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Santa Cruz HMIS News
November 2023

Welcome to the Santa Cruz HMIS November 2023 newsletter!

In this edition you'll find the following:

- Upcoming Events
- Check out this fun poll: Tis the season for curling up with a good book - what's your favorite way to read books?
- HMIS Policies & Procedures: Privacy Features in the HMIS
- Using the HMIS to Document Chronic Homelessness
- Santa Cruz CoC Regional Plan to Address Homelessness
- HMIS Training Update
- 2023 Federal Reports: LSA Overview
- LSA Toolbox: How to Check for Common Errors
- LSA Toolbox: How to Correct Common Errors

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Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

Housing for Health - HMIS Workgroup

Monday, January 22 | 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | Register HERE

This monthly virtual meeting provides a regular opportunity for sharing related to HMIS implementation among all HMIS Leads and users. In this meeting, we discuss specific solutions to system issues end users may be experiencing, along with community-wide initiatives. We would love to have you join us! *Please note that this meeting is required for HMIS Agency Leads.*

Clarity Human Services Office Hours

Tuesday, January 23 | 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. I Register HERE

We host office hours every fourth Tuesday of each month. Drop-in for as long or as short as you'd like to ask any and all questions related to HMIS or Clarity Human Services. All users are welcome. Please join us within the first 15 minutes or we will assume nobody will be joining us for Office Hours and we will close out the Zoom meeting.

Announcements

Check Out This Fun Poll:

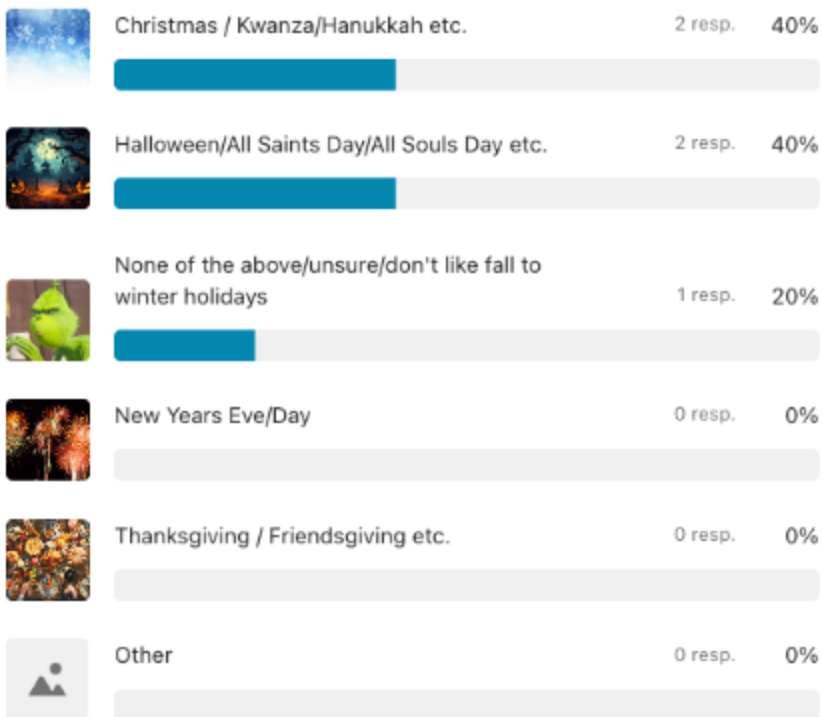**Tis the season for curling up with a good book - what's your favorite way to read books?**

Click here to complete the poll, and check out the newsletter next month to see what your colleagues said! Please note that your individual response is anonymous.

Here are the results from last month's poll. Thanks for taking the time to respond!

1   As many holidays approach, what's your favorite fall to winter-time holiday?

5 out of 5 people answered this question

Christmas / Kwanza/Hanukkah etc.		2 resp.	40%
Halloween/All Saints Day/All Souls Day etc.		2 resp.	40%
None of the above/unsure/don't like fall to winter holidays		1 resp.	20%
New Years Eve/Day		0 resp.	0%
Thanksgiving / Friendsgiving etc.		0 resp.	0%
Other		0 resp.	0%

Updates

HMIS Policy & Procedure Updates

Privacy features in the HMIS

Previously, HMIS privacy and security policies allowed for client profiles to be set as private upon new client creation. The new privacy and security policies **do NOT allow for client profiles to be set as private upon new client creation.** *Please do not set any client profiles to private.*
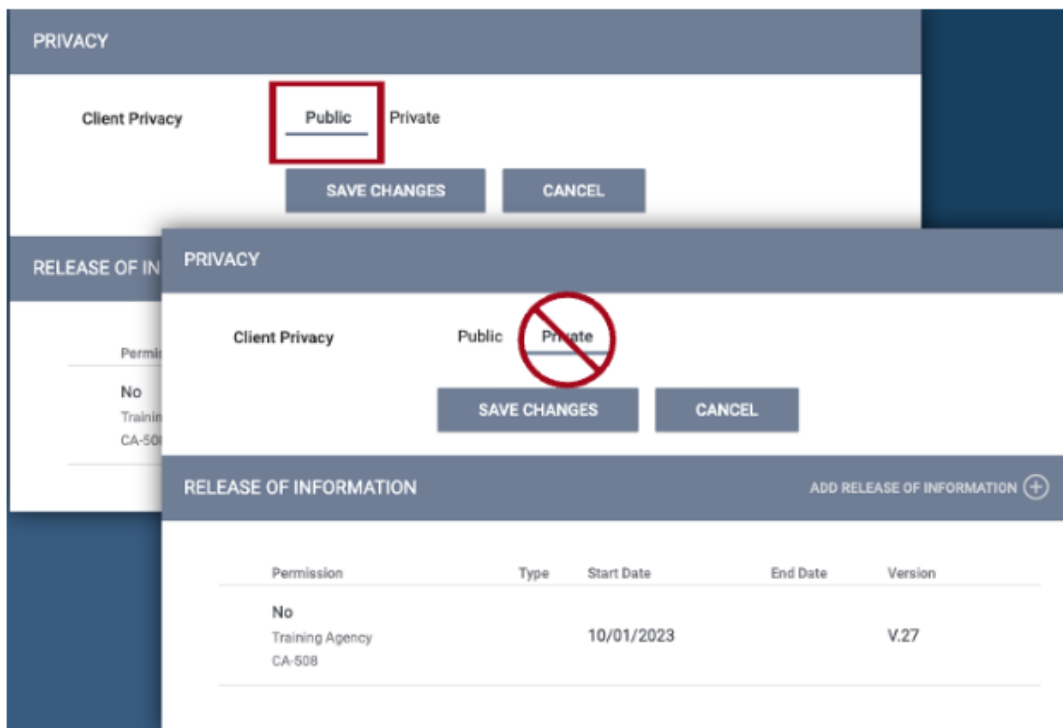
Additionally, the new HMIS Privacy and Security policies do not allow for the use of any other private features you may find in the HMIS. This includes the privacy toggles included within client notes, assessments, contact and location, public alerts, files, and any other privacy toggles you may find within the HMIS. Please do NOT ever use these features. The reason for this is that the "private" setting is often not truly private in a collaborative HMIS system like the one Santa Cruz has.

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News

Using the HMIS to Document Chronic Homelessness

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has clear requirements for documenting chronically homeless persons. Documentation must include evidence that an individual was homeless with a disability (per § 401(9) of the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Act**).

While there are different ways of establishing a person's chronic homelessness status, **third-party documentation is HUD's preferred method of documenting an individual's history of chronic homelessness.** There are multiple **acceptable forms of third-party documentation** to satisfy this requirement, but the HUD's most preferred method of third-party documentation is using the client's HMIS record.

An individual's stay in an Emergency Shelter or a Current Living Situation (CLS) assessment record of an individual residing in "a place not meant for human habitation" in a single month is sufficient documentation to consider the individual as residing in that location for the entire month, and therefore, establishes the person's chronic homelessness status - unless there is clear evidence of a break (such as an exit to a permanent housing program). Places not meant for human habitation include individuals who stay outside on the streets, in their vehicles, or in abandoned buildings.

Where data is available, an HMIS user could document the individual's entire period of homelessness based on the client's HMIS record. However, the HMIS documentation that will ultimately be accepted is determined by those who are responsible for issuing vouchers. That being said, **here are some different ways the client's HMIS record** *could* **provide appropriate documentation of chronic homelessness:**

- Print out of the client's enrollment screen within an Emergency Shelter program *[most reliable option]*
- Print out of the client's Current Living Situation (CLS) assessment *within a Street Outreach program only [most reliable option]*
- Print out of the client-level **Client History report**
- Print out of the **Client Enrollment Details report**

Again, the acceptable forms of documentation will be determined by the person processing the voucher application, so it is important to be sure you are following the requirements listed in the application.

It is also important to note that HMIS records are stored for seven years only, so the print outs of any of the acceptable forms of documentation from within the HMIS should be stored securely elsewhere if it is needed for longer than seven years.

Updates

Santa Cruz CoC Regional Plan to Address Homelessness

Over the next several months, the Santa Cruz Housing for Health Partnership (CoC) will be working with community members to create an updated local Regional Plan to Address Homelessness that meets **California Housing Homeless Assistance and Prevention Round 5 (CA HHAP-5) Funding Requirements**.

One of the key requirements of the plan is to review Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data on System Performance Measures (SPM) and to develop local action steps to improve system-wide performance. Santa Cruz County's most recent California-specific SPM can be viewed **here**. If you are interested in learning more about the California System Performance Measures in general, check out the **CA SPM Guide** from California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH).

If you would like to get invited to community meetings related to the Regional Plan update, please make sure to register to receive updates here: **Housing for Health Partnership Membership**. If you have ideas or questions related to the SPM or the Regional Plan, please feel free to reach out via email to **info@housingforhealthpartnership.org**.

Training

HMIS Training Update

In-Person General HMIS Trainings

The General HMIS Module #1 in-person training has almost wrapped up. **The final training time will be 1-4 p.m. on December 12 in the computer lab at 18**

W Beach St. If you still need to register for this training, please use **this registration link**. *If you have not taken the training and miss the last training on 12/12/23, then you will lose access to HMIS at the end of the year, and will have to wait until March when the next one is held.*

Housing for Health Partnership will be beginning the General HMIS Module #2, the last of the three in-person trainings for non-Leads/Managers, in January. Links for registering for these trainings will be sent out shortly. As this is a required training, please make sure to register for one of the classes.

Lastly, our quarterly in-person Privacy and Security training will be held the morning of January 9, 2024 at 18 W Beach St. Watsonville. For new staff, or those that missed the earlier trainings and have not yet taken this training, please plan to do so as this is a required training.

Please feel free to reach out to Loren White at **loren.white@santacruzcountyca.gov** if you would like to know more about what trainings you or your staff members need to take.

Updates

2023 Federal Reports: LSA Overview

Are you unfamiliar with the LSA or could use a refresher on this federal report? We have created **these slides** for you! These slides cover the general what, why, and when of the LSA, and include additional resources to support you with the LSA. These slides were shared during the HMIS Workgroup meeting on 11/27/23.

We are actively reviewing your community's LSA data, and we will reach out to your Agency Lead if we need to verify or correct data about your program and/or clients. We will use BOX to compile this information within a "Data Quality Workbook" for your agency. In order to edit/collaborate with us within this Workbook, you will need to **create a free BOX account** if you don't already have one.

Please be on the lookout from any LSA-related communications from us and respond promptly! **We truly appreciate all of the hard work your community does to maintain data that is complete, accurate, and timely!**

Additional LSA Resources:

- Email, chat, or call the Bitfocus Help Desk:
    - **Santacruz@bitfocus.com**
    - 831-713-2288
    - Use the chat feature on the **Santa Cruz HMIS Support website** or from directly within your HMIS account
    - *Pro-tip: You can ask to meet with Help Desk staff via Zoom to do a screen-share!*

- **2023 LSA Toolkit** - Bitfocus Help Center resource
- **Preparing for the LSA: Guidance on Common Data Quality Issues** - HUD resource

How-to

LSA Toolbox: How to check for common errors

1. **Enrollment and exit data errors**

Use **[DQXX-102] Program Data Review** located in your report library under "Data Quality Reports" to view enrollment/exit screen data quality programs.

- Suggested Parameters

Program	Choose the program for your report, only one
Status	Choose exited within 2 years first, then active • Exited within 2 years • Active
Report Format	• Web page for data correction • Excel for delegation

- Report Details: Areas of Focus

In the event a client enrollment includes a data entry error, the client will be displayed in red. The count in the **Missing Entry Data** and **Missing Exit Data** columns indicate the number of errors on the screens.

Continue reading

LSA Toolbox: How to correct common errors

1. **Change enrollment head of household**

Changing a head of household at the global/agency-level does not automatically update active program enrollments.

Active enrollments must be updated when the global/agency-level household changes.

There are many reasons why the head of household may change - perhaps its a passing, perhaps a separation or reunification. At any rate all active enrollments will need to be updated.

Step 1: The old head of household must be exited from the current program enrollment OR new program enrollments must occur for new household members.

Step 2: A new head of household must be designated.

Once the old head of household is exited, or new household enrollments completed, you will navigate the active program enrollment. The top section on the right is where you can update the program's head of household.

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Questions? Your HMIS Administrator is happy to help.

Phone: 831-713-2288
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