

Georgia HMIS (GHMIS) Governance Charter

Section 1: Overview and Purpose

The purpose of the GHMIS Governance Charter is to outline the governance roles, responsibilities, relationship, and authorities of Georgia's eight (8) participating Continuum of Care (Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Augusta-Richmond, Savannah-Chatham, Athens-Clarke, and the Balance of State, hereinafter referred to as "the Continua"), the HMIS Lead Agency [the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA)], and participating agencies. This governance charter is designed to ensure the operation of and consistent participation in the GHMIS for the purpose of meeting HUD requirements and making planning and funding decisions. Where Continuums share a single HMIS implementation, it is important for data quality and other standards to be established for the entire HMIS implementation.

The GHMIS currently operates over a shared human services database implemented by Pathways Community Network (Pathways). Pathways Community Network (otherwise referred to herein as "Vendor") is a GHFA sub-grantee and a key partner in this GHMIS implementation.

Through its Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS Continuum) portfolio, and since 2003, GHFA funds many of the essential functions of the GHMIS implementation in compliance with the HUD Data Standards. As such, GHFA serves as the HMIS Lead for the eight (8) Continuums participating in the GHMIS implementation. By participating in the GHMIS implementation, the Continuums agree to adopt the initial terms of this Charter as stated herein.

Section 2: Continuum of Care HMIS Responsibilities

By agreeing to participate in the statewide HMIS implementation, the local Continuum agrees to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Identify two representatives (one from the Continuum's organization and one from the Collaborative Applicant) to serve on the GHMIS Advisory Committee to provide oversight of the implementation and represent the Continuum in GHMIS decision-making.
- Accept the HMIS software funded through GHFA as the designated software for its Continuum.
- Designate GHFA (the HMIS Lead) to manage the Continuum's HMIS.
- Advisory Committee members will annually vote upon or adopt the HMIS Governance Charter.
- Understand HUD HMIS and reporting requirements.
- Ensure leadership has received training on the use of report and export functionality.
- Ensure participation by service providers within Continuum jurisdictions including compliance with data quality and completeness thresholds set forth in the GHMIS Policies and Procedures.
- Require compliance with GHMIS Policies and Procedures for all Continuum agencies. Identify and enforce requirements that individual Continuums may set that are above and beyond the Statewide Policies and Procedures and GHMIS participation requirements.
- Prepare, review and submit all HUD required Continuum reports (Housing Inventory Chart, Point in Time Count, Annual Homeless Assessment Report). The HMIS Lead will provide support to the Continuum in the form of technical assistance and training, thus enabling Continuum staff to address data quality issues once identified. If the Continuum funds dedicated CoC staff through GHFA, they may choose to delegate responsibility for monitoring agency compliance to those staff members if they choose.

- Obtain and maintain funding for any additional staff or system enhancements that the Continuum deems necessary, but not provided by the HMIS Lead through the BoS Continuum HMIS grant for the GHMIS implementation. If a Continuum applies for an HMIS grant, and in keeping with current HUD guidelines, GHFA should be the applicant and grantee for that grant as the HMIS Lead and the HMIS Lead should be consulted on its use.

Section 3: HMIS Lead Requirements

Subject to the availability of HUD and local Continuum resources and unanticipated HUD mandates, and to the best of its ability, the HMIS Lead agrees to carry out the following responsibilities:

Project Management

- Oversee the operation and management of the GHMIS including continual monitoring of data system (not system user) compliance with all HUD Data and Technical Standards.
- Obtain and maintain GHMIS Participation Agreements with all participating agencies and users.
- Administer HUD HMIS awards for Continuum jurisdictions within the GHMIS implementation.
- Maintain a central queue and timeline for enhancements, including those funded outside by local Continuums, and bug fixes with the Vendor.
- Maintain a central queue and timeline for custom reports and data exports that require GHMIS staff resources.
- Schedule, coordinate and hold monthly Advisory Committee meetings and provide updates on the following topics: enhancement timelines; software fixes; reporting; training and technical support provided; data and security procedures; troubleshooting; and others as necessary.

System Functionality

- Enter into a formal contractual relationship with the GHMIS Vendor that outlines the requirements and responsibilities of the Vendor, including those required by HUD through its Data and Technical Standards, rules, notices, etc.
- Ensure the Vendor's software system maintains timely compliance with all Data and Technical Standards to include Victim Service Standards as well as the Privacy and Security Standards.
- Ensure software system maintains timely compliance with any other required standards set by other Federal and State programs that require HMIS use (such as the US Veterans Administration).
- Ensure the software system, within reasonable development timeframes, is capable of producing all HUD required reports, including data quality and completeness monitoring reports.

Policies and Procedures

- Develop and maintain GHMIS Policies and Procedures in accordance with HUD requirements and notices. This document must be reviewed and adopted by the GHMIS Advisory Committee (described in Section 4).
- Develop and maintain a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS in accordance with HUD requirements. This (or these) document must be reviewed and adopted by the HMIS Advisory Committee.

- Monitor participating agency compliance with security, privacy and confidentiality policies.
- If GHMIS policies and procedures allow for the import of data from an alternate database, the HMIS Lead will establish standards for the process, schedule, and acceptance criteria for any data imported and provide a cost estimate for the service provided to the agency or Continuum requesting data import.
- Provide Continua with tools necessary to monitor agency compliance with HUD Data Standards including reports and access to raw agency data.
- Set minimum general participation and timeliness standards for agencies. (Continuums can set more stringent requirements if they deem necessary.)

Training and Technical Assistance

- Ensure required basic training is available to participating agency staff and accessible on a regular basis.
- Ensure technical assistance and help desk support is available and accessible to participating agencies on a regular basis.
- Ensure Continuums have access to reports, technical assistance, and training required to develop a data quality improvement plan when necessary.

Section 4: HMIS Governance: Decision Making & Authority

The HMIS Lead is subject to oversight by the GHMIS Advisory Committee, which operates as the liaison between the GHMIS Lead Agency and the Continuums for the purposes of overseeing GHMIS-related activities. The GHMIS Advisory Committee will be made up of designated committee members from all Continuums and the HMIS Lead. Each Continuum participating in the Statewide HMIS implementation must identify two representatives to serve on the GHMIS Advisory Committee that will provide oversight of the implementation. This participation must include one representative designated by the Collaborative Applicant and one representative from the Continuum Board or any other relevant Committee. These representatives are responsible for ensuring their Continuum leadership is fully informed of GHMIS decisions and for making decisions on behalf of the Continuum such as improvements and enhancements to the GHMIS Policies and Procedures.

The HMIS Lead will ultimately retain decision-making authority and responsibility related to basic GHMIS project management functions (such as compliance with Data Standards, security and privacy settings). The GHMIS Advisory Committee will provide input and final approval of the Statewide Policies and Procedures. Although the Continuums may also choose to add supplemental requirements or policies, they may not contradict the Statewide Policies and Procedures. The GHMIS Advisory Committee will periodically review changes to the current Data and Technical Standards and other reporting requirements to ensure system compliance. The GHMIS Advisory Committee will also vote on customizations and enhancements that affect the overall functionality of the software.

The GHMIS Advisory Committee will review the GHMIS Governance Charter annually. Any amendments to this Governance Charter will be based on a majority vote by quorum (9 of 16) of Advisory Committee members. GHFA, as the HMIS Lead, has the right to accept or not accept proposed changes that may have an impact on their ability to successfully perform their duties as HMIS Lead.

Continuum SHP Grant Activities

Any Continuum receiving a Continuum HMIS Grant will designate GHFA as the applicant to administer any HMIS SHP grants in accordance with the Continuum of Care NOFA requirements. The Continuum and HMIS Lead will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement for services, which will outline the intended use of funds including any funded staff roles and deliverables.

Continuums can fund enhancements to the HMIS implementation with their SHP grants. Enhancements funded through a Continuum grant should be identified by the respective Continuum based on the needs in that community. All discussions and planning on enhancements must include both the Vendor and the HMIS Lead to ensure that the activity will not impair the functionality of the GHMIS implementation, is compliant with the Data Standards, and minimizes (to the HMIS Lead's satisfaction) existing GHMIS staff or resources.

Once it has been determined that the enhancements will not impact the overall system functioning, the Continuum will work with the HMIS Lead and the Vendor on establishing timelines, specifications, deliverables, and resource allocation for the enhancement. If dedicated staff positions, such as trainers and data analysts, are paid for through Continuum of Care funds to complete discreet duties relegated to the functioning the Continuum, the said jurisdiction(s) will collaborate with the HMIS Lead to define the roles, responsibilities, and oversight of those staffing positions.

Section 5: Acknowledgement and Acceptance

BY ADOPTING THIS GOVERNANCE CHARTER, THE CONTINUUM OF CARE AND HMIS LEAD ARE ESTABLISHING THAT IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

All parties will demonstrate a commitment to work together and support each other to achieve stated project goals.

The Continua agree to provide representation to the GHMIS Advisory Committee for the purpose of ensuring HMIS policy and practice that is both consistent with federal and state requirement and with the local needs of the Continua.

The HMIS Lead agrees to the extent practicable to respond to recommendations by each Continuum as provided by them through the HMIS Advisory Group.

The Governance Charter will be revisited on, at a minimum, an annual basis to confirm that the Charter continues to be relevant and appropriate.

This Charter documents the mutual understanding between all parties of GHMIS related roles, responsibilities, relationships, and authorities between the parties hereto. It should not be construed as the HMIS Memorandum of Agreement for services, which is the formal contracting agreement between the Continuums and the HMIS Lead administering Continuum HMIS funds.