# Joint Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Governance Charter

## Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care

## Mahoning County Homeless Continuum of Care

## 1 Purpose

This Governance Charter outlines how the shared HMIS implementation will be governed and managed for the Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (Ohio BoSCoC) and Mahoning County Homeless Continuum of Care (MCHCoC), the responsible parties and their specific responsibilities, and all other relevant items.

This Governance Charter goes into effect upon approval by both the Ohio BoSCoC Board and the MCHCoC Board. As described in the Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC's Governance Charters, each CoC has given this HMIS Governance Charter authority to serve as the governing document for HMIS.

## 2 Background

The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC employ an HMIS to record and store client-level data including the numbers, characteristics, and needs of persons utilizing shelter, housing assistance, and supportive services. Use of the HMIS is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for all communities and organizations receiving HUD Continuum of Care (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), and/or Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds; by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for organizations receiving Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and/or Grant Per Diem (GPD) funds; and Department of Health and Human Services Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) and/or Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) funds.

In 2020, the Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC agreed to merge HMIS implementations as a means to streamline HMIS administrative efforts and maximize HMIS funding. The merger of the MCHCoC HMIS into the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS implementation was complete in November 2020.

## 3 Designations

### 3.1 HMIS Governance

- The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC share governance responsibilities for the HMIS implementation.

### 3.2 HMIS Product

- Per the CoCs' Governance Charters, the Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC designate the shared implementation of Clarity by Bitfocus as the official HMIS for each CoC's geographic area.

### 3.3 HMIS Lead(s)

- The Ohio BoSCoC designates the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) as the HMIS Lead for the Ohio BoSCoC.
- The MCHCoC designates The Board of Mahoning County Commissioners as the HMIS Lead for the MCHCoC.

### 3.4 HMIS System Administrator

- The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC designate COHHIO as the HMIS System Administrator for the merged HMIS implementation.

### 3.5 Joint HMIS Advisory Committee

- The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC designate the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee as the advisory entity for the merged HMIS implementation.

### 3.6 HMIS Management Committee

- The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC designate the HMIS Management Committee to support the HMIS Administrators in the day-to-day work of managing the merged HMIS implementation.

## 4 Other HMIS Governing Documents

### 4.1 HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual

### 4.2 HMIS Data Quality Standards

### 4.3 COHHIO and MCHCoC MOA

### 4.4 Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC Governance Charters

- https://cohhio.org/ohio-boscoc/governance-policies/
- https://www.mahoningcountyoh.gov/1038/Governance

## 5 Responsibilities

### 5.1 Continuums of Care

The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC are responsible for overall governance and oversight of HMIS. Specifically, the Ohio BoSCoC Board and MCHCoC Board are the entities charged with ensuring the CoC's HMIS responsibilities are met, per the CoC Interim Rule. These responsibilities include:

- Designating the HMIS Lead, HMIS software, and HMIS Administrator;
- Reviewing, revising, and approving HMIS governing and management documents, such as HMIS Policies and Procedures and Data Quality Standards;
- Ensuring the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD including, compliance with HUD HMIS Data Standards, HUD reporting requirements, and all other requirements; and
- Ensuring consistent participation in HMIS by grantees and subgrantees.

The Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC authorize the following entities to carry out the defined responsibilities on their behalf, as it relates to the operation and oversight of HMIS.

## 5.2 HMIS Lead(s)

The HMIS Leads for the Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC are responsible for the following:

- Receiving and maintaining the HMIS grant provided through HUD's CoC Program;
- Securing match required of the CoC-funded HMIS grant;
- Submitting the HMIS Annual Performance Report (APR) to HUD annually and on-time; and
- Managing the CoC's Service Participation Fee Policy and collection of fees from HMIS Participating Agencies in accordance with the policy.

## 5.3 HMIS System Administrator

The HMIS System Administrator is generally responsible for all activities outlined in HUD's HMIS System Administrator Checklist. This includes:

### 5.3.1 General

- Maintain knowledge of HMIS data and technical requirements; and
- Establish policies and standards to guide HMIS administration and usage. Specifically, this includes:
    - HMIS Policies and Procedures
    - HMIS Data Quality Standards

### 5.3.2 System Administration

- Maintain a calendar of events, such as report due dates, training dates, monitoring dates, data committee meeting dates, annual recertification due dates, to support ongoing and cyclical HMIS operational activities;
- Ensure the HMIS network infrastructure is up and running, and work with the HMIS vendor if there are outages or unexpected downtime to get the system back online as quickly as possible;
- Add, remove, or update HMIS End User account information, reset passwords, set and monitor HMIS End User access levels;
- Ensure correct set-up of projects in the HMIS and make updates, as needed, based on data standards updates or local needs;
- Customize/configure workflows within the capacity of the software in accordance with the CoC Privacy Plan, Privacy Notice, and data use and disclosure agreements;
- Assess HMIS software performance and conduct software monitoring for improvement
- Work with software vendor to develop and implement custom project work plans, as needed;
- Manage HMIS software updates;
- Test, monitor, and validate software fixes;
- Ensure technical requirements are incorporated into planning for special software projects;
- Ensure the existence of current software technical documentation, such as system configuration;
- Remove or archive client data from HMIS as authorized by the CoC;
- Work with software vendor/ensure presence of a disaster protection and recovery plan for data hosting sites, including back-up sites and accessibility protocols;
- Develop and manage a disaster recovery protocol for System Admin/HMIS Lead paper and electronic HMIS documents and agreements;

- Support Victim Services Provider programs with understanding the requirements of having a comparable database; and
- Install and configure new hardware and software related to the HMIS for the HMIS Lead.

5.3.3 Technical Support

- Develop and establish HMIS support structure, helpdesk, HMIS Policies and Procedures;
- Conduct HMIS support and help desk activities within the scope of established HMIS policies, procedures, and protocols;
- Respond to technical queries and assist HMIS End Users;
- Troubleshoot and resolve HMIS issues/bug/default tracking with HMIS software vendor;
- Monitor data collection and review report compliance with HUD standards and federal partner requirements, when applicable;
- Manage communication with the HMIS software vendor and report ongoing issues in accordance with HMIS Policies and Procedures;
- Design and implement a customer feedback forum (HMIS End User group); and
- Support the HMIS Lead and CoC leadership's outreach to project and community leadership to cultivate and maintain support and understanding of HMIS.

5.3.4 Training

- Establish effective training processes to ensure efficient and effective training for HMIS End Users, including HMIS New User training and opportunities for refresher/review trainings;
- Make training and supplemental materials available to HMIS End Users; and
- Updating training materials and relevant documents in alignment with data standards updates or changes.

5.3.5 HMIS Security

- Establish policies and procedures regarding the management of hard copy documents with Personal Identifiable Information (PII);
- Create and implement a system security plan;
- Implement technical safeguards to protect HMIS data, assuring devices used for HMIS are password protected, have up-to-date antivirus software, have locking screensavers, have individual or network firewalls, and physical device locations are secure;
- Ensure that the HMIS software is configured correctly to ensure compliance with CoC established security policies and procedures;
- Monitor audit logs for unauthorized access to client records and report deviations from security protocol according to an established channel of communication; and
- Ensure security of data during any electronic transfer of data.

5.3.6 HMIS Privacy

- Establish policies, procedures, and monitoring plan for the Privacy Notice; client consent, and electronic and paper documents containing personal identifying information, as laid out in the Privacy Policy;
- Ensure that the HMIS software is configured correctly to ensure compliance with CoC established privacy policies and procedures; and
- Conduct monitoring for compliance to established policies, procedures, and plans and report deviations from privacy protocol according to an established channel of communication.

5.3.7 Data Quality

- Establish and maintain data quality policies and procedures;
- Develop and maintain a data quality improvement/maintenance plan;
- Test, monitor, validate, and verify the HMIS software can collect required data elements;
- Monitor data quality in accordance with CoC established Data Quality Management Plan;
- Work with HMIS End Users to identify and resolve data quality issues;
- Perform data integrity maintenance, such as record deduplication/merger, as authorized by the CoC;
- Implement a data quality monitoring plan to ensure the HMIS collects required data as per the most recent HUD specifications, including federal partner requirements; and
- Establish, maintain, and monitor data and hardware disposal policies and procedures.

5.3.8 Reporting

- Work with CoC staff to provide HUD-required, system level reporting to support submission requirements
- Provide support to HMIS End Users on HUD-required, project-level reporting
- Provide support to HMIS End Users on HUD-required, federal partner reporting
- Respond to custom reporting requests
- HMIS Management Committee evaluates custom reporting requests in the monthly meetings and makes determinations about building requested reports on a case-by-case basis considering the following:

    - Applicability and relevance of the custom reporting request to other projects and HMIS End Users
    - Staff capacity to build requested report
    - Time estimated to build the requested report
    - Relevance of request to other work of the HMIS and CoC
    - Extent to which the requested report meets a grant reporting needed.

## 5.4 Joint HMIS Advisory Committee

- The HMIS operates under a model of shared governance by the Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC.
- The Joint HMIS Advisory Committee is comprised of members from each CoC. Membership includes HMIS End Users, CoC staff, and HMIS system administrators. Details about membership can be found in the Committee's by-laws in section 6 below.
- Responsibilities of the Joint Advisory Committee are done with the goal in mind to streamline and increase efficiencies between the two CoCs whenever possible and appropriate.
- The CoCs exercise the following responsibilities for the HMIS through the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee:

    - Ensure the HMIS scope aligns with the requirements of organizations, HUD, and other stakeholder groups. Address any issues that have major implications for the HMIS, such as HUD HMIS Data Standards revisions or HMIS Vendor performance problems to provide recommendations to the CoC Boards.
    - Review HMIS governing and management documents developed by the HMIS Administrator, such as the Policies and Procedures and Data Quality Standards, and submit recommended documents to each CoC Board for approval.

- Determine HMIS reporting needs, approaches, and methods for sharing reporting, etc.
- Serve in an advisory capacity to the HMIS Administrators on an as needed basis
- Participate in CoC HMIS Vendor, Lead, and Administrator monitoring processes, as requested by the BoSCoC and MCHCoC

More details about the structure of the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee can be found below.

### 5.5 HMIS Management Committee

- The HMIS Management Committee is responsible for monitoring and addressing HMIS data quality issues, provider requests, project and provider set-up, changes or additions, preparing for submission of system-level reports (eg, LSA, HIC, PIT, System Performance Measures), custom reporting requests/needs, etc
- The Committee is comprised of HMIS system administrators and CoC staff
- The HMIS Management Committee provides updates on its work to the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee in every meeting

## 6 Joint HMIS Advisory Committee

### 6.1 Membership

Membership of the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee is capped at 20 members

#### 6.1.1 Membership Composition

- Ohio BoSCoC Staff Lead
- Ohio BoSCoC Collaborative Applicant representative (if different from Staff Lead)
- MCHCoC Staff Lead
- Ohio BoSCoC HMIS Lead representative or designee
- MCHCoC HMIS Lead representative or designee
- No more than 5 HMIS End Users from each CoC (number of end users per CoC does not need to be equal)
    - Ideally, end users are solely associated with organizations that operate exclusively in their respective CoC (e.g., users from an agency that serves both BoS and Mahoning will not serve as the MCHCoC end user rep to this Cte)
- HMIS system administrators
- Persons with lived expertise of homelessness (PLE)
- PLE members may be eligible for compensation, based on each CoC's compensation policy as outlined in their respective CoC Governance Charters

#### 6.1.2 Committee Staffing

- Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC Staff leads (eg, CoC Directors) are jointly responsible for staffing the Joint HMIS Advisory Committee meetings, along with the Committee Chair. This includes setting meeting agendas, distributing meeting information and reminders, taking and distributing notes, maintaining Committee membership lists, supporting PLE members as needed, and coordinating with each CoC to ensure new members are solicited as part of each CoC's annual solicitation process.

6.1.3 Committee Chair

- Annually, the Committee will designate a chairperson as determined by majority vote of those members present
- Chair Responsibilities:
    - The Committee Chair is responsible for leading the Committee meetings, and working with CoC Staff Leads to develop meeting agendas and move work forward between meetings as needed.

6.1.4 Committee Member Terms

- Committee members serve two-year terms.
- Terms begin January 1 and end December 31 of the following year.
- There is no limit on the total number of terms a Committee member can serve.

6.1.5 Member Selection

- Every two-years, the Committee Chair and CoC staff leads will solicit Committee membership from each CoC via the CoC's annual CoC Board/Cte/Workgroup solicitation process.
- A recommended slate of candidates for Committee membership will be drafted by the CoC Staff Leads. Current Committee members approve new slate of Committee members at the first meeting of the calendar year.
- PLE members may be added to the Committee on an ongoing basis as long as the membership cap is not exceeded.

6.1.6 Vacancies

- If a Committee member resigns, the Committee may appoint another representative

6.1.7 Meeting Attendance

- Committee members are expected to attend 2/3 of the regularly scheduled meetings.
- Failure to meet attendance expectations may result in the member being asked to resign their Committee seat.

**6.2 Meetings**

6.2.1 Meetings

- Committee meetings are held semi-annually
- Special meetings may be called in addition, as needed
- Meetings are held via virtual meeting technology

6.2.2 Proxies

- Committee members may have proxies participate in Committee meetings on their behalf as needed. However, proxies are not permitted to cast votes

### 6.3 Voting and Decision-making

6.3.1 Quorum

- A number equal to a majority of those serving on the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of conducting business at any meeting;
- However, the Committee primarily seeks to make decisions by consensus.
- When the Committee cannot make a decision by consensus, decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of the members present, as long as there is a quorum.

6.3.2 Action without a meeting

- Any action that may be taken at a meeting may also be taken without a meeting, such as via email. Preferably, any action to be taken outside of a meeting will have been discussed at a Joint HMIS Advisory Committee meeting and deferral of action approved by committee members. Committee members may take votes by email, provided that at least 48 hours, over the course of two business days, are given for members to cast their votes.
- Where action is taken without a meeting, any vote counts and the results of the action shall be reflected in the written minutes of the next regular meeting.

6.3.3 Conflicts of Interest

- Before any item is put to a vote at a meeting, all Committee members will be asked to disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest related to the business item at hand. These members will refrain from voting on items where a conflict exists.
- Any Committee member who is determined to have engaged in behavior in a Committee meeting that would be considered a real or perceived conflict of interest, may be asked to resign their seat on the Committee

## 7 HMIS Participation Fees

Each CoC may charge HMIS participation fees to support the long-term sustainability of the shared HMIS implementation. Details of the participation fee policy can be found in the respective CoC's HMIS Participation Fee policy – Ohio BoSCoC and MCHCoC.