

City of Cambridge
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

City of Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs
Planning & Development Division
51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139

Purpose

The purpose of the Cambridge Homeless Management Information System (CHMIS) is to provide a robust and comprehensive system for collecting and disseminating information about persons experiencing homelessness and the homelessness service system in the City of Cambridge. The long-term vision of HMIS is to enhance Partner Agencies' collaboration, service delivery and data collection capabilities. Accurate information will put the City of Cambridge Continuum of Care in a better position to plan for future needs and meet the reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The mission of the Cambridge Continuum of Care HMIS is to be an integrated network of homeless and other service providers that use a central database to collect, track and report uniform information on client needs and services. This system will meet Federal requirements and also enhance service planning and delivery.

The fundamental goal of CHMIS is to document the demographics of homelessness in Cambridge according to the HUD HMIS and Data Standards. The project aims to identify patterns in the utilization of assistance, and document the effectiveness of services for clients. This will be accomplished through analysis of data that are gathered from the actual experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and from the service providers who assist them in shelters and homeless assistance programs throughout the City.

Charter Definition

This document defines the governance structure of the CHMIS. The charter is intended to be used as a statement of the roles and responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency, the CoC Lead Agency and the HMIS Working Group as they relate to managing the CHMIS.

Roles & Responsibilities

The City's Planning and Development Division within the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) staffs and is the lead agency for both the CoC and the CHMIS. DHSP Grant Managers are the authorizing agents for all HMIS agreements made between Partner Agencies and DHSP. HMIS Project Staff are responsible for the administration of the web-based application and user access. HMIS Project Staff also provide technology, training and technical assistance to users of the system throughout the City.

The HMIS Working Group provides important oversight and guidance to HMIS. This group is committed to balancing the interests and needs of all stakeholders involved: individuals and families experiencing homelessness; service providers; case managers and end users; funders; and policymakers.

City of Cambridge Continuum of Care

HMIS Working Group – members must be active HMIS users and/or manage staff using HMIS.

- Project direction and guidance – includes oversight of implementation of the HMIS
- Approval of HMIS project forms and documentation
- Project participation and feedback
- Prioritization of issues

City of Cambridge, DHSP

Planning and Development Division

- Lead agency for HMIS administration and overall responsibility for project

- Project funding
- Liaison with HUD
- Project Staffing
- Procurement of software and licenses
 - Selection of system software
- Manage contract with software vendor
- User Administration
 - Add and remove partner agency HMIS administrators
 - Manage user licenses
- Creation of project forms and documentation
- Project policies and procedures compliance
- Signatory for Memorandums of Understanding
- Keeper of Signed Memorandums of Understanding

Training Coordinator

- Adherence to HUD Data Standards*, Security Plan and Privacy Plan
- Application customization
- Curriculum development
- Training documentation
- Confidentiality training
- Application training for Agency Administrators and End Users
- Outreach/end user support
- Training schedule
- Helpdesk

Data Analyst

- Adherence to HUD Data Standards*
- Application customization
- Data monitoring
- Data validity
- Aggregate reporting and extraction
- Assist Partner Agencies with agency-specific data collection and reporting needs (within reason and within constraints of other duties)

*HUD Data Standards and HMIS Requirements:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf>

Partner Agency

Any agency, group, or other entity that has completed an Agency Agreement with DHSP is a Contributory HMIS Organization (CHO), or Partner Agency. All Partner Agencies must abide by all policies and procedures outlined in this manual, which are subject to change. Partner Agencies must complete an Agency Agreement with DHSP before gaining access to HMIS. Partner Agencies are responsible for the conduct of their End Users and the security of End User Accounts.

Partner Agency Executive Director

- Authorizing agent for Partner Agency Agreement
- Designation of HMIS Agency Administrator
- Agency compliance with Policies & Procedures

- Each Partner Agency is responsible for ensuring they meet the Privacy and Security requirements detailed in the [HMIS Data and Technical Standards](#). Annually, Partner Agencies will conduct a thorough review of internal policies and procedures regarding HMIS.

Partner Agency Administrator

Each Partner Agency will designate an HMIS Agency Administrator to serve as primary contact between DHSP and the Partner Agency, and send that person's name and contact information to HMIS Project Staff. Changes to that information should be promptly reported to DHSP. HMIS Agency Administrators are responsible for:

- Program compliance with Policies & Procedures
- Authorizing agent for Partner Agency User Agreements
- Keeper of Executed Client Informed Consent forms
- Authorizing Agent for User ID requests
- Internet connectivity
- End user adherence to workstation security policies
- Detecting and responding to violations of the Policies & Procedures
- Maintain agency/program data in HMIS application
- Authorizing agent for Data Quality Monitoring

Agency Staff

- Safeguard client privacy through compliance with confidentiality policies
- Data collection as specified by training and other documentation

Non-Cambridge HMIS Partner Agency

Agencies using a comparable HMIS must either provide DHSP access to their HMIS system, or submit data to DHSP on at least a quarterly basis. Data should be submitted in the .csv format specified by HUD (see [HMIS Comma-Separated Value Format Documentation](#)). Non-CHMIS Partner Agencies must assign a staff member to be the primary point of contact with HMIS Project Staff.

Meetings

HMIS Project Staff within the HMIS Lead Agency convene HMIS meetings every other week. These meetings allow HMIS staff to check in with DHSP grant managers on HMIS issues including software bugs, reporting (APRs), project development, HMIS trainings, etc.

The HMIS Working Group meets quarterly to inform and advise the operations, policies and procedures of the CHMIS implementation and to provide feedback from end users on a regular basis.

Additionally, HMIS Project Staff attend all monthly CoC meetings to report to the larger group on progress, updates and issues related to HMIS. CoC members are invited to participate in the HMIS Working Group, and are given an opportunity to provide feedback on the HMIS implementation to both HMIS Working Group members and HMIS Project Staff.