

Georgia Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

Standard Operating Procedures

Homeless Management Information Systems

- Mandated by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - Published HMIS Data and Technical Standards in 2004
- Used by policymakers at federal, state and local levels to obtain better information about the extent and nature of homelessness over time
- Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) uses aggregate HMIS data from multiple communities to produce a national report on homelessness for Congress
 - Eventually ALL communities will submit data for AHAR so it is important to enter data accurately and in a timely manner

Georgia HMIS

- Statewide Implementation using PATHWAYS COMPASS
- Started in 2002
 - Currently over 300 active agencies
- “Shared System” – agencies serving the same person can share information and coordinate services
- Goals:
 - Assist homeless persons to navigate the continuum of care
 - Assist homeless service agencies with information allowing them to better serve their clients
 - Assist homeless agencies, local, State and Federal entities with information

Standard Operating Procedures

- Developed to provide guidance and standardization of how information is collected and entered into HMIS
- Resource guide for agencies that are using HMIS
- Working document – will continue to change over time, especially as Pathways changes

Project Organization

Collaborative Effort between DCA, Pathways,
Local Continuum of Care and Agencies

- **Department of Community Affairs** = Lead Agency for Statewide Implementation
- **Pathways Community Network** = Provides Software, Technical Support and Training
- **Local Continuum of Care Leads** = Guides implementation in their continuum, collects feedback, develops local policies

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Pathways**: administration and support of PATHWAYS COMPASS, development of new functionality within COMPASS, provide training and technical assistance to agencies, provide reports and data to Continuum of Care
- **Lead Agency** (DCA): overall project management, ensure adherence to HUD standards, development of statewide policies and procedures
- **Steering Committee**: provide project planning and oversight – made up of DCA staff, Pathways staff and CoC Leads
- **Continuum of Care Lead**: oversee local administration, facilitate user group, inform agencies of policies, communicate agency feedback and problems, provide input into overall implementation, develop local policies
- **Continuum HMIS Administrator**: provide additional technical assistance, guidance on continuum policies and data analysis as needed

Roles and Responsibilities

- **User Group**: provide agency/user level feedback on system and implementation, problem solve with other agencies
- **Agency**: attend user group, ensure adherence to policies, request support and report problems, agency level administration
- **User**: attend training, obtain client consent, enter and update data, adhere to privacy and security policies

DCA HMIS Policy

- Provide Program Profile Information
- Enter all consenting clients into HMIS
 - 75% of ALL clients at a minimum
- Shelter and Housing programs must ENROLL and DISCHARGE clients in a timely manner
- Comply with current privacy and security standards
- Maintain documentation of authorization
 - Including REFUSALS

DCA HMIS Policy

- DCA staff will monitor compliance with policy through:
 - Site Visits
 - System Utilization Reports
- Refusal to comply with HMIS participation may result in withholding of payments
- Domestic Violence Agencies are not required to participate
- Future funding levels will be based, in part, on HMIS participation

Other HMIS Policies

- Local Continuum of Care
- Other Funders (United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta)

Agency and User Setup

- New Agency Procedures
 - Sign Agency Agreements
 - Ensure Agency Meets Technical Requirements
 - Designate PATHWAYS COMPASS Agency Administrator
 - Set up Programs and Program Profiles
 - Designate who will be authorized system users and their access level
- New User Procedures
 - Attend Confidentiality and Ethics Training
 - Obtain a Password
 - Log onto COMPASS
 - Attend New User Training

Program Profile

- In order to run reports for the Continuum and HUD program profile information has been added to the system
- The Program Profile collects two types of information:
 - General Program Information
 - Name of program, program Type, program funding, program site, population served, etc.
 - Specific Program Type Information
 - Based on Program Type
 - Number of shelter beds, types of services provided, etc.
- Agencies are also asked to complete information on each of their SITES (locations)

Program Profile

- Agencies must complete a program profile for each of their programs
 - All existing programs will be asked to complete the profile
 - All new programs are required to complete the profile at the time they set up the program

Program Profile

Begin first by setting up Sites by clicking on Sites from My Agency Menu.

Agency Sites	
Site Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Admin <input type="checkbox"/> Beds <input type="checkbox"/> Services
Site Name:	Default Site
Site Description:	
Continuum of Care	[(Select)]
Scattered Site:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address 1:	
Address 2:	
City:	
State:	(None)
Zip:	
Phone:	
Hours:	
Contact Name:	
Contact Phone:	
Contact Email:	

Save Cancel

For each Site you will need to complete the information where you see the headers in Bold. It is advantageous to capture as much information as possible.

Program Profile

Once you have entered information on all the sites, you will set up or update the Program Profile. Click on Programs under the My Agency Menu.

If there are existing Programs, they will appear here, otherwise you will see the New Link.

The screenshot displays the 'Agency Program Maintenance' interface. On the left is a sidebar menu with two sections: 'MAIN' and 'MY AGENCY'. The 'MAIN' section includes options like Search, My Agency, My Region, I & R, Reports, Help, Tutorial, Switch User, and Log Out. The 'MY AGENCY' section includes Info, Fields, Funds, Keywords, Profile, Programs, Reasons, and Referrals. The main content area is titled 'Agency Program Maintenance' and features a 'New' link above a table of programs. The table has columns for Program Name, Program Type, Site, Expected Length(days), and Bed Program. It lists five programs: Emergency Shelter Program, Pathways Shelter, Transitional Shelter, test, and test4.

	Program Name	Program Type	Site	Expected Length(days)	Bed Program
 	Emergency Shelter Program	Supportive Service Programs	HQ	30	Y
 	Pathways Shelter	Emergency Shelter	HQ	13	Y
 	Transitional Shelter	Permanent Supportive Housing	HQ	90	Y
 	test	Prevention	HQ		N
 	test4	Prevention	HQ		N

Program Profile

When you select a or existing Programs, you will see the screen below.
All Bolded fields require data input.

Agency Program Maintenance				
New Program				
Program Type	(Select) <input type="text"/>			
Program Name	<input type="text"/>			
Program Description	<input type="text"/>			
Expected Length(days)	<input type="text"/>			
Bed Program	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Site	None <input type="text"/>			
Funding Source:	<table border="1"><tr><td>Other Continuum of Care (HUD) DCA ESG DHR MHDDAD DHR Family Violence</td><td><input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/></td><td><input type="text"/></td></tr></table>	Other Continuum of Care (HUD) DCA ESG DHR MHDDAD DHR Family Violence	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Continuum of Care (HUD) DCA ESG DHR MHDDAD DHR Family Violence	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Gender Served:	<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSGENDER			
Household Type:	<table border="1"><tr><td>Unaccompanied Males > 18 Unaccompanied Males <18 Unaccompanied Females > 18 Unaccompanied Females < 18 Families w/children headed by single male ad</td><td><input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/></td><td><input type="text"/></td></tr></table>	Unaccompanied Males > 18 Unaccompanied Males <18 Unaccompanied Females > 18 Unaccompanied Females < 18 Families w/children headed by single male ad	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>
Unaccompanied Males > 18 Unaccompanied Males <18 Unaccompanied Females > 18 Unaccompanied Females < 18 Families w/children headed by single male ad	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Special Needs Served/Targeted:	<table border="1"><tr><td>Chronically Homeless (HUD Definition) Severely Mentally Ill Substance Abuse (Alcohol &/or Drugs) Persons with HIV/AIDS Other Disability</td><td><input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/></td><td><input type="text"/></td></tr></table>	Chronically Homeless (HUD Definition) Severely Mentally Ill Substance Abuse (Alcohol &/or Drugs) Persons with HIV/AIDS Other Disability	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>
Chronically Homeless (HUD Definition) Severely Mentally Ill Substance Abuse (Alcohol &/or Drugs) Persons with HIV/AIDS Other Disability	<input type="button" value=">>"/> <input type="button" value="<<"/>	<input type="text"/>		
<input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>				

Program Profile

Select the Program Type that matches this Program. Each program can only be one type.

Agency Program Maintenance

New Program

Program Type	(Select) ▾	
Program Name	(Select)	
Program Description	Emergency Shelter	
Expected Length(days)	Overflow Shelter	
Bed Program	Permanent Supportive Housing	
Site	Prevention	
Funding Source:	Transitional housing	
	Voucher Assistance	
	Winter/Seasonal Shelter	
	Other	
	Supportive Service Programs	
	Other	
	Continuum of Care (HUD)	>>
	DCA ESG	
	DHR MHDDAD	<<
	DHR Family Violence	
Gender Served:	<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSGENDER	
Household Type:	Unaccompanied Males > 18	
	Unaccompanied Males <18	>>
	Unaccompanied Females > 18	
	Unaccompanied Females < 18	<<
	Families w/children headed by single male ad	
Special Needs Served/Targeted:	Chronically Homeless (HUD Definition)	
	Severely Mentally Ill	>>
	Substance Abuse (Alcohol &/or Drugs)	
	Persons with HIV/AIDS	<<
	Other Disability	

Save Cancel

After completing the bolded fields, click on Save. The Program Type Questionnaire will appear.

Program Profile

For this example, the Transitional Housing was selected.
Based upon the Program Type the questions will be different.

Program Type Questionnaire

Transitional housing	
Questions	Answers
How many beds does this program have for unaccompanied individuals?	<input type="text"/>
How many UNITS (rooms/apartments) does this program have for families?	<input type="text"/>
How many BEDS does this program have for families within these units?	<input type="text"/>
Are the beds used for both individuals and families dependent upon need?	YES ▾
Does Capacity Fluctuate Throughout the Year?	Drastically ▾
On average, what % of your beds are occupied?	<input type="text"/>
What is the maximum amount of time individuals/families stay in these beds?	<input type="text"/>

Program Profile

- All programs that provide **shelter and housing** **MUST** set up a program
- Programs cannot be more than one **TYPE**
 - Separate programs **MUST** be set up for different types of housing (emergency, transitional, overflow, winter, permanent)
 - Shelter and Services cannot be in the same program **UNLESS** the services are provided as **part** of the shelter stay and only to people staying in the shelter
- A program must be associated with one site
 - Scattered Site is an option for those programs with scattered site apartments
- Separate programs **MUST** be set up for program that cross multiple Continuum of Care
- If a program crosses multiple counties within the same Continuum of Care they should consult their CoC Lead to see if they need separate programs set up for each county

Client Authorization

- Prior to a client's data being entered into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, every client must read, complete and sign a Client Authorization Form
- This Client Authorization Form should reside in the clients file for future verification and auditing purposes.
- The Parent/Guardian with minor children Authorization Form should be used by those parents/guardians with minor children.
- If the client declines to have their information entered into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, the client information should not be entered in to PATHWAYS COMPASS. The Client Authorization Form should reflect they declined and the form should be inserted into the client file for future verification and auditing purposes.

Required Data Elements

Universal Data Elements

At intake, all universal data elements should be completed for each participant including all household members that are also receiving services directly or are enrolled in a program

- *Name*
- *Social Security Number*
- *Date of Birth*
- *Ethnicity and Race*
- *Gender*
- *Veteran Status*
- *Homeless Status*
- *Special Needs*
- *Disabling Condition*
- *Residence Prior to Program Entry*
- *Zip Code of Last Permanent Address*

These elements are required for all participants regardless of type of program.

Required Data Elements

Permanent Supportive and Transitional Housing

- All program data elements should be completed
 - *Program Entry Date; Program Exit Date; Income at Entry and Exit; Income Sources at Entry and Exit; Services Received; Destination; Reasons for Leaving*
- All individuals should be enrolled in the appropriate program on the date that they entered the program. If data is not entered on that day, back date the program entry date.
- All individuals should be discharged on the date that they leave the program. If the data is not entered on that date, back date the program exit date.

Required Data Elements

Emergency Shelter and Motel Vouchers

- All individuals should be enrolled in the appropriate program on the date that they entered the program. If data is not entered on that day, back date the program entry date
- All individuals should be discharged on the date that they leave the program. If the data is not entered on day, back date the program exit date
- DCA Grantees: All program data elements should be completed
 - *Program Entry Date; Program Exit Date; Income at Entry and Exit; Income Sources at Entry and Exit; Services Received; Destination; Reasons for Leaving*

Required Data Elements

Service Only Programs

- Service transactions should be logged every time that an individual receives services (DCA Grantees)
- If you are not a DCA grantee, contact your local continuum of care to see if they require service transactions

Intake, Enrollment, Discharge

- Each agency should enter the Universal Data Elements at Intake
- The PATHWAYS COMPASS system includes a program enrollment wizard that allows the user to enroll a client in to one or more programs.
- When enrolling a household in a program, make sure you enroll all members that are directly receiving services or housing
- At every subsequent visit by a client, the universal data elements should be verified to ensure the latest information in the client record is complete.
- Once the client has left the program the client should be discharged from the program.
- FAILURE TO ENROLL OR DISCHARGE IN A TIMELY MANNER WILL IMPACT DATA QUALITY AND ACCURATE REPORTING

Data Quality

- Data Quality is **EXTREMELY** important when we are reporting our data to HUD and Congress
- Each staff member should understand the data collection process and the importance of accurate data and maintaining data quality
- Entering data in a timely manner will reduce issues with data quality
- If your agency uses paper forms, try to make sure they resemble the layout of the Intake screens within the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. Sample forms can be found at www.pcni.info
- All efforts should be taken to ensure duplicate records are not created within the PATHWAYS COMPASS system.

Privacy and Security Policy

HMIS Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security Standards

- Does your agency have a purpose for data collection sign posted at the intake desk?
- Does your agency have a privacy policy?
- Does your agency have procedures in place to protect hard copy PPI information generated from or for the HMIS?
- Do all computers have virus protection with automatic update?
- Does your agency have a firewall on the network and/or workstation(s) to protect the HMIS systems from outside intrusion?
- Are all HMIS workstations in secure locations or are they manned at all times if they are in publicly accessible locations?
- Does your agency have policies and procedures to dispose of hard copy PPI?

Privacy and Security Policy

- Every CHO must post the following information at each intake desk or comparable location:
 - General explanation of reasons for collecting information; and
 - Privacy policy/notice is available upon request.
 - If a CHO has a website it can post its privacy notice there.
- HMIS users
 - Unique username and password
 - Signed receipt of privacy notice
- HMIS computers and networks
 - Secure location
 - Workstation username and password
 - Virus protection with automatic update
 - Locking password protected screen saver
 - Individual or network firewall
 - Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to prevent unauthorized access

Reports

- List Reports
- Blank Forms
 - Authorization Form
 - Opt-out Form
- Summary Reports
 - Authorizations
 - Custom Fields
 - Program
 - Service Records
 - Fund Reports
- Statistical Reports
 - CDBG
 - Custom Fields
 - Disbursements
 - ESGP
 - HUD APR Format
 - Service Records
- Data Exports
- Agency Customized Reports

Reports User Guide:

<http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/ReportsUserGuideV5.8.2.pdf>

Reports Training: www.pcni.info

Support

- **System errors** should be communicated directly to Pathways Support.
 - Pathways provides several ways in which to report system outage, problems, or questions. Users can communicate with the Support Team by:
 - Email: support@pcni.org
 - Phone: 404-639-9933, option 2 (local) 866-818-1032 option 2 (toll free)
- Issues with a users password or login information should be directed to Pathways Support
- If an agency would like to request an **enhancement** to the system, they should communicate this request to their continuum of care representative directly or through the advisory/user group

Training

- Pathways offers various training in person and through webinars:
 - Confidentiality & Ethics Training (Required)
 - New Users Training (Required)
 - Reports Training
 - Agency Administration Training (Required for Agency Administrators)
- All Pathways training, locations, dates and times are listed on www.pcni.info/training

Technical Assistance

- Pathways also offers Agency Specific Technical Assistance
- Agencies are eligible for Technical Assistance once they have done the following:
 - Attend Confidentiality & Ethics training, pass with 70% or greater
 - Attend User Training
 - Attend Reports Training
 - Attend Agency Administration Training (where applicable)
 - Complete Pre-Onsite Assessment Form and submit to Support Team
 - Entering data into PATHWAYS COMPASS system
 - Sign off of visit with Executive Director
 - Basic knowledge of computer, use of browser, and mouse, navigate to various pages.
- Contact Pathways Support to find out more about available Technical Assistance

Other Pathways Resources

- **Quick Reference "How To" Guides** available at www.pcni.info under Forms, Documents and Videos on the following topics:
 - **Program & Service:** *This Quick Reference Guide contains instructions to: a) enroll a client in a program and record a service for that client in one transaction; b) discharge a client from one or more programs.*
 - **Sample Client Intake Form:** *This sample form can be used as a starting point for agencies to use when creating their own Client Intake form. Download this guide and then modify it to suit your needs.*
 - **PATHWAYS COMPASS Quick Reference Card:** *The QRC contains information such as how to log into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, check training class schedules, and contact the Support Team.*
- The following **Tutorials** are available at www.pcni.info under Forms, Documents and Videos:
 - **Client Search** - a demonstration of how to use more thoroughly search for people who have received services in your community in order to avoid client duplication
 - **Program Enrollment** - learn how to enroll a client in a program and record a service for that client in one transaction
 - **Program Discharge** - a demonstration of how to discharge a client from one or more programs

Monitoring

- DCA conducts periodic on site monitoring of grantees which includes HMIS utilization. In addition, DCA reviews system utilization reports on a regular basis
- Local Continuum of Care representatives may also monitor utilization periodically
- Other funders with Pathways requirements (United Way of Metro Atlanta, local governments) may also conduct monitoring visits with their grantees
- Pathways staff may conduct a security audit of your agency

Other Resources

■ State and Local

- DCA/State Housing Trust Fund Website www.dca.state.ga.us
- Pathways Website: www.pcni.org
- Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative Website: www.tri-j.net
- Chatham – Savannah Authority for the Homeless Website: <http://www.homelessauthority.org/>
- Metro Columbus Task Force for the Homeless: <http://www.homelessresourcenetwork.org/>
- Cobb Community Collaborative: www.cobbcollaborative.org

■ National Resources

- HMIS.INFO (HUD): www.hmis.info
- Homelessness Resource Exchange (HUD): www.hudhre.info

Quiz

- Which clients should be listed on a program enrollment list in Pathways?
 - a) All Individuals/Families receiving shelter in the past year
 - b) All Individuals/Families currently enrolled in the program
 - c) All Individuals/Families staying over three nights
 - d) All Individuals/Families discharged in the past three months
 - e) All Individuals/Families currently enrolled in the program with current Pathways Authorization

- Which of these programs **MUST** have a program profile in Pathways?
 - a) Food Pantry
 - b) Transitional Housing Program
 - c) Emergency Shelter
 - d) Employment Training
 - e) Permanent Supportive Housing
 - f) Winter Shelter
 - g) Hotel Voucher Program

Quiz

- Which clients should be listed on a program enrollment list in Pathways?
 - a) All Individuals/Families receiving shelter in the past year
 - b) All Individuals/Families currently enrolled in the program
 - c) All Individuals/Families staying over three nights
 - d) All Individuals/Families discharged in the past three months
 - e) **All Individuals/Families currently enrolled in the program with current Pathways Authorization**

- Which of these programs **MUST** have a program profile in Pathways?
 - a) Food Pantry
 - b) **Transitional Housing Program**
 - c) **Emergency Shelter**
 - d) Employment Training
 - e) **Permanent Supportive Housing**
 - f) **Winter Shelter**
 - g) **Hotel Voucher Program**

Quiz

- An individual was discharged from a program one week ago and you are just now entering the data into Pathways. What discharge date should you put into the system?
 - a) The date you entered the data
 - b) The date they were discharged
 - c) Don't need to discharge the individual
 - d) Halfway between the date you entered the data and the date they were discharged

- Which of the following are security requirements for HMIS?
 - a) Locking Screen Saver
 - b) Lock on Computer or Laptop
 - c) Firewall
 - d) Unique Password

Quiz

- An individual was discharged from a program one week ago and you are just now entering the data into Pathways. What discharge date should you put into the system?
 - a) The date you entered the data
 - b) **The date they were discharged** - Backdate if Necessary
 - c) Don't need to discharge the individual
 - d) Halfway between the date you entered the data and the date they were discharged

- Which of the following are security requirements for HMIS?
 - a) **Locking Screen Saver**
 - b) Lock on Computer or Laptop
 - c) **Firewall**
 - d) **Unique Password**

Quiz

ISSUE

- a) Cannot logon to Pathways ____
- b) Computer will not turn on ____
- c) Request for additional reports ____
- d) Questions about required data for DCA Grant ____
- e) Questions about local policy ____
- f) Training Dates ____
- g) Keep getting System Error ____
- h) Help on how to discharge clients ____

CONTACT

- 1) Lindsey Stillman at DCA
- 2) Local Continuum of Care Representative
- 3) Pathways Support Desk
- 4) Pathways Website
- 5) Agency IT Department

Quiz

ISSUE

- a) Cannot login to Pathways _3_
- b) Computer will not turn on _5_
- c) Request for additional reports _2_
- d) Questions about required data for DCA Grant _1_
- e) Questions about local policy _2_
- f) Training Dates _4_
- g) Keep getting System Error _3_
- h) Help on how to discharge clients _4_

CONTACT

- 1) Lindsey Stillman at DCA
- 2) Local Continuum of Care Representative
- 3) Pathways Support Desk
- 4) Pathways Website
- 5) Agency IT Department

Top Five List

- Ensure Site Information and Program Profiles are Complete
- Complete Release of Authorization before entering individual/families information into Pathways
- Make sure an individual is not already in the system before you enter them in
- ENROLL all individuals/families receiving housing and shelter in a program upon entry into program
- DISCHARGE individuals/families when they leave a program