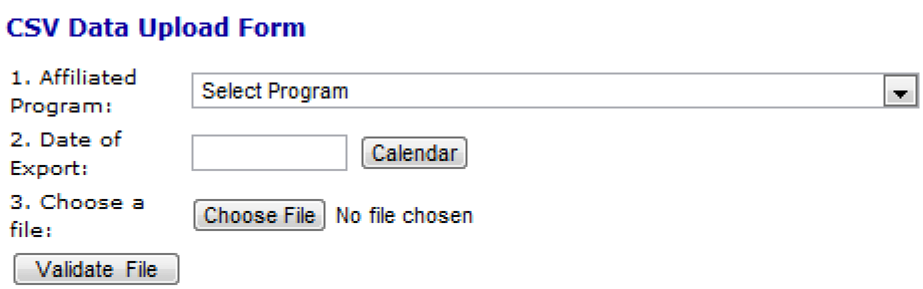
You can name the ZIP file anything you want – just make sure that the name includes the .zip extension and does not contain and special characters such as #, $, %, @, etc. Letters, numbers, dashes (-), underscores (_), and periods (.) are the only characters you should use when you name your ZIP file.

Uploading CSV Data

From the list of User Options on the left-hand side of the page, click on *Upload CSV*.



First, you will have to enter some information about your upload.



1. Affiliated Program – the name of the specific SSVF program for which you are uploading data.
2. Date of Export – enter the date on which the file was exported from HMIS.
3. Choose File – this will open a dialog box in which you can select the zip file from your network or hard drive.

When you've entered all of the required information, click 'Validate File.'

The Repository will process your files and check them for data quality and to make sure that the files include all of the necessary columns. When it's done, it will display a file validation report (see the File Validation section for more information about how to read the results).

If your files validate, you must then click the *Upload Data* button to transmit the data from your files to the Repository database.

Unzip successful
numFiles: 7
Index 1: ServiceEvent.csv
Index 2: AgencyProgram.csv
Index 3: ClientHistorical.csv
Index 4: Client.csv
Index 5: IncomeBenefits.csv
Index 6: ProgramParticipation.csv
Index 7: Export.csv

Step 3. Validate File

File 1: Export.csv -> export.csv is a valid file name. [2 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 2: AgencyProgram.csv -> agencyprogram.csv is a valid file name. [2 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 3: Client.csv -> client.csv is a valid file name. [159 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

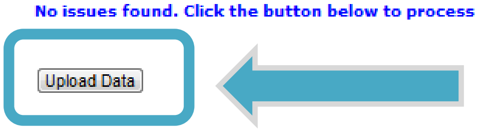
File 4: ClientHistorical.csv -> clienthistorical.csv is a valid file name. [315 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 5: IncomeBenefits.csv -> incomebenefits.csv is a valid file name. [321 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 6: ServiceEvent.csv -> serviceevent.csv is a valid file name. [988 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

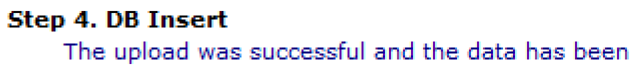
File 7: ProgramParticipation.csv -> programparticipation.csv is a valid file name. [192 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

[Validation Result Summary]
No issues found. Click the button below to process uploaded data files.



After you click *Upload Data*, The Repository will process the uploaded data and you will receive a message that the data has been accepted.

You MUST click the Upload Data button at the bottom of the validation report to complete your upload!



If you see this message, congratulations! You are finished until next month.

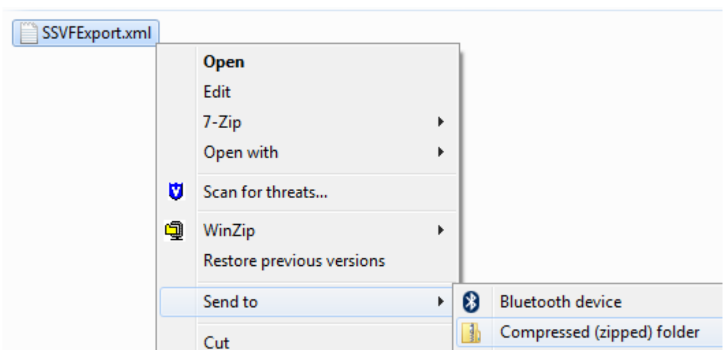
If you do not see this message, your upload was not successful and you will need to correct any issues with your data and try again.

Preparing XML Data for Upload

An XML export should consist of a single file with a filename extension of .xml.

The XML file generated by your HMIS application must be packaged in a ZIP file using freely available software such as WinZip or 7-zip prior to upload to the Repository.

In Windows, if you right-click on the file, you can select ‘Send to’ and then ‘Compressed (zipped) folder’ to create a ZIP file.

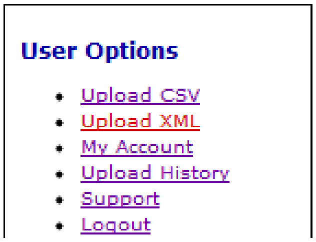


When you zip the XML file, make sure to zip ONLY the XML file – don’t zip up the folder that it’s in.

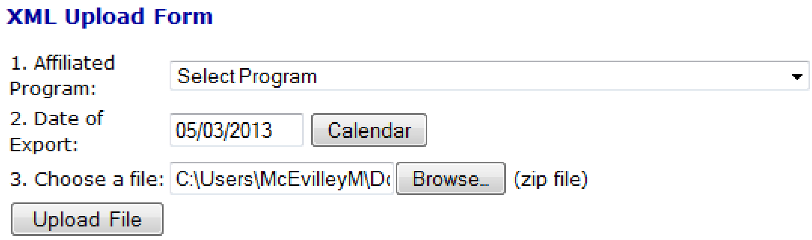
You can name the ZIP file anything you want – just make sure that the name includes the .zip extension and does not contain and special characters such as #, $, %, @, etc. Letters, numbers, dashes (-), underscores (_), and periods (.) are the only characters you should use when you name your ZIP file.

Uploading XML Data

From the list of User Options on the left-hand side of the page, click on *Upload XML*.



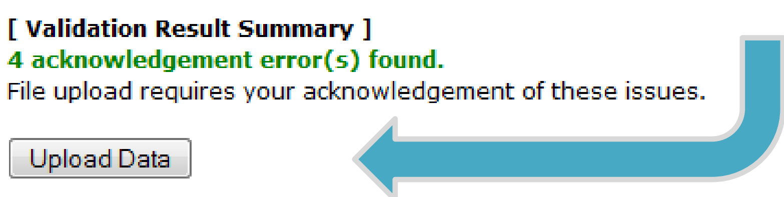
First, you will have to enter some information about your upload.



1. Affiliated Program – the name of the specific SSVF program for which you are uploading data.
2. Date of Export – enter the date on which the file was exported from HMIS.
3. Choose a file – this will open a dialog box in which you can select the zip file from your network or hard drive.

When you've entered all of the required information, click 'Upload File.'

Depending on the size of the file you're uploading, it might take up to 5 minutes before you get the file validation report. Please give the Repository some time to process and validate your data. After reviewing the file validation report (see the File Validation section for more information about the report), you MUST click the *Upload Data* button at the bottom of the report to complete your upload.



Sometimes the validation report is long and colorful. Although the *Upload Data* button is small, gray, and at the bottom of the page, it's critical because it tells the Repository that you are satisfied with your data and want it copied to the database.

After clicking the *Upload Data* button, you will see a message that indicates the Repository is attempting to integrate your data into the national database.

Upload Data Processing Data. Please wait.

Once processing is complete, a summary of the results for each file will be displayed. If the data is successfully added to the database, the following message will be shown:

Step 4. DB Insert

* AnXMLUpload.zip with file id 4507 ha
* Program Status has been updated a

The upload was successful and the da

If you see this message, congratulations! You are finished until next month.

You MUST click the Upload Data button at the bottom to complete your upload!

If you do not see this message, your upload was not successful and you will need to correct any issues with your data and try again.

File Validation

In order for the Repository to process the data set, the export must be compliant with HUD's XML or CSV standards. In order for VA to be able to use the data to report on SSVF program activity, the data quality must meet minimum thresholds.

If your upload is in the CSV format, the Repository will unzip your data files and evaluate them immediately. If your upload is in the XML format, the Repository will first transform your XML data into the seven required CSV files, and then evaluate the data quality. The data quality criteria are the same for both CSV and XML.

If the export is not compliant with the published standards, the data set will be rejected by the Repository, and information about the specific issue(s) will be provided.

Step 3. Validate File

File 1: Export.csv[2 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 2: AgencyProgram.csv[2 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 3: Client.csv[14 rows found in the file.]
File Error #1 : 9-Oct is not in the valid date format for field: DateOfBirth
(row #2 pid: 86756)

If a data set is rejected because of the format of a field or the structure of the export, you might be able to fix it by correcting the data in your HMIS, but it may be necessary for your vendor to make corrections. If your vendor has any questions, technical assistance is available.

The uploaded dataset will also be evaluated for data quality. Data collection and HMIS data entry is mandatory for SSVF grantees. If too many client records are missing critical data elements, the data set will be rejected by the Repository. There are two levels of data quality thresholds: Notify and Reject.

File Validation

Step 1. File Upload

File name: SampleCSVDataImperfect.zip
File type: application/x-zip-compressed
File size: 4.76953125 Kb

Step 2. Unzip

Unzip successful
numFiles: 7
Index 1: ServiceEvent.csv
Index 2: AgencyProgram.csv
Index 3: ClientHistorical.csv
Index 4: Client.csv
Index 5: IncomeBenefits.csv
Index 6: ProgramParticipation.csv
Index 7: Export.csv

Step 3. Validate File

File 1: Export.csv[2 rows found in the file.]
Rejected #1 : Unable to process. Data is incomplete. The end of the export period for this upload is 4/30/2013 but the date of the export is 5/3/2013 Please use the date that the export is generated as the end date.
(row #2)

File 2: AgencyProgram.csv[2 rows found in the file.]
No issue found.

File 3: Client.csv[14 rows found in the file.]
Acknowledgement required #1 : There are 2 don't know or refused answer (PrimaryRace) in client.csv out of 13 records
which is more than 10% acknowledge threshold limit set for this data.

At the Notify level, users are alerted to potential data quality issues, but the Repository will accept the upload. For example, if any client record is missing a last name, the user will be notified. Grantees are strongly encouraged to correct issues at the Notify level. Even if the Repository does not reject your upload, missing data at these rates is a problem.

At the Reject level, the Repository will reject the uploaded data set. For example, if your export period is incorrect, the upload will be rejected. Thresholds are currently set very high for the Reject level. Missing data at these rates is a serious problem.

If a data set is rejected due to poor data quality, SSVF program staff will have to update client records in HMIS. Once the HMIS data has been updated, the export and upload will have to start over from the beginning.

Reading the Validation Results

Every once in a while, a program has a 'successful' upload, but the upload doesn't include any client data. The validation results can tell you more than whether or not your data quality is acceptable – they can also help you to verify that all of the data that you intend to upload is there. There are separate validation results for each of the CSV files, and just the number of rows found in the files can be very informative.

File 1: Export.csv[2 rows found in the file.]

This file holds data about the export itself – the date that the data was exported, the start date and end date, etc. It should always (and only) include two rows – the first row holds column names and the second row holds the data.

ExportIDS	SourceID	SourceNa	Source	Source	Source	Source	Source(	ExportDate	ExportPeriodBegin	ExportPeriodEnd	ExportHas	SoftwareVenc
100568	1	HMIS Inc.	Molly	McE			molly_r	5/3/2013	9/15/2011	5/3/2013		North Kaibab

Export

File 2: AgencyProgram.csv[2 rows found in the file.]

This file holds data about the program(s) as it is set up in HMIS – the organization name, program name, and other info. Most often, there will be two rows – the column headers and data for one program – but sometimes a single SSVF program is split out into multiple 'programs' in HMIS and there are more. Ideally, this file will only contain information about the program(s) whose data is included in the export.

1	OrganizationID	OrganizationName	ProgramID	ProgramName	DirectServiceCode	SiteID	SiteConfiguration1
2	506	Ribbon Falls, Inc.	19509	Phantom Ranch, Ltd.	1	2182	

AgencyProgram

File 3: Client.csv[589 rows found in the file.]

This file holds data about clients – name, SSN, DOB, race, gender, and ethnicity, and the PersonalIdentificationNumber (PIN). The PIN is supposed to be unique to each client in an HMIS, and it's how the records in Client.csv are linked to records in ProgramParticipation and the other data files. Household members are considered clients and they all have records.

Once again, the first row is column names, so the raw count of clients is one less than the number of rows in the file. The count is unduplicated in the sense that there should only be one record for each person, regardless of how many program enrollments they have, but sometimes duplicate records are created accidentally in an HMIS.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Organizati	PersonalI(	LegalFirstI	LegalMidc	LegalLastNar	LegalSuffi	SocialSecurityN	SocialSecI	DateOfBirth	DateOfBir	PrimaryRa	Secondary	Ethnicity	Gender
2	506	12	Beric		Dundarrion			8	6/26/1968	1	5		9	
3	506	16	Davos		Seaworth		654654654	1	7/1/1972	1	1		0	1
4	506	452	Lyra		Mormont		987987987	1	9/2/1981	1	5	2	0	0

Client

The fact that there is a record here does not necessarily mean that a client will be counted in reporting – there must also be a valid record for that person in ProgramParticipation.csv.

File 7: ProgramParticipation.csv[600 rows found in the file.]

ProgramParticipation is File 7 in the validation results, but it's the next logical step in the file structure. This file is central to all reporting. It holds data about program entries and exits and it should have one row per person per program entry.

In addition to the entry and exit dates, it also has fields for which there is only one response per program enrollment – e.g., VeteranStatus, PriorResidence, HousingStatusAtEntry, Destination, etc. The PIN in this file links to the PIN in Client.csv. A person who has been enrolled multiple times should have only one record in Client.csv, but would have multiple records in ProgramParticipation.csv.

As an example, in the file shown below, client 12 has two program entries – one on 10/9/2011 and one on 2/14/2012.

PersonalIdentification	Orga	ProgramID	SiteID	EntryDate	ExitDate	DateUpdated	VeteranSt	Disabling(	PriorResic	LengthOfStayAtI	ZIPCode	ZIPQuality	HousingSt	HousingSt	H
12	506	19509		10/9/2011	12/20/2011	12/20/2011	1	9	22	5	98989	1	2	4	
16	506	19509		11/2/2011	3/1/2012	3/1/2012	1	1	1	2		8	1	4	
452	506	19509		12/5/2011		12/5/2011	1	0	1	3	98980	1	1		
12	506	19509		2/14/2012		2/14/2012	1	1	16	1	98969	1	1		

ProgramParticipation

The raw count of rows (-1 for the column names) is – when everything is as it should be – a duplicated count of clients, or an unduplicated count of program entries. Things are very often not as they should be, though, for various reasons. If the number of rows in ProgramParticipation is more than 10-15% higher than the number of rows in Client.csv, there may be a problem with the data.

The raw count only takes into account the fact that a record is present, and the number you see here might be substantially different from the number you see in reports. One common cause for big discrepancies is records that are missing HousingStatusAtEntry; housing status is required to identify whether a client was served under Prevention or Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and clients whose records are missing this information do not get counted in any reporting.

File 4: ClientHistorical.csv[1080 rows found in the file.]

This file holds data that might change over the course of a program enrollment and is collected at multiple points, such as total monthly income. For every program entry, there should be at least one record in ClientHistorical. For every program exit, there should be an additional record in ClientHistorical. That is the minimum, but some systems end up creating considerably more records than that. The records in this file are linked to the records in ProgramParticipation by PIN, ProgramID, and the AssessmentDate. If the AssessmentDate in ClientHistorical matches the EntryDate in ProgramParticipation, it is reported as data collected at program entry. If it matches the ExitDate, it is reported as data collected at program exit. Anything in between is considered an update. Anything with an AssessmentDate that does not fall inside the date range of a program enrollment is ignored.

In the sample below, client 12 has 3 different records – one for his program entry on 10/9/2011, one for his program exit on 12/20/2011, and a third for his program entry on 2/14/2012. For the first two, his total monthly income was $540.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	PersonalIdent	Organizati	ProgramID	SiteID	AssessmentDate	DateUpdated	IncomeTotalMonthly	IncomeLast30	NonCashB
2	12	506	19509		10/9/2011	10/9/2011	540	1	0
3	16	506	19509		11/2/2011	11/2/2011	1224	1	0
4	452	506	19509		12/5/2011	12/5/2011	0	0	0
5	12	506	19509		12/20/2011	12/20/2011	540	1	0
6	12	506	19509		2/14/2012	2/14/2012	0	0	0
7	16	506	19509		3/1/2012	3/1/2012	1576	1	1

ClientHistorical

A Note on XML Validation Results for the ClientHistorical File

There are a few differences in the XML schema and CSV structure that can be a little challenging to resolve. Ultimately, in reporting on HMIS data for the SSVF programs, there are 3 types of data in ClientHistorical that we might look at:

- Data about income and benefits collected at program entry;
- Data about income and benefits collected at program exit;
- Updates to income or benefits data for people who have not yet exited the program.

In order to reconcile the discrepancies between the XML and CSV structures and to ensure that no data that might be relevant for reporting is omitted, the Repository creates one ClientHistorical record for each program entry, one ClientHistorical record for each program exit, and one ClientHistorical record for each person who has not yet exited (to hold any updates to income or benefits since the client entered the program). It then populates the fields in those records with the most appropriate data.

However, it is not uncommon, and it is totally acceptable, for clients who have not yet exited the program to only have the income and benefits data that was collected at program entry. For those clients, TotalMonthlyIncome, IncomeLast30, and NonCashBenefitsLast30 will be blank in the record that was created to accept update data.

The result of this is that for now, the Repository is interpreting those blanks as missing data and data quality for ClientHistorical can appear alarming. Please do not be surprised as this 'missing' data will not count against your overall data quality in any way.

File 5: IncomeBenefits.csv[1825 rows found in the file.]

This file contains information about specific sources of income and benefits – the records are linked to records in ClientHistorical by PIN, ProgramID, and the AssessmentDate. For each record in ClientHistorical, there should be one record in IncomeBenefits for each income or benefit source that the client has at that time. If the client has no source of income or benefits at the time, there would be no records in IncomeBenefits. As a result, the number of records in this file can vary quite a bit.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
1	PersonalIdent	Organizati	ProgramID	SiteID	AssessmentDate	DateUpdated	IncomeBer	SourceCode	SourceOtl	MonthlyAmount	Ex
2	12	506	19509		10/9/2011	10/9/2011	1	15		60	
3	12	506	19509		10/9/2011	10/9/2011	2	1			
4	12	506	19509		10/9/2011	10/9/2011	1	10		480	
5	12	506	19509		12/20/2011	12/20/2011	1	15		60	
6	12	506	19509		12/20/2011	12/20/2011	2	1			
7	12	506	19509		12/20/2011	12/20/2011	1	10		480	

IncomeBenefits

The sample file above shows all of the IncomeBenefits records for client 12 – the first three records show that at his first program entry on 10/9/2011, he was receiving $60 in child support (source code 15), $480 in TANF (source code 10), and he was also receiving Medicaid (source code 1). The last three records show that he had exactly the same sources and amounts of income / benefits at the time of his exit on 12/20/2011. When he re-entered the program on 2/14/2012, however, he had 0 income and no benefits (as recorded in ClientHistorical) so there are no records in IncomeBenefits for him that are dated 2/14/2012.

File 6: ServiceEvent.csv[3565 rows found in the file.]

This file holds information about specific services, and there is a record for each instance of service. As such, the number of records can vary wildly. Until the next version of the HMIS Data Standards, which will allow for complete recording of services that are funded by the SSVF grant, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between services funded by SSVF and the services available in most HMIS applications. None of the current Repository reporting includes any of the data in this table.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1	PersonalIdenti	OrganizationI	ProgramID	SiteID	ServiceEventType	ServiceEventStartDate	ServiceEventEndDate	Ser
2	12	506	19509		1	10/9/2011	10/31/2011	
3	12	506	19509		1	10/9/2011	10/9/2011	
4	12	506	19509		2	10/10/2011	10/10/2011	
5	12	506	19509		2	10/10/2011	10/10/2011	

ServiceEvent

How to Tell If Your Upload Was Successful

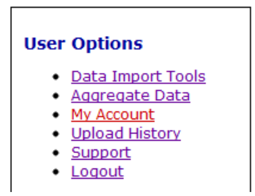
There are four basic steps in successfully uploading data to the Repository:

1. Identify the zip file that you want to upload and click *Upload File* (XML) or *Validate File* (CSV).
2. Review your file validation report.
3. Click *Upload Data*.
4. Wait until you see a message like this one:

Until you see that message, your data has not been uploaded to the Repository.

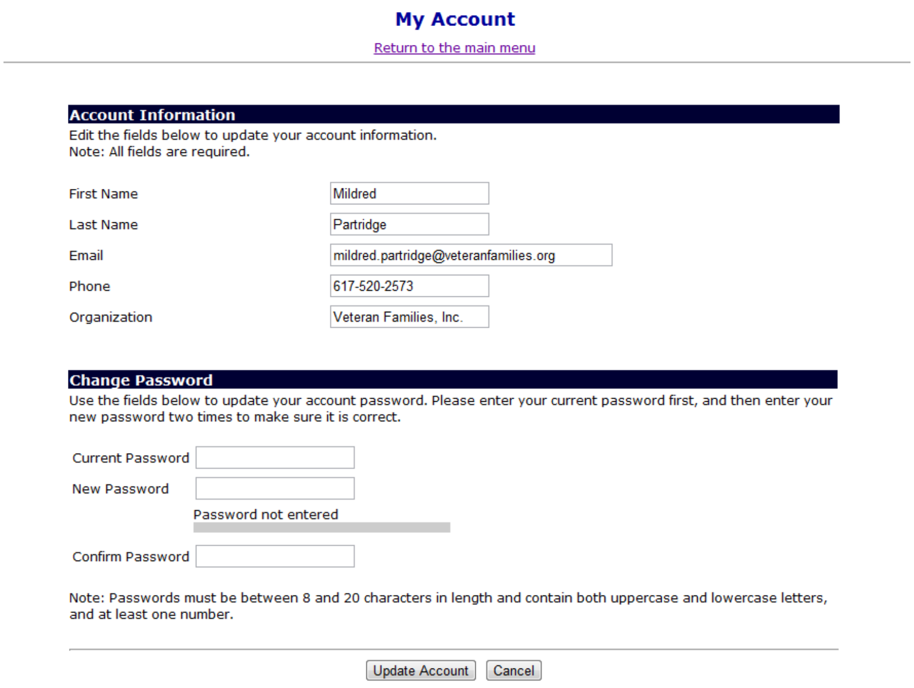
Your Account Information

Each Repository user should have his/her own username and password; please never share your username or password with anyone. There is no charge for these accounts; your organization may have as many as you need to make sure that SSVF program data gets uploaded to the Repository on time every month.



You can update your name, email address, phone number, organization name, and password by clicking ‘My Account’ on the User Options menu. It’s very important that the Repository has a current email address and phone number for you so that we can contact you in the event that there is an issue with your data and so that you can retrieve your login information if you forget your password. Your name is also important to accurately identify you (and so that if we send you an email, we’re using the name you prefer).

Please note that if your Repository user account has you entered as Millie but you would prefer to be addressed as Mildred, or if your email address or phone number changes, the program will allow for you to edit those things. However, if you are leaving and someone else will be taking over the upload responsibilities, the new person should create his/her own account. It would not be appropriate for you to edit your account information to reflect the new user’s name and contact information.



My Account

Return to the main menu

Account Information

Edit the fields below to update your account information.
Note: All fields are required.

First Name	Mildred
Last Name	Partridge
Email	mildred.partridge@veteranfamilies.org
Phone	617-520-2573
Organization	Veteran Families, Inc.

Change Password

Use the fields below to update your account password. Please enter your current password first, and then enter your new password two times to make sure it is correct.

Current Password

New Password

Password not entered

Confirm Password

Note: Passwords must be between 8 and 20 characters in length and contain both uppercase and lowercase letters, and at least one number.

Update Account | Cancel

Once you've updated your information, click 'Update Account.'

A Final Note

You MUST click the Upload Data button at the bottom of the validation report to complete your upload!

G. Section 4: Data Quality Management

Data Quality Plan Components

A data quality monitoring plan is a set of procedures that outlines a regular, on-going process for analyzing and reporting on the reliability and validity of the data entered into the HMIS at both the program and aggregate system levels. A data quality monitoring plan is the primary tool for tracking and generating information necessary to identify areas for data quality improvement.

Most data quality monitoring plans outline the procedures and frequency by which data is reviewed. The plan highlights expected data quality goals, the steps necessary to measure progress toward the goals, and the roles and responsibilities for ensuring the data in the HMIS is reliable and valid.

The local CoC will have a procedure in place to assess and monitor data quality. The HMIS Lead Agency produces reports that the CoC, or a data committee working on their behalf, uses to review and monitor data quality. Good data quality is a vital component to the CoCs application for funding through HUD.

VA Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD) grantees are expected to comply with local HMIS Data Quality Standards. HUD-VASH programs contributing data to HMIS are expected to contribute data in accordance with local HMIS Data Quality Standards.

SSVF programs are expected to comply with HMIS Data Quality Standards. As part of that compliance, SSVF grantees are expected to monitor data quality and ensure that subgrantees are also in compliance.

The following information outlines the concepts of data quality and the recommended process for monitoring. VA providers should understand data quality and how it impacts both community planning and VA needs. They should actively seek to achieve the highest levels of quality possible.

What is Data Quality?

Data quality is a term that refers to the reliability and validity of client-level data collected in the HMIS. It is measured by the extent to which the client data in the system reflects actual information in the real world. With good data quality, the CoC can "tell the story" of the population experiencing homelessness.

The quality of data is determined by assessing certain characteristics such as timeliness, completeness, and accuracy. In order to assess data quality, a community must first think about what data quality means and document this understanding in a data quality plan.

What is a Data Quality Plan?

A data quality plan is a community-level document that facilitates the ability of the CoC to achieve statistically valid and reliable data. A data quality plan is generally developed by the HMIS Lead Agency with input from community stakeholders and is formally adopted by the CoC. At a minimum, the plan should:

- Identify the responsibilities of all parties within the CoC that affect data quality.
- Establish specific data quality benchmarks for timeliness, completeness, and accuracy.
- Describe the procedures that the HMIS Lead Agency will take to implement the plan and monitor progress to meet data quality benchmarks.
- Establish a timeframe for implementing the plan to monitor the quality of data on a regular basis.

In short, a data quality plan sets expectations for both the community and the end users to capture reliable and valid data on persons accessing the homeless assistance system.

Collecting data in the human service field can be challenging; clients presenting for services are often distraught, scared, or confused. It may be difficult to obtain accurate information from them, but case managers and others working with these clients need to understand the importance of obtaining accurate information from all clients they serve. Without good information, it is difficult to assess a client's needs and determine the appropriate level of services for each homeless individual or family.

A plan that sets data quality expectations will help case managers better understand the importance of working with their clients to gather timely, complete, and accurate data. For example, most homeless providers collect information on a client's military service history, or veteran status. Knowing whether a client has served in the military is an important piece of information; it helps case managers make appropriate referrals and alerts them to specific benefits the client may be eligible to receive – benefits that could help the client become permanently housed. If the case manager ***does not*** know the veterans status of a client, a piece of their story is missing.

Each component of a data quality plan includes a benchmark – a quantitative measure used to assess reliability and validity of the data. A community may decide to set the benchmark for a missing (or null) value for a certain data element at 5%. This would mean that no more than 5% of all the client records in the system should be "missing" a response to a particular data element.

"Garbage in, Garbage Out"

Many have heard the phrase "garbage in, garbage out," when referring to data collection. It is well known that the reports generated from a system are only as good as the data that is entered into the system. That is why establishing benchmarks for data quality and implementing ongoing monitoring protocols is critical to ensuring communities have valid and reliable data to make sound informed decisions.

There are 5 components to a good Data Quality Standard: Timeliness, Completeness, Accuracy, Monitoring, and Incentives. Although these standards have already been determined by the local CoC, VA programs must comply with local standards. Therefore, VA programs should obtain and review the local Standards and Compliance Plan for the local CoC.

Below is a brief overview of each Data Quality Standard component. For more information, a toolkit on how to develop a Data Quality Standard and Compliance Plan is available on HUD's Homeless Resource Exchange (https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/HUDDataQualityToolkit.pdf).

Component 1: Timeliness

Entering data in a timely manner can reduce human error that occurs when too much time has elapsed between the data collection (or service transaction) and the data entry. The individual doing the data entry may be relying on handwritten notes or their own recall of a case management session, a service transaction, or a program exit date; so the sooner the data is entered, the better chance the data will be correct. Timely data entry also ensures that the data is accessible when it is needed, either proactively (e.g. monitoring purposes, increasing awareness, meeting funded requirements), or reactively (e.g. responding to requests for information, responding to inaccurate information).

The Standard for entering HMIS data in a timely manner is set by specifying the number of hours or days by which data must be entered. By including timeliness benchmarks for all types of programs that enter or contribute data to the HMIS, such as Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing, Safe Haven, Outreach, Prevention, Rapid Re-housing, and any other programs in the CoC, local communities can ensure that data is available when needed, such as for the SSVF monthly export to the VA Registry.

Timeliness is critical for SSVF Grantees since data must be exported to the VA's SSVF Data Repository by the 5th business day following the end of each month. This requirement often exceeds the general timeliness standards for the HMIS.

Component 2: Completeness

Partially complete or missing data (e.g., missing digit(s) in a SSN, missing the year of birth, missing information on disability or veteran status) can negatively affect the ability to provide comprehensive care to clients. Missing data could mean the client does not receive needed services – services that could help them become permanently housed and end their episode of homelessness. Expectations for completeness expectations include All Clients Entered and analysis of each of the HUD data elements. All Clients Entered is usually a manual process where regularly non-electronic records are compared to records in the HMIS to assess if all clients have been entered along with their associated service provision. For individual data elements, allowable percentages of null/missing data or levels of Unknown, Don't Know and Refused responses is expressed as a maximum percentage. For example, a community may have determined that an allowable rate for non-VA programs of null/missing values for Veteran status is 0%, meaning that no null or missing values are allowed.

The CoCs goal is to collect 100% of all data elements. However, the CoC recognizes that this may not be possible in all cases.

Therefore, the CoC has very likely established an acceptable range of null/missing and unknown/don't know/refused responses of between 2 and 5 percent, depending on the data element and the type of program entering data.

It is important to understand that standards for SSVF Grantees may exceed the CoCs existing completeness standards. For example, while responses of 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are acceptable responses for some data elements under the HMIS Data Standards, the VA may require additional information to establish program eligibility.

Component 3: Accuracy

The purpose of accuracy is to ensure that the data in the CoCs HMIS is the best possible representation of reality as it relates to persons experiencing homelessness and the programs that serve them. Accuracy of data in an HMIS can be difficult to assess as it depends on the client's ability to provide the correct data and the intake worker's ability to document and enter the data accurately. Accuracy is best determined by comparing records in the HMIS to paper records, or the records of another provider whose information may be considered more accurate. For instance, a Social Security Number that is in question may be compared to a paper case file or an SSI benefit application, where the data is perceived to be more accurate.

A primary way to ensure that data is understood, collected, and entered consistently across all programs in the HMIS is to provide regular training, refresher courses, and cheat sheets for collection and data entry. Additionally, consistency in intake forms, how well forms match data entry methods, wording of questions, etc. are all excellent practices for achieving the best possible accuracy of data.

Component 4: Monitoring

SSVF programs will need to implement monitoring practices to ensure that subgrantees are complying with the CoCs HMIS data quality plan. Documenting the expectations for monitoring activities of the HMIS data and the methods that data quality is monitored will help prevent invalid data. A statement on the expectation of the SSVF grantee in their grant agreements that the providers meet the benchmarks in the data quality plan will eliminate confusion.

Component 5: Incentives and Enforcement

Incentives and enforcement policies reinforce the importance of good data quality. The local CoC will likely have established incentives and enforcement measures for complying with the data quality plan. The VA expects its grantees to adhere to or exceed the local Data Quality Standard to ensure quality data for its own programs, provide quality data for community planning, and to ensure that VA participation does not negatively impact CoC funding processes.

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the CoCs data quality benchmarks are met to the greatest extent possible and that data quality issues are quickly identified and resolved. The local HMIS and CoC will have a monitoring process in place. The following is a sample of a monitoring process that VA providers may be required to follow:

- Access to the Data Quality Plan: The data quality plan will be posted to the CoCs public Web site.

- Access to Data Quality Reports: By the 15th of each month, the HMIS Lead Agency will make available data quality reports for the purposes of facilitating compliance review by participating agencies and the CoC Data Committee.
- Data Correction: Participating agencies will have 10 days to correct data. By the 30th of each month, the HMIS Lead Agency will make available revised data quality reports for posting to the CoCs public Web site.
- Monthly Review: The CoC Data Committee will review participating agency data quality reports for compliance with the data quality benchmarks. The Committee will work with participating agencies to identify training needs to improve data quality.
- Public Review: On the last day of each month, the HMIS Lead Agency will post agency aggregate data quality reports to the CoCs public Web site.
- CoC Review: The CoC Data Committee will provide a brief update on progress related to the data quality benchmarks at the monthly CoC meeting.
- Review Results: Agencies that meet the data quality benchmarks are periodically recognized by the CoC Data Committee. For agencies that fail to meet the data quality benchmarks, the CoC may ask the agency to submit a written plan that details how they will take corrective action. The plan is then submitted to and monitored by the CoCs Data Quality Subcommittee. Should the problem persist, the Data Quality Subcommittee may make a recommendation to suspend the agency's ability to enter data into the HMIS, and will contact any appropriate state and federal funders.

Standards: SSVF Data Quality Policy and Thresholds

The purpose of the SSVF Data Quality Policy is to ensure collection of comprehensive and accurate data from beneficiaries of the VA's SSVF program.

It is the policy of the VA to require that all SSVF grantees collect and manage beneficiary data in HMIS and maintain a level of data completeness and quality that successfully meets a tiered system defined as follows:

Tier 1: Data must be **100%** accurate and complete. Missing data, "Don't Know", and "Refused" responses are not allowable.

Tier 2: Data must be **90%** accurate and complete. Missing data, "Don't Know", and "Refused" responses do not count toward the 90% threshold goal.

Tier 3: Data are important but will not be monitored for completeness or accuracy.

SSVF Data Quality Thresholds

SSVF Data Field	Repository upload will be rejected for…	Tier
First name	Any missing values	1
Last name	Any missing values	1
*Social Security number**	Any missing values*	1
*SSN data quality**	Any missing/ don't know / refused responses*	1
Date of birth	Any missing values	1
Date of birth quality	Any missing / don't know / refused responses	1
Veteran status	Any missing / don't know / refused responses for adults	1
*Personal identification number***	Any missing values	1
*Household identification number***	Any missing values	1
Program entry date	Any missing values	1
Program exit date	Any program exit date that is earlier than the program entry date	1
Race	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses	2
Ethnicity	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses	2
Gender	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses	2
Disabling condition	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses	2
Residence prior to program entry	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses for adults	2
Length of stay in previous place	>=10% missing / don't~ know / refused responses for adults	2
Housing status (at entry)	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses	2
Housing status (at exit)	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses for records with a Program Exit Dates	2
Destination	>=10% missing / don't know / refused responses for	2

SSVF Data Field	Repository upload will be rejected for…	Tier
	records with a Program Exit Date	
Income received from any source in past 30 days (at entry)	Any missing / don't know / refused responses for adults >=10% missing data	1
Income received from any source in past 30 days (at exit)	Any missing / don't know / refused responses for adults with a Program Exit Date >=10% missing data	1
Total monthly income	Non-numeric data in field	3
Non-cash benefit received from any source in past 30 days (at entry)	>=10% missing data / don't know / refused	2
Non-cash benefit received from any source in past 30 days (at exit)	>=10% missing data / don't know / refused	2
ZIP code of last permanent address	Non-numeric data in field	3
ZIP code type		3
Financial Assistance Provided		3
Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services Provided		3

*Grantees must make prior arrangement with TA staff if upload will include a record for any individual who legitimately does not have a Social Security number.

**These identification numbers are assigned automatically by the HMIS application and may not be under the control of the grantee.

Toolkit: Additional Resources for Data Quality Management

Using Data to Get Measurable Results (USICH)

(http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/toolkits_for_local_action/using_data/)

The Web site of the U.S. Interagency Council on the Homeless contains a list of resources to help communities improve their data quality and use data more effectively to make policy, funding, and program design decisions in this toolkit.

The Solutions Database (USICH)

(http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/)

The USICH Solutions Database is a searchable source of up-to-date information drawn from around the country that federal, state, and local partners can use to further their collaborative efforts to end homelessness.

Toolkit: Sample Data Quality Plan

This sample of a combined Quality Assurance/Data Quality plan summarizes and combines policies provided by SSVF Grantees. Grantees should add additional detail as necessary to describe their specific efforts to assure excellent data quality. Thanks to the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc. and Volunteers of America of Greater Sacramento and Northern Nevada, Inc. for sharing their policies.

Quality Assurance & Data Quality Policy

1. The goal of the SSVF Program is to provide services that will stabilize housing for very-low income veterans and their families through prevention assistance for those still residing in housing and for very low income homeless veterans, through assistance in movement to permanent housing.

2. The SSVF Program will provide services consistent with the application submitted to the VA, the Final Rule, the Continuum of Care Program's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and VA SSVF Program Guide. This includes targeting:
   - Extremely low-income veteran-headed households
   - Very low-income homeless veterans with a dependent family member
   - Chronically or formerly chronic homeless veterans and their families

3. Performance objectives will be developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the SSVF Program goal and measured using internal tracking and HMIS reporting.

4. The agency will integrate HMIS Data Quality elements into the Quality Assurance activities.

5. The agency will evaluate the project outcomes and develop strategies for addressing those areas of deficiency.

6. Policy and procedures are developed to ensure consistency with the implementation of the SSVF Program and incorporate any interpretations or clarifications received from the VA.

General Procedures for Quality Assurance, Evaluation & Data Quality:

1. Staff providing services as part of the SSVF Program will receive training in the policy and procedures, the SSVF Program Guide and Final Rule.
   Add specific steps

2. Subcontractors will develop performance standards for each employee in the SSVF Program and evaluate performance at least annually.
   Add specific steps

3. Agency staff and subcontractors will be trained on HMIS policies, procedures and operations. All staff and contractor personal with access to the HMIS will receive training in the Continuum of Care's Privacy Policy and will sign an HMIS End User Agreement.

4. Staff and contractors will be trained on the agency's data quality elements, standards and monitoring:

   - Timeliness
     - Standard – Intakes will be reviewed by a Screening Committee within 24 hours. Once a decision has been made by the committee, the relevant data will be entered into HMIS within 24 hours of the veteran's acceptance into SSVF.
     - Monitoring - The entry date of HMIS will be compared to the date on the SSVF intake document and is expected to be within 48 hours of the intake appointment (24 hours of approval).
   - Completeness
     - The SSVF Program will enter data on 100% of all clients accepted into the program. Subsequently, all clients will be exited from the system within 24 hours of their exit from the program.
     - All Social Security numbers of family members are required through either a card or verification from the Social Security office.
     - Veteran Status is documented through a DD-214.
     - Birth certificates of all children are requested. If the cost to the homeless veteran family of obtaining a birth certificate is prohibitive, a hospital birth form is acceptable.
     - All HMIS questions will be asked at the intake. Don't know, refused or unknown will not be recorded in the HMIS system because of a question not being asked or recorded.
   - Monitoring
     - An HMIS client detail report will be printed from HMIS on a monthly basis to ensure that the list of current and exited clients is accurate.

   - A Data Quality report will be run biweekly to identify any missing/refused or don't know responses. It will be run immediately prior to the monthly upload to the VA Repository.
   - The results and corrections will be reviewed by the Program Director and the Director of Quality Assurance. Should further oversight be deemed necessary the Vice President or Chief Operating Officer will review all findings.
   - All Data will reach the Data Quality and Benchmark Rates as established by SSVF. The repository notifications will be responded to as follows:
     - Notify level: if the agency receives an alert at the Notify level it will be corrected immediately.
     - Reject level: For a non-compliant data set, the staff will immediately upload any missing records and repeat the repository upload.
- Accuracy
   - Errors within the data reporting system can often be corrected most efficiently by comparing paper files to the HMIS records.
     As such, SSVF paper intake forms should match what is entered into HMIS. Instances where the two sources are not in agreement identify errors for our staff so that we can ensure corrections are made.
   - Standard – 100% of the data entered into HMIS will reflect what SSVF clients are reporting
   - Monitoring Plan – A data quality report will be run biweekly to identify any missing data elements or those with unknown/refused responses. The results and corrections will be reviewed by the Program Director and the Director of Quality Assurance. Should further oversight be deemed necessary the Vice President or Chief Operating Officer will review all findings.

Monitoring – In this example monitoring is integral to each data quality element. In addition, data quality reports will be printed at a minimum of once-a- month and reviewed by senior staff. The results will be reviewed by the Program Director and the Director of Quality Assurance.

5. Program performance is evaluated monthly and more frequently if there is a high error rate in compliance to the policy and procedures, SSVF Program Guide and Final Rule. During program implementation and until performance demonstrates the ability to provide the SSVF Program services consistent with the NOFA, Final Rule and SSVF Program Guide, the agency will review the eligibility determination for each application approved for assistance and those households screened and determined ineligible.
   - This includes the submission of the eligibility determination.
     List required forms and documentation.
   - The agency will review the forms submitted and data entered into the HMIS within 2 business days of receipt of the paperwork, not including the day the paperwork is received. The review will include:
     List required forms and documentation.

- Once staff can confirm eligibility, the case manager will be notified. Staff will complete the SSVF program entry in the HMIS.
  List any evaluations, measurement or other activities the case manager is required to complete after eligibility is confirmed.

6. At a point in time agreed to by the agency and the primary subcontractor, the agency will begin to reduce the level of review provided.
   Describe any anticipated changes in subcontractor review.
7. The agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the services being provided by examining the aggregate results of the performance. The following data elements will be reviewed at least quarterly:
   List the data elements that will be reviewed to evaluate performance.
8. Incentives and enforcement policies are an important part of the HMIS Data Quality Plan since they reinforce the importance of good data quality. HMIS data quality reports will be prepared monthly for providers based on data entered. Corrective action is required for any data quality score below 100%. Staff and subcontractors achieving a score of 100% will be recognized by the agency for their performance.
9. Program performance is reviewed by the agency CEO and Board of Directors.
10. Each request for Financial Assistance is reviewed to ensure the eligibility of the request and compliance with the limitations and restrictions for the requested assistance. The agency Financial Assistance Request Checklist will be completed and reviewed by different staff persons using the Financial Assistance Request Reviewer Checklist.
11. Policy and procedures may be revised to clarify or correct an area of deficiency and will be reviewed at least annually.

H. Section 5: HMIS Privacy & Security Requirements

SSVF Grantees are required to maintain confidentiality of records kept on participants. In addition, HUD has established standards for the privacy and security of personal information collected in an HMIS. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data and Technical Standards Final Notice, published in the Federal Register on July 30, 2004 (the standard) provides baseline standards and guidance for privacy and security. While the HMIS Data Standards have been revised, the Technical Standards portion of the standard governing privacy and security remains in effect.

These standards seek to protect the confidentiality of personal information while allowing for reasonable, responsible, and limited uses and disclosures of data. The standards are based on principles of fair information practices and were developed after careful review of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The privacy standards apply to all agencies, projects and individuals that record, use or process protected personal information for an HMIS. This includes employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and associates, regardless of funding source.

Baseline or minimum standards require that Continuum of Care (CoC), HMIS, service providers and individual end users:

- Must comply with other federal, state, and local confidentiality law
- Must comply with limits to data collection (relevant, appropriate, lawful, specified in privacy notice)
- Must have written privacy policy, which must be posted it on your web site
- Must post sign at intake or comparable location with general reasons for collection and reference to privacy policy
- May infer consent for uses in the posted sign and written privacy policy

The CoC may also establish additional privacy protections though the privacy policy. Once approved by the CoC, these additional protections require compliance at the same level as HUD’s baseline standards.

The standard also establishes a common set of baseline security requirements for all HMIS implementations. While the HMIS staff manages most security requirements, the grantee and individual end users are critical in maintaining a secure HMIS environment by:

- Safeguarding passwords
- Maintaining local virus protection and firewalls
- Limiting physical access to systems with access to HMIS data
- Securing paper or other hard copy containing personal protected information generated for or by the HMIS, such as client intake forms, signed consent forms or reports

The CoC may adopt additional security protections that must be followed by all HMIS users.

Agencies must require each member of its staff (including employees, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and associates) to sign (annually or otherwise) a confidentiality agreement that acknowledges receipt of a copy of the privacy notice and that pledges to comply to comply with the privacy notice.

Local HMIS privacy and security requirements are a combination of HUD HMIS baseline requirements, additional protections established by the CoC in the privacy notice, and state and local privacy laws. Appropriate privacy and security training should be obtained from HMIS staff prior to accessing the HMIS.

2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards are available at:

https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/2004HUDDataandTechnicalStandards.pdf

Toolkit: Privacy & Security- Additional Resources

- Additional in-depth security and privacy information, including slides and a recorded presentation, are available in Module 4 of HUD's HMIS 101 training: https://www.onecpd.info/training-events/courses/hmis-system-administrator-training-hmis-101/

- Additional resources, including sample agency participation agreements and end user confidentiality agreements, are available at: https://www.onecpd.info/resource-library/

- The HMIS section of HUD's OneCPD "Ask A Question" can respond to specific questions on the technical standards for privacy and security: https://www.onecpd.info/ask-a-question/

- Additional VA SSVF resources, including HMIS training, are available at: http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/SSVF_Grantee_Resources.asp#four

Toolkit: Sample Client Notification Forms

Sample 1

(Homeless Management Information System Name)

VA SSVF Program Client Notification Form

(SSVF Grantee Name) collects personal information directly from you for reasons that are discussed in our privacy policy. We may be required to collect some personal information by law or by organizations that provide funding to operate this program. Other personal information that we collect is important to run our programs, to improve services for homeless persons, and to better understand the needs of homeless persons. We only collect information that we consider to be appropriate.

Your privacy rights are explained in the (**Name of CoC)** privacy policy, available on request. The privacy policy also explains how your personal information is used and the steps we take to protect that information. On a monthly basis your personal identifying information and other information about services provided to you by the SSVF program will be shared with the US Department of Veteran Affairs for purposes of program administration, grant monitoring, and evaluation.

This VA SSVF program requires that you provide information to determine eligibility for SSVF benefits and to allow the VA to keep your Veteran records current and complete.

The (**CoC Name)** allows agencies to view limited information about homeless persons served in other programs. Sharing information helps us to coordinate and improve services to all our clients. [Optional: While participation in the **(HMIS Name)** is mandatory for this program, you may choose to not share your personal information with other agencies.]

Signature of Client/Parent Guardian

Date

Optional for verbal consent to share: Verbal Consent Case Manager Signature

Sample 2

(Homeless Management Information System Name)

VA SSFV Program Client Notification Form

(HMIS Name) is used by agencies working together to provide services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. HMIS is administered and maintained by (**HMIS Lead Agency Name)**. This system is required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) and gathers identifying information on persons served in various housing programs to create an unduplicated count and picture of who receives what kind of housing-related services in (**Community Name)**.

We collect and enter personal identifying information into **(HMIS Name)** for reasons that are discussed in our privacy policy. Personal identifying information includes: Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, and Zip Code of Last Permanent Residence. On a monthly basis your personal identifying information and other information about services provided to you by the SSVF program will be shared with the US Department of Veteran Affairs for purposes of program administration, grant monitoring, and evaluation.

Release of identifying information to (HMIS Name)

All persons applying for benefits from the VA SSVF Program are required to provide identifying information to determine program eligibility. Each month the HMIS transfers information about persons served and services provided to the VA's SSVF Data Repository.

☐ I have received a copy of and understand the **(Name of CoC)** Privacy Policy

______________________________	______________________________	______________
Client Name (please print)	Client Signature	Date
______________________________	______________________________	______________
Guardian Name (please print)	Guardian Signature	Date

I. Section 6: CoC Integration & Planning

Continuum of Care (CoC) Overview

A ‘‘Continuum of Care’’ is a geographically based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the Continuum of Care program, as established under 24 CFR part 578. These representatives come from organizations that provide services to the homeless, or represent the interests of the homeless or formerly homeless. These organizations can include, but are not limited to nonprofit homeless providers , victim service providers , faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.

A Continuum of Care then designates certain ‘‘applicants’’ as the entities responsible for carrying out the projects that the Continuum has identified through its planning responsibilities.

Coordinated Assessment

HUD has established a requirement that all CoCs implement a coordinated assessment approach, a common process for documenting a person‟s crisis response needs for housing assistance and then accessing homeless assistance services including prevention, diversion, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, supportive services and even permanent supportive housing. The interim regulations for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the CoC Program contain clear requirements for CoCs to work in consultation with ESG recipients to establish and operate “either a centralized or coordinated assessment system” within their mutual geographic areas. SSVF grantees and all VA homeless assistance service will need to be coordinated with the CoCs coordinated assessment approach.

The definition included in the CoC program interim rule is relatively broad, allowing for flexibility in choosing a model that works best for an individual community based on geography, population, level of need, and other local factors. Taking such factors into account, the resulting system of assessment should address the following elements.

Access – Homeless and at-risk households should be able to easily reach the assessment locations. CoCs might explore the possibility of offering after-hours access and other considerations to potential consumers, including special-need populations such as domestic violence survivors.

Assessment – Assessment of consumer needs for services and housing should be performed in a uniform and consistent manner. The use of a common assessment tool and standards for referral and service connections can increase consistency, fairness, and positive outcomes.

Data – Communities should have a consistent process for gathering data and sharing information across programs, with appropriate protections in place for sensitive information.

Referral – Well-defined and documented standards for referrals are needed to assure that consumers are connected with appropriate resources according to their need, eligibility, and preference.

Intake – When assessments result in intake into a particular system, consumers" entry into a housing or service program should be coordinated as much as possible, to assure that consumers are not required to answer questions and engage in processes that were already completed at the assessment point.

More in-depth information on coordinated assessment elements, models and requirements can be found at:
http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/coordinated-assessment-toolkit

Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

HUD requires that CoCs conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. CoCs also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). In 2013, CoCs are required to conduct both a sheltered and unsheltered count during the last ten days of January. CoCs that wish to perform their required PIT count on a date outside of the last ten days of January 2013 must request a PIT waiver from HUD. (CoCs do not need HUD permission or a waiver to conduct supplemental PIT counts.)

The PIT count should be completed using unduplicated counts or statistically reliable estimates of homeless persons in sheltered and unsheltered locations on a single night. CoCs will submit their 2013 PIT data through the HUD Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX) Web site. HUD requires that PIT counts be conducted in compliance with HUD counting standards, as documented in HUD's *A Guide to Counting Sheltered Homeless People* and *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People* available on the HUD Homelessness Resource Exchange (HRE). If you are uncertain about whether your community's standards meet HUD's requirements as outlined in these guides please submit a question to the HUD Virtual Help Desk requesting clarification of your counting methodologies.

PIT data collection requirements for 2013 include changes to better assist in understanding the characteristics of persons experiencing homelessness, and measuring progress in ending homelessness among families, children, and youth, as outlined in Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Housing Inventory Chart

The Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within your Continuum of Care that provide beds and units dedicated to serve persons who are homeless. It should reflect the number of beds and units available on the night designated for the count that are dedicated to serve persons who are homeless, per the HUD homeless definition.

HUD has provided specific guidance on reporting Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program Rapid Re-housing Inventory (HIC and PIT Data Collection Guidance, pg. 10).

Households are not reported as "served" unless a service record has been entered in HMIS. Therefore, CoCs must take additional steps to identify and count SSVF rapid re-housing inventory. CoCs should only count SSVF rapid re-housing beds/units that meet all of the following criteria:

- SSVF participant is actively enrolled in the provider program on the night of the inventory count;
- SSVF participant housing status at program entry is "literally homeless;"
- SSVF participant is no longer literally homeless and is in permanent housing on the night of the inventory count; and SSVF participant is receiving financial assistance and/or housing relocation and stabilization services on the night of the inventory count.