

TN-500 HMIS DATA QUALITY PLAN AND RESOURCE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the TN-500 Continuum of Care (TN-500 CoC) Data Quality Plan is to ensure that the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data for TN-500 is accurate, timely, and complete. High-quality data is essential for assessing the effectiveness of homelessness services, guiding decision-making, and complying with HUD standards. Additionally, good quality data is crucial for accurately telling our community's story, showcasing the needs and progress of those experiencing homelessness. This plan outlines benchmarks and monitoring processes for achieving and maintaining high data quality across all agencies participating in the TN-500 CoC.

HMIS DATA & TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established HMIS Data and Technical Standards to guide CoCs and agencies in implementing and maintaining a high-functioning HMIS. The TN-500 CoC Data Quality Plan is a HUD-required framework designed to establish clear goals and expectations for data entry into HMIS. It sets benchmarks for timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and other critical data quality measures, ensuring that TN-500 maintains high standards in the collection and management of client information. These standards provide the necessary structure for data collection, management, and reporting to enhance the overall quality and reliability of data related to homelessness.

HMIS SOFTWARE

The TN-500 Continuum of Care (TN-500 CoC) has adopted ClientTrack, a software product by CaseWorthy, as its official Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). In this document, HMIS refers to ClientTrack, including all its modules, assessments, and reporting capabilities, whether standard or customized.

WHAT IS A DATA QUALITY PLAN?

A Data Quality Plan outlines the CoC's expectations for data quality and sets forth the benchmarks and goals required by HUD. The plan is designed to ensure that all data entered into HMIS meets the highest quality levels, enabling the CoC to make informed decisions about resource allocation and service provision.

WHAT IS A DATA QUALITY MONITORING PLAN?

A Data Quality Monitoring Plan provides the structure for regularly reviewing and improving the data quality in HMIS. It defines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and outlines the processes for ongoing data quality assessment and improvement.

NOTE ON LINKED RESOURCES

Many resources in this plan are available on Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition's [website](#); however, for any resource you might need please contact the HMIS Data Team at hmisdata@homelesscoalition.org.

For public access to HUD resources, please visit [HUD Exchange](#).

DEFINITIONS/TERMINOLOGY

HMIS DATA ELEMENTS

UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS (UDEs): baseline data collection that is required for all programs reporting data into HMIS (as of FY 2026 Data Standards).

- [Universal Data Elements on HUD Exchange](#)

Universal Identifier Elements (One and Only One per Client Record)	Universal Project Stay Elements (One or More Value(s) Per Client, One Value Per Project Stay)
Name	Disabling Condition
Social Security Number	Project Start Date
Date of Birth	Project Exit Date
Race and Ethnicity	Destination
Veteran Status	Relationship to Head of Household
	Enrollment CoC
	Housing Move-in Date
	Prior Living Situation

PROJECT DESCRIPTOR DATA ELEMENTS (PDDE): data elements recorded about each project in the CoC, regardless of whether the project receives federal funding. PDDEs are updated at least annually.

- [Project Descriptor Data Elements on HUD Exchange](#)
- PDDEs enable HMIS to:
 - Link client records with the specific projects in which they are enrolled across various CoC initiatives.
 - Define the project type for each client throughout their time receiving housing or services.
 - Identify federal funding sources supporting the project.
 - Track bed and unit inventory, as well as other relevant project information, for reporting purposes related to the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA), System Performance Measures (SPMs), Housing Inventory Counts (HIC), Point-in-Time (PIT) counts, and bed utilization.
- Project Descriptor Data is generally managed by the HMIS System Administrator rather than individual project users. These data elements are created during the initial project setup in ClientTrack and are reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- The required Project Descriptor Data Elements include:
 - Organization Identifiers

- Project Identifiers (including Project Type, Method for Tracking Emergency Shelter, Housing Type, and Target Population)
- Continuum of Care Information
- Federal Partner Funding Sources (Including Grant Identifiers)
- Bed and Unit Inventory Information (Including Operating Dates, Household Type, Bed Type, Availability, Unit/Bed Count)

PROGRAM SPECIFIC DATA ELEMENTS (PSDEs): data provided about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided, and client outcomes. These data elements must be collected from all clients served by programs that are required to report this information to HUD.

- [Program Specific Data Elements on HUD Exchange](#)

HMIS REPORTS

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR): a report required by HUD for organizations that receive funding through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program.

- The APR evaluates the performance of CoC-funded projects over the course of a year and helps HUD assess the effectiveness of programs that serve homeless individuals and families, including permanent housing, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and supportive services.
- The APR pulls client-level data from HMIS, such as demographics, services provided, and housing outcomes, to measure the effectiveness of CoC-funded programs. This data includes information on income changes, exits to permanent housing, length of time experiencing homelessness, and other key performance indicators.

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER): a report required by HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) to evaluate the performance of programs funded under the Consolidated Plan, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

- The CAPER allows HUD and local governments to track and report on the progress of housing and community development programs. It includes data on how grant funds are used and whether the community's goals for housing assistance, homeless services, and community development are being met.

LONGITUDINAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS (LSA): a HUD-mandated report that provides detailed, system-wide information about homelessness in a community. The data from the report is used for HUD's annual report to Congress on the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide.

- The LSA report helps HUD and communities analyze how individuals and households are being served by their homeless service systems. It tracks system performance over time

and provides insights into patterns of service use, lengths of stay, demographics, and housing outcomes.

- The LSA report pulls data from across the entire HMIS to analyze how people move through the homeless service system. It focuses on five project types: Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), and Street Outreach (SO).

HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT (HIC) - an annual report required by HUD that provides a snapshot of the housing resources dedicated to individuals and families experiencing homelessness within a community. This report includes the number and types of beds and units available in different types of programs, including Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH), Transitional Housing (TH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH).

- The HIC allows HUD and CoCs to track the availability of beds and units over time, assess gaps in the housing inventory, and understand capacity needs within a community.
- The data collected from the HIC helps HUD evaluate how well a community's resources align with the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and assists in planning for resource allocation to reduce homelessness.

POINT IN TIME COUNT (PIT) - a HUD-mandated annual survey that provides a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. This count includes both sheltered and unsheltered individuals, and it's conducted by CoCs to assess the extent of homelessness within their area. HUD requires CoCs to conduct a full unsheltered count every two years, though many communities choose to conduct both sheltered and unsheltered counts annually.

- The PIT data is critical for tracking changes in the size and demographics of the homeless population over time. It helps HUD and communities measure the scope of homelessness, understand trends, and evaluate the impact of local efforts to reduce homelessness.
- The information gathered from the PIT count contributes to national data on homelessness and informs policy and funding decisions aimed at addressing homelessness effectively.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES (SPM) - a set of metrics required by HUD that evaluate the overall effectiveness of a CoC's homeless service system and monitor the community's progress in reducing homelessness and improving housing outcomes.

- The SPM report pulls data from HMIS to track the success of various interventions in moving individuals and families toward stable housing, while also identifying areas for improvement. The data from the SPMs is submitted to HUD annually and is used to evaluate how well CoCs are meeting HUD's goals and objectives for addressing homelessness. The SPMs measure key areas of system performance, including:

- Length of Time Homeless: Tracks how long individuals and families experience homelessness.
- Exits to Permanent Housing: Measures the success of programs in placing clients into permanent housing.
- Returns to Homelessness: Tracks the rate at which individuals and families return to homelessness after exiting a program.
- Job and Income Growth: Measures the income and employment improvements of clients while enrolled in CoC projects.
- Successful Placement from Street Outreach: Evaluates how effective street outreach programs are at connecting unsheltered individuals with housing and services.

DATA QUALITY PLAN

DATA QUALITY KEY TERMS

- **Completeness:** The degree to which all required data is known and documented. Coverage and utilization are both forms of completeness.
- **Coverage:** The degree to which all homeless assistance agencies within a CoC's geography enter all homeless clients into HMIS. Agencies include those funded by the CoC and ESG Program, federal partner agencies, foundations, and private organizations.
- **Utilization:** The degree to which the total number of homeless beds within the HMIS are recorded as occupied divided by the total number of homeless beds within the CoC's geographic coverage area.
- **Accuracy:** The degree to which data reflects the real-world client or service.
- **Timeliness:** The degree to which the data is collected and available when it is needed.
- **Consistency:** The degree to which the data is equivalent in the way it is collected and stored within and among agencies.

BENCHMARKS & GOALS

The following benchmarks and goals are established to guide agencies in entering and maintaining high-quality data in HMIS:

TIMELINESS

- Timeliness ensures that client information is up to date and current. For reporting purposes, it is essential that ClientTrack contains the most recent information about clients.

- Timely data entry guarantees that information is readily available when needed, whether proactively (e.g., for monitoring, raising awareness, or meeting funding requirements) or reactively (e.g., responding to information requests or correcting inaccuracies).
- To maintain data accuracy, information should be entered as soon as it is collected. Real-time data entry is strongly recommended. As such, it is important that:
 - Client information is entered within 72 hours of project entry or intake
 - Client data is updated regularly as changes occur, including at exit or during interim or annual assessments, in accordance with universal and project-specific data element requirements.

TIMELINESS BENCHMARKS BY PROJECT TYPE

The TN-500 CoC recognizes that agencies are at different stages in their data quality journey. To support progress while maintaining accountability, the CoC establishes three levels of timeliness standards:

- **Minimum Standard (2026)** – the baseline agencies must achieve in order to be in compliance in 2026.
- **TN-500 Standard** – the CoC’s ongoing expectation for timely data entry (72 hours).
- **High-Performing Goal** – the best practice target that agencies are encouraged to reach (real-time or within 24 hours).

Project Type	Minimum Standard (2026)	TN-500 Standard (Expectation)	High-Performing Goal
Emergency Shelter (ES)	Within 7 days of entry/exit	Within 3 days of entry/exit	Real time or less than 24 hours
Transitional Housing (TH)	Within 7 days of entry/exit	Within 3 days of entry/exit	Less than 24 hours
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Within 7 days of entry/exit	Within 3 days of entry/exit	Less than 24 hours
Rapid Rehousing (RRH)	Within 7 days of entry/exit	Within 3 days of entry/exit	Less than 24 hours
Street Outreach (SO)	Within 7 days of engagement	Within 3 days of engagement	Real time or less than 24 hours
Coordinated Entry (CE)	Within 7 days of assessment	Within 3 days of assessment	Real time or less than 24 hours
Services Only (SSO)	Within 7 days of service	Within 3 days of service	Real time or less than 24 hours

COMPLETENESS

- Data completeness ensures that the information in HMIS is as thorough as possible, containing all required details for every client served within a project during a given time

period. To provide accurate reporting, it is essential that HMIS captures all required data fields, ensuring that the records reflect the full scope of clients being served.

- The goal of achieving HUD-defined HMIS coverage across all local projects is crucial for creating representative data. Complete data entry is critical, as missing or incomplete information (e.g., missing Social Security Number digits, year of birth, or disability/veteran status) can hinder the ability to deliver comprehensive care. Inaccurate or incomplete data may result in clients missing out on services that could help them secure permanent housing and end their homelessness.
- The TN-500 CoC aims to collect 100% of all data elements. However, it acknowledges that this may not be feasible in every situation. As a result, the CoC has established an acceptable range of missing, unknown, or refused responses based on the specific type of project entering the data
 - Street Outreach - 90% of required data elements (only applies after the client has a Date of Engagement)
 - Emergency Shelter - 95% of required data elements
 - Services Only (Excludes Coordinated Entry) - 90% of required data elements
 - Transitional Housing - 98% of required data elements
 - Rapid Rehousing - 100% of required data elements
 - Permanent Supportive Housing - 100% of required data elements
 - Homelessness Prevention - 90% of required data elements

ACCURACY

- Information entered in HMIS must be valid and accurately reflect the details of individuals participating in the homeless service projects that contribute data to HMIS.
- Inaccurate data, whether intentional or unintentional, can be more problematic than incomplete data. While missing information can be acknowledged and addressed, false or inaccurate data misrepresents the truth, leading to larger issues. It is important for both clients and staff to understand that it is better to enter “Client doesn’t know” or “Client prefers not to answer” than to enter incorrect data.
- To maintain the highest level of data accuracy:
 - Data errors should be corrected monthly
 - Entering inaccurate information is strictly prohibited
 - Staff must enter information exactly as provided by the client.

CONSISTENCY

- Every project must ensure that client data is entered in the same manner over time, regardless of which staff member is recording the information in HMIS.
- Consistency in data collection and entry is crucial to ensure that data is understood and handled uniformly across all projects within HMIS. Inconsistent data collection can negatively impact accuracy; even if all data is gathered, it may be unreliable if not collected

consistently. Therefore, all data in HMIS should be gathered and recorded in a standardized way across all projects.

- To support this, all intake and data entry staff must complete initial training before accessing the live HMIS system.

COVERAGE

To ensure comprehensive data, participation in HMIS is required at the following levels:

- **100% of all CoC- and ESG-funded projects** must actively participate in HMIS. These projects are federally required to enter complete client and project data into the system.
- **At least 85% of other homeless assistance projects** (including those funded by federal partners, state/local government, foundations, or private organizations) should also participate in HMIS. This broader participation strengthens the accuracy of community-wide reporting and helps identify service and housing gaps across the full homeless response system.

The long-term goal of the TN-500 CoC is full coverage across all project types, regardless of funding source.

UTILIZATION

- **Bed utilization rates** should reflect accurate client usage of available resources. The goal is for agencies to utilize 95-105% of their available beds, ensuring that data accurately represents resource use.

DATA QUALITY BENCHMARKS: MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT CROSSWALK

Benchmark	Standard/Goal	How It's Monitored	Enforcement if Not Met
Timeliness	Data entered within 48 hours of intake; updated at exit and during assessments	HMIS Data Entry Timing Report; quarterly data checks by HMIS Lead	Technical assistance first; written notice if repeated; corrective action plan if unresolved
Completeness	90–100% depending on project type	HUD Data Quality Report; monthly/quarterly data quality checks	Feedback from HMIS Lead; corrective plan; may impact CoC rank & review score
Accuracy	Information entered exactly as provided by client; errors corrected monthly	Data Quality Report; monthly error checks; monitoring of duplicate records	Training; written notice; corrective plan; possible suspension of HMIS access for persistent noncompliance
Consistency	All staff collect/enter data in standardized way	Review during training; Data Quality Spotlights; Data Tune-Ups	Additional staff training; agency-level corrective plan

Coverage	100% of CoC/ESG-funded projects; ≥85% of other homeless projects	Annual HIC review; coverage tracking in HMIS	HMIS Committee review; projects not participating may be ineligible for CoC funding
Utilization	95–105% bed utilization	HIC & PIT reports; quarterly utilization checks	HMIS Lead provides feedback; corrective action plan if bed data inaccurate or consistently outside range

TRAINING

Training is a critical component of maintaining high data quality within the HMIS. Properly trained staff are essential for ensuring that data is entered accurately, consistently, and in compliance with HUD standards. By providing comprehensive training on data entry, reporting, and system navigation, staff can avoid common errors, better understand the significance of the information they collect, and confidently manage client data. Ongoing training also helps to adapt to system updates and reinforces best practices, ultimately contributing to a more effective and reliable homeless management information system.

NEW USERS

- Must complete Privacy and Security Training before receiving HMIS access.
- Must complete Introductory Training – Part 1 and Part 2 before entering data.

ALL USERS

- Must complete Privacy and Security Training annually to maintain system access.
- Must attend a minimum of one training session annually (Introductory or Refresher).

INACTIVE USERS

- Any user inactive for more than 180 days must retake Introductory Training – Part 1 prior to resuming data entry.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY TRAINING

Privacy and Security Training is a cornerstone of HMIS data quality and compliance. This training ensures that all users understand their responsibilities in safeguarding sensitive client information and following HUD's data privacy and security standards. By reinforcing best practices for handling data, the training protects both clients and agencies while strengthening trust in the Homeless Management Information System.

TN-500's Privacy and Security Training consist of one training video and a Knowledge Check. A score of 90% or higher is required to successfully complete the training.

All HMIS users must complete Privacy and Security Training annually. Completion is required by the end of the calendar year, and failure to do so may result in deactivation of HMIS access until the training is completed.

INTRODUCTORY TRAINING

The Introduction to HMIS training provides new users with the foundational knowledge required to effectively use the Homeless Management Information System. This comprehensive training covers the essential features of HMIS, including data entry and system navigation, ensuring that staff are well-prepared to manage client information in compliance with HUD standards. By building a strong understanding of how to accurately collect and enter data, the training sets the stage for ongoing data quality and consistency across all projects. This initial training is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the system and fostering confidence in new users as they begin working within HMIS.

TN-500's Introductory Training for ClientTrack and HMIS is a self-paced training course and consists of two parts.

- Part 1 consists of watching a series of videos and completing a quiz. A score of 85% or higher on the quiz is required to progress to Part 2.
- Part 2 consists of a quiz and a practice assignment, which is completed in the training environment of ClientTrack. The HMIS team will review the data quality of the practice assignment and discuss any required corrections with the user. A score of 85% or higher on the quiz is required to receive access to the production environment.

HMIS REFRESHER TRAINING

Refresher training is an essential element in sustaining data quality within HMIS. Over time, staff may encounter system updates, policy changes, or shifts in best practices that impact data entry and reporting. Regular refresher training ensures that staff remain proficient in the most current processes, reinforcing key principles of accurate and consistent data collection. It also helps to address common errors, clarify complex data entry scenarios, and enhance overall system usage. By offering periodic refresher training, organizations can ensure ongoing compliance with HUD standards and continue to improve the quality and reliability of HMIS data.

- HMIS Refresher Training is offered both in-person and virtually, with each format available at least once per year.
- A score of 80% or higher on the HMIS Refresher Quiz is considered satisfactory. Users that score lower than 80% should arrange for additional training.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAINING

In addition to standard HMIS training, miscellaneous training sessions provide staff with focused learning opportunities to address specific or emerging data quality needs. These training courses

can cover a variety of specialized topics, such as advanced reporting techniques, error troubleshooting, data privacy and security protocols, and compliance with new HUD data standards.

DATA STANDARD SPOTLIGHTS

Data Standard Spotlights are released monthly and focus on a single HMIS data element. Each spotlight explains what the element is, why it matters, where it should be recorded in ClientTrack, and when it should be collected. Spotlights also include practical examples and tips for accurate data collection. By breaking down data elements in a clear and accessible way, the Spotlights help staff avoid common mistakes, improve data consistency across projects, and understand how their daily data entry connects to larger HUD reporting requirements.

SE TN DATA TUNE UPS

The SE TN Data Tune-Up series offers short, 30-minute monthly sessions that combine HMIS updates, training refreshers, and interactive discussion. These sessions are designed to keep users up to date on system changes, reinforce best practices, and provide real-time opportunities to ask questions. By offering a regular forum for both information-sharing and problem-solving, Data Tune-Ups strengthen user confidence, build community across agencies, and support continuous improvement in data quality.

BEST PRACTICES FOR HIGH DATA QUALITY

In addition to the required training and data quality standards outlined in this plan, agencies are encouraged to adopt the following recurring tasks as best practices. These practices are strongly encouraged to support high data quality, help agencies operate more effectively, and strengthen the accuracy of our community's data as a whole. Agencies that follow these guidelines are more likely to be recognized as highly performing and will help us better tell the story of homelessness in our community.

BEST PRACTICES FOR BECOMING A HIGH-PERFORMING AGENCY

WEEKLY

- Ensure all Clients are properly entered/exited
- Review the "[TN-500 Date of Last Contact BNL \(View Only\)](#)"
- Update Current Living Situations

MONTHLY

- Review the current Data Standard Spotlight
- Take the Data Standard Spotlight quiz
- Attend the SE Tennessee Data Tune-Up
- Run the Data Quality (DQ) Report
- Run Enrollment Reports
- Complete Annual Assessments

QUARTERLY

- Correct Data Quality (DQ) Reports
- Confirm active enrollments
- Participate in Data Champions Meeting
- Submit Data requested for Federal Reporting
- Report Inventory Changes

ANNUALLY

- Complete Privacy and Security Training
 - Review HMIS Policies and Procedures
 - Attend In-person or On Demand Training
 - Pass Quiz with 90% or higher
- Complete HMIS Refresher Training
 - Take Pre-Training Quiz
 - Attend In-Person or Virtual Training
 - Take Post-Training Quiz

DATA QUALITY MONITORING PLAN

The Data Quality Monitoring Plan provides a structured approach to reviewing and improving data quality within HMIS. Monitoring activities are designed to track agency performance against the benchmarks outlined in the *Benchmarks & Goals* section (see p. 13). The HMIS Lead uses the crosswalk table as the foundation for reviewing timeliness, completeness, accuracy, consistency, coverage, and utilization across all agencies.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING DATA QUALITY

HMIS COMMITTEE:

- **Provide Oversight and Guidance on Data Quality Initiatives:** Serve as the primary forum for identifying system-wide data quality trends, challenges, and opportunities. Collaborate to develop solutions and strategies that support accurate, complete, and timely data entry across all agencies.
- **Review Data Quality Monitoring and Improvement Activities:** Examine reports, metrics, and improvement plans to ensure monitoring activities are effective, actionable, and aligned with the goals of the Data Quality Plan. Make recommendations to enhance processes and promote system-wide consistency.
- **Evaluate and Improve the HMIS Data Experience:** Gather ongoing user feedback specifically focused on data entry, reporting, and quality issues. Use this information to identify opportunities to improve accuracy, consistency, usability, and overall user experience in the HMIS system.

- **Provide Data Quality Policy Feedback and Endorsement:** Review and provide feedback to the HMIS Lead on all policies and procedures related to data quality, including Privacy, Security, and Data Quality Plans. Endorse policies as appropriate to ensure compliance with federal regulations and alignment with best practices in data management.
- **Conduct Annual HMIS Lead Data Quality Review:** Develop and administer an evaluation tool to assess the HMIS Lead’s performance in supporting and maintaining high-quality data. Ensure the review reflects responsibilities outlined in the MOU with the Leadership Board and fosters continuous improvement in data quality practices.

HMIS LEAD AGENCY:

- **Conduct Training on Data Quality Expectations and Best Practices:** Organize and deliver training sessions for all participating agencies to ensure staff understand data quality requirements, reporting standards, and best practices for accurate data entry.
- **Maintain and Update Data Quality Reports:** Regularly update and distribute data quality reports to reflect current standards, system benchmarks, and actionable insights for participating agencies.
- **Monitor Data Quality and Provide Feedback:** Conduct ongoing monitoring of agency data submissions, identify gaps or errors, and provide targeted feedback to help agencies meet performance expectations.
- **Facilitate Corrective Action Plans:** Work with agencies not meeting data quality standards to develop and implement corrective action plans, ensuring timely resolution of issues and sustained improvement.
- **Review HUD HMIS Guidance and Documentation:** Annually review HUD HMIS documents, including Data Standards Manuals, Reporting Terminology Glossary, System Performance Measures, and related guidance, to ensure agency practices align with current federal expectations.
- **Review Project Descriptor Elements:** During the annual HIC review, review all project descriptor elements with participating agencies and update records as changes are reported to maintain accurate project-level data.

HMIS PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND END USERS:

- **Data Entry & Quality**
 - Enter client data promptly, accurately, and completely in accordance with HMIS standards and timelines.
 - Regularly review and correct Data Quality reports (e.g., missing fields, duplicates, or errors).
 - Use multiple search methods before creating a new client record to avoid duplicates.
 - Submit a support ticket anytime something doesn’t look right (e.g., duplicate client, broken form, missing data) or if you have a question about ClientTrack or data entry.

- [How to submit a support ticket](#)
- **Privacy, Security & Compliance**
 - Follow all [HMIS Policies and Procedures](#), as well as federal, state, and local privacy/confidentiality regulations.
 - Maintain security of system accounts (e.g., don't share logins, log out when not in use, report suspected breaches).
 - Use HMIS only for authorized purposes related to your role.
- **Training & Capacity Building**
 - Complete required initial training before gaining access to HMIS.
 - Participate in annual privacy, security, and HMIS refresher training, and seek additional training as needed.
 - Agencies must coordinate training for new staff and ensure terminations are immediately reported so access can be updated.
- **Communication & Accountability**
 - Report data discrepancies, system issues, or suspected security/privacy concerns to the HMIS Lead or System Administrator.
 - All security breaches should be reported to databreach@homelesscoalition.org immediately.
 - Stay engaged in data quality improvement by implementing best practices and acting on feedback provided in monitoring or reports.
 - Maintain active accounts by logging in regularly; notify HMIS staff of staff changes or inactive accounts.
- **Designate a Data Champion:** Assign at least one staff member to serve as the agency's Data Champion. The Data Champion acts as the primary point of contact for data-related activities, facilitates data quality improvement, oversees training, and ensures ongoing compliance with HMIS standards. Key responsibilities of the Data Champion include:
 - Data Quality Oversight:
 - Receive and review Data Quality reports to identify areas needing improvement.
 - Facilitate data quality cleanup by coordinating with relevant staff and ensuring timely resolution of data issues.
 - Implement best practices and standard procedures for data entry to maintain high data quality standards.
 - Training and Capacity Building:
 - Oversee training for agency/program staff on HMIS usage, data entry protocols, and data quality standards.
 - Ensure all staff members are adequately trained and updated on any changes in HMIS policies and procedures.
 - Provide ongoing support and guidance to staff to address any HMIS-related issues.
 - Collaboration and Communication:

- Serve as the liaison between the agency/program and the HMIS Team at the Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition
- Communicate data quality issues, training needs, and system updates to agency/program team members
- Participate in HMIS meetings, trainings, and workshops to stay informed about best practices and system updates.

ENCOURAGEMENTS AND ENFORCEMENTS

DATA QUALITY APPROACH

The TN-500 CoC emphasizes a supportive approach first—celebrating strong performers, providing technical assistance when challenges come up, and making sure agencies have the tools they need to succeed. At the same time, the CoC outlines clear expectations and consequences for persistent noncompliance, so that data quality remains consistent and reliable across the system.

The TN-500 CoC, in partnership with the HMIS Lead, will monitor data quality. To reinforce the importance of accurate and timely data in HMIS, a set of encouragements and enforcements are in place to both recognize strong performance and address issues when they arise.

ENCOURAGEMENTS

- **Committee Reporting:** The HMIS Committee will include data quality updates and recognitions in its regular reports to the CoC Governance Board. Agencies meeting or exceeding benchmarks will be highlighted in Board meeting minutes.
- **Community Recognition:** Agencies that consistently meet or surpass data quality standards will be acknowledged each quarter through CoC General Membership Meetings, newsletters, or other public forums.
- **Data Champions:** The CoC will highlight “Data Champions” who model strong practices, sharing their tips and successes to encourage peer learning.
- **Funding Consideration:** During the CoC’s annual rank and review process, projects maintaining baseline data quality will remain eligible for CoC dollars, while those exceeding expectations may receive additional points.
- **Alignment with Funders:** The CoC will work with state and local funders to promote the use of data quality measures in funding decisions, encouraging consistency across systems.
- **Training:** Agencies demonstrating strong data quality practices may be invited to help co-facilitate training or serve as peer mentors, reinforcing the value of shared learning.

ENFORCEMENTS

To ensure adherence to the Data Quality Plan, the CoC will enforce the following measures:

- **Training Requirements:** All agencies are required to participate in HMIS training provided by the HMIS Lead Agency to ensure understanding of data quality standards and procedures.
- **Technical Assistance:** If data quality issues are identified, the HMIS Lead will first reach out to the agencies to offer guidance, tools, and training.
- **Written Notice:** If concerns persist, the CoC will provide formal written notice outlining the specific issues and the steps required for correction.
- **Corrective Action Plan:** Agencies with ongoing challenges may be asked to create and implement a corrective action plan, with support from the HMIS Lead.
- **Penalties for Non-Compliance:** Persistent failure to comply with data quality standards may result in penalties, including loss of access to HMIS or other corrective measures as determined by the HMIS Committee.
- **Escalation to Governance:** Continued noncompliance may be reported by the HMIS Committee to the CoC Governance Board for further action.
- **Impact on Funding:** If data quality issues remain unresolved, the CoC may reduce points in the rank and review process or consider additional consequences tied to funding eligibility.

APPENDIX A: HMIS DATA ELEMENTS

This appendix provides direct links to all current **Data Standard Spotlights, Data Tune-Ups, and other reference materials** for each data element. Simply click on any link to access the document on CRHC's website. As new resources are developed, they will be added here, keeping this section up to date and serving as a central hub for all data standard guidance.

ANNUAL AND UPDATE ASSESSMENTS

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
- [Data Tune Up](#)

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Chronic Homelessness Tool](#)
 - [Chronic Homelessness Worksheet](#)
 - [Flowchart of HUD's Definition of Chronic Homelessness](#)
- [Data Tune Up](#)

DISABLING CONDITION

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [How to Collect Disabling Condition](#)
 - [Common Errors Related to Disabling Condition](#)

HOUSING MOVE IN DATE

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Tips for Collecting Housing Move-in Date](#)
 - [Housing Move-in Date Guidelines](#)

INCOME AND BENEFITS

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Helpful Tips and Interview Prompts for Income and Benefits](#)
 - [Best Practices for Improving Client Income and SPM 4](#)

LIVING SITUATIONS

- [HMIS Living Situation Response Categories and Descriptions](#)
- [Appendix A – Living Situations and Response Categories](#)

CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)

- [Tips for Collecting Current Living Situation](#)
- [How to Enter a Current Living Situation](#)
- [Current Living Situation Collection Requirements for PIT Count](#)

DESTINATION

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Instructions for Collecting Destination Data for a Client](#)
 - [Asking about Destination: SALT Method](#)
 - [Tips for Collecting Destination Data in HMIS](#)
 - [Common Destination Errors](#)

PRIOR LIVING SITUATION

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [How to Collect Prior Living Situation](#)
 - [Asking the Prior Living Situation Script – Using the SALT Method](#)
 - [Tips for Collecting Prior Living Situation Data](#)
 - [How to Troubleshoot Prior Living Situation Errors](#)
- [Data Tune Up](#)

PROJECT START DATE

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Common Project Start Date Errors and How to Prevent Them](#)

PROJECT EXIT DATE

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Guidelines for Recording Project Exit Date](#)
 - [Common Project Exit Date Errors and How to Prevent Them](#)

RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

- [Data Standard Spotlight](#)
 - [Common Errors with Relationship to HoH](#)

APPENDIX B: FEDERAL REPORTS

This appendix contains links to step-by-step instructions for running the following **federal reports**. Click on any link to access the guidance directly, and we will continue to update this section as new instructions or resources become available.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR)

- [How to run the APR](#)

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

- [How to run the CAPER](#)

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES (SPM)

- [System Performance Measures.docx](#)

CSV EXPORT

- [How to run the CSV Export 2026 \(Hashed and Unhashed\)](#)

APPENDIX C: CLIENTTRACK REPORTS

This appendix provides links to instructions for running standard **ClientTrack reports**. If you need instructions for a different report or help creating a custom report, please reach out to the **Data Team**.

BNLS: HMIS ACTIVE CLIENTS

Lists all clients currently active in the HMIS system, helping agencies track engagement, monitor system activity, and maintain an active client list.

- [How to run the HMIS Active Clients Report](#)

HMIS REPORTS: HUD DATA QUALITY REPORT

Provides an overview of data quality metrics required by HUD, highlighting completeness, accuracy, and consistency for federally mandated fields. Supports monitoring and improvement initiatives.

- [How to run the HUD Data Quality Report](#)

HMIS REPORTS: HMIS DATA ENTRY TIMING REPORT

Tracks timeliness of data entry for client enrollments, service entries, and exits, helping agencies ensure compliance with program standards and reduce reporting lag.

- [How to run the HMIS Data Entry Timing Report](#)

ENROLLMENT REPORTS: CASE ASSIGNMENTS

Displays which clients are assigned to specific case managers, facilitating workload management, oversight, and accountability.

- [How to run the Case Assignments Report](#)

ENROLLMENT REPORTS: CLIENTS IN PROGRAMS

Shows all clients currently enrolled in specific programs or projects, providing insight into program utilization and active participation.

- [How to run the Clients in Programs Report](#)

ENROLLMENT REPORTS: ENROLLMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Summarizes key demographic information (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity) for clients in programs, supporting reporting, planning, and equity analysis.

- [How to run the Enrollment Demographics Report](#)

SERVICE REPORTS: CLIENTS SERVED

Lists clients who have received one or more services during a selected time period, enabling agencies to track service reach and client engagement.

- [How to run the Clients Served Report](#)

SERVICE REPORTS: SERVICE SUMMARY

Provides a high-level summary of services provided, including counts and types of services, helping agencies evaluate service delivery trends and resource allocation.

- [How to run the Service Summary Report](#)

SERVICE REPORTS: SERVICE SUMMARY BY CASE

Summarizes services received at the household (case) level, detailing types, dates, and frequency of services. This allows agencies to review service provision patterns across entire households, track engagement, and verify service documentation for accuracy.

- [How to run the Service Summary by Case Report](#)

APPENDIX D: EXTERNAL RESOURCES

This section is meant to be a quick guide for staff who may need extra help with HMIS or who want to learn new skills. These resources are not just for system administrators; they are tools you can use when you have questions, want to double-check data requirements, or need to strengthen your knowledge.

- **[HUD Exchange – HMIS](#)**: This is HUD’s main page for all things HMIS. You’ll find training, FAQs, and links to every official HMIS guide. If you’re not sure where to start, this page is a great “home base.”
- **[HUD Data Standards](#)**: The official rulebook for what information we must collect in HMIS (like income, housing move-in dates, and prior living situation). When you’re unsure about a specific question or data field, this is the place to check.
- **[HUD HMIS Data Dictionary](#)**: Defines every single data field in HMIS, including what each response means. Helpful if you ever wonder: “What does HUD mean by this field?”
- **[HUD System Performance Measures](#)**: Explains how HUD measures community success, like how quickly people are housed or whether they return to homelessness. This helps you see how your daily data entry connects to bigger system outcomes.
- **[National Alliance to End Homelessness \(NAEH\)](#)**: A national nonprofit that shares research, best practices, and policy updates. Their site has toolkits, webinars, and fact sheets that can help you understand trends and effective strategies in homelessness services.
- **[USICH \(Interagency Council on Homelessness\)](#)**: The federal agency that coordinates the national response to homelessness. Their website has plain-language guides, federal strategies, and resources communities use to reduce homelessness.
- **[Tennessee Housing Development Agency – Emergency Solutions Grants \(ESG\) Program](#)**: This is Tennessee’s state-level program that provides federal ESG funds to local communities. It supports street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing. Case managers can use this site to learn about available funding streams, program requirements, and resources that directly affect services in Tennessee.
- **[U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Homeless Programs](#)**: Central hub for VA programs and benefits. Case managers working with veterans can find healthcare, housing, and benefits resources here.
- **[PATH \(Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness\)](#)**: A federal program that funds outreach and services for individuals with serious mental illness who are experiencing homelessness. The [Tennessee PATH site](#) explains how the program works locally and how to connect clients to it.

APPENDIX E: COMMON ERRORS IN HMIS

This appendix provides the most common errors in HMIS for the TN-500 CoC and a brief explanation of how to prevent and resolve said errors.

CLIENT DUPLICATES

Ends users should always search HMIS in at least three different ways to ensure the client does not have an existing HMIS profile. The Data Team suggests:

- Searching by the first letter of the clients first name and the client date of birth
- Searching by the first letter of the clients last name and the client date of birth
- Searching by using the first couple of letters of the clients first name and last name

If an end user notices a client has duplicated HMIS Profiles, the end user should submit a support ticket via Client Track.

- At the bottom left corner, click on the (?) button.
- On the right-hand side, under “Request Help”, select “Report an Issue”
- In the summary box, write “Duplicate Profiles”
- When describing the issue in the following box, be sure to list both HMIS ID’s and clearly state which profile should be the one used moving forward.
- The Data Team will merge the client profiles, leaving only the HMIS Profile identified.

DATE OF BIRTH

Date of Birth is a required field for HMIS Profiles. Reminders about Date of Birth include:

- The “Date of Birth Quality” is a required field and must be answered.
 - If the client gives a full DOB, select “Full DOB Reported
 - If the client gives a partial DOB or age, select “Approximate or Partial DOB Reported”
 - If the client does not know their DOB, select “Client Doesn’t Know”
 - If the client does not want to share their DOB, select “Client Prefers not to Answer”
 - If you did not ask about DOB, select “Data not collected”
- DOB should not be after the current date.
- DOB should not be later than the project enrollment date.

DUAL ENROLLMENT IN RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

Clients can only physically occupy one bed at a time. Because of this, overlapping enrollments in certain types of residential projects (Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, or Permanent Supportive Housing) may create data quality errors or inconsistencies.

In general, it is acceptable for a client to be enrolled in multiple projects at once only when the projects serve different functions or represent different stages of housing assistance. However, clients should never appear to be living in two places at once.

Examples of when dual enrollment is allowed:

- A client is in an Emergency Shelter and is also enrolled in a Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing project before their Housing Move-In Date is entered (they are still staying in shelter while working toward housing).
- A client is in a Transitional Housing project and is also enrolled in Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing before their Housing Move-In Date is entered.
- A client is enrolled in two Rapid Re-Housing projects if the projects are performing different functions; for example, one provides financial assistance while the other provides case management. Housing Move-In Dates (HMIDs) must be aligned, so the client appears housed in both projects at the same time — they cannot appear to be experiencing homelessness in one project while appearing housed in another.

Examples of when dual enrollment is not allowed:

- A client cannot be enrolled in two Emergency Shelter projects at the same time.
- A client cannot be enrolled in two Transitional Housing projects at the same time.
- A client cannot be enrolled in an Emergency Shelter and a Transitional Housing project at the same time.
- A client cannot remain enrolled in a shelter or transitional housing project once a Housing Move-In Date has been entered in a Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing project (they cannot occupy both a bed in a shelter and a house).

HOUSING MOVE-IN DATE

Housing Move-In Date signifies the first night the Client sleeps in their permanent housing. Rather than thinking about the date the client received the keys, or signed the lease, think about the first night the client slept in their home.

- The “Housing Move-In Date” (HMID) must be between the Project Start Date and Project Exit Date.
- The HMID cannot be a future date. Even if you know the anticipated move-in date, it should only be entered on or after the client’s first night in their home.
- The HMID may be the same date as the Project Entry Date if the client was in housing at enrollment or moved into housing on the enrollment date.
- There can be no more than one Housing Move-In Date per client, per enrollment.
- Once an HMID is recorded, it should not be deleted if the client loses their housing. If the client loses housing, exit them from the project and create a new project enrollment if you will continue to work on rehousing the client.

PROJECT START DATE / PROJECT EXIT DATE

Project Start Date and Project Exit Dates track when clients were enrolled and exited from all projects in HMIS.

- All clients enrolled in your program should have a Project Start Date.
- The Project Start Date should be later than the client's Date of Birth.
- Project Start Date should be prior to the Exit Date.
- Project Start Dates and Project Exit Dates should not be the same date for residential shelters.
- If a project's data quality reports reflect more clients than expected, this is typically a situation where the agency staff have not exited clients from the project in HMIS.
- If a project's data quality reports reflect less clients than expected, this is typically a situation where the agency staff have not enrolled all clients in HMIS.

APPENDIX F: TN-500 DATA DASHBOARDS

TN-500 Data Dashboards are visual tools that transform raw HMIS data into clear, accessible insights. They allow the TN-500 CoC to monitor data quality in real time while also helping us tell the broader story of homelessness in our community. By making trends and outcomes visible,

dashboards strengthen accountability and support informed decision-making for agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

- [Active By Name List \(BNL\) Dashboard](#) - Provides a daily snapshot of who is experiencing homelessness within the CoC, ensuring that the By Name List remains current and actionable for coordinated entry and service delivery.
- [By Name List \(BNL\) Trends Dashboard](#) - Compiles monthly data to highlight overarching trends in the homeless population, supporting long-term planning and analysis of shifts in need across the community.
- [Point In Time \(PIT\) Count Dashboard](#) - Displays annual Point-in-Time Count results, offering a clear view of changes in homelessness year over year and informing both HUD reporting and local strategy.
- [Housing Forward Fund \(HFF\) Dashboard](#) - Tracks fund expenditures alongside the number and demographics of individuals assisted, offering both financial accountability and the direct impact of the fund on reducing homelessness.