

*Please review the **HMIS Privacy Notice and Client Consent Form** followed by the **HMIS User Agreement**. Your signature is acknowledgement of receipt of, and a pledge to comply with, the privacy notice and user agreement.*

HMIS PRIVACY NOTICE & CLIENT CONSENT FORM

This agency participates in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care, the local community of homelessness services agencies.

What is the Cincinnati/Hamilton County HMIS?

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a computerized data collection system designed to collect client information about the characteristics and service needs of individuals and households experiencing homelessness. Strategies to End Homelessness (STEH) is the HMIS Lead Agency as defined by HUD. Clarity Human Services is the HMIS application used by the Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care (CoC).

What is the benefit for clients who participate in HMIS?

Clients are encouraged, but not required, to participate in HMIS to help:

- Provide quality services to you
- Increase access to housing
- Improve access to services
- Decrease need to share personal information when accessing multiple services within the system
- Contribute to aggregate data used to improve the homeless service system

Types of identifying data collected, if you are willing to give it, could include name, address, zip code, phone number, date of birth, social security number, your family status, the nature of your situation and the types of services you receive from an agency, project entry and/or exit date, and unique personal identification number (HMIS Unique Identifier).

Reasons data is collected, used and/or disclosed by the agency and/or CoC:

- To Provide services to you
- For functions related to funding for services
- For administrative purposes, planning and personnel decisions
- To research and better understand homelessness in the community
- To provide a government required count(s) of people receiving services by HMIS participating agencies
- Meet requirements of funders such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Develop and improve programs to work towards ending homelessness in our community

How is the information used?

- All information entered into the HMIS is protected and secured to protect your privacy.

- Only agency staff members, database administrators, or auditors who have signed a confidentiality agreement will be allowed to see, enter, or use the information entered into the HMIS.
- Based on your needs, your HMIS information may be shared to coordinate referrals for housing and services or to coordinate services such as food, utility assistance, counseling, etc.
- Information that does not identify you may be used for research in order to increase housing options and improve services.

Your rights:

- You have the right to refuse to participate in HMIS.
- You have the right to see your information in the HMIS, ask for changes, or ask for a printed copy upon request.
- Identifying Information stored in the HMIS will not be given to anyone outside the system without written consent, except as required by law through a court order or in the event of a public health emergency.
- Only information deemed necessary/appropriate to meet goals above will be collected.

By signing this form, you authorize this agency and Strategies to End Homelessness to share basic data about yourself and your household (if applicable). You understand that if you refuse to sign this consent you will not lose or be denied any benefits or services. This consent will expire in 7 years. **This policy may be amended at any time. Amendments may affect information obtained before the date of the change.**

You can revoke this consent at any time by returning a completed Revocation of Consent form, available at any HMIS participating agency and online at the Strategies to End Homelessness website, <https://www.strategiestoendhomelessness.org/what-we-do/data/hmis-transition/>. You can return the form to any participating agency or email it to HMISsupport@end-homelessness.org. If you have any questions or you feel your information has been misused in any way you can contact the Cincinnati / Hamilton County HMIS Support team at 513-263-2790. **Please note revoking consent will impact sharing of future information. Information currently shared cannot be unshared.**

HMIS USER AGREEMENT CINCINNATI/HAMILTON COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a computerized data collection application designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. The HMIS provides an unduplicated count of clients served within a Continuum of Care (CoC) – the community’s system of homeless services. Additionally, the HMIS application is used to configure, facilitate, and protect data integrity and sharing among participating agencies for the purpose of coordinated service delivery and reporting in the CoC region. Strategies to End Homelessness (STEH) is the HMIS Lead Agency as defined by HUD and Clarity Human Services is the HMIS application used by the CoC.

Purpose of This Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to:

- 1) Ensure that information collected as part of HMIS will affirm the basic right of clients to have the confidentiality of their information protected;
- 2) Create procedures to ensure client confidentiality while providing for the exchange of information necessary for continuity of care.

User Policy, Responsibility Statement, & Code of Ethics

User Policy

At the discretion of the Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC Board (locally known as the Homeless Clearinghouse), information for provision of services may be shared through HMIS among the Partner Agencies.

Consistent with client permissions and restrictions, agencies using HMIS shall have access to the data pertaining to their clients entered by them. Strategies to End Homelessness, the Agency, and any Partner Agency with access to data, through a release of information, shall be bound by all restrictions imposed by the client pertaining to any use of that client's personal information. Participating Agencies bound by HIPAA or 42 CFR Part 2 are expected to develop and administer appropriate consent and Notice of Privacy Practices documentation in compliance with all appropriate State and Federal regulations.

Minimum data entry on each client shall consist of the Universal Data Elements as defined in the October 2017 HUD Data Standards. This standard is subject to modification by State and Federal policymakers. Data necessary for the development of aggregate reports of homeless services, including services needed, services provided, referrals, client goals and outcomes should be entered to the greatest extent possible.

HMIS is a tool to assist agencies in focusing services and locating alternative resources to help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Therefore, agency staff shall only use client information in HMIS to target services to the client's needs. Refusal of a client to provide consent to have their data entered into the HMIS will never be used to refuse or limit services to that client.

User Responsibility

Your User ID and password gives you access to HMIS. Review each item and sign below to indicate that you understand and accept the proper use of your User ID and password. Failure to uphold the confidentiality standards set forth below may result in a breach of client confidentiality, and is grounds for immediate termination from the HMIS for you as a user or for the agency that you represent.

- My User ID and password are for my use only and I will not share them with anyone.
- I will take reasonable precautions to keep my password physically secured.
- I will never log into HMIS and allow someone to work under my user account.
- I will not knowingly enter false or misleading client information in HMIS under any circumstances.
- I will only view, obtain, disclose, or use the database information that is necessary to perform my job.

- I understand that failure to log off HMIS appropriately may result in a breach in client confidentiality.
- I will ensure that all printouts/hard copies of HMIS information be kept in a secure file, and shredded or otherwise properly destroyed when no longer needed.
- If I notice or suspect a security breach, I will immediately notify STEH HMIS staff.
- I understand that in the event that I am terminated or leave my employment with this agency, my access to HMIS will be revoked.
- I understand that if I do not log into HMIS for more than 90 days, my user account will be disabled.
- I have reviewed all the current HMIS Policy and Procedure Manual, and comply with it as applicable.
- I have received new user training about the Cincinnati/Hamilton Count CoC Services and HMIS Overview.

User Code of Ethics

As the guardians entrusted with this personal data, HMIS users have a moral and a legal obligation to ensure that the data is being collected, accessed, and used appropriately. It is also the responsibility of each user to ensure the client data is only used to the ends to which it was collected, the ends that have been made explicit to clients and are consistent with the mission of the CoC which is to use HMIS to advance the provision of quality services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, improve data collection, and promote more responsive strategies to end homelessness. As an HMIS user, you agree to following the code of ethics outlined below:

- HMIS Users must treat partner agencies with respect, fairness, and good faith.
- HMIS User should maintain high standards of professional conduct in the capacity as a HMIS User.
- HMIS User will make every effort to assure that client data is handled securely, responsibly and in accord with the clients' wishes.
- HMIS Users have the responsibility to relate to their clients and the clients of other partner agencies with full professional consideration.
- Discriminatory comments based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, handicap, age, sex, and sexual orientation are not permitted in HMIS.
- Users must not use the HMIS with intent to defraud the federal, state, or local government or an individual entity; or to conduct any illegal activity; or to solicit clients for personal gain.

I understand and agree to comply with all the statements listed above.

{SIGNATURES.0}

{SIGNED_DATE}