



Supportive Services for Veterans and Families

Developing a Comprehensive Data Quality (DQ) Plan

Updated 1/16

Learning Goals

- Learn importance of data quality
- Understand key components of a data quality plan and real-life examples
- Learn SSVF data quality requirements and how enforced through the VA Repository
- Learn steps to developing a comprehensive data quality plan for your SSVF program

What do we mean by *Data Quality*?

Does your data reflect reality?

- *How accurately are you communicating the picture of homelessness in your community to others?*
- *How accurately are you able to measure your progress towards achieving your goal of ending veteran homelessness?*

Elements of a Data Quality Plan

- 1) Timeliness
- 2) Completeness:
 - a) All Clients Served
 - b) Data Quality Benchmarks
- 3) Accuracy
- 4) Consistency
- 5) Monitoring
- 6) Incentives & Enforcement

Importance of Data Quality

- Identifies the risk factors for Veteran homelessness
- Identifies the needs of homeless Veterans
- Identifies what works in ending homelessness and promoting housing stability
- Know if you're reaching target population
- Inform your outreach approach.
- Know where changes are needed .
- Measure your progress against goals and benchmarks set.

Data Quality & SSVF program

- SSVF legislation requires use of HMIS for client-level data collection
- Reports to VA of SSVF activity and outcomes are generated from HMIS
- Paints the picture of veteran homelessness, informs national resource allocation.

SSVF Data Requirements

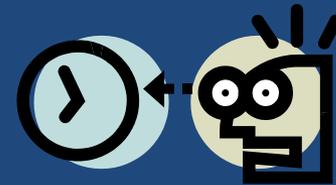
- You must ask for every required data element for every client
- Household members are clients
- You must enter the data into HMIS accurately and completely
- You must make every effort to enter and update client records in HMIS within 24 hours of data collection
- You must make sure that your data is exported from HMIS and uploaded to the VA's Repository every month

Data Quality (DQ) Standards



1) Timeliness

Is the client information, including intake data, project entry dates, services provided, and project exit dates entered into the HMIS within a reasonable period of time?



Timeliness Example

- Standard:

Client information is entered within 24 hours of intake.

- Monitoring plan:

Hard copy intake forms are date stamped when the client information is first collected. The dates on the forms are then compared to actual HMIS data entry dates by a program manager to determine if the time between initial collection and entry into HMIS is 24 hours or less.

2a) Completeness: *All Clients Served*

Are all of the clients receiving services being entered into the HMIS?

Are all of the appropriate data elements being collected and entered into the HMIS?



Completeness Example

Standard: The project shall enter data on 100% of the clients they serve in accordance with the data set outlined in the project type's definition of record. No anonymous client records are allowed.

- All clients must be exited from system within 24 hours of exit from project.
- Client Doesn't Know, or Client Refused cannot be recorded in the HMIS because the question was not asked, the intake worker did not record the answer on the intake/assessment sheets, or the data entry worker does not have access to the information.
- Policies on obtaining SSN, estimating DOB, Children & Veteran Status

Completeness- Sample Monitoring Plan

Monitoring Plan:

- All programs must review, as part of their monthly data quality process, the list of current clients to ensure that client exits are recorded properly in the HMIS.
- Run DQ Report weekly or bi-weekly to identify missing/refused/don't know responses in advance of the upload. Find missing data or re-train case managers where needed.

2b) Completeness:

Establishing Data Quality Thresholds

- To ensure completeness of the data in these data element sets, all programs are required to meet a high standard of data quality. Unlike other HMIS applications, SSVF sets data quality thresholds for you by generating Data Quality error reports after each upload.
- Criteria: See VA Data Guide, “VA Repository Data Upload Criteria” section.
- Monitoring Plan: Data Quality Reports sent after each upload to the Repository generates a data quality alert to notify the user that the data quality is below the expected threshold.

3) Accuracy



Does the HMIS data accurately and consistently match information recorded on paper intake forms and in client files?

Determined by:

1. Truthfulness of the client
2. Accuracy of data collected by staff
3. Accuracy of data entered into the system by staff

Accuracy- Example

- Standard:
100% of data entered into an HMIS must reflect what clients are reporting.
- Monitoring Plan: SSVF program will generate and send a Data Quality Report from the Repository to identify any required data elements with missing or unknown/refused responses. Data for active clients should also be reviewed from the HMIS application near the throughout each month, especially before upload into the Repository.

4) Consistency

To ensure a *common interpretation* of questions, answers, and process for data entry, including which HMIS fields require completion.

5) Monitoring

- Ensure that the standards on the extent and quality of data entered are met.
- Identify DQ issues that affect timeliness, completeness and accuracy of the data and resolve them expediently.
- Specify frequency of monitoring activities.

Identifying and Correcting Errors in HMIS

- If your data upload is rejected from the Repository, update the records in HMIS to correct missing data
 - If you do not have the resources to identify which records are missing data, technical assistance is available
- Once issues are resolved in HMIS, a new export file should be created and uploaded to the Repository
- Resolving issues may take some time – upload to the Repository as early as possible each month to allow extra time to make corrections and resubmit data

Using Reports to Monitor DQ

- Save yourself stress! Don't wait until there are problems to pay attention to DQ!
- Be proactive. Use reports to identify issues *before* upload.
 - *Local HMIS DQ Reports* - availability varies by software provider
 - *SSVF Data Quality Reports*-
 - E-mailed to all Repository users registered with each Repository program.
 - During Repository period sent within 1-2 days of upload.
 - Provides data quality score for all data fields

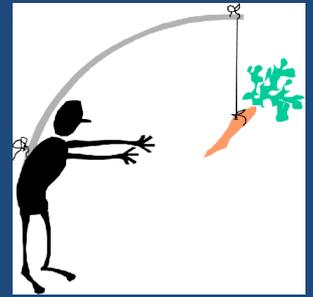
Useful Local HMIS Data Quality Reports

- 1) Null/Missing and Unknown/Don't Know/Refused Reports on Universal Data Elements
- 2) Universal Data Elements by Project Type – Benchmark for % Null/Missing and Unknown/Don't Know/Refused
- 3) Program Data Elements by Project Type – Benchmark for % Null/Missing and Unknown/Don't Know/Refused
- 4) Universal Data Elements by Client ID Report
- 5) Length of Stay Report by Client ID
- 6) Intake and Exit Data Entry Date Timeliness Report
- 7) Bed Utilization Tool

Null Values = Errors

- Records where the response information is missing, (responses with values of *Client doesn't know*, *Client refused*, *No exit interview completed*, or *Other* is counted as an error)
- A minimal number of these responses are expected for fields such as Destination, but will always show as an error.
- Will be compared against national averages

6) Incentives & Enforcement



- Positively reinforce adherence to the data standards and achievement of excellent data quality
- Set protocol and consequences for making corrections to data in a timely manner.

Incentives & Enforcement- Example

Standard:

Recognition awards given to SSVF HMIS case managers annually or quarterly who have substantially improved DQ and to those who consistently meet or exceed DQ standards.

Questions to Ask as You Develop Your DQ Plan



- Does your CoC have a set of HMIS data standards? If so, take a look at them.
- If they don't meet the standards stated above, you can raise the bar and set a higher standard!
- Does your local HMIS have additional requirements not mentioned here? If so, do they conflict with SSVF requirements? Contact Regional Coordinator to request TA if needed.

Get Started Developing Your DQ Plan:



1. Establish specific guidelines for all above standards. Put in writing. Borrow from other successful programs!
2. Train & re-train SSVF staff on each data collection and entry standards, roles and responsibilities.
3. Test data collection workflow and tools (before you begin to serve clients!)
4. Designate staff roles & responsibilities for creating, implementing and monitoring plan.
5. Meet weekly with SSVF staff to address questions, issues and to ensure consistency.

Data Quality Resources

- From Intake to Analysis: A Toolkit for Developing a Continuum of Care Data Quality Plan
<https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/huddataqualitytoolkit.pdf>
- VA Data Guide
http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/program_requirements/hmis_and_data

Questions?



Contact ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com