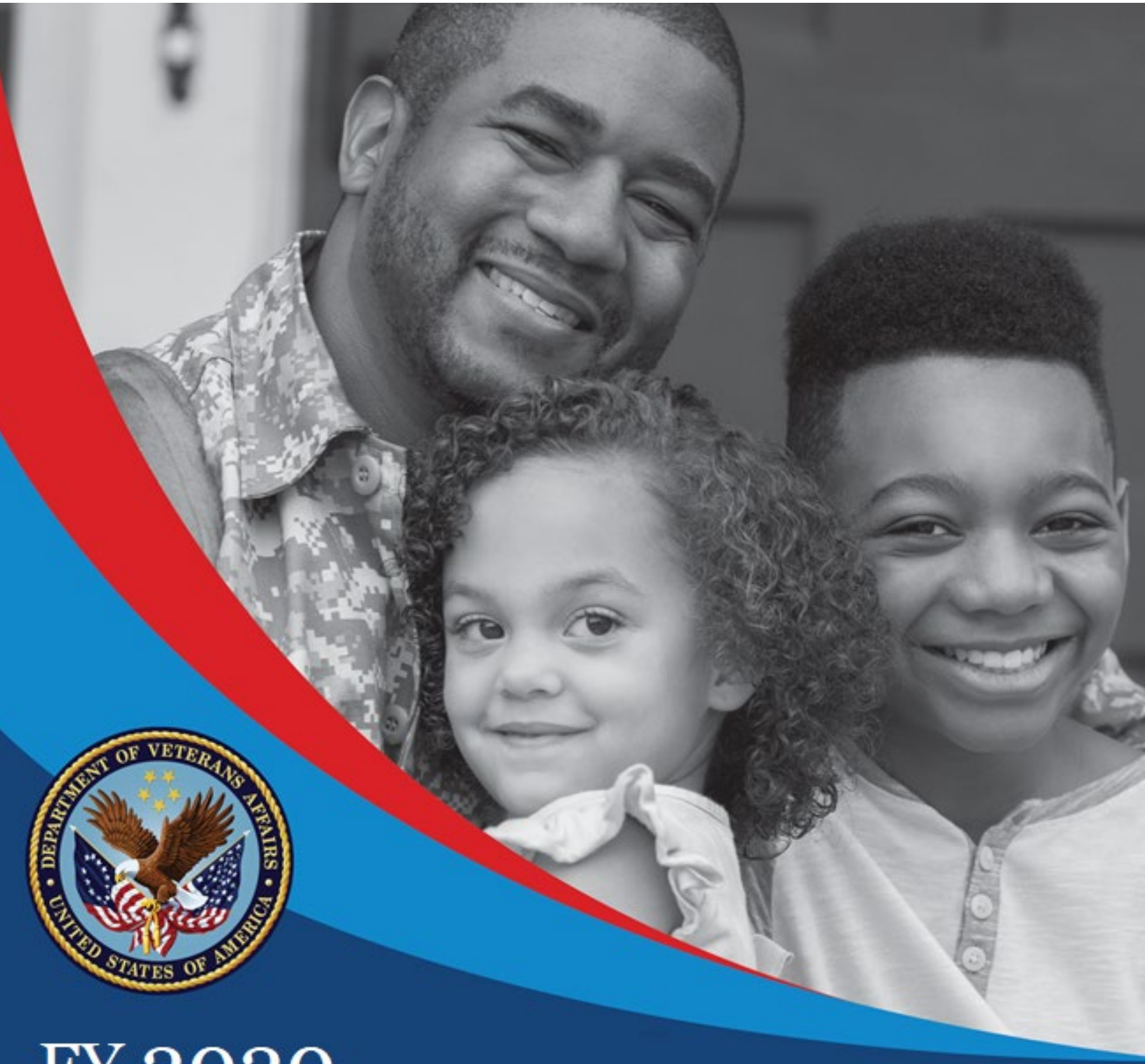

FY 2020
VA Data Guide

Data Collection and Reporting Guidance for VA Grantees

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Summary of VA Data Guide Revisions since FY 2019

- Updated to HMIS information to the 2020 HMIS Data Standards version 1.4
- Added information regarding Extended Shallow Subsidy data capture
- Added information regarding Rapid Resolution data capture

VA Programs & HMIS Participation

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a community-based application that collects and reports on the characteristics and needs of people who are served by programs intended to prevent and end homelessness in a particular geographic area or Continuum of Care (CoC). U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to HMIS participation by VA-funded homeless assistance providers to support community-based service planning and coordination for Veterans and others who are homeless and at risk of homelessness

In June of 2010, 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, and is consistent with strategic plans developed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

As a result of this federal coordination, VA-funded Grant and Per Diem (GPD) providers, Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contract Emergency Residential Services providers, and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers have been directed by VA to participate in HMIS implementations operated by each CoC in which they provide services.

With respect to HMIS participation by VA homeless programs other than GPD and HCHV/CRS, the VA Homeless Program Office released national guidance on August 31, 2015 that VA staff may obtain read-only access to HMIS, as long as the data is used as part of the job responsibilities of the individual obtaining access; VA staff are also permitted to enter data directly into an HMIS if a Release of Information (ROI) is in place and the entry contributes to the job responsibilities of the VA staff entering the data. In both cases, the data entered must be used to provide needed services and coordinated care to Veterans. VA's full guidance can be viewed at: https://www.hudexchange.info/news/va-releases-guidance-on-hmis-read-only-and-direct-entry-access-policy-q-a/.

CoC leadership and HMIS project staff will need to consider the following when planning for HMIS participation:

- Local CoC and HMIS staff should coordinate with local VA officials and VA-funded providers to initiate HMIS participation for community-based service providers who are not yet participating in HMIS.

- VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are subject to the requirements of the most recent version of the HMIS Data Standards and 2004 HMIS Technical Notice , which define HMIS data collection and privacy, security, data quality, and software requirements. Documentation is available on the HUD Exchange website (https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/).
- VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are subject to HMIS policies and procedures established by the CoC(s) in which they operate, but they are also subject to VA requirements. For SSVF grantees, VA requirements include the export of client-level data from HMIS for upload to VA's HMIS Repository. It may be necessary to amend HMIS policies and procedures in the event that they would prevent these VA grantees from complying with this requirement.
- VA will provide HMIS training to VA-funded projects required to participate in HMIS; topics will include a general HMIS overview, HMIS participation requirements, a review of the HMIS Data Standards as they apply to VA-funded projects, and forthcoming HMIS Technical Standards (to be released by HUD), which will include minimum standards for HMIS governance, privacy, security, software, and data quality.
- There are costs associated with HMIS licenses, training, technical support, data storage, system maintenance, and HMIS administration. Given the requirement that SSVF grantees export and upload client-level data to the Repository at least monthly, and that grantees operating in multiple CoCs may also provide exported data to other HMIS implementations, HUD expects HMIS project staff and CoC leadership to assess the costs associated with including VA-funded providers in HMIS, to document the allocation of those costs, and to assess any participation fees in an equitable and transparent manner.
- VA staff and other federal partners will work together to provide additional training materials and technical assistance (TA) support as VA expands HMIS participation requirements.

This manual is comprehensive with respect to SSVF, GPD and HCHV; information and project setup guidance for HMIS administrators about other VA programs participating in HMIS is available on the HUD Exchange website Data Standards landing page at: (https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/).

I. Data Guide Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this document is to convey all data management requirements to VA grantees required to participate in HMIS 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 or at risk of homelessness.

The guide is designed for use by grantees, staff, HMIS administrators, and CoC partners. The guide is divided into the following sections:

HMIS Participation Planning. This section includes a general overview of HMIS participation requirements and guidance for grantees in decision-making about how to fulfill them.

HMIS Project Descriptor Data Elements. This section provides guidance to HMIS administrators and HMIS vendors on how to complete the Project Descriptor Data Elements in HMIS to properly set up a grant for data collection in HMIS.

HMIS Data Collection. This section includes information on specific data elements that must be collected, when they must be collected, and for whom they must be collected, along with grant-specific information. It also includes sections on data quality and completeness requirements, data security policies, and HMIS privacy and security requirements.

Reporting. This section details reporting requirements, including HMIS and quarterly reports. Also included are Repository upload and integration specifications and the Repository user guide, which include step-by-step instructions on uploading HMIS data into the VA's Repository.

Data Quality Management. 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.

CoC Integration & Planning. This section contains an overview of the function of the CoC and specific opportunities for collaboration between VA homeless programs and CoCs. Topics covered include coordinated assessment, homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts, and the Housing Inventory Chart (HIC).

Toolkit. This section provides grantees with sample forms, templates, checklists and other resources that can be used and adapted for each program to facilitate HMIS implementation.

Other Training Materials for Grantees

In addition to this Data Guide, there are five 30 minute trainings available on VA's SSVF Website site at http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/official_guide/homeless_management_info_system.

SSVF Data Collection & Reporting 101

The target audience for this training includes new grantees, new staff, or anyone who needs a review of the basics of SSVF data collection and reporting. Topics include an introduction to HMIS, roles and responsibilities, HMIS set-up, data collection requirements, reporting requirements, and tools and resources for grantees.

Reporting Data through VA's Repository

The target audience for this training is all grantees. Topics include description of data quality policy and threshold limits, reading validation results, interpreting validation results, identifying and correcting data errors, creating and implementing data quality plans and working with data from multiple CoCs and HMIS implementations.

HMIS: Beyond Data Collection

The target audience for this training is all grantees. Topics include privacy and security requirements, VA HMIS participation, CoC coordination, and using data for program improvement.

SSVF HMIS Administrator and Vendor Training

This training is more technical than the others and is aimed primarily at HMIS administrators and software solution providers.

Topics include project setup in HMIS, data collection, export requirements, upload validation processes, and a brief overview of how uploaded data are reported.

Developing a Comprehensive Data Quality Plan

The target audience for this training is all grantees, particularly individuals who are responsible for planning and oversight. Topics include the importance of data quality and how to achieve and maintain it.

II. HMIS Participation Planning

Overview

To participate in HMIS means to provide client level data into the database that is designated by the Continuum of Care (CoC) as that jurisdiction's HMIS. Therefore, grantees are participating in HMIS by contributing data to HMIS. For the VA, participation in HMIS also includes creating uploads of client data for the VA's HMIS Repository.

Requirements

- Every grantee is required to participate in at least one HMIS implementation; that HMIS implementation must be operated by a CoC in which the grantee is providing direct services.
- An HMIS implementation is community-based. Entering data into an HMIS application that is not affiliated with a CoC does not satisfy the requirement to participate in an HMIS implementation unless data are exported to and accepted by an HMIS implementation.
- Grantees operating in multiple CoCs must participate in the HMIS implementation of each CoC in which they operate. This requirement may be satisfied either by direct data entry into each HMIS or by entering data into a single HMIS and providing exports of client-level data to each HMIS. HMIS participation arrangements are subject to approval by grantees' Regional Coordinators (RC).
- Information about every participant served must be entered into HMIS, exported from HMIS, and uploaded to the VA Repository on at least a monthly basis.
- Every project in an HMIS must be associated with one or more CoCs (data element 2.03 Continuum of Care Code). Projects operating in multiple CoCs must be associated with each CoC for which they will be entering client-level data into the HMIS.
- HMIS users must identify the CoC (data element 3.16 Client Location) that the client is being served by the CoC in which the vouchers/assistance the client receives was funded to operate.

Grantees should contact the HMIS Lead for each CoC in which they are operating to discuss HMIS participation. You can find a list of CoC contacts by accessing the HUD Exchange website at https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/contacts/. Technical assistance is available from both HUD and VA if assistance or mediation is needed to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Considerations in HMIS Planning

There are many factors to consider in establishing an HMIS participation plan; some of these factors are outlined below.

Other Grantees Operating in the Same CoC

HMIS can be invaluable in reducing duplication of services in CoCs where there are multiple grantees. If your program is operating in any CoC in which there are other grantees providing services, talk to the other grantees about HMIS. The use of an HMIS that is either open or supports data-sharing agreements between projects such that it is possible to see if an applicant is already being served by another grantee is ideal. Your Regional Coordinator may be able to assist you in collaborating with other grantees to use a common HMIS.

Percentage of Participants in a CoC

In the case of a grantee operating in multiple CoCs: when deciding into which CoC to directly enter data versus into which CoC data will be contributed via uploads, it is advisable to decide which CoC has the largest share of the grantee's clients. For example, a grantee operating in six CoCs but with 90% of participants concentrated in a single CoC should be participating in the CoC with the highest percentage's HMIS (unless there are extenuating circumstances discussed with your Regional Coordinator). Your Regional Coordinator may be able to assist you in deciding which CoC's HMIS to use.

Location of Service Providers

In the case of a grantee operating in multiple CoCs: it is relatively easy to support participation in multiple HMIS implementations when there is a one-to-one relationship between an organization (grantee or sub grantee) and a CoC, i.e., when services in different CoCs are provided by organizations physically located in those CoCs. In many cases, when service providers are physically distributed across multiple CoCs, the provider organizations may have other programs that are already entering data into the HMIS implementations for the CoCs where they operate. In these cases, participating in multiple HMIS implementations might make more sense than entering all data into a single HMIS.

On the other hand, if services in multiple CoCs are provided from a single location by the same group of people, and participating in each of the HMIS implementations would require staff to remember multiple usernames and passwords as well as which system a participant's record is in every time a service is recorded, consider entering all of your data into a single HMIS.

If your grant covers three CoCs and services for each of the CoCs are provided from separate locations, you should consider participating in each of the CoC's HMIS implementations. Your Regional Coordinator may be able to assist you in deciding how many CoC's HMISs to use.

Participation Fees

HMIS participation fees are a covered expense for SSVF grantees. The overall cost of HMIS participation is a practical consideration in deciding whether or not to participate in the HMIS implementations for all of the CoCs in which you operate, but it should not be the primary factor.

It's important to be aware that the cost of HMIS participation varies from CoC to CoC and may have no relation to the level of support available or the quality of the HMIS software. Funding can be a big factor; some very advanced HMIS implementations have secured additional funding and charge minimal participation fees.

When comparing the participation fees of various HMIS implementations, be aware of what the fees include and what might cause them to increase. What kind of training and technical support is included? Does the cost of participation depend on the number of users you have, the number of programs you need, the number of client records you create, or some other factor? For SSVF grantees concerned about HMIS costs, please communicate with the Regional Coordinator for the SSVF grant.

HMIS Software

Each HMIS implementation selects its own HMIS application. HUD publishes minimum standards for HMIS applications, but there are big differences in workflow, reporting, and additional features. Software that is easy to use can have a big impact on data quality and save a lot of staff time. Using software that data entry personnel are already familiar with can also be helpful. When comparing two

HMIS implementations that use different HMIS applications, it can be helpful to ask for a demonstration of the software.

The workflow for data entry is important; some applications have features that prevent users from creating duplicate records or to help ensure that all of the required data are entered. The ability to report on data from the HMIS may also be important; some applications offer a wide variety of reporting options – including data quality reports – while others do not. For grantees – particularly those who export and upload their own data to the Repository – the export process is also critical. Some applications produce a single file within a few minutes that can be uploaded to the Repository as is; others require a multi-step process, manual changes, and/or overnight processing.

If two HMIS implementations use different HMIS applications and one appears to be easier to use and/or to have additional useful features that the other does not offer, the software might be a deciding factor. If two HMIS implementations use the same software, it may be that data could be entered into one and exported to the other with relative ease.

HMIS Implementation Capacity

Some HMIS implementations are more advanced and/or have more capacity to support HMIS users than others. A number of grantees export and upload their own data to the Repository; in some HMIS implementations, however, HMIS administrators or software vendors manage this process on behalf of grantees.

Entering Data into One HMIS and Exporting Data to Another

Some HMIS implementations accept data exported from another HMIS implementation. Grantees operating in multiple CoCs may choose to do direct data entry into a single HMIS and to participate in the HMIS implementations for other CoCs by providing them with exports of data for clients located in their jurisdiction.

Your program will only be participating in an HMIS implementation if your data is accepted and integrated into the HMIS database. An HMIS implementation is not required to accept an extract of data and their ability to do so may depend on the capacity of their software. Your data is also subject to all of the policies and procedures of the HMIS implementation that receives it. If either the host CoC HMIS or recipient CoC HMIS lacks the export or import functionality (encouraged but not yet required for HMIS implementations), then using a single CoC's HMIS may not be a viable option. Any decision to use only one CoC's HMIS must be made after determining the data exchange work flow and schedule that assures the HMIS participation requirements of the recipient CoC are met so as not to disrupt their ability to produce system level reports.

Questions to Consider

The following is a list of some questions you may wish to consider for each of the CoCs in which you are operating in developing an HMIS participation plan.

- Does your organization already have other programs participating in this CoC's HMIS?
- If you have sub grantees, do any of them have other projects participating in this CoC's HMIS?
- Are there other VA grantees operating in the CoC?

- If other SSVF, GPD, or HCHV projects operate in the same CoC, is the HMIS open or does it support data-sharing agreements between projects?
- What percentage of your clients do you expect will be located in this CoC? Less than 10%? More than 75%?
- Which HMIS software does the CoC use?
- Are any of your staff already familiar with the CoC's designated software?
- Does the CoC's HMIS software have any features that make it easier or more difficult to use than the software used by other CoCs?
- Given the number of users you need and the number of projects required, what is the annual cost of participation by direct data entry in this CoC's HMIS?
- What kind of user training and support is provided to HMIS users? Are they included with the participation fee or are there additional costs?
- Will using a CoC's HMIS increase the availability of resources to your clients?
- Is the expected total number of persons to be served by your grant in a given CoC significant for their HUD System Performance Measures submission?
- Can the HMIS export HMIS data in the HMIS FY 2020 CSV format? (This is the only format that the Repository will be able to accept). Can it import and export HMIS data in the HMIS FY 2020 XML format (which may be helpful in data exchange with other HMIS implementations)?
- Who would export SSVF data and upload it to the Repository each month?
    - If the HMIS administrator / vendor: Is there a backup in the event that she/he is not available?
    - If the SSVF grantee: What steps are required to export / upload the data?

III. HMIS Project Descriptor Data Elements

This section provides guidance to HMIS administrators and HMIS vendors on how to complete the Project Descriptor Data Elements in HMIS to set up a grantee.

2.01 Organization Information

The *Organization Information* element contains several fields: 'Organization ID' is generated by the HMIS application; the 'Organization Name' should be name of the grantee. In the event that the organization has other projects participating in HMIS, there may already be a record for the organization in the HMIS. It is not necessary that the *Organization Name* in HMIS is an identical match to the grantee name as identified in the grant, only that the organization is correctly identified and recognizable to CoC and HMIS administration staff. 'Victim Service Provider' status is set at the organization level as "Yes/No" response. The definition of Victim Service Provider can be accessed at this link: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5743/hmis-when-to-use-a-comparable-database/

2.02 Project Information

The *Project Information* element contains several fields: 'Project ID' is generated by the HMIS software; the 'Project Name' identifies the specific project. There are no specific VA requirements for grantee's HMIS project names, but in general, names should make it as simple as possible for users to distinguish between the various HMIS projects created to represent a single grant. Due to 'Project Type' (described below), you may be required to split a single grant into multiple projects. If so, here's an example of a simple naming convention for 2.02.2 'Project Name': *Community Homeless SSVF RRH* and *Community Homeless SSVF Prevention*.

'Operating Start Date' must be completed on all projects within the HMIS. The 'Operating Start Date' of the project is defined as the first day the project provided services and/or housing. Thus, this date must be no later than the date the first client served in the project was entered into the project. For projects which began operating prior to October 1, 2012, the start date may be estimated if not known. 'Operating End Date' must be entered when a project closes. The 'Operating End Date' must be the last day on which the last client received housing/services. The 'Operating End Date' should be left empty if the project is still in operation

Every VA grant project in HMIS should answer "Yes" to 'Continuum Project'. Each VA grant component has a specific 'Project Type' assigned to it, as follows:

Grant: Component	Project Type #	Project Type Name
SSVF (RRH)	13	PH-Rapid Re-Housing
SSVF (Homelessness Prevention)	12	Homelessness Prevention
SSVF (Rapid Resolution)	14 or 6 (determined locally)	Coordinated Entry Services Only
HCHV CRS: EH	1	Emergency Shelter
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Bridge Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Low Demand	8	Safe Haven
GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	2	Transitional Housing

GPD: Hospital to Housing	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	2	Transitional Housing
GPD: Transition in Place	9	PH – Housing Only
GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention	6	Services Only

'Affiliated with a residential project' and 'Project ID(s) of residential project(s) affiliated with a Supportive Services Only project' does not apply to VA funded projects. 'Emergency Shelter Tracking Method' is only relevant for projects funded under the HCHV CRS: EH program component; these projects should be set up using the "Entry/Exit Date" method. Finally, 'HMIS Participating Project' should be "Yes" for all projects funded under the VA programs listed in the "Identify the VA Program Funding" section of this document if the project has client data collected about them in the Universal Data Elements, Common Data Elements, and Federal Partner Program Specific elements in the Continuum's HMIS. Otherwise, select "No."

2.03 Continuum of Care Information

Select the 'CoC Code' based on the location in which the project operates. VA-funded projects may be funded to operate in a single CoC or they may be funded to operate in a wider geographic area that covers multiple CoCs. Projects funded to operate in multiple CoCs should be associated with all of the CoC codes for which they will be entering client-level data into the HMIS. For example, if a SSVF project is expected to provide financial assistance to everyone in the catchment area then all of the CoC codes which cover the area must be selected. However, if the SSVF project only provides services to people in City X, and City X has a single CoC code, then select the code that applies to City X's CoC only. If a project is funded to operate in multiple CoCs and is participating in the HMIS implementations of each separate CoC with a separate project created in each, only the CoC Code relevant to the HMIS implementation need be entered.

'Geocode,' 'Project ZIP code,' and 'Project Street Address' fields must reflect the location of the project's principal lodging site or, for multiple site projects, the area in which most of the project's clients are housed.

2.06 Federal Partner Funding Sources

Projects funded in whole or in part by VA funds are to be identified based on the VA program. Select the appropriate VA program for each project as such:

Grant: Component	Federal Funder Source Number	Federal Funder Source Name
SSVF (RRH)	33	VA:Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SSVF (Homelessness Prevention)	33	VA:Supportive Services for Veteran Families
SSVF (Rapid Resolution)	33	VA:Supportive Services for Veteran Families
HCHV CRS: EH	27	VA:CRS Contract Residential Services
HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven	30	VA:Community Contract Safe Haven Program
GPD: Bridge Housing	37	VA:Grant Per Diem – Bridge Housing
GPD: Low Demand	38	VA:Grant Per Diem – Low Demand

GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing	41	VA:Grant Per Diem – Service Intensive Transitional Housing
GPD: Hospital to Housing	39	VA:Grant Per Diem – Hospital to Housing
GPD: Clinical Treatment	40	VA:Grant Per Diem – Clinical Treatment
GPD: Transition in Place	42	VA:Grant Per Diem – Transition in Place
GPD: Case Management/ Housing Retention	45	VA: Grant Per Diem – Case Management/Housing Retention

For VA projects the *Grant Identifier* field should include the VA grant number or Federal Awards Identification Number (FAIN), along with the corresponding *Grant Start Date* and *Grant End Date*. With the exception of SSVF, projects that operate as a single entity but are funded under multiple VA programs or grants may be set up as a single project in HMIS, as long as the project type (as shown in 2.4 Project Type above) is the same and each of the funding sources is recorded in HMIS. For SSVF, multiple VA grant identifiers should only be associated with a single project when a grant is renewed. Organizations operating with more than one VA grant at the same time must have separate projects set up for each grant.

2.07 Bed and Unit Inventory

This data element should be completed for the projects in HMIS consistent with the policies of the HMIS implementation. This information is not used by VA.

IV. HMIS Data Collection Instructions

HMIS Universal and Program Specific Data Elements Required by Program

All VA funded projects participating in HMIS are required to collect and enter Universal Data Elements. Project-specific data elements are required for some VA-funded programs and not others. For detailed information about data collection instructions, element rationale, and definitions of response categories, please see the HMIS Data Manual. Some special considerations for VA projects include:

- Persons served under "Pending Verification of Veteran status" may be entered into HMIS and uploaded to the Repository.
- Data collected and entered into HMIS should be done so upon program entry based on the participants' self-reports.
- Documentation must be obtained for data elements directly tied to program eligibility.

X = Required; O = Optional; Blank = Not reported

#	Name	SSVF: RRH	SSVF: HP	SSVF: RR	HCHV: All	GPD: All
3.01-3.917	Universal Data Elements	X	X	X	X	X
4.02	Income and Sources	X	X		X	X
4.03	Non Cash Benefits	X	X		X	X
4.04	Health Insurance	X	X		X	X
4.05	Physical Disability				X	X
4.06	Developmental Disability				X	X
4.07	Chronic Health Condition				X	X
4.08	HIV/AIDS				X	X
4.09	Mental Health Problem				X	X
4.10	Substance Abuse				X	X
4.11	Domestic Violence	X	X		X	X
4.19	Coordinated Entry Assessment			O	O	O
4.20	Coordinated Entry Event			X	O	O
V1	Veteran's Information	X	X		X	X
V2	Services Provided – SSVF	X	X		O	O
V3	Financial Assistance – SSVF	X	X			
V4	Percent of AMI (SSVF Eligibility)	X	X			
V5	Last Permanent Address	X	X			
V6	VAMC Station Number	X	X		X	X
V7	SSVF HP Targeting Criteria		X			
P4	Connection with SOAR	X	X			O
R4	Last Grade Completed	X	X			
R6	Employment Status	X	X			X

VA Assistance Type

Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)

Rapid Re-Housing and Homelessness Prevention: For each SSVF grant, there must be one project set up in HMIS with a project type of Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and another with a project type of Homelessness Prevention (HP).

Participants should be entered into HMIS under either the RRH or HP project based on the housing status of the head of household.

If the head of household is homeless, enter the household into the RRH project. Briefly, this includes:

- Individuals and families living in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., a vehicle, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground).
- Individuals and families being provided with a temporary residence by a public or private organization (e.g., emergency shelter, Safe Haven, or a hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter vouchers).
- Individuals exiting an institution after a stay of 90 days or less who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
- Individuals and families leaving their primary nighttime residence because they are fleeing domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- Individuals leaving their primary nighttime residence because they are fleeing domestic violence, who have no other residence, and do not have resources or a support network in place to acquire permanent housing.

Other participants (i.e., those who are not homeless but are eligible for SSVF) should be entered under the HP project type.

Rapid Resolution: There are two types of *Rapid Resolution* data that should be captured in HMIS:

1) **Received a Rapid Resolution Conversation: Grantees are expected to have a Rapid Resolution conversation with all Veterans.** Grantees are required to enter Veterans into a Coordinated Entry or Services Only-type project and are required to record the conversation and its result using element '4.20 – Coordinated Entry Event.' HMIS Leads and System Administrators are to provide an HMIS project for recording these conversations, and to work with local Coordinated Entry data collection Leads to reduce or eliminate data entry burden on SSVF case managers when these conversations are required by the CoC to be recorded in the local CE project *as well.*

   If a conversation commences and cannot be completed in the same day, then grantees can wait up to 72 hours to enter the outcome of the Rapid Resolution conversation.

2) **Enrolled in HP or RRH with a Service of Rapid Resolution:** SSVF grantees shall enroll all Veterans who identify a safe alternative through the Rapid Resolution conversation, if the Veteran is eligible for SSVF and agrees to be enrolled, in HP or RRH (based on guidance in the Rapid

Resolution Program Guide) with a Rapid Resolution service by adding a service under V2 Services Provided using the Field Response #9: "Rapid Resolution."

If a conversation commences and the client is ineligible for SSVF or doesn't agree to be enrolled in SSVF, then the grantee shall not enroll the client in the HP or RRH project in HMIS.

For further information about the *Rapid Resolution* program, please refer to the SSVF Rapid Resolution Service Compliance Guidance.

Returning Home: SSVF grantees may provide *Returning Home* assistance to SSVF households. *Returning Home* assistance consists of offering homeless Veteran households the option of returning to their community of origin or to a community where the Veteran has available supports to facilitate housing placement using SSVF financial assistance.

Communities may find that *Returning Home* is beneficial when used in partnership with the *Rapid Resolution* initiative. *Returning Home* will be available to all communities in FY 2020.

SSVF households receiving *Returning Home* assistance should enroll households into RRH or HP project types based on their living situation at entry. Within HMIS, *Returning Home* clients must be identified by adding a service under V2 Services Provided using the Field Response #8: "Returning Home."

For further information about the *Returning Home* program, please refer to the SSVF Returning Home Initiative Description and FAQ.

Extended Shallow Subsidy: Shallow Subsidy is only authorized for certain communities designated as Priority 3 in the FY2020 NOFA. SSVF grantees may provide *Extended Shallow Subsidy* assistance to SSVF household. *Extended Shallow Subsidy* assistance consists of offering homeless Veteran households a smaller amount of assistance over a longer (extended) period of time to facilitate housing placement using SSVF financial assistance.

SSVF households receiving *Extended Shallow Subsidy* assistance should enroll households into RRH or HP project types based on their living situation at entry. Within HMIS, *Extended Shallow Subsidy* clients must be identified by adding a service under V2 Services Provided using the Field Response #7: "Extended Shallow Subsidy" and/or by adding a financial assistance amount under V3 Financial Assistance using the Field Response #15: "Extended Shallow Subsidy – Rental Assistance."

Grant and Per Diem (GPD)

For each GPD grant, there must be at least one project set up in HMIS with a project type matching the table on page 9. The GPD program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing (up to 24 months) and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability.

Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)

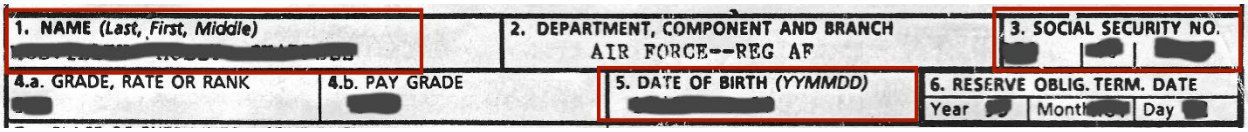
For each HCHV grant, there must be at least one project set up in HMIS with a project type matching the table on page 9. The HCHV program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Data Elements

3.01 Name

Providing identifying information is an eligibility requirement and is not optional. At a minimum, every client, including household members, must have a first name and a last name entered in HMIS. Use full legal names instead of nicknames or shortened versions. Entry of middle names and suffixes is strongly encouraged.

For Veterans, names should be entered in HMIS as they appear on the DD214 unless the Veteran has had a legal name change since his/her discharge. The DD214 is also a reliable source of information about Social Security number and Date of Birth.



The only acceptable response to Name Data Quality is *Full name reported*. (As long as the first name and last name are complete and correct, *Full name reported* is an appropriate response – it is desirable but not necessary that the middle name is included.)

If there is already a record in HMIS for the participant and any part of the name is incorrect, correct it. Although the HMIS Data Standards specify that name is only collected when a client record is created, it is the responsibility of every project that serves that person to ensure that information is complete and correct.

3.02 Social Security Number

For Veterans, SSN is relevant to eligibility. Any Veteran applying for services from a VA funded program must provide an SSN in order to receive services and grantees must enter the complete SSN into HMIS. A Veteran who declines to provide an SSN is not eligible for VA funded programs.

Grantees must also ask for an SSN for all non-Veteran household members; however, non-Veterans are legally entitled to decline to provide an SSN. When that happens, it must be accurately reflected in HMIS data by selecting 'Client refused' in the SSN Data Quality field. Regardless of the reason, partial, missing, or invalid SSNs will always have a negative impact on data quality.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and the SSN is incorrect or incomplete, please correct it.

3.03 Date of Birth

Again, providing identifying information is an eligibility requirement and is not optional. Every client, including non-Veteran household members, must have a date of birth in HMIS. Note that for Date of Birth Type, *Client doesn't know* and *Client refused* are not valid responses for SSVF participants.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and the date of birth is incorrect or incomplete, please correct it.

3.04 Race

Collect self-reported race information about every client. Select as many races as apply. If the participant does not identify with any of the five races listed, select *Client doesn't know* or *Client refused*

as appropriate. The Data Manual provides a description of each race category and instructions for how to help a client identify the appropriate races for them.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and race information is incorrect or incomplete, please correct it.

3.05 Ethnicity

Collect self-reported ethnicity information about every client. Select only one ethnicity. If the participant does not identify with any of the ethnicities listed, select *Client doesn't know* or *Client refused* as appropriate. The Data Manual provides a description of each ethnicity and instructions for how to help a client identify the appropriate ethnicity for them.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and Ethnicity is incorrect, please correct it.

3.06 Gender

Collect self-reported gender information about every client. The Data Manual provides a description of each gender. *Client doesn't know* and *Client refused* are not valid responses for VA grant-funded participants.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and gender information is incorrect or incomplete, please correct it.

3.07 Veteran Status

SSVF & GPD grantees can serve clients who only had service time in Basic Training. Please be aware that the *HMIS definition of Veteran* requires a day of active duty beyond training, but this *is not a requirement for SSVF or GPD program eligibility*.

For HMIS purposes, Veteran Status should be 'Yes' for anyone who has ever been on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, regardless of discharge status or length of service.

For members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, active duty begins when a military member reports to a duty station after completion of training.

For members of the Reserves and National Guard, active duty is:

- Reservist activation or deployment, either within the United States or abroad under Active duty as defined in section 101(d)(1) of Title 10 USC (12304, 12302, or 12301a); or
- National Guard call to active service authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense for a period of more than 30 consecutive days under section 502(f) of Title 32 USC for purposes of responding to a national emergency declared by the President and supported by Federal funds; or
- Anyone who was disabled in the line of duty during a period of active duty training; or
- Anyone who was disabled from an injury incurred in the line of duty or from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident during a period of inactive duty training.

Veteran Status should be 'No' for anyone who has not been on active duty, including:

- Individuals who attended basic training, officer training school, and/or technical training but were discharged before reporting to a duty station;
- Members of the Reserves or National Guard who were never activated or deployed as described above.

For VA funded projects, every adult must have a Veteran Status of either *Yes* or *No*. Neither *Client doesn't know* nor *Client refused* are permissible responses.

Full time active duty Veterans who were discharged from the military while in basic training meet service requirements to be considered for SSVF & GPD if they meet all other eligibility criteria.

Due to the complexity in the definition of active military service, it is important to have a strong level of communication with your local VA Medical Center to verify if a potential participant has active military service and to verify their type of discharge. **The VA understands that an SSVF or GPD Program participant may have a 3.7 Veteran Status = "No" and still be eligible for SSVF- or GPD-funded services.** Documentation of the client's eligibility for the project should be retained on file for the client for monitoring purposes, and this guidance can be saved as backup to explain the apparent discrepancy between the client file and the HMIS record.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and Veteran Status is incorrect, please correct it.

Establishing Veteran Status for SSVF Enrollment:

To prove a participant's Veteran status, grantees should obtain at least ONE of the following documents:

- SQUARES Printout
- Veteran Health Administration (VHA) Veteran's Identity card
- VA Veterans Choice Card
- VA Photo ID Card -
- Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Statement of Service (SOS)
- VISTA printout from VHA healthcare provider
- VA Hospital Inquiry System (HINQS)
- VBA award letter of service connected disability payment or non-service connected pension
- NA Form 13038
- DD Form 214 Certificate of Release Discharge from Active Duty

SQUARES 2.0 allows any SSVF grantee user of the HMIS Repository to instantaneously determine Veteran status. The system functions by sending the personal identifiers for an individual client record as an electronic query to the VA Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR). VADIR then uses its standard match logic to determine whether the particular individual has a matching record of military service. SQUARES offers detailed discharge status for the majority of inquiries, allowing instant determination of program eligibility and status of VHA enrollment (a description of SQUARES is attached). Although SQUARES cannot be used as a substitute for VHA enrollment, programs such as SSVF and GPD that do not require VHA enrollment may use SQUARES as documentation for purposes of determining eligibility and is included in the list of approved documents to determine SSVf eligibility. To review the features and watch a tutorial on how to use SQUARES, please go to:

www.va.gov/homeless/SQUARES

If such documents proving eligibility are not immediately available, an Affidavit of Veteran Status signed by the Veteran can be used to allow grantees to temporarily enroll Veterans who are Pending Verification of Veteran Status and initiate supportive services. However, temporary financial assistance will not be provided until the grantee/Veteran can obtain documentation proving Veteran status. For further guidance on Pending Verification of Veteran Status, see Exhibit D.

If the Veteran is not in possession of his or her DD Form 214, the grantee should assist the Veteran in submitting an SF-180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, to confirm the individual's status. Information on how to submit this form can be found on the National Archives website: http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/.

3.08 Disabling Condition

Disabling condition is one or more of the following:

- A physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury that:
    - Is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration;
    - Substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently; and
    - Could be improved by the provision of suitable housing conditions.
- A developmental disability, as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002); or
- The disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any condition arising from the etiologic agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV).
- Additionally, if the client is a veteran who is disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service and whose disability meets the disability definition defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act, they should be identified as having a disabling condition.

Collect disabling condition for every client served with VA-funded grants. If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and Disabling Condition is incorrect, please correct it.

3.10 Project Start Date

Every client must have a Project Start Date. There are no exceptions and the Repository will reject any upload that has missing information for this field.

For all project types, the Project Start Date indicates a client is now being assisted by the project. The term 'assisted' is not limited to financial assistance. By project type for VA funded projects, below is a synopsis of what to record as the date of project start:

Emergency Shelter: Record the date of the night client first stayed in the shelter.

Safe Haven and Transitional Housing: Record the date the client moves into the residential project (i.e. first night in residence).

Permanent Housing including Rapid Re-Housing: Record the date following application that the client was admitted into the project. To be admitted indicates the following factors have been met:

- Information provided by the client or from the referral indicates they meet the criteria for admission;
- The client has indicated they want to be housed in this project;
- The client is able to access services and housing through the project.

Homelessness Prevention: Record the date the client first began working with the project and generally received the first provision of service.

All household members who are staying with the head of household at the time of project entry should have the same Project Entry Date. If a new client is added to a household after the original household members' start dates, the new client's start date should reflect the actual day that client started the project.

3.11 Project Exit Date

The Project Exit Date is the last date on which the grantee provides services or residence to the household. This may be the last day of any month for which rental assistance is provided, even if no other services were provided on that date. Likewise, rental assistance may have ended but services are still being provided, in which case the client must not be exited until those services cease.

All household members who are staying with the head of household at the time of project exit should have the same Project Exit Date. Household members who leave the project before the rest of the household for any reason may have an earlier Project Exit Date.

3.12 Destination

For all clients, select the residence type that best corresponds to the client's living situation at the time of project exit.

For Prevention clients who maintained their housing, this will be the same as the Residence Prior to Project Entry.

It is critical to follow up with clients who may stop showing up after receiving services. Without information about clients' living situation at exit, VA has no way to tell whether or not the intervention was successful. For this reason, any response that does not provide information about the client's living situation will show up on data quality reports.

If a client cannot be contacted after receiving services and it is not possible to identify a living situation for the client at the time of exit, 'No exit interview completed' should be selected. This will happen; data quality for this field is not evaluated against perfection but against national averages and other grantees dealing with the same circumstances and client population.

The selection of 'Other' for the Destination field generally reflects poor data quality. 'Other' should only be selected in the event that the client's living situation at the time of project exit is so unusual that it is not possible to select one of the other options. If 'Other' is selected, an explanation must be provided; if the explanation indicates a living situation that falls under one of the other options, grantees will be required to correct this.

Below are some common destination situations and the matching HMIS Destination response that is appropriate for that situation. This list is not exhaustive of every situation; please refer to the HMIS Data Manual for all destinations.

Common Living Situations at Project Exit	HMIS Destination Response
In a unit paid for by HUD-VASH voucher	Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
In a unit no longer subsidized by any subsidy	Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
In a unit paid for by GPD Transition in Place	Rental by client with GPD TIP housing subsidy
In the same unit because they were prevented from becoming homeless with SSVF HP	Same "Destination" as "Prior Living Situation"

Not yet in a unit (still looking for housing even though a HUD-VASH voucher has been secured)	Whatever the actual living situation is on the date of Project Exit (but likely not "Rental by client" because they are not yet in a unit)

FY2020 changes include a revised Destination list to align with Prior Living Situation and Current Living Situation lists. Make sure you are accessing the most up-to-date destination list when selecting destination at exit. Collect this element on every client exited. For a more detailed description of each destination, refer to the HMIS Data Manual.

3.15 Relationship to Head of Household

Identify one person to whom all other household members can be linked at the time of project start: that becomes the Head of Household. Every client must have a Relationship to Head of Household defined at project start. There are no exceptions and the Repository will reject any upload that has missing information for this field.

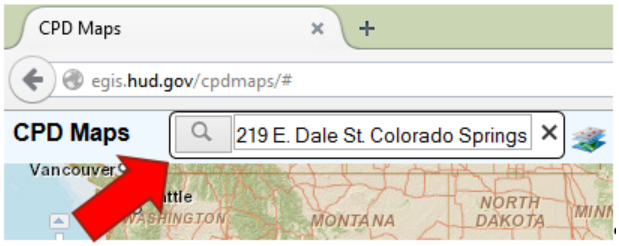
For VA funded projects, the head of household should be the eligible Veteran. In households with two or more eligible Veterans, the program should follow CoC methodology to designate head of household.

3.16 Client Location

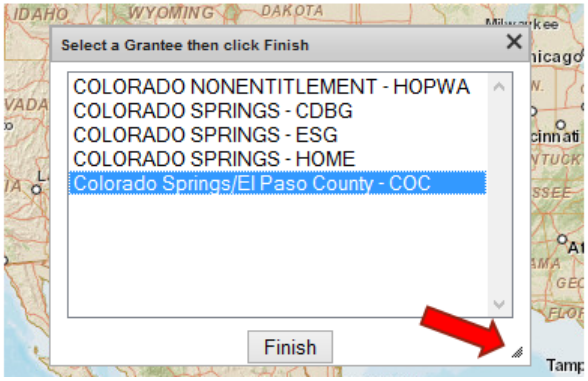
Identify the CoC in which the head of household is located at the time of project entry. The CoC Code should correspond to one of the CoCs in which the VA grantee is funded to provide services. CoC codes identify a geographic area and consist of a two-letter state abbreviation, a dash, and a 3-digit number assigned by HUD. For example, the CoC code for the Colorado Springs / El Paso County Continuum of Care is CO-504.

This is mandatory for every project entry; there are no exceptions. If you do not know the CoC code, HUD has an online mapping tool that you can use to find it. To do this:

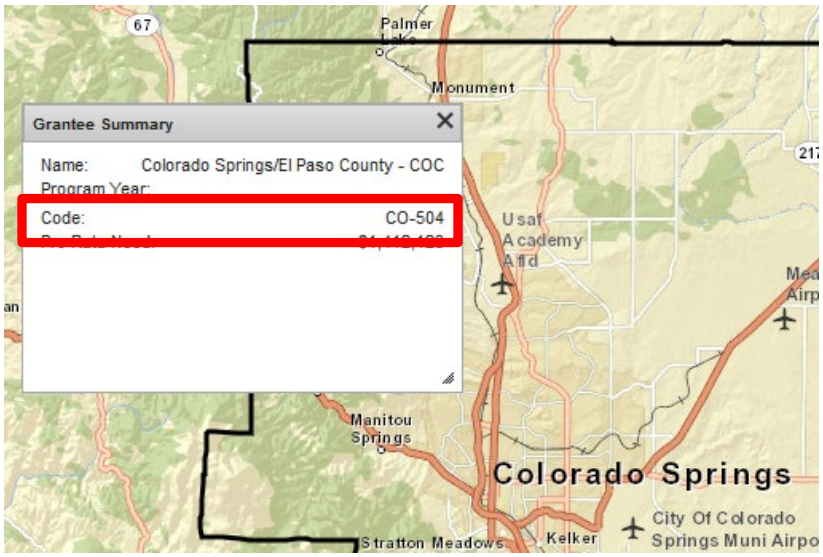
1. Go to http://egis.hud.gov/cpdmaps/#.
2. Enter the client's address (or an address close to where the client is located) in the box on the upper left and click the magnifying glass to search.



3. In the popup box, select the grantee that ends with 'COC' and click 'Finish.' If the popup box is too small to read full names, you can click on the lower right corner and drag to make it bigger.



4. The mapping tool will display the geographic boundaries of the CoC that covers the address you entered and another popup box that includes the CoC Code.



If the head of household moves to a different CoC during enrollment and services will be provided from the updated CoC that the SSVF was funded to provide services from, create a new record with the CoC Code for the updated CoC in which the VA grantee is funded to provide services. The Information Date associated with the new record should be the date that the client changed location. If the exact date is not known, an approximate date is fine.

If Client Location information was recorded incorrectly at project start or update, correct the existing record.

3.20 Housing Move In Date

For clients with a Project Start Date in a Permanent Housing project type, including Rapid Re-Housing, record the date a client or household physically moves into a permanent housing unit. This may be the same date as Project Start Date, or a date after Project Start Date if there are pre-housing services being provided.

If the client or household exits the permanent housing project for a different housing opportunity <u>without physically moving into a housing unit</u>, do not enter a housing move in date. Simply exit the client and record the exit destination.

In the event that a client vacates the housing situation and the project stops paying rental assistance, staff should exit the client from the project with an accurate *Project Exit Date* and *Destination* and create a new *Project Start Date* in a second enrollment for the client on the same or following day. The project would continue working with the client until a new unit is found, at which point a new housing move-in date would be recorded on the second project record. This will ensure that the client's history of housing is preserved.

If the client moves directly from one unit into another unit with the same subsidy and no days of homelessness in between, it would not be necessary to exit and re-enter them because their housing move-in date would still accurately reflect the day they entered permanent housing according to that enrollment record.

Additionally, if using SSVF funded RRH, please note that the VA tracks the recording of Housing Move-In Date in RRH projects very closely, and expects that any RRH exit record with a permanent housing destination will have a Housing Move-In Date recorded as well. Therefore, the RRH provider should exit the client from RRH if the client is housed by VASH. They should include in their exit record in the RRH project in HMIS:

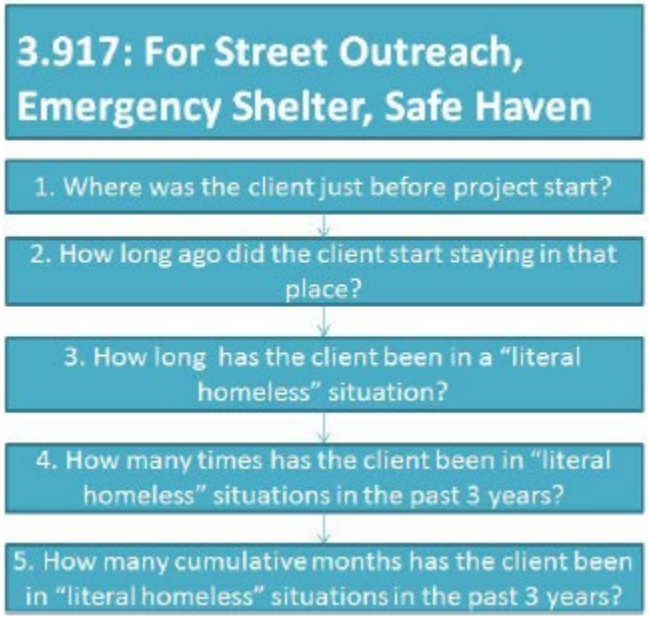
1. An accurate Housing Move in Date that matches the VASH provider's Housing Move-in Date in the VASH project record (or in the case of missing or non-entered housing move in date on the VASH side, the RRH provider should enter a date that is accurate to the best of their knowledge on the RRH record); and
2. An accurate permanent housing destination; and
3. An accurate Exit Date that *matches the housing move in date in the RRH project.*

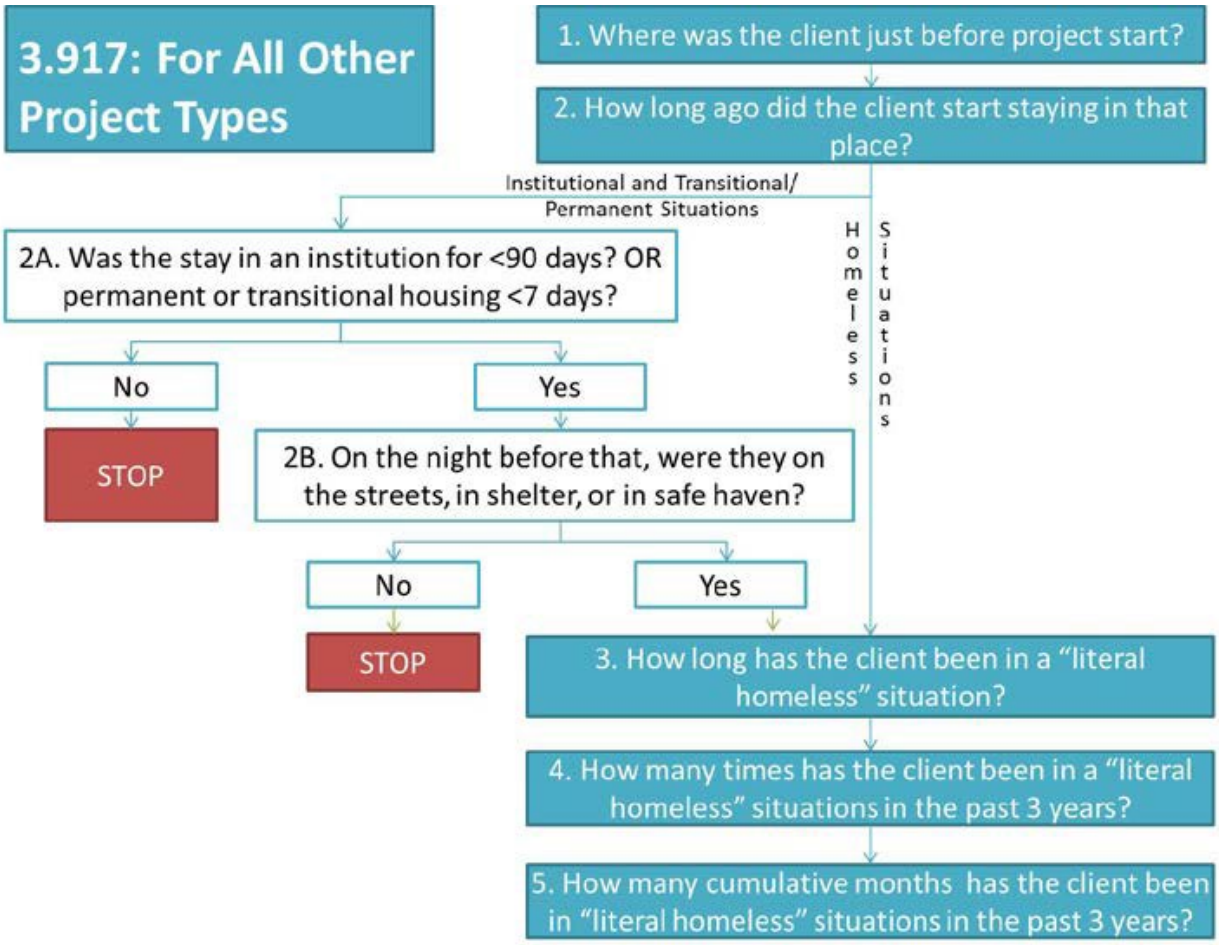
For additional guidance about this data element, please see the HMIS Data Manual.

3.917 Prior Living Situation

3.917A is to be used for all persons entering a Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter or Safe Haven project and 3.917B is to be used for persons entering in all other HMIS project types. With this separation and clarification, the definition of chronic homelessness as identified in the final rule in the Federal Register published December 5, 2015 is able to be fully reported through an HMIS.

3.917 has been carefully constructed to apply the logic appropriate to the client's responses in order to avoid asking for information which is irrelevant or inappropriate for the client population being served in a particular situation. For example – eligibility for Homelessness Prevention requires that a client be in housing. By definition, a person in housing is not homeless, let alone chronically homeless, so the series of questions asked to determine chronic homeless status are not required. A flow chart to further describe this element is shown below. FY2020 changes include a revised Prior Living Situation list to align with Destination and Current Living Situation lists. Make sure you are accessing the most up-to-date Prior Living Situation list when selecting Prior Living Situation. For additional guidance about this data element, please see the HMIS Data Manual.


3.917: For Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven
1. Where was the client just before project start?
2. How long ago did the client start staying in that place?
3. How long has the client been in a "literal homeless" situation?
4. How many times has the client been in "literal homeless" situations in the past 3 years?
5. How many cumulative months has the client been in "literal homeless" situations in the past 3 years?


3.917: For All Other Project Types
1. Where was the client just before project start?
2. How long ago did the client start staying in that place?
Institutional and Transitional/ Permanent Situations
Homeless Situations
2A. Was the stay in an institution for <90 days? OR permanent or transitional housing <7 days?
No
STOP
Yes
2B. On the night before that, were they on the streets, in shelter, or in safe haven?
No
STOP
Yes
3. How long has the client been in a "literal homeless" situation?
4. How many times has the client been in a "literal homeless" situations in the past 3 years?
5. How many cumulative months has the client been in "literal homeless" situations in the past 3 years?

4.02 Income and Sources

Record responses for all adults at all collection points: project start, annual assessment, and project exit. Note that 'Client doesn't know' and 'Client refused' are not valid responses for VA funded participants. Eligibility for VA projects is based on income; participants must provide income information and grantees must enter it into HMIS.

Information about income may be recorded in HMIS consistent with the SSVF Income Eligibility Calculation worksheet. For example, the worksheet specifically excludes income earned by minors from household income calculations; accordingly, income earned by minors may be excluded from HMIS.

If Income from any Source is 'Yes,' there should be an amount greater than zero in the Total Monthly Income field and at least one income source should also be 'Yes.' For any source that is 'Yes', there must be an amount greater than zero recorded for the source. The total of all source amounts must equal Total Monthly Income.

The HMIS Data Standards and VA require that a new record of Income and Sources must be created at the time of collection. The questions must be asked and the responses must be recorded in HMIS. It is not acceptable to assume that nothing has changed since project entry.

4.03 Non-Cash Benefits

Record responses for all adults at all collection points: project start, annual assessment, and project exit.

The HMIS Data Standards and VA require that a new record of Non-Cash Benefits must be created at the time of collection. The questions must be asked and the responses must be recorded in HMIS. It is not acceptable to assume that nothing has changed since project entry.

4.04 Health Insurance

Record responses for all participants (including minors) at all collection points: project start, annual assessment, and project exit.

The HMIS Data Standards and VA require that a new record of Health Insurance must be created at the time of collection. The questions must be asked and the responses must be recorded in HMIS. It is not acceptable to assume that nothing has changed since project entry.

4.05 – 4.10 Disability Elements

Record whether clients have any disabling special needs. Indicate whether the client has each disability and whether the disability is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration and substantially impair the client's ability to live independently. These elements are required for all VA funded projects except SSVF projects.

- 4.05 Physical Disability
- 4.06 Developmental Disability
- 4.07 Chronic Health Condition
- 4.08 HIV/AIDS
- 4.09 Mental Health Problem
- 4.10 Substance Abuse

4.11 Domestic Violence

Record whether adults served are survivors of domestic violence. These elements are required for all VA funded projects except the stand-alone *Rapid Resolution* project.

For specific questions about participation in HMIS for providers who serve survivors of domestic violence, please see the following HUD Exchange website

4.19 Coordinated Entry Assessment

This data element is intended to standardize data collection on core components of Coordinated Entry like access, assessment, referral and prioritization. This optional data element will only be used by SSVF *Rapid Resolution* stand-alone projects as needed if coordination with Coordinated Entry in the local CoC means that SSVF-funded case managers having Rapid Resolution conversations that do not result in an SSVF funded Rapid Re-Housing or Homelessness Prevention enrollment are able to contribute conversation data to the CoC's Coordinated Entry project without data entry burden on the SSVF case managers recording the SSVF-required data (4.20 Coordinated Entry Event) for capturing these conversations.

4.20 Coordinated Entry Event

This data element is intended to standardize data collection on core components of Coordinated Entry like access, assessment, referral and prioritization. This data element will only be used by SSVF *Rapid Resolution* stand-alone projects as needed to record all *Rapid Resolution* conversations.

Record the Date of the Event (conversation). In a separate field, use Field 2: "Event" and Response #2: "Problem Solving/Diversion/Rapid Resolution intervention or service" to record the Event (conversation). At the same time or at some point later when the information is known, come back to this recorded Event and record a response to Field A: "Client housed/re-housed in a safe alternative" as either "No" or "Yes." After recording the conversation result, the client can be exited from the *Rapid Resolution* project.

Data Capture Situation	**Do I record an Event (4.20) in a Stand-alone *Rapid Resolution* project?**	**Do I record an enrollment in HP or RRH Project and a V2 "Rapid Resolution" service provided?**
A Veteran is referred to SSVF Project from Coordinated Entry for the Rapid Resolution. A conversation commences and results in the identification of a safe alternative to sheltered or unsheltered homelessness and Veteran is enrolled in SSVF for 90 days of Case Management/ Aftercare using RRH or HP Assistance with a Rapid Resolution service	Yes	Yes

Data Capture Situation	Do I record an Event (4.20) in a Stand-alone *Rapid Resolution* project?	Do I record an enrollment in HP or RRH Project and a V2 "Rapid Resolution" service provided?
A Veteran is referred to SSVF Project from Coordinated Entry for Rapid Resolution. Conversation commences and results in client not finding a safe alternative. Grantees are expected to enroll literally homeless Veterans, without waiting for documentation, in coordination with the community's coordinated entry policies.	Yes	Yes as soon as possible for all eligible, literally homeless Veterans
A conversation commences and the client is ineligible for SSVF or doesn't agree to be enrolled in SSVF. The grantee shall not enroll the client in the HP or RRH project in HMIS.	Yes	No

Special note: HMIS Leads and System Administrators are to provide an HMIS project for recording these conversations, and to work with local Coordinated Entry data collection Leads to reduce or eliminate data entry burden on SSVF case managers when these conversations are required by the CoC to be recorded in the local CE project *as well*.

V1 Veteran's Information

Record Veteran's Information for all Veterans served. This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP, all GPD and all HCHV projects.

Veteran's Information includes:

Year Entered Military Service and **Year Separated from Military Service**

Record the Year Entered and Year Separated for the Veteran's latest period of service or the period of service with the most favorable discharge status for eligibility purposes. These can be found in Block 12 of the DD214 (as shown on the right) or from SQUARES 2.0 (as shown below).

12. RECORD OF SERVICE	Year(s)	Month(s)	Day(s)
a. Date Entered AD This Period	1987	NOV	03
b. Separation Date This Period	1993	NOV	02
c. Net Active Service This Period	06	00	00
d. Total Prior Active Service	00	00	00

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SSN	GENDER	VETERAN ELIGIBILITY STATUS	CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE	DISCHARGE YEAR
				M	1-VHA Eligible	Honorable	1992

Description	What it means for SSVF/GPD	What it means for VA health care/ HUD-VASH
1-VHA Eligible: Eligible for SSVF/GPD and VA health care.	Eligible	Eligible

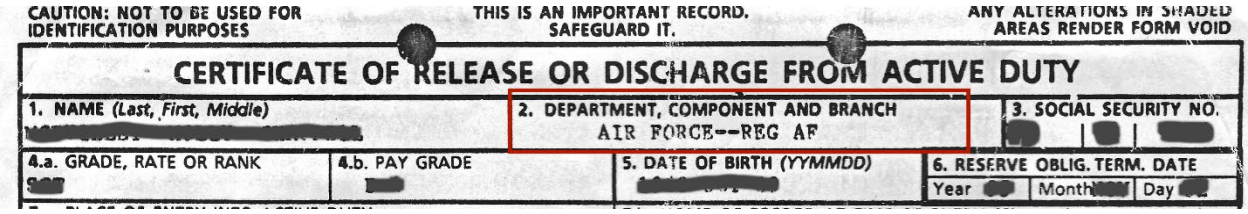
Theaters of Operations

Identify whether or not the Veteran served in the theatre of operations for any of the listed military conflicts. Only physical presence within the geographic area during the conflict is required for a *Yes* response – this is not a question of whether or not the Veteran was in combat or ever came under fire.

Branch of the Military

Record the branch of the military in which the Veteran served for the longest period of time. If periods of service are identical in length, see the instructions related to Year Entered and Year Separated above.

This can be found in Block 2 of the DD214.


CAUTION: NOT TO BE USED FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RECORD. SAFEGUARD IT.
ANY ALTERATIONS IN SHADED AREAS RENDER FORM VOID

CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OR DISCHARGE FROM ACTIVE DUTY

1. NAME (Last, First, Middle) [redacted]
2. DEPARTMENT, COMPONENT AND BRANCH AIR FORCE--REG AF
3. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. [redacted]
4.a. GRADE, RATE OR RANK [redacted]
4.b. PAY GRADE [redacted]
5. DATE OF BIRTH (YYMMDD) [redacted]
6. RESERVE OBLIG. TERM. DATE Year [redacted] Month [redacted] Day [redacted]

Discharge Status

Record the Veteran's discharge status. For Veterans with multiple discharges under different conditions, record the best discharge status.

A veteran's discharge status can be found in block 24 of the DD214.

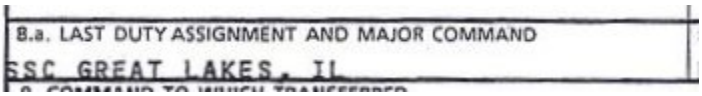
23. TYPE OF SEPARATION RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY
24. CHARACTER OF SERVICE (Include upgrades) HONORABLE

There is only one character of service / discharge status that may appear on a DD214 but has no corresponding value on the HMIS list – this is 'Entry Level Separation.'

In order to be considered a Veteran, an individual must have completed training and reported to a duty station. Entry level separations, which only occur during the first 180 days a person is in the military, often happen prior to completion of training.

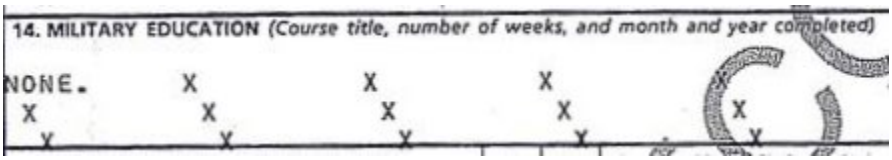
In order to establish Veteran status – and VA-funded program eligibility – additional information may be needed. Asking the applicant whether or not s/he reported to a duty station after training is a good start.

The last duty assignment is listed on the DD214 in Block 8a. Information about these locations is typically available via a quick internet search. If the last duty assignment was


8.a. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND
SSC GREAT LAKES, IL

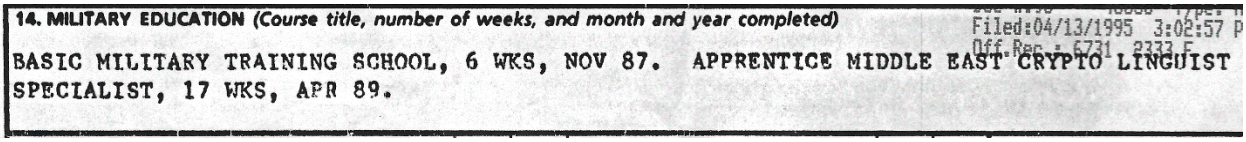
a training location, the applicant may be less likely to be a Veteran.

Another source of information is Block 14 of the DD214, which lists military education. If Block 14 shows no completed training, the applicant may be less likely to be a Veteran.


14. MILITARY EDUCATION (Course title, number of weeks, and month and year completed)

NONE.

If completed training is listed, the applicant is more likely to be a veteran.


14. MILITARY EDUCATION (Course title, number of weeks, and month and year completed)

BASIC MILITARY TRAINING SCHOOL, 6 WKS, NOV 87. APPRENTICE MIDDLE EAST CRYPTO LINGUIST SPECIALIST, 17 WKS, APR 89.

V2 Services Provided – SSVF

Record each service on the date it is provided. For example, if you meet with a participant 5 times during the course of enrollment to provide case management, there should be a record for each date. Another example is when a family has a Rapid Resolution conversation that results in the family accessing Returning Home services. Both a 'Rapid Resolution' service and a 'Returning Home' service would be recorded for the family.

Services should be attached to the head of household's record. Do not create duplicate records of a single service for each household member.

New response options for FY 2020 include recording 7 – Extended Shallow Subsidy services, 8 – Returning Home services, and 9 – Rapid Resolution services.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects and is optional for other VA projects.

V3 Financial Assistance – SSVF

Record each instance of financial assistance. There should be a separate record of financial assistance for each check that is cut; the date of financial assistance should be the date that the check is cut. If a check is returned or not cashed, delete the record in HMIS.

Enter financial assistance under the head of household's record. Do not create duplicate records of a single instance of financial assistance for each household member; after a household is discharged, it should be possible to determine, based on HMIS data, how much financial assistance the household received.

New response option for FY 2020: 15 – Extended Shallow Subsidy - Rental assistance

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects.

V4 Percent of AMI (SSVF Eligibility)

Record the household income as a percentage of Area Median Income (AMI). Select a category based on the SSVF Income Eligibility Calculation. Please note that although 'Greater than 50%' is a response

category defined in the HMIS Data Standards, households with income greater than 50% of the Area Median Income are ineligible for SSVF. Responses of 'Greater than 50%' will negatively impact data quality.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects.

V5 Last Permanent Address

Record the head of household's last permanent address. For Prevention clients, this will be their current address. For Rapid Re-Housing participants, this is not the location where the participant is currently staying, but the address of the last place they were permanently housed.

This should never be the address of a shelter or a reference to a location like the streets or a park – it should be the address where the client was last in housing that might be categorized as permanent, such as:

- An apartment or house rented by the client, with or without a subsidy;
- A home owned or rented by someone else (e.g., the client's parents, a friend, etc.) where the client lived.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects.

V6 VAMC Station Number

Enter the VA Medical Center (VAMC) Station Number that corresponds to the grantee's service location. The service number requires no input from the client. In situations where SSVF providers are serving more than one VAMC in their catchment area, grantees should select the VAMC in the location where the services will be provided from. The list of VAMC Station Numbers can be found on the HMIS_CSV_Specifications document located on the Homelessness Data Exchange.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP, all GPD, and all HCHV projects.

V7 SSVF HP Targeting Criteria

Enter the results of SSVF Homelessness Prevention Stage 2 Targeting Criteria Screening as of the date of project entry for all heads of households. The data element contains nineteen separate questions or field names.

This element is required for SSVF Homelessness Prevention component funded projects only. It is not required for any other VA funded projects including Rapid Re-Housing SSVF projects.

P4 Connection with SOAR

Record for all adults in the household any connection to a SOAR program. Update the connection status anytime between entry, annual assessment, and exit.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects. It is optional for GPD projects.

R4 Last Grade Completed

Enter the last grade completed by the head of household, adult and any unaccompanied youth.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects.

R6 Employment Status

Enter the employment status of the head of household and any adults, including type of employment for those employed and reason not employed for those that aren't. Record the status once at Project Start and once at Project Exit.

This element is required for SSVF RRH & HP projects and for GPD projects.

Data Quality and Completeness Policy

VA grantees must attempt to collect every applicable data element for every person served; grantees are required to enter data into HMIS for every person served. National-level counts of participants and tracking of outcomes are based on HMIS data. Only clients for whom data is entered into HMIS and successfully uploaded to the Repository can be counted by VA as having been served by VA-funded grantees in the GPD, HCHV and SSVF programs.

Some data elements in HMIS include options for 'Client doesn't know' and 'Client refused.' In some cases, these responses are unacceptable for VA clients.

Mandatory Data Collection

All of the data elements listed in the HMIS Data Collection Instruction section are mandatory; all grantees are required to collect them, participants are required to provide responses, and the data must be entered into HMIS.

The data fields listed immediately below are required to determine eligibility for VA funded projects and/or does not require input from clients. There is zero tolerance for missing data in these fields:

- Social Security Number for Veterans
- Relationship to Head of Household (no/multiple heads of household
- VAMC Station Code
- Client Location – CoC Code
- Income as a Percent of AMI
- Housing Move-In Date (RRH)

Issues identified on the data quality report must be corrected in HMIS and data must be re-uploaded to the Repository.

Social Security Numbers (SSN)

For Veterans, SSN is relevant to eligibility. Any Veteran applying for services from VA funded program must provide an SSN in order to receive services and grantees must enter the complete SSN into HMIS. A Veteran who declines to provide an SSN is not eligible for VA funded assistance.

Grantees must also ask for an SSN for all non-Veteran household members; however, non-Veterans are legally entitled to decline to provide an SSN. When that happens, it must be accurately reflected in HMIS data by selecting 'Client refused' in the SSN Data Quality field. Regardless of the reason, partial, missing, or invalid SSNs will always have a negative impact on data quality.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and the SSN is incorrect or incomplete, correct it.

HMIS Data Collection for Participants with History of Domestic Violence

Only programs whose primary mission is to serve victims of domestic violence are prohibited by VAWA[1] from entering client data into HMIS. All other grantees are required to collect and enter data for 100% of participants into HMIS.

Grantees who perceive this requirement to be in conflict with state law, local law, or local HMIS policy must contact regional coordinators with documentation of the specific law and/or policy. VA will review and, when possible, take additional action to facilitate the entry of this data into HMIS. If there is any doubt about a conflict, grantees should contact regional coordinators immediately rather than waiting until a participant with a history of domestic violence requests assistance.

Of the data elements defined by the HMIS Data Standards, V5 Last Permanent Address may be particularly sensitive for Prevention participants given that it includes a current street address. Grantees should enter the city, state, and ZIP code, but may omit the street address in instances where there is reason for concern about an abuser's access to HMIS data.

HMIS Duplicate Enrollments

Grantees are expected to review their HMIS records and client files for evidence of client duplication, investigate the duplication, and resolve the issue (if needed). If a client has received financial assistance, the grantee must determine if total amounts have exceeded the limitations stated in the NOFA/Final Rule.

Data Security Policy

It is the responsibility of the grantee to take precautions to protect client information for all persons served; this applies to both hard copies and electronic data. Information in HMIS tends to be more secure than information in paper files. There are basic information security practices that grantees should follow to keep all personally identifying information secure:

1. Protect any computer that stores or accesses identifying information about any client – which includes accessing HMIS or data exported from HMIS for upload to the Repository – with a username and password.
2. Do not share the username and password for your computer or your HMIS account with anyone, and do not keep them written down in a place where anyone else could find them.
3. Log out or lock your computer when you are not at your desk.
4. The only VA-approved method of transmitting exported HMIS data for clients is by upload to the Repository; exported files may not be emailed.

Grantees should coordinate with the HMIS Lead to ensure that they are aware of and compliant with all security and privacy policies and procedures established by the HMIS implementation(s) in which they operate.

Additional Security Measures for Sensitive Data

While data in HMIS is typically highly secure, there are some very rare circumstances in which it may be vulnerable. These circumstances include instances in which a participant who has been a victim of domestic violence has an abuser who either has access to HMIS data or is a proficient hacker.

Grantees who have reason to believe that information pertaining to a particular participant or household is especially vulnerable in HMIS must contact their regional coordinator, who will help to develop a plan to enter data without compromising the participant's safety. It may be appropriate to delay data entry in whole or in part until after the participant has been discharged.

In addition to data elements required by VA, some HMIS applications include data collection that may provide information about a participant's location, employers, etc. Where there is reason to believe that an abuser may have access to HMIS data, none of that additional information should be entered into HMIS.

HMIS Privacy & Security Requirements

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 laws
- Must comply with limits to data collection (relevant, appropriate, lawful, specified in the privacy notice)
- Must have a written privacy policy, which must be posted on their website
- Must post a sign at each intake desk or comparable location with general reasons for collection and reference to privacy policy
- Consent may be inferred consent from the use of posted signs and a written privacy policy

The CoC may also establish additional privacy protections through 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 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.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2004HUDDataandTechnicalStandards.pdf

Sending Client Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Over Email

Under no circumstances should client PII (such as names, social security numbers, dates of birth) be sent to anyone else over unencrypted email. This includes sending information internally or to the SSVF HMIS TA Team. For additional context on this policy, see the Data Security Policy.

If your organization does need SSVF HMIS TA Team troubleshooting with client-level data issues, then request a screen sharing session at ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com. Be sure to include your grantee ID in the subject line.

V. SSVF Reporting

Monthly Repository Uploads

Grantees are required to enter data on all participants into the HMIS project associated with the CoC geography where the head of household is physically located at the time of entry. The only exception to this is for grantees who are victim service providers as defined by the Violence Against Women Act. Client data from separate HMIS projects will be aggregated within the Repository to create a consolidated accounting of grant activity.

During the first three business days of every month, grantees are required to upload client-level data from the HMIS system into the secure HMIS Repository ("Repository") managed by VA. Each upload of data to the Repository will contain a complete data set reflecting program activity from the start of the federal fiscal year to the date of export. Every time a file is successfully uploaded, it replaces any and all data previously uploaded for that program dating to the start of the Federal Fiscal Year.

The preferred format for the upload of VA funded 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.

Data exported from HMIS systems should be packaged in a ZIP file prior to upload to the Repository. For detailed specifications, please see the VA Repository Data Upload Criteria section of this document.

Upload Reports

Two separate reports containing important data quality and validation information are sent to registered Repository users during the monthly upload cycle.

Each time SSVF data is uploaded to the Repository, it validates each file to ensure that all of the necessary columns were included. The results of this validation will appear on the Repository website immediately after submitting the data and will be emailed to the uploader at the time of the unsuccessful or successful upload.

a. Validation Results

If a Repository upload is unsuccessful, the Validation Report will identify all of the file errors that led to the upload's rejection. Data quality alerts may occur as well. See the file validation section of this report for more details on these issues.

If the uploaded data is successfully transmitted to the Repository, a message will appear at the bottom of the validation results confirming that the uploaded data was successfully transferred to the Repository database. See the File Validation section for more information about how to read the results.

b. Data Quality Summary

The purpose of the Data Quality Summary Report is to identify and correct errors before the Repository closes. These reports are emailed out to all Repository users *with a successful upload* associated with the corresponding Repository program.

Individual fields must be above the 95% complete threshold for that data element. The Repository remains open from the third business day of the month through the ninth

calendar day of the month to allow for uploads with corrected data or for late uploads. The data quality reports will continue to be emailed with each successful upload so that grantees can track data quality improvements.

c. Data Quality Details

The Data Quality Details report is emailed to all Repository users with a successful upload associated with the corresponding Repository program. The details report corresponds to the Data Quality Summary report and provides the HMIS ID for each error/issue identified on the Data Quality Summary report.

The SSVF Program Office will be reviewing data throughout each fiscal year to ensure timely, accurate, and complete data.

VA Repository Data Upload Criteria

Each upload of SSVF data to the Repository must contain a complete data set for the current grant year up to the date that the data set is exported from the HMIS. This document identifies criteria that an uploaded data set must meet in order to be accepted by the Repository.

Data Upload Format

Beginning in November 2019, the Repository accepts data in the HMIS CSV FY 2020 format. CSV files must be packaged in a ZIP file and uploaded to the Repository by the third business day of each month.

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 HMIS CSV specifications and with the data quality requirements established by VA for grantees.

General

- Each of the required CSV files must be included in the upload and file names must be consistent with the HMIS CSV specifications. Uploads missing any required file will be rejected.
- Each file must contain a header row with field names for all fields defined for the file in the HMIS CSV specifications, regardless of whether or not the Repository requires data for the field. Uploads with missing fields, incorrect field names, or additional fields in required files will be rejected.
- The Repository will disregard fields that are greyed out in the tables below. Any data in those fields will not be validated, nor will it be written to the Repository database.
- Fields that are not greyed out in the tables below must be exported in a manner consistent with the HMIS CSV FY 2020 specifications (where data are present) or the upload will be rejected. Data types must be correct, fields with defined pick lists must include only valid values, and fields not specifically identified in the CSV specifications as null must have values.
- All data associated with any enrollment active in the current grant year must be included in every upload. This includes all enrollment data for participants who entered the project in the previous grant year and were still enrolled on October 1. All service and financial assistance records associated with those enrollments must be exported, including those dated prior to the export start date.
- No data marked as deleted in the exporting application may be included in an SSVF export for upload to the Repository. Uploads with non-null values in any DateDeleted field will be rejected.
- When an upload is rejected, the Repository will provide a specific reason (or reasons) for the rejection.

Data Quality

The Repository will evaluate the uploaded files for data quality.

When records are missing data in critical fields, an error message will be displayed identifying the file name, the field name, and the PersonalID associated with the record.

When the percentage of field values with missing/NULL, Client doesn't know (8), Client refused (9), or Data not collected (99), the Repository will generate a data quality alert to notify the user that the data quality is below the expected threshold.

'Other' is almost always not the most accurate response when entering data. It should only be used if no other response is more accurate, which would occur very rarely. 'Other' is included in error counts for Residence Prior to Project Entry and Destination.

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.

Required HMIS CSV FY 2020 Files

The complete CSV standard includes a broader range of information than is required by the Repository. Only the following 14 CSV files are required the Repository (this is the order in which files are usually created by HMIS Vendors):

1. Export.csv
2. Project.csv
3. Funder.csv
4. ProjectCoC.csv
5. Client.csv
6. Enrollment.csv
7. EnrollmentCoC.csv
8. Exit.csv
9. IncomeBenefits.csv
10. Services.csv
11. EmploymentEducation.csv
12. Disabilities.csv
13. HealthandDV.csv
14. Event.csv

The Repository will ignore any files other than those that are required. Fields that are greyed out in the tables below are not required; the Repository does not validate or import data in fields that are not required.

Files and their associated fields are listed below, along with notes specific to Repository uploads.

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 (ExportID) 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.

It should always (and only) include two rows – the first row will be field names and the second row will be the values for those fields. There must be one and only one export record in Export.csv.

Field Name	Notes
ExportID	Unique identifier for the exported data set, repeated in all files.
SourceID	
SourceName	
SourceContactFirst	
SourceContactLast	
SourceContactPhone	
SourceContactExtension	
SourceContactEmail	
ExportDate	The date that the export was generated.
ExportStartDate	The start date of the current federal fiscal year for which you are reporting data should be used for the Export Start Date. If the date in this field is later than the Repository's recorded start date for the program, the upload will be rejected.
ExportEndDate	The date that the export was generated must be used for the Export End Date. If the date in this field does not match the ExportDate, the upload will be rejected.
SoftwareName	The name of the HMIS application that produced the export.
SoftwareVersion	(optional)
ExportPeriodType	Must be 3
ExportDirective	Must be 2
HashStatus	1,2,3,4

Project.csv

Project.csv holds data about the project(s) selected for export as defined in HMIS. There should be one record for each project selected for export, even if there's no enrollment data for a selected project. There should be one (and only one) record in Project.csv for each ProjectID in Enrollment.csv

Name	Notes
ProjectID	Unique identifier; up to 32 characters.
OrganizationID	
ProjectName	Up to 128 characters.
ProjectCommonName	
OperatingStartDate	
OperatingEndDate	
ContinuumProject	
ProjectType	Valid values are: SSVF: 12,13, 14, 6 GPD: 2,8,9, 6 HCHV: 1,8 All others are ignored
HousingType	
ResidentialAffiliation	
TrackingMethod	
HMISParticipatingProject	
TargetPopulation	
PITCount	
DateCreated	
DateUpdated	
UserID	
DateDeleted	
ExportID	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Funder.csv

For each project in Project.csv, this file identifies the 2.6 Federal Funding Partner for the project. There must be at least one record in Funder.csv for each record in Project.csv where the *ProjectType* is 1,2,8,9,12,or 13.

Name	Notes
FunderID	Unique identifier; up to 32 characters
ProjectID	Must match a record in Project.csv
Funder	Valid values are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46
OtherFunder	Required if value for Funder = 46
GrantID	For VA Projects the GrantID field should include the VA grant number.
StartDate	Start date of grant
EndDate	End date of grant; may be NULL
DateCreated	
DateUpdated	
UserID	
DateDeleted	
ExportID	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

ProjectCoC.csv

For each project in Project.csv, this file identifies the CoC(s) in which the project provides services. There must be at least one record in ProjectCoC.csv for each record in Project.csv where the *ProjectType* is 1,2,8,9,12,or 13.

Name	Notes
ProjectCoCID	Unique identifier; up to 32 characters
ProjectID	Must match a record in Project.csv
CoCCode	Two letters, a dash, and 3 numbers `^[a-zA-Z]{2}-[0-9]{3}$`
Geocode	
Address1	
Address2	
City	
State	
Zip	
Ge**ographyType**	
DateCreated	
DateUpdated	
UserID	
DateDeleted	
ExportID	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Client.csv

This file holds data about clients – name, SSN, DOB, race, gender, and ethnicity, veteran status, and, for Veterans, information about their service, and their Personal ID. The Personal ID is unique to each client in an HMIS, and it is also used in Enrollment.csv and other data files to link enrollment data to a particular individual. Household members are considered clients and they all have records.

There should only be one record for each person, regardless of how many enrollments they have.

The fact that there is a record here doesn't necessarily mean that a client will be counted in reporting – there must also be a valid record for that person in Enrollment.csv.

Name	Reject	Notes
PersonalID	>0	
FirstName	>5	
MiddleName		
LastName	>5	
NameSuffix		
NameDataQuality	>5	Check for: 2, 8, 9, 99, NULL
SSN		
SSNDataQuality	>10	Check for: 2, 8, 9, 99, NULL
DOB		
DOBDataQuality	>5	Check for: 2, 8, 9, 99, NULL
AmIndAKNative		
Asian		
BlackAfAmerican		
NativeHIOtherPacific		
White		Check for: 8, 9, 99
RaceNone	>10	
Ethnicity		
Gender	>5	Check for: 8, 9, 99, NULL
OtherGender		
VeteranStatus	>0	Check for: NULL
YearEnteredService		
YearSeparated		
WorldWarII		
KoreanWar		
VietnamWar		
DesertStorm		
AfghanistanOEF		
IraqOIF		
IraqOND		
OtherTheater		
MilitaryBranch		
DischargeStatus		
DateCreated		
DateUpdated		
UserID		

Name	Reject	Notes
DateDeleted		
ExportID		Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Enrollment.csv

Enrollment.csv is central to all reporting. It holds data about project entries and should have one record per person per project entry.

In addition to the entry date, it also has fields for which there is only one response per project enrollment – e.g., Relationship to Head of Household, Residence Prior to Project Entry, etc.

The Personal ID in this file links to the Personal ID 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 Enrollment.csv.

Every record in Enrollment.csv ***must have*** an Entry Date and Relationship to Head of Household.

Every household ***must have*** one (and only one) record where Relationship to Head of Household is 'Self' (1).

The count of records in Enrollment.csv is – when everything is as it should be – a duplicated count of clients, or an unduplicated count of project entries. If the number of rows in Enrollment 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 doesn't take anything into account except the fact that a record is present, and the count of records in this file might be substantially different from the number in the reports.

Name	Reject	Notes
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
ProjectID		
EntryDate	>0	
HouseholdID	>0	
RelationshipToHoH	>0	
LivingSituation		New Values for FY 2020 – See CSV Specs on HUDhdx.info
LengthOfStay		
LOSUnderThreshold		
PreviousStreetESSH		
DateToStreetESSH		
TimesHomelessPastThreeYears		
MonthsHomelessPastThreeYears		
DisablingCondition	>0	Check for: NULL Should be '99' for any project entry where there is no response
DateOfEngagement		
MoveInDate		
DateOfPATHStatus		
ClientEnrolledInPATH		
ReasonNotEnrolled		
WorstHousingSituation		

Name	Reject	Notes
PercentAMI		
LastPermanentStreet		
LastPermanentCity		
LastPermanentState		
LastPermanentZIP		
AddressDataQuality		
DateOfBCPStatus		
EligibleforRHY		
ReasonNoServices		
SexualOrientation		
SexualOrientationOther		
FormerWardChildWelfare		
ChildWelfareYears		
ChildWelfareMonths		
FormerWardJuvenileJustice		
JuvenileJusticeYears		
JuvenileJusticeMonths		
UnemploymentFam		
MentalHealthIssuesFam		
PhysicalDisabilityFam		
AlcoholDrugAbuseFam		
InsufficientIncome		
IncarceratedParent		
ReferralSource		
CountOutreachReferralApproaches		
UrgentReferral		
TimetoHousingLoss		
ZeroIncome		
AnnualPercentAMI		
FinancialChange		
HouseholdChange		
EvictionHistory		
SubsidyAtRisk		
LiteralHomelessHistory		
DisabledHOH		
CriminalRecord		
SexOffender		
DependentUnder6		
SingleParent		
HH5Plus		
IraqAfghanistan		
FemVet		
HPScreeningScore		Should not be null when RelationshipToHoH = 1
ThresholdScore		
VAMCStation		Should not be null when RelationshipToHoH = 1

Name	Reject	Notes
DateCreated	>0	
DateUpdated	>0	
UserID		
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

EnrollmentCoC.csv

At every project entry, the CoC in which the head of household is located must be identified in HMIS. There must be one record in EnrollmentCoC.csv with a DataCollectionStage of project entry (1) for each record in Enrollment.csv where the RelationshipToHoH = 1 (i.e., the record is for the head of household).

If the head of household moves from one CoC to another during enrollment, then there may be an additional record in the EnrollmentCoC file.

Name	Reject	Notes
EnrollmentCoCID	>0	
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
InformationDate	>0	
CoCCode	>0	`^[A-Za-z]{2}-(0-9){3}$`
DataCollectionStage	>0	
DateCreated	>0	
DateUpdated	>0	
UserID		
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Exit.csv

This file includes information on client exits. There may be no more than one record in Exit.csv for any ProjectEntryID.

Name	Reject	Notes
ExitID	>0	
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
ExitDate	>0	
Destination	>0	New Values for FY 2020 – See CSV Specs on HUDhdx.info
OtherDestination		
HousingAssessment		
ExchangeForSex		
ExchangeForSexPastThreeMonths		
CountOfExchangeForSex		
AskedOrForcedToExchangeForSex		
AskedOrForcedToExchangeForSexPastThreeMonths		
WorkPlaceViolenceThreats		
WorkplacePromiseDifference		
CoercedToContinueWork		
LaborExploitPastThreeMonths		
CounselingReceived		
IndividualCounseling		
FamilyCounseling		
GroupCounseling		
SessionCountAtExit		
PostExitCounselingPlan		
SessionsInPlan		
DestinationSafeClient		
DestinationSafeWorker		
PosAdultConnections		
PosPeerConnections		
PosCommunityConnections		
AftercareDate		
AftercareProvided		
EmailSocialMedia		
Telephone		
InPersonIndividual		
InPersonGroup		
CMExitReason		
DateCreated	>0	
DateUpdated	>0	
UserID		
DateDeleted		

Name	Reject	Notes
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

IncomeBenefits.csv

This file holds information about specific sources of income, benefits, and health insurance. The records are linked to Enrollment.csv using the ProjectEntryID.

Each client should have one record in IncomeBenefits at project entry and one record at project exit, so the total number of records should be equal or greater than the total number of records in Enrollment.csv PLUS the total number of records in Exit.csv. There may be additional records if any of the information is updated during enrollment.

Records for adults will include income, non-cash benefits, and health insurance. Records for children (clients who were under 18 at project entry) will include only health insurance information.

Name	Reject	Notes
IncomeBenefitsID		
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
InformationDate	>0	
IncomeFromAnySource	>5	Check for: 8,9,99
TotalMonthlyIncome		
Earned		
EarnedAmount		
Unemployment		
UnemploymentAmount		
SSI		
SSIAmount		
SSDI		
SSDIAmount		
VADisabilityService		
VADisabilityServiceAmount		
VADisabilityNonService		
VADisabilityNonServiceAmount		
PrivateDisability		
PrivateDisabilityAmount		
WorkersComp		
WorkersCompAmount		
TANF		
TANFAmount		
GA		
GAAmount		
SocSecRetirement		
SocSecRetirementAmount		
Pension		
PensionAmount		
ChildSupport		
ChildSupportAmount		
Alimony		

Name	Reject	Notes
AlimonyAmount		
OtherIncomeSource		
OtherIncomeAmount		
OtherIncomeSourceIdentify		
BenefitsFromAnySource		
SNAP		
WIC		
TANFChildCare		
TANFTransportation		
OtherTANF		
OtherBenefitsSource		
OtherBenefitsSourceIdentify		
InsuranceFromAnySource		
Medicaid		
NoMedicaidReason		
Medicare		
NoMedicareReason		
SCHIP		
NoSCHIPReason		
VAMedicalServices		
NoVAMedReason		
EmployerProvided		
NoEmployerProvidedReason		
COBRA		
NoCOBRAReason		
PrivatePay		
NoPrivatePayReason		
StateHealthIns		
NoStateHealthInsReason		
IndianHealthServices		
NoIndianHealthServicesReason		
OtherInsurance		
OtherInsuranceIdentify		
HIVAIDSAssistance		
NoHIVAIDSAssistanceReason		
ADAP		
NoADAPReason		
ConnectionWithSOAR		
DataCollectionStage	>0	
DateCreated	>0	
DateUpdated	>0	
UserID	>0	
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

EmploymentEducation.csv

This file holds information about education and employment, and there's a record for each enrollment.

Name	Reject	Notes
EmploymentEducationID	>0	
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
InformationDate	>0	
LastGradeCompleted		
SchoolStatus		
Employed		
EmploymentType		
NotEmployedReason		
DataCollectionStage	>0	
DateCreated	>0	
DateUpdated	>0	
UserID	>0	
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Services.csv

This file holds information about specific services, and there's a record for each instance of service. Depending on the number of services provided, the number of records may be quite high relative to other files.

Name	Reject	Notes
ServicesID		
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
DateProvided	>0	
RecordType		Ignore records with a RecordType other than 144 or 152
TypeProvided	>0	
OtherTypeProvided		
SubTypeProvided		
FAAmount		
ReferralOutcome		
DateCreated		
DateUpdated		
UserID		
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

HealthandDV.csv

This file holds information about health and DV specific issues, and there's a record for each enrollment.

Name	Reject	Notes
HealthandDVID		
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
InformationDate	>0	
DomesticViolenceVictim		
WhenOccurred		
CurrentlyFleeing		
GeneralHealthStatus		
DentalHealthStatus		
MentalHealthStatus		
PregnancyStatus		
DueDate		
DataCollectionStage		
DateCreated		
DateUpdated		
UserID		
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Disabilities.csv

This file holds information about disabilities, and there's a record for each enrollment.

Name	Reject	Notes
DisabilitiesID	>0	
EnrollmentID	>0	
PersonalID	>0	
InformationDate	>0	
DisabilityType	>0	Only values allowed: 5,6,7,8,9,10
DisabilityResponse	>0	Only values allowed: 0,1,2,3,8,9,99
IndefiniteandImpairs		
TCellCountAvailable		
TCellCount		
TCellSource		
ViralLoadAvailable		
ViralLoad		
ViralLoadSource		
DataCollectionStage		
DateCreated		
DateUpdated		
UserID		
DateDeleted		
ExportID	>0	Must match *ExportID* in Export.csv

Event.csv

This table holds information about the newly added *Rapid Resolution* assistance tracking.

Name	Type	Null	Notes
EventID	S32	>0	Unique identifier
EnrollmentID	S32	>0	
PersonalID	S32	>0	
EventDate	D	>0	
Event	I	>0	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15
ProbSolDivRRResult	I		0,1,99
ReferralCaseManageAfter	**I**		**0,1,99**
LocationCrisisorPHHousing	**S250**		
ReferralResult	**I**		**1,2,3**
ResultDate	**D**		**Null unless ReferralResult not null**
DateCreated	T	>0	
DateUpdated	T	>0	
UserID	S32	>0	
DateDeleted	**T**		
ExportID	S32	>0	Must match ExportID in Export.csv

Reading V2 Service Provided - SSVF and V3 Financial Assistance - SSVF for HMIS FY 2020

Services.csv

All service and financial assistance data are exported in Services.csv, a file which is included in the zip file uploaded to the Repository.

There are a total of *15* columns in the Services.csv file. Some of the information in these columns can help you understand how a service record is connected to records in other files:

- **PersonalID** link a service to a client record in Client.csv
- **EnrollmentID** links the service to a record in Enrollment.csv

Other columns provide information about the service itself:

- **DateProvided** is the date that the service was provided, as it was entered into HMIS by a user.
- **RecordType** has number values that translate to very broad categories. There are only two values that are relevant for VA reporting:
    - 144 = SSVF Supportive Services
    - 152 = SSVF Financial Assistance
- **TypeProvided and SubTypeProvided** also has number values; they indicate the type of service or TFA provided along with the subtype if applicable. Lists of TypeProvided and SubTypeProvided (where applicable) values and their translations for Supportive Service *(RecordType =* 144) and Financial Assistance *(RecordType = 152)* are as follows:
    - 144 = SSVF Supportive Services
        - 1 – Outreach services
        - 2 – Case Management Services
        - 3 – Assistance obtaining VA benefits
            - 1 – VA vocational and rehabilitation counseling
            - 2 – Employment and training services
            - 3 – Educational assistance
            - 4 – Health care services
        - 4 – Assistance obtaining/coordinating other public benefits
            - 1 – Healthcare services
            - 2 – Daily living services
            - 3 – Personal financial planning services
            - 4 – Transportation services
            - 5 – Income support services
            - 6 – Fiduciary and representative payee services
            - 7 – Legal services – child support
            - 8 – Legal services – eviction prevention
            - 9 – Legal services – outstanding fines and penalties
            - 10 – Legal services – restore/acquire driver's license
            - 11 – Legal services – other
            - 12 – Child care

        - 13 - Housing counseling
    - 5 – Direct provision of other public benefits
        - 1 – Personal financial planning services
        - 2 – Transportation services
        - 3 – Income support services
        - 4 – Fiduciary and representative payee services
        - 5 – Legal services – child support
        - 6 – Legal services – eviction prevention
        - 7 – Legal services – outstanding fines and penalties
        - 8 – Legal services – restore/acquire driver's license
        - 9 – Legal services – other
        - 10 – Child care
        - 11 – Housing counseling
    - 6 – Other (non-TFA) supportive service approved by VA
    - 7 – Extended Shallow Subsidy
    - 8 – Returning Home
    - 9 – Rapid Resolution
- *152* = SSVF Financial Assistance
    - 1 - Rental assistance
    - 2 – Security deposit
    - 3 – Utility deposit
    - 4 – Utility fee payment assistance
    - 5 – Moving costs
    - 8 – Transportation services: tokens/vouchers
    - 9 – Transportation services: vehicle repair/maintenance
    - 10 – Child care
    - 11 – General housing stability assistance – emergency supplies
    - 12 – General housing stability assistance - other
    - 14 – Emergency housing assistance
    - 15 – Extended Shallow Subsidy – Rental Assistance

- **OtherTypeProvided** is used for SSVF Supportive Services; when the service is 'Other (non-TFA) supportive service approved by VA' (6), a description of the service is supposed to be entered.
- **FAAmount** holds the amount of the temporary financial assistance.

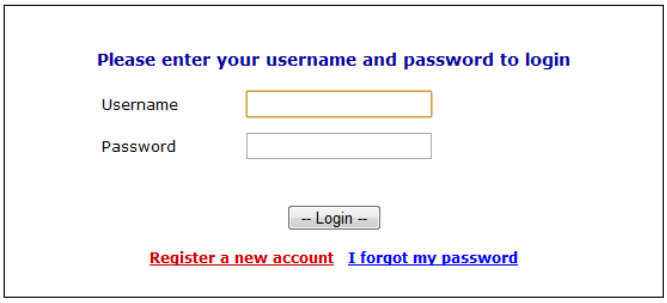
Repository User Guide

Accessing the Repository

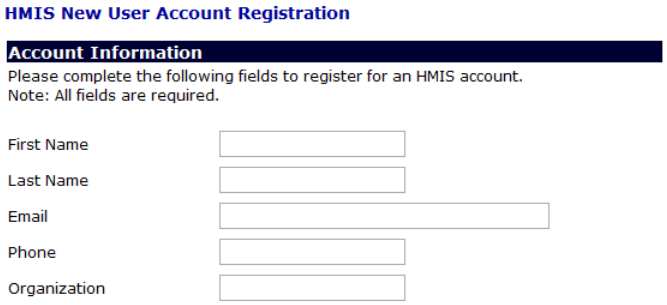
To access the Repository, go to https://www.hmisrepository.va.gov/ and click the 'Click here to log in' link.

Creating an Account

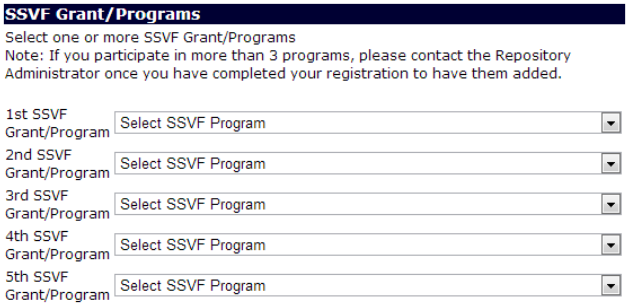
1. From the log in page, click on the 'Register a new account' link.



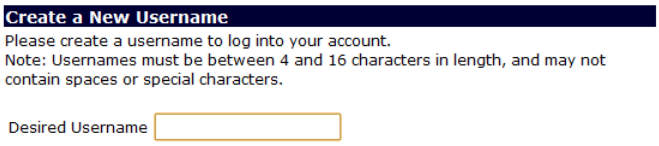
2. Enter your first name, last name, the email address the Repository should use to send your account confirmation, your work phone number, and the name of the organization that employs you. All of these fields are required. The phone number should include an area code.



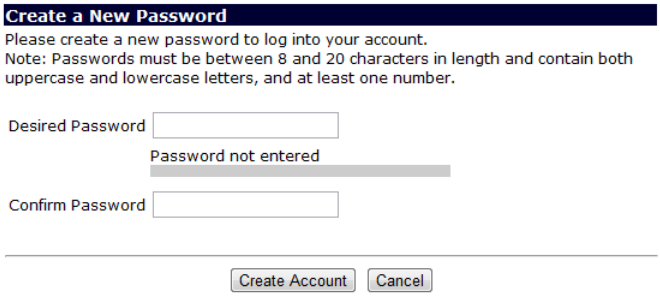
3. Select the name of the program(s) for which you will be uploading data. In order to create an account, you must select at least one program, and if you only select one program, it must be in the field labeled '1st VA Grant/Program.' If you will be uploading more than five data sets each month, click the "Show/Hide" button on the right of the screen to add up to eight programs.



4. 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.



5. 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.'



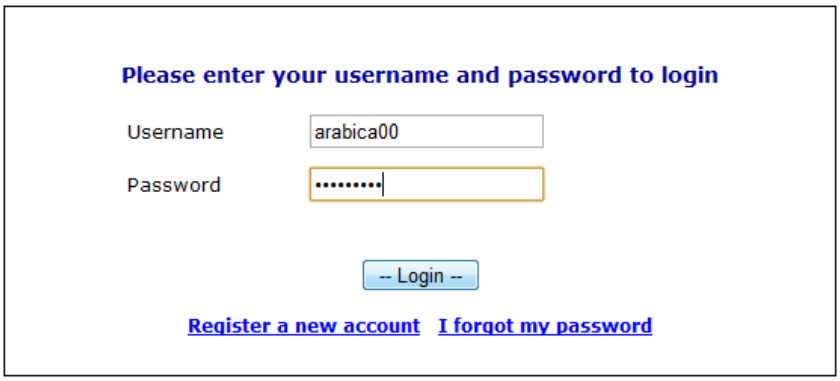
Within a few minutes, you should receive an email asking you to confirm your email address. If you do not receive an email, please contact ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com.

After you have confirmed your email address, a Repository Administrator will authorize your account to log in.

Logging in to the Repository

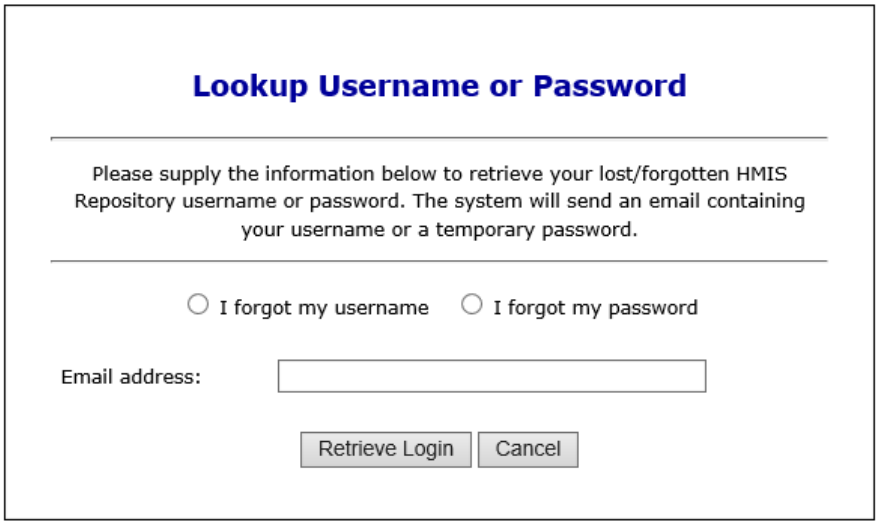
The Repository is open during the first three business days of each month, at which time you are free to log in as many times as necessary.

On the Repository login page, enter your username and password, and click 'Login'.



Forgotten Username or Password

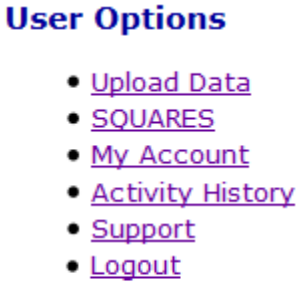
If you've forgotten your username or your password, click the "I forgot my password" link on the login page.



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

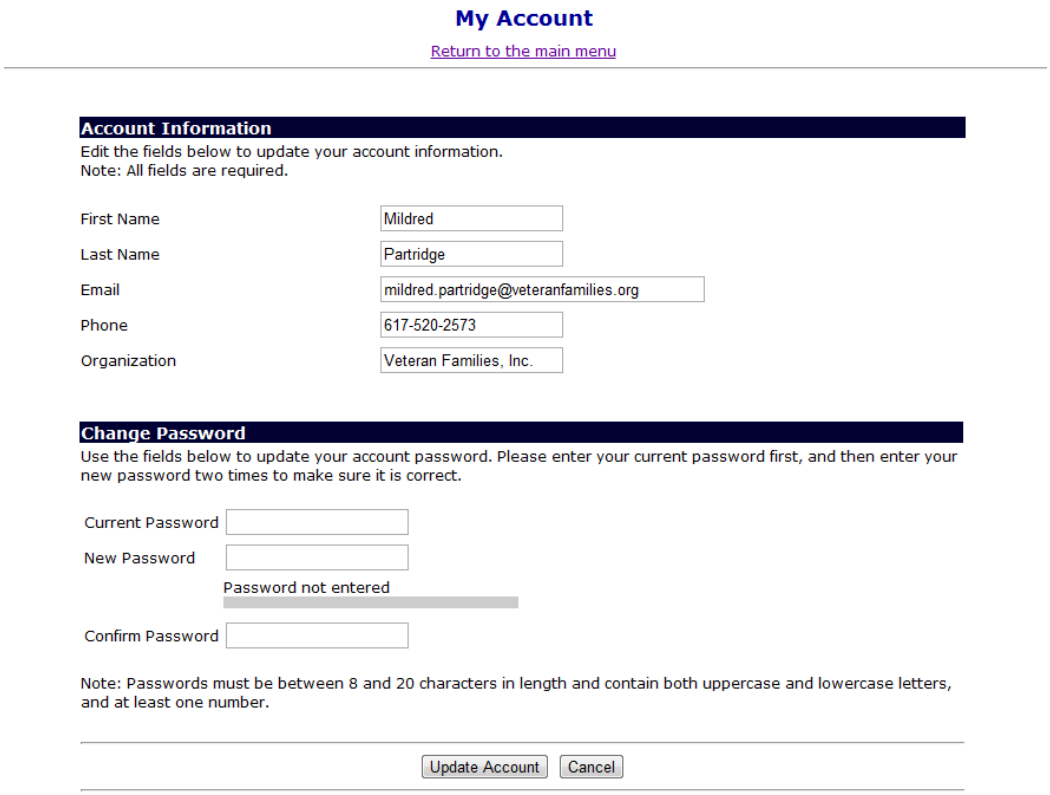
Repository User Account Information

Each Repository user will set-up her or his' own username and password. **Please do not ever 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 VA 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 important that the Repository has a current email address so that we can contact you in the event that there is an issue with your data. It also allows you to retrieve your username if you forget it, and to automatically reset your own password it you forget that.

Please note that if you are leaving the VA program and someone else will be taking over the upload responsibilities, the new person should create her/his own account. It would not be appropriate for you to edit your account information to reflect the new user's name and contact information.



Once you've updated your information, click the 'Update Account' button to save it.

Generating an Export of HMIS Data

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

Only data related to VA funded programs 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 the federal fiscal year in which you are reporting.
- 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 ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com to get set up for multiple uploads. Be sure to include your grantee ID in the subject line.

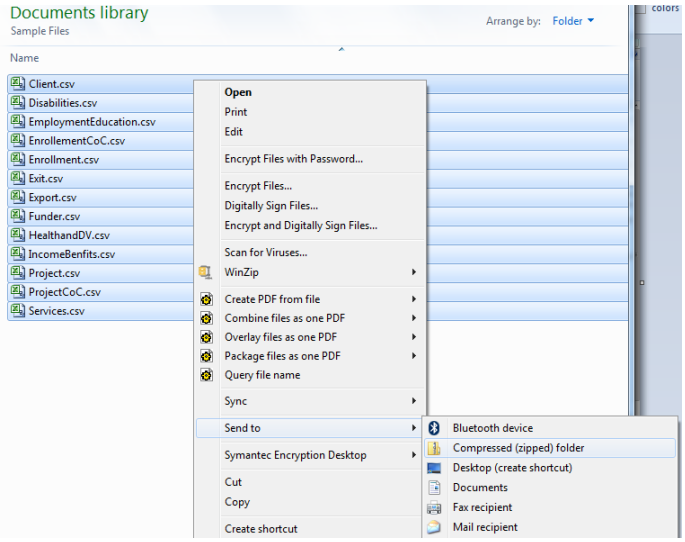
Preparing CSV Data for Upload

A CSV export should include, at a minimum, 14 files with the following names (this is the order in which they are uploaded to the Repository):

1. Disabilities.csv
2. ProjectCoC.csv
3. Services.csv
4. Project.csv
5. EnrollmentCoC.csv
6. Client.csv
7. HealthandDV.csv
8. IncomeBenefits.csv
9. Exit.csv
10. Funder.csv
11. Export.csv
12. EmploymentEducation.csv
13. Enrollment.csv
14. Event.csv

The CSV files must be packaged in a ZIP or RAR file. Those compressed file formats decrease the amount of space required to store data, making the upload process faster. Some HMIS applications zip/rar the files as part of the export process. If your HMIS does not compress the files for you, you will need to compress them prior to upload to the Repository.

Both Windows and Mac operating systems (OS) have built-in functionality to create ZIP files. To use the built-in functionality, select all thirteen of the CSV files and right-click on them.



In Windows, click 'Send to' and then 'Compressed (zipped) folder' to create a ZIP file.

In Mac OS, click 'Compress 13 items' to create a ZIP file. In both Windows and Mac OS, the ZIP file will be created in the same folder as the CSV files.

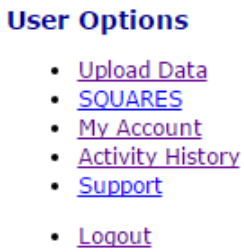
When you zip your files, make sure to zip ONLY the CSV files. Do not zip up the folder that contains the files; if they're in a folder inside the ZIP file, the Repository will not be able to find them.

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

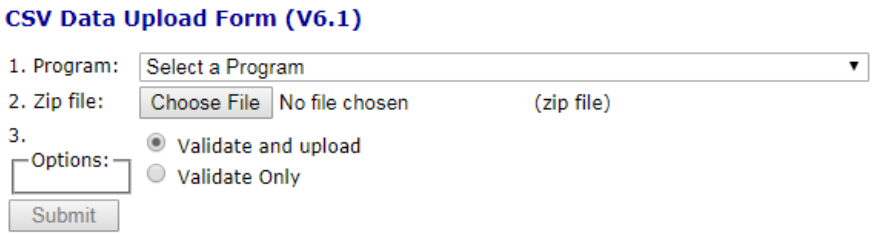
There are also several software applications that will create ZIP files, including 7-zip, WinZip, WinRAR; or MagicRAR. If you have one of these installed on your computer, you are welcome to use it to zip your files.

Uploading Data

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



Next, enter the following information about your upload.



- **Program** – Select the name of the specific program for which you are uploading data.
- **Zip file** – Click 'Browse' to open a dialog box where you can select the .zip or .rar file from your network or hard drive.
- **Options** – There two options for the upload process:
  - **Validate and upload** – This is the default; it will validate your file and – if the file meets the data quality requirements – transmit the data to the Repository database.
  - **Validate only** – This option will validate your file, but <u>will not</u> upload it. You can use this to check your data quality if you'd like to review it before deciding whether or not to upload your file. If after validating your data, you would like to proceed with uploading it, click the "Upload Data" button at the bottom of the validation page.

The validate and upload option is a single step process, but it may take several minutes to complete; please wait for the Repository to display the results without clicking Back or closing your browser window.

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 an SSVF Validation Report. See the File Validation section for more information about how to read the results.

If the uploaded data is successfully transmitted to the Repository database, you will see this message at the bottom of the validation report:

The upload was successful and the data has been accepted.

If you see this message, congratulations! You upload was accepted into the HMIS Repository.

If you do not see this message, your upload was not successful and you will need to fix 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 the HMIS CSV specifications. In order for VA to be able to use the data to report on program activity, the data quality must meet minimum thresholds.

The Repository will unzip your CSV files and analyze them.

There are several sections in the validation report.

Validation Errors

Validation errors identify instances where data quality for one or more fields does not meet acceptable levels and the upload is rejected. Missing data at these rates is a serious problem and must be corrected in HMIS. Once HMIS has been updated, data must be exported and uploaded again.

Often, this report will identify row numbers with in a specific CSV file (noted in brackets). The row number can be used to identify SSVF client or service records with file errors. For questions about file errors, contact your HMIS Administrator or ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com.

Data Quality Alerts

Data quality alerts identify records that are missing data in critical fields. These issues may not prevent you from uploading your data, but they should be addressed with program staff. Often, this report will identify row numbers with in a specific CSV file (noted in brackets). The row number can be used to identify SSVF client or service records with file errors. For questions about these issues, contact your HMIS Administrator or ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com.

File Errors

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

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 data in your HMIS, but it may be necessary for your vendor to make corrections. If your vendor has any questions, contact ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com. Be sure to include your grantee ID in the subject line.

Reading the Validation Results

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 present. See "Required HMIS CSV FY 2020 Files" section of this document for more information on each of the thirteen CSV files.

How to Tell If an Upload Is Successful

For a successful upload, the Repository will display a message like this:

Step 5. Data Integration

Success! Uploaded data has been transferred to the Repository database.

If you do not see that message, your data has not been uploaded to the Repository. The error messages display the specific errors that are causing rejection. If technical assistance is needed to troubleshoot these errors, contact ssvfhmis@abtassoc.com. Do not send personally identifiable information such as such as social security number, date of birth, name, etc. by e–mail. The SSVF HMIS TA team can share screens to ensure that no data is transferred insecurely using email.

VI. Data Quality Management

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 set of policies and procedures designed to assure that all client level information entered into HMIS is complete, accurate and timely. The plan facilitates the ability of the CoC to achieve statistically valid and reliable data. It establishes 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. In general, it's 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.

VA Program Data Quality

All projects participating in HMIS, including VA funded projects, are expected to understand and follow the CoC's data quality plan, which details baseline standards for all projects participating in the HMIS. SSVF, GPD and HCHV programs must also meet the additional data quality requirements established in their VA grant. These additional VA data quality requirements are discussed later in this section.

VA grantees are also responsible for all information entered into HMIS by subgrantees and should develop a plan to assure adequate data entry oversight. A successful upload to the VA Data Repository requires that grantees and subgrantees meet or exceed all data quality thresholds. 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.

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 veteran's 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.

There are five 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 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.hudexchange.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 the 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 projects 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 VA Grantees since data must be exported to the VA's VA Data Repository by the 3rd 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 two and five percent, depending on the data element and the type of program entering data.

It is important to understand that standards for VA 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

VA 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 VA 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 website.
- 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 Website.
- 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.

VII. Continuum of Care 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 Entry Systems

HUD has established a requirement that all CoCs implement a coordinated entry system, 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 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 entry system” within their mutual geographic areas. VA homeless assistance service will need to be coordinated with the CoCs coordinated entry approach. For more information on HUD’s views of the characteristics of an effective coordinated entry process, a policy brief is available at https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf.

Data Collection and Management Toolkit Materials

Checklist & Discussion Guide for New Grantees

This comprehensive checklist includes a list of all tasks involved in setting up a new VA funded project in 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 2020 HMIS Data Standards Manual (version 1.4) to understand the HMIS requirements for data collection. (https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/)
- Check the HUD Exchange page for updates on HMIS. Here grantees can subscribe to receive HUD's email updates on HMIS. (https://www.hudexchange.info/mailinglist/)

Step 2: Learn about your CoCs HMIS Implementation

A list of local CoC HMIS points of contact can be found on the HUD Exchange Website (https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/).

Contact the CoC Chairperson and HMIS Administrator.

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?
- Will any additional costs be applied to 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. Review the Repository User Guide section of this manual.

- If your VA funded program covers multiple CoC jurisdictions, how will this data be reportable by CoC?
- If your VA funded 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.
    - It is REQUIRED that SSVF grantees create, update and hold themselves accountable for HMIS data collection and SSVF Reporting data quality policies and procedures.
    - It is BEST PRACTICE to coordinate SSVF Policies and Procedures with CoC HMIS Policies and Procedures so that HMIS data collection and data quality policies are not in conflict between SSVF grantees and CoC grantees.
- 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 Data Quality Management section.
- 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 exporting data from HMIS, confirm that data entry is up-to-date. You should also use any available data quality tools to check for missing or erroneous data prior and make corrections.

Ensure data is uploaded to the Repository BEFORE the last day of the upload cycle (the third business day of each month).

- If data is rejected, correct errors and resubmit data to Repository.

Additional Resources for Data Quality Management, Privacy and Security

SSVF HMIS Tools and Trainings:

http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/official_guide/homeless_management_info_system

Tools for Action Database (USICH)

The U.S. Interagency Council on the Homelessness' (USICH) Tools for Action Database is a searchable source of up-to-date tools drawn from around the country that federal, state, and local partners can use to further their collaborative efforts to end homelessness.

https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action

Best Practices: Sharing Information to End Veteran Homelessness

This document seeks to provide guidance for local homeless Veteran service providers to improve information sharing across programs and systems, strengthen the targeting of resources based on a shared prioritization system, and create more efficient systems for ending Veteran homelessness within their communities.

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3677/best-practices-sharing-information-to-end-veteran-homelessness/

HMIS 101 System Administrator Training (HUD), Module 4 -- In-Depth Security and Privacy:

Module 4 provides HMIS System Administrators, end users, CoC representatives, consumers, and Federal, state, and local partners with an in-depth understanding of Privacy and Security.

https://www.hudexchange.info/training-events/courses/hmis-system-administrator-training-hmis-101/

HMIS section of the HUD Exchange's "Ask A Question" can respond to specific questions on the technical standards for privacy and security:

https://www.hudexchange.info/get-assistance/my-question/

Guidance and Tools for Homeless Veteran Service Providers

This page contains guidance about policy issues and the ways in which providers can more effectively structure and implement their programs, websites to agencies and organizations that provide information and resources for aiding homeless veterans, and tools developed for veteran service providers by a range of federal agencies and private organization.

https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-veterans/guidance-and-tools/

Sample Data Quality Plan – SSVF Grantees

This sample of a combined Quality Assurance and 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 and 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. Policies 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 policies and procedures, the SSVF Program Guide and Final Rule.
2. Subcontractors will develop performance standards for each employee in the SSVF Program and evaluate performance at least annually.
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.
  - Veteran Status is documented through a DD214.
  - 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:
    - Alert level: if the agency receives an alert at the Notify level it will be corrected immediately.
    - Error (Reject) level: For a non-compliant data set, the staff will immediately update HMIS 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.

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 policies 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.

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.

Sample Client Notification Forms – SSVF Grantees

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 SSVF 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