



Continuum of Care (CoC)

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Notice to Clients of Uses & Disclosures - Privacy Notice to Clients

We will enter the information you provide our agency into a computerized record-keeping system called the BostonHMIS. Several local agencies take part in the BostonHMIS in order to better organize and deliver services to those who are homeless or near homeless individuals and families in the City of Boston. Our goal is to improve efforts to work together to understand and end homelessness. Information you provide will play an important role, including:

- Helping us prioritize, plan, and provide meaningful services to you and your family;
- Assisting our agency to improve its work with families and individuals that are homeless;
- Allowing local agencies to work better together to end homelessness;
- Providing statistics for local, state, and national policymakers to set effective goals.

How your personal information may be used.

- Information you provide and services you receive will be entered into BostonHMIS.
- The information you provide will be used for administrative and operational purposes to improve, provide and coordinate services that can be offered to you.
- Information you provide will be used for functions related to payment or reimbursement for services.
- The information you provide will be used to monitor program effectiveness.
- The information you provide will be used to prepare reports and statistical information without personal identifying information.
- Information you provide concerning substance abuse, mental health, HIV, and domestic violence will not be shared with BostonHMIS Partner agencies unless specifically authorized by you on a *Boston Homeless Assistance Network (HAN) Release of Information*.
- Personal identifying information may be disclosed to a third party in order to coordinate and provide services to you in order to determine eligibility, locate housing or provide stabilization services.
- Personal identifying information will not be disclosed to any State or Federal Agency except as required by law; to avoid a serious threat to health or safety; or to meet one of the uses described above.



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How will my information be kept secure?

- The computer program we use has the highest degree of security protection available.
- Persons with access to BostonHMIS data shall not issue reports containing personal identifying information.
- BostonHMIS is governed by federal, state, county, city, and local privacy policies. System-wide access to personally identifying information contained in the BostonHMIS shall be limited to System Administrators. System Administrators have been screened and are employed by the City of Boston.
- Personal identifying information, like your name or birth date, will be viewed only by people working to provide services to you or by administrators providing technical assistance. Personal identifying information will be removed before reports are issued to local, state, or national agencies.
- All BostonHMIS users receive training in privacy protection and have received copies of this privacy policy and have signed a confidentiality agreement pledging to adhere to its requirements.

Know your information rights

As a Client receiving services from a BostonHMIS Participating agency, you have the following rights:

1. *Determine the level of disclosure* of your information; allow or refuse to share your information with BostonHMIS participating agencies by using the *Boston Homeless Assistance Network (HAN) Release of Information* or a *General Client Release of Information Consent Form*.
2. *May terminate the Release Of Information* at any time, by providing this service provider written notice on the *Client Revocation of Consent Form*.
3. *Are entitled to a copy of this notice*.
4. *Reasonable accommodation*. The agency you are seeking services from must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that you understand your information rights.
5. *Access to your record*. You have the right to review your BostonHMIS record, obtain a printed copy of your data, and have information that you do not understand explained to you.
6. *Correction of your record*. You have the right to have your record corrected so that information is up to date, and accurate, and to ensure fairness in its use. Disagreements over the accuracy of information shall be subject to the agency grievance process and any uncorrected disagreement shall be noted in your BostonHMIS record.



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7. *Refusal.* You will not be denied services for which you are otherwise eligible if you refuse to provide personally identifiable data or if you refuse to consent to the sharing of data with other agencies participating in BostonHMIS. If you have safety concerns, please discuss this with a staff member.
8. *Grievance.* You have the right to be heard if you feel that you have been unjustly served, put at personal risk, or harmed. Employees or agencies that misuse information are subject to reprimands, warnings, and dismissal from the BostonHMIS. The agency must make its written grievance policy available to you. If any problems can not be remedied by the agency, a client may submit a grievance to BostonHMIS directly using the “*Client Grievance Form*”.
9. *Data Removal:* All personally identifying data will be removed from BostonHMIS no later than seven years after being entered or after last being modified.
10. *Amendments:* The terms of this privacy notice may be amended at any time and all amendments will be effective with respect to previously obtained information.
11. *Privacy Policy Questions & Complaints:* All questions or complaints regarding this agency’s privacy and data security practices may be pursued through the agency grievance process.