

Northern Nevada Continuum of Care—NV 501 HMIS License Use and Distribution Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines how Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) user licenses paid for by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Reno/Sparks/Washoe County Continuum of Care (CoC) grant are allocated.

Background

All homeless service providers funded by HUD through the CoC are required to utilize a HMIS. This system must be compliant with HUD HMIS Data Standards for the collection, management, and reporting of client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. The designated HMIS in the Reno/Sparks/Washoe County CoC, and across the State of Nevada, is called Clarity and is managed by its developer, Bitfocus.

Planners and policymakers at the local, state, and Federal levels use the data collected in Clarity to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness within the CoC at any given point in time, or over periods of time. For example, the Clarity HMIS system can be used to produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons, understand patterns of service use, and measure the effectiveness of homeless programs. CoC programs and clients benefit from improved internal and external coordination that guides service and systems planning. A robust HMIS also helps communities engage in informed advocacy efforts, including the pursuit of policies that result in targeted services. Analysis of information gathered through HMIS is critical to accurately calculate the size, characteristics, and needs of different subpopulations.

The use of the Clarity HMIS in the CoC, whether required or not, is encouraged as it provides benefits to the individual agencies and the homeless provider community at large. To ensure that all homeless service providers who are required to utilize HMIS by HUD have access to the system, and to encourage the use of the system by agencies who are not required to use the system by HUD, the CoC requests funding for licenses in every CoC Consolidated Application.

Homeless service providers in the CoC may choose to purchase additional licenses from BitFocus at their own expense as needed. Whether purchased or provided at no cost to the agency through CoC funding, user licenses can only be assigned to a single individual. The sharing of licenses or passwords is strictly prohibited. Users who work at multiple agencies will need a separate user license for each agency where they use HMIS.

Everyone with HMIS access must sign a user agreement and successfully complete a CoC-approved training before being provided with login credentials. User agreements must be resubmitted annually. Failure to comply with any aspect of the user agreement may result in the loss of agency purchased or CoC funded HMIS access.

Distribution of CoC funded User Licenses

CoC funded user HMIS licenses are (re)allocated to agencies annually according to the following guidelines and in the following order of priority. The number of CoC funded licenses available to agencies in the CoC may change from year to year and agencies are not guaranteed that the same number of CoC funded licenses will be available to them in any given year. Larger programs such as large emergency shelters or large housing programs will be allocated additional licenses on an as needed and as requested basis. Consideration will also be given to programs that enter larger amounts of client data and have higher data quality scores. CoC funded licenses are allocated on an annual basis, beginning on July 1.

CoC Funded License Distribution Priorities

1. Agencies or Government entities required to monitor HUD grants, such as the CoC Lead Entity, Emergency Solutions Grant administrator, etc.
2. HUD-funded CoC agencies receiving permanent housing or transitional housing referrals off the community queue will be provided with at least two no cost licenses annually.
 - a. If available, an additional no cost license may be provided by request for larger programs serving a larger number of clients
3. Non-HUD-funded CoC agencies providing housing to people experiencing homelessness (emergency shelter, RRH, transitional housing) may be provided with at least two no cost HMIS user licenses annually if requirements are met.

Requirements: (i.)100% of housing program data, ie data on program beds, is being entered into HMIS, and (ii.) the use of HMIS is not mandated by a non-HUD program funder.

 - a. If available, an additional no cost license may be provided by request for larger programs serving a larger number of clients
4. Agencies in the CoC entering client data for street outreach and homeless prevention programs are provided with at least two no cost user licenses annually if requirements are met.

Requirements: (i.)100% of the program data is being entered into HMIS, and (ii.) the use of HMIS is not mandated by a non-HUD program funder.
5. If available, agencies using HMIS to look up clients but not entering any client data or housing inventory data may be provided with one no cost license annually.
6. If available, no cost HMIS licenses may be provided in special circumstances not listed previously.

Law Enforcement Officers are not allowed access to the HMIS system.