

Data Quality Tips

HUD defines data quality as referring to the reliability and validity of client-level data collected in the HMIS. It's measured by the extent to which the client data in the system reflects actual information in the real world. With good data quality, communities can “tell the story” of the population experiencing homelessness.

It's clear that good data quality is important to ending homelessness. But achieving this standard can be challenging due to factors such as quality of HMIS software, truthfulness of the client, question and answer interpretation, staff training, language differences, and more.

Here you will find various resources to compile a list of ideas you can put into action to ensure better quality of HMIS data. We have also highlighted a few reports we think are great resources for data quality.

Develop HMIS DQ Plan

First and foremost, the best way to ensure good data quality is to have a data quality plan. A data quality plan is a set of policies and procedures that facilitates the ability to achieve complete, accurate, and timely client-level data. It lays out data quality goals, the steps necessary to measure progress toward those goals, and the roles and responsibilities for making sure HMIS data is reliable and valid.

Training of Staff

Having trained staff means they are aware of any changes, are learning new skills, reducing the amount of data entry errors and building their confidence in using HMIS.

Create & Maintain BNL

Many communities are recognizing the need to develop, maintain, and use a by-name list (BNL), a continually updated snapshot of all individuals experiencing homelessness. A BNL can include categories such as Veteran status, chronic status, active/inactive status, homeless/housed status, and more.

Helpful Data Quality Tips for Agency Leads

The secret of staying ahead is getting started. Mark Twain



Enter HMIS Data Within 24 Hours of Intake

Accuracy of data largely depends on timeliness, particularly if the collection of data doesn't happen directly within the HMIS. As you enter HMIS data, you may be relying on handwritten notes or your own recall of a case management session, service transaction, program entry or exit date, etc.

Set a goal to transfer data from notes or memory into the HMIS within 24 hours of intake, increasing the chances the data will be correct. This also ensures data is entered as close to real-time as possible, making it accessible when needed.

Be Proactive in Monitoring

Being proactive is key. Don't wait until there are problems before you start paying attention to data quality. Make a plan to monitor data quality regularly so that you aren't scrambling to identify and correct data errors right before reports are due.



Report Library

A great place to start when trying to ensure data quality is by using the Report Library. You can find detailed information about reports, including the source of each data point as well as guidance on the drill-down functionality and parameters.

Here's a list of reports you can find in the report library that are useful as you navigate through data quality. Please note this is not an extensive list but rather reports that are useful for data quality.

Clicking on the title of report type will redirect you to more information.

ASSESSMENT BASED REPORTS

[GNRL-210] Assessment Details Report

AGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORTS

[STFF-101] User Activity Report

[STFF-104] Staff Client Data Activity

CLIENT REPORTS

[CLNT-128] Client Enrollment Details

DATA QUALITY REPORTS

[DQXX-103] Monthly Staff Report

[DQXX-110] Duplicate Clients

HOUSING REPORTS

[HSNG-104] Monthly Housing Report

HUD & FEDERAL PARTNER REPORTS

[HUDX-223] Client-Level System Use & Length of Time Homeless Report

[HUDX-225] HMIS Data Quality Report

PROGRAM - BASED REPORTS

[GNRL-220] Program Details Report

Report Spotlight: [HUDX-225] HMIS Data Quality Report

Looking for a report that is the gold standard when it comes to pulling data? Look no further! This report provides a plethora of data that will point you in the right direction of where you should tackle data quality. It will help identify data that is missing or incomplete, issues with household configuration, and clients who may be missing an annual assessment.

Additionally, this report pulls clients who are missing data elements used to determine Chronic Homeless status (section Q5), compliance with local data entry timeliness (section Q6), and number of inactive records (sectionQ7).

Report Spotlight: [GNRL-106] Program Roster Report

Housing Move-in Date is required for all permanent housing projects, including Rapid Re-Housing. Housing Move-in Date is the date the household moves into permanent housing. Housing Move-in Date is required to be entered on the Head of Household’s enrollment screen only.

Housing Move-in Date may be on or after Project Start Date, but not before. Some projects begin working with clients before they move into housing. In that case, the Housing Move-in Date will be after Project Start Date. If the client or household has not yet moved into housing at the time of enrollment, the move-in date will need to be updated on the enrollment screen once the client or household is housed.

The GNRL-106 Program Roster report (found in the Program Based Reports folder) can help you check that Housing Move-in Date has been correctly entered. Undefined means that the individual or household has not yet moved into housing or the move-in date is before the project start date.

Report Spotlight: [DQXX-110] Duplicate Clients

Managing duplicate client records is an important part of an HMIS system. Tracking client data through one client record can reduce the risk of duplicate client assessments, enrollments, or services and help streamline services for the client.

The report [DQXX-110] Duplicate Clients can identify duplicate client records. If records are identified they can be merged by contacting the Help Desk. When client records are merged, all client history is consolidated and moved to the primary (surviving) client record. When making a request to have records merged, please ensure the primary record you would like to keep has the most complete Profile information.

Want to Learn More?

- Data Quality: Universal Data Elements
- Data Quality: LSA Data Quality Errors
- HUD and Federal Partner Reports
- Data Quality Dashboard

Resources

Want to learn more specifics about the reports listed here? Check out this mini guide!

