



Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) New Agency Application Policy

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local, secure web-based database used to collect and record information on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Some benefits of using HMIS include evaluating program performance, providing better case management and coordination, and demonstrating program outcomes.

The HMIS database contains very sensitive, confidential, personally identifying data on clients at risk of and experiencing homelessness, including some vulnerable populations such as domestic violence survivors and chronically homeless persons. Having access to the HMIS carries great responsibility to protect the privacy and security of the people served by its agencies.

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services and funding for homeless families and individuals. The CoC is made up of community agencies in health care, education, law-enforcement, government, faith-based groups, non-governmental organizations, as well as, residents and persons with lived experience and expertise. The ultimate responsibility for the HMIS is assigned to the CoC and is delegated to the Lead Agency which oversees and manages it.

For the OC CoC, onboarding of new agencies will occur twice a year – January 1st and June 1st. If you are applying in the middle of this cycle, you will have to wait until the next cycle to begin the process.

*****NOTE** If your agency simply comes in contact with persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness, referrals can be made directly to the HARA for proper screening and assessment without the need to become an HMIS participating agency.***

Alliance for Housing, the CoC's HMIS Lead, has established the following criteria for agencies/individuals requesting access to the HMIS in Oakland County:

- Is a recognized 501c3 status, or comparable business serving persons experiencing homelessness, whose employees or volunteers are part of that agency.
- Will be required to submit documented proof of the 501c3 status at time of application

- Understands the homeless response system in our community and the process by which clients are served through that system including knowing the definitions of literal homelessness.
- Able to specifically describe your agency's services as they relate to persons at-risk of or experiencing homelessness and why the agency is requesting to use HMIS. Describe your connection to persons experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Able to explain how long your agency has been working for the greater good of serving those in the community experiencing homelessness.
- Provide an explanation of how your agency becoming an HMIS sharing partner would benefit the persons experiencing homelessness that you are serving.
- Agency has defined a place in assisting with the overall functioning of the CoC. (i.e., if doing street outreach, has the ability to conduct prescreening and referring clients to the coordinated entry system (CES)).
- Knowledge of agency's funding streams
- Receiving state/federal funding or in the process of applying, and will pull households from the Centralized Housing Registry for available program openings.
- Users will have an individual/separate business use email address, i.e. non-shared email address
- Will provide the agency's website address, if the agency has one
- The agency/individual has been participating in the CoC for at least 6 months and has attended at least 2 General Membership Meetings
- Be a full-dues paying member of the Alliance for Housing
 - Membership is a prerequisite for HMIS access, but it is not guaranteed
- Agencies must adhere to strict privacy and security guidelines established that govern the use of HMIS
- Required to complete 3-4 hours of required self-paced training depending on the role the staff will be fulfilling
- Initial user must assume the role of HMIS Agency Administrator, accepting the responsibilities of training and functions above those of an end-user of the system.
- Willing to undergo the extensive process of becoming an HMIS participating agency which could take up to at least 3 months and includes, but is not limited to:
 - Signing of several HMIS policy and governance documents (between agencies)
 - 3-4 hours of HMIS training podcasts required to obtain and maintain an HMIS license.
 - 5-10 hours of additional virtual live training
 - Additional hours of data entry-practice in the training site needed to obtain mastery of the HMIS workflow process for HMIS data-entry
 - 5 additional hours of practice for role-specific HMIS users, also dependent on the type of project or grant
 - Familiarizing self with the MSHMIS and OCHMIS policies and procedures manual
 - Participation in yearly monitoring for HUD-funded projects
 - Adherence to strict privacy and security policies and guidelines established to protect the privacy and security rights of clients

- Understanding of the HMIS Release of Information (ROI) and the Coordinated Services Agreement and how to explain these and other security documents to staff
- Annual privacy and security recertification training
- Maintaining a high standard of data quality through at least monthly report runs and data cleanup
- As an HMIS Agency Administrator, must attend a monthly Agency Admin meeting, agree to a data quality plan with requirements to run and submit several monthly reports, have an established workflow for training new hires, provide technical support and troubleshooting to end users, monitor and maintain HMIS compliance and adherence to HUD's data standards and HMIS policies and procedures.
- Completion of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) New Agency Policy Application

Once you have read the HMIS Access Policy, if you have any questions, you may email: Holly Gauthier at hgauthier-alliance@oaklandhomeless.org or Rebecca Fitzgerald at rfitzgerald-alliance@oaklandhomeless.org. If you are interested in becoming an HMIS sharing partner, email hmishelp-alliance@oaklandhomeless.org to request the application.