# VA Programs HMIS Manual

## A GUIDE FOR HMIS END USERS AND HMIS LEADS/SYSTEM ADMINISTRATORS

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

ALIGNS WITH FY 2026 HMIS DATA STANDARDS | RELEASED OCTOBER 2025

## Revision History

| Release Date | Revision Summary |
|---|---|
| **October 2025** | Updated to the 2026 HMIS Data Standards<br>Removed data collection requirements for 4.05 -4.10 for GPD and HCHV projects. |

## Introduction

The *VA Programs HMIS Manual* is intended to support data collection and reporting efforts of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agencies and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) program grantees.

This manual provides information on HMIS program setup for VA funded projects. Data collection instructions and other standard guidance for VA funded projects are provided in an additional document, the VA Data Guide. While the VA Data Guide is meant to convey all data management requirements to VA grantees, necessary tools to properly meet those requirements and information needed to help manage program data, the VA Programs HMIS Manual is meant to help system administrators and HMIS Lead staff ensure that VA funded programs are properly set up in HMIS.

### VA Resources

- Additional information about the VA homeless programs and requirements can be found online at the VA Homeless Programs page.
- **Ask A Question:** To ask a question about any VA Program's HMIS requirements, go to the "Ask A Question" section of the HUD Exchange. Please be sure to select "HMIS" for your question under "My Question is Related To." HUD and VA program staff are working together to answer questions that come in on the AAQ related to the VA programs and HMIS.

### HMIS Resources

#### Additional HMIS Resources

- There are a variety of documents available on the HUD Exchange HMIS page that detail all HMIS Data and Technical Standards, Federal Partner Information, and information about HMIS forums for HMIS Leads, System Administrators, and Vendors.
- The 2026 HMIS Data Standards page contains a suite of HMIS Data Standard resources, which are briefly described below. Each of the documents has a specific purpose and intended audience. The HMIS Lead should be familiar with all the documents and collectively use them as their HMIS reference materials along with specific materials provided by the software provider.
    - FY2026 HMIS Data Manual represents the foundation for the data

contained within an HMIS, project setup instructions, and data collection instructions.

- FY2026 HMIS Data Dictionary Table Shells contain the data element tables with relevant programming instructions, system logic and other issues to be used by vendors for HMIS programming. The information in the tables shells aligns with the information contained herein.
- FY2026 CSV Specifications This document provides specifications for a standard set of comma-separated values (CSV) files that include all data elements and fields defined by the FY2022 HMIS Data Standards, along with information that describes an exported data set.
- HMIS Federal Partner Participation Resources Each link on this page contains resources and materials for following the HMIS requirements of HUD and other federal partners.
- HMIS Project Setup Tool provides a general framework to support project setup in HMIS by system administrators. It assists system administrators in ensuring that all HMIS participating projects are set up using the appropriate HMIS project types and are collecting the required data elements.

## HMIS Data Terms and Concepts

Definitions of HMIS terms and concepts used in this Manual are detailed in the HMIS Data Standards Manual.

## HMIS Project Setup Steps

It is important to be sure that communities understand the difference between a **program** and a **project** because they have distinct meanings in this document and for the purposes of data collection in HMIS. A *program* is the source of funding that the organization is receiving to run its homeless intervention whereas *project* refers to a distinct unit of an organization as set up in the HMIS (e.g., Grant and Per Diem *Program* funding for ABC Transitional Housing *Project*).

### Identify Projects for Inclusion in HMIS

Identify all of the **projects** within the HMIS implementation that receive VA funding. The VA Medical Center (VAMC) serving your community should be aware of all VA funding awarded to your CoC. VA has also posted their Directory of Veteran Service Organizations online, which will assist with contact information.

## Identify the VA Program Funding

Identify the **program** for each VA-funded project serving Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and operating within the continuum. The VA funds projects under the following relevant programs:

- The **Grant and Per Diem (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. These services only, Safe Haven and transitional housing projects have been either **required or strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.
    - Models of GPD projects **required by VA to participate in HMIS** include:
        - GPD: Case Management /Housing Retention
    - Models of GPD projects **strongly recommended by VA to participate in HMIS** include:
        - GPD: Bridge Housing
        - GPD: Special Need
        - GPD: Low Demand
        - GPD: Service Intensive Transitional Housing
        - GPD: Hospital to Housing
        - GPD: Clinical Treatment
    - **Note:** A limited number of GPD projects use the "Transition in Place" (TIP) model. VA has clarified that these projects should be classified as "Permanent Housing Only" project type in HMIS. These projects have been strongly recommended by VA to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC, identified as "Other Permanent Housing" (OPH).

- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Contract Emergency Housing (HCHV CRS: EH)** program provides emergency housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness. These emergency shelter projects have been **strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Community Contract Safe Haven (HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven)** program provides an early recovery model of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless individuals. These safe haven projects have been **strongly recommended by VA** to **participate in HMIS** and their data must be included in the continuum's HIC and PIT Count.

- The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program provides case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, as well as time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed childcare providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. SSVF serves

veteran families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness without SSVF assistance. These projects are **required** to **participate in HMIS**; two separate projects – one with a type of Homelessness Prevention and one with a type of Rapid Re-housing must be set up in HMIS. Data for the Rapid Re-housing project must be included in the continuums HIC.

Every residential project receiving funding through these programs must be included in a continuum's HIC and PIT Count. In communities that use HMIS to generate the HIC, all projects funded under these programs must be entered into HMIS, regardless of HMIS participation. Furthermore, every project in a CoC's HIC is required to be set up in HMIS regardless of collection of client level data in HMIS or not. This is to facilitate participation in reporting efforts such as Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), as well as other CoC-driven analysis efforts.

## Set Up Projects in HMIS

One of the most critical steps towards the establishment of an accurate data collection and reporting system is the proper set up of projects in HMIS. Project Descriptor Data Elements (PDDE) are the required elements that define the individual projects within the HMIS. They are initially entered at the setup of each project within an HMIS. They must be updated by the HMIS Lead or System Administrator on a regular basis as information within the elements are subject to change and are critical for report generation. Incorrect project setups may jeopardize recipients' ability to produce accurate, reliable reports and will affect the community's ability to generate community wide reports like System Performance Measures (SPM) and the LSA. For a VA-funded SSVF project, incorrect project set ups could compromise homeless assistance providers' ability to comply with HMIS Repository submission deadlines.

HMIS Leads and System Administrators should follow the procedures established for their particular HMIS when setting up projects in the HMIS. It is not recommended that (agency/grantee/provider) staff set up projects in HMIS. These setup procedures must include, at a minimum, the following:

1. The HMIS includes Project Descriptor Data Elements for all residential continuum projects, regardless of their participation in HMIS; and
2. The HMIS Lead, in consultation with the CoC, reviews project descriptor data at least once annually and updates that data as needed.

The following required Project Descriptor Data Elements are detailed below.

### Organization Information (2.01)

The name of the agency/organization receiving VA funding must be entered. An identification number will be generated by the HMIS. There may be only one record in HMIS for each agency/organization, regardless of how many projects they operate. In the HMIS Data Standards, HUD strongly recommends that the name of the organization is the entity's

legal name - not an abbreviation or other derivative since the name is transmitted in reports.

Organization Information (2.01) is also where HMIS Leads would designate Victim Service Provider (VSP) status for the organization (Yes/No).

### Project Information (2.02)

- **Project ID**: A Project ID must be assigned to each project via a system generated number or code. Each project must receive a distinct identifier that is consistently associated with that project.

- **Project Name**: The name of the project receiving VA funding and providing the direct service must also be entered or identified with the VA-specific project. HMIS administrators should note that often the name of the project on the grant agreement is not the same as the name the project is called by the organization and/or the common name in the community and often not the same name as is used on the HIC. System administrators should maintain mapping information to correlate grant names, HIC names, and common names with the project identifiers either within the HMIS itself or separately.

- **Operating Start Date**: The Operating Start Date of a project 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**: An 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 (refer to the specific HMIS instructions on project close out in an HMIS).

- **Continuum Project**: A project within the geographic boundaries of the Continuum(s) of Care served by the HMIS whose primary purpose is to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless by providing lodging and/or services. Continuum Project should be answered "Yes" for all projects funded under the VA programs listed in the "Identify the VA Program Funding" section of this document.

- **Project Type**: A project is to be assigned a 'Project Type' based on the lodging or service it is providing. The 'Project Type' for VA funded projects is as follows:

| Funded Component | Project Type # | Project Type Name |
|---|---|---|
| SSVF: Rapid Rehousing | 13 | PH - Rapid Re-Housing |
| SSVF: Homelessness Prevention | 12 | Homelessness Prevention |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HCHV CRS: EH | 0 | Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit |
| HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven | 8 | Safe Haven |
| GPD: Bridge Housing | 2 | Transitional Housing |
| GPD: Special Need | 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 |

Note: In response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, SSVF provided expanded Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) in order provide housing to Veterans within social distancing guidelines. The provision of EHA in hotel and motel settings should be recorded in the SSVF: Rapid Rehousing project type, as there is no emergency shelter project type that the SSVF Program funds. Instructions for how to report this correctly for HIC/PIT reporting can be found in the most recently released PIT and HIC guidance.

- **If PH-Rapid Re-Housing, identify sub-type:** (1) RRH: Services Only; or (2) RRH: Housing with or without services. This only applies to SSVF: Rapid Rehousing projects, and all SSVF Rapid Rehousing projects should choose (2) RRH: Housing with or without services.

- **If Services Only for "Project Type" or RRH: Services Only as sub-type, Affiliated with a residential project:** (0) No; or (1) Yes. This only applies to GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention. For GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention, identify if the services that are being provided are in conjunction with a residential project, which is a separate project in HMIS.

- **Project ID(s) of residential project(s) affiliated with a Services Only or RRH: Services Only project:** If "Yes" for GPD: Case Management/Housing Retention, identify the Residential Project in HMIS.

- **Housing Type:** For residential projects only, identify the type of housing provided by the residential project, "Site based-single site," "Site-based – clustered/multiple sites" or "Tenant-based – scattered site." If there is more than one Housing Type, multiple projects must be set up to account for the different types of housing offered.

- **Target Population:** Identify a target population, if any, for the project.

- **HOPWA-funded Medically Assisted Living Facility:** Projects that do not receive HOPWA funding will select the "NA – non-HOPWA Funded Project" response to this field. Projects that do receive HOPWA funding will need to make a determination as to whether the project is or is not a medically assisted living facility and select the correct response to this data field.

### Continuum of Care Information (2.03)

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.

### Funding Sources (2.06)

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:

| Component | Funding Source # | Funding Source Name |
|---|---|---|
| GPD: Bridge Housing | 37 | VA: Grant Per Diem – Bridge Housing |
| GPD: Clinical Treatment | 40 | VA: Grant Per Diem – Clinical Treatment |
| GPD: Hospital to Housing | 39 | VA: Grant Per Diem – Hospital to 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: Special Need | 41 | VA: Grant Per Diem – Service Intensive Transitional Housing |
| 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 |
| HCHV CRS: EH | 27 | VA: CRS Contract Residential Services |
| HCHV: Low Demand Safe Haven | 30 | VA: Community Contract Safe Haven Program |
| SSVF: Homelessness Prevention | 33 | VA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families |
| SSVF: Rapid Re-housing | 33 | VA: Supportive Services for Veteran Families |

For VA projects the **Grant Identifier** field should include the VA grant number or 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 2.02 Project Information 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.

### Bed and Unit Inventory Information (2.07)

HMIS administrators must complete the bed and unit inventory information for projects that provide lodging (Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, RRH: Housing with or without Services, Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit, and Safe Haven). This information

should match the Housing Inventory Count (HIC). The bed and unit information is based on the number and type of beds in the entire project, which may be more beds/units than are funded by the VA Program. HMIS Leads should review available HMIS guidance on the HUD Exchange regarding specific bed and unit inventory information. HMIS Leads and CoC data leadership, as well as VA grantees that are required to use HMIS, may also utilize the Ask A Question HMIS Help Desk available at https://www.hudexchange.info/program-support/. Because different HMIS software may have different ways of populating bed and unit inventory information, HMIS Leads and system administrators should be familiar with the processes and protocols for recording this information and should also be able to compare vendor programming specifications with HMIS guidance from HUD and VA to ensure accurate data collection, project set up, and reporting. Correct set-up is critical for accurate reporting in the LSA.

### HMIS Participation Status (2.08)

HMIS administrators should choose the applicable participating status for all VA programs and the participation dates should align to the Project Operating dates. If Project Operating End date is blank, then Participation end date should be blank. Participation date ranges are expected to be mutually exclusive and shall not overlap.

### CE Participation Status (2.09)

HMIS administrators should choose the applicable Coordinated Entry (CE) status for the project, and whether the project receives CE referrals or not. To answer "yes" to being a CE Access Point, the project must conduct screenings, assessments, and/or referrals to other projects or provide some direct service(s) related to diversion, rapid resolution, or navigation.

## Data Collection Requirements

Information on the rationale, collection point, subjects, and instructions for each element can be found in the HMIS Data Standards Dictionary and Manual.

All VA-funded projects participating in HMIS are required to collect and enter Universal Data Elements and relevant Program-Specific Data Elements. The Program Specific Data Elements to be collected by each VA- funded project are shown below:

## Data Collection Requirements by Program Component

| Element | Name | SSVF: RRH | SSVF: HP | HCHV: All | GPD: All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.01 -3.917 | Universal Data Elements | 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 | | | | |
| 4.06 | Developmental Disability | | | | |
| 4.07 | Chronic Health Condition | | | | |
| 4.08 | HIV/AIDS | | | | |
| 4.09 | Mental Health Disorder | | | | |
| 4.10 | Substance Use Disorder | | | | |
| 4.11 | Domestic Violence | X | X | X | X |
| 4.19 | Coordinated Entry Assessment | | | O | O |
| 4.20 | Coordinated Entry Event | | | O | O |
| 4.21 | Sex | X | X | X | X |
| 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 | | |
| V6 | VMAC Station Number | X | X | X | X |
| V7 | HP Targeting Criteria | | X | | |
| V10 | Mental Health Consultation | O | O | | O |
| P4 | Connection with SOAR | X | X | | O |
| R4 | Last Grade Completed | X | X | | |
| R6 | Employment Status | X | X | | X |

X = Data collection required  O = Data collection optional at the discretion of grantee

## Special Data Collection Instructions

While HUD maintains this data collection manual for consistency with other federal partner materials and to help HMIS Leads perform VA-specific project set up tasks, the VA publishes its own data collection guidance for the VA specific data elements. In an effort to reduce duplication, those detailed instructions are not provided in this manual. Please see the VA Data Guide for special data collection instructions for VA grantees.

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