The COHMIS New Agency Welcome Packet

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative

COHMIS

September 2022

What is COHMIS?

Thank you for your interest in becoming a COHMIS agency!

COHMIS is a partnership of the 4 CoCs (Continuums of Care) in Colorado. Metro Denver covers the 7-county metro region: Pikes Peak covers El Paso county, Northern Colorado covers Larimer and Weld counties, and the Balance of State covers all remaining counties.
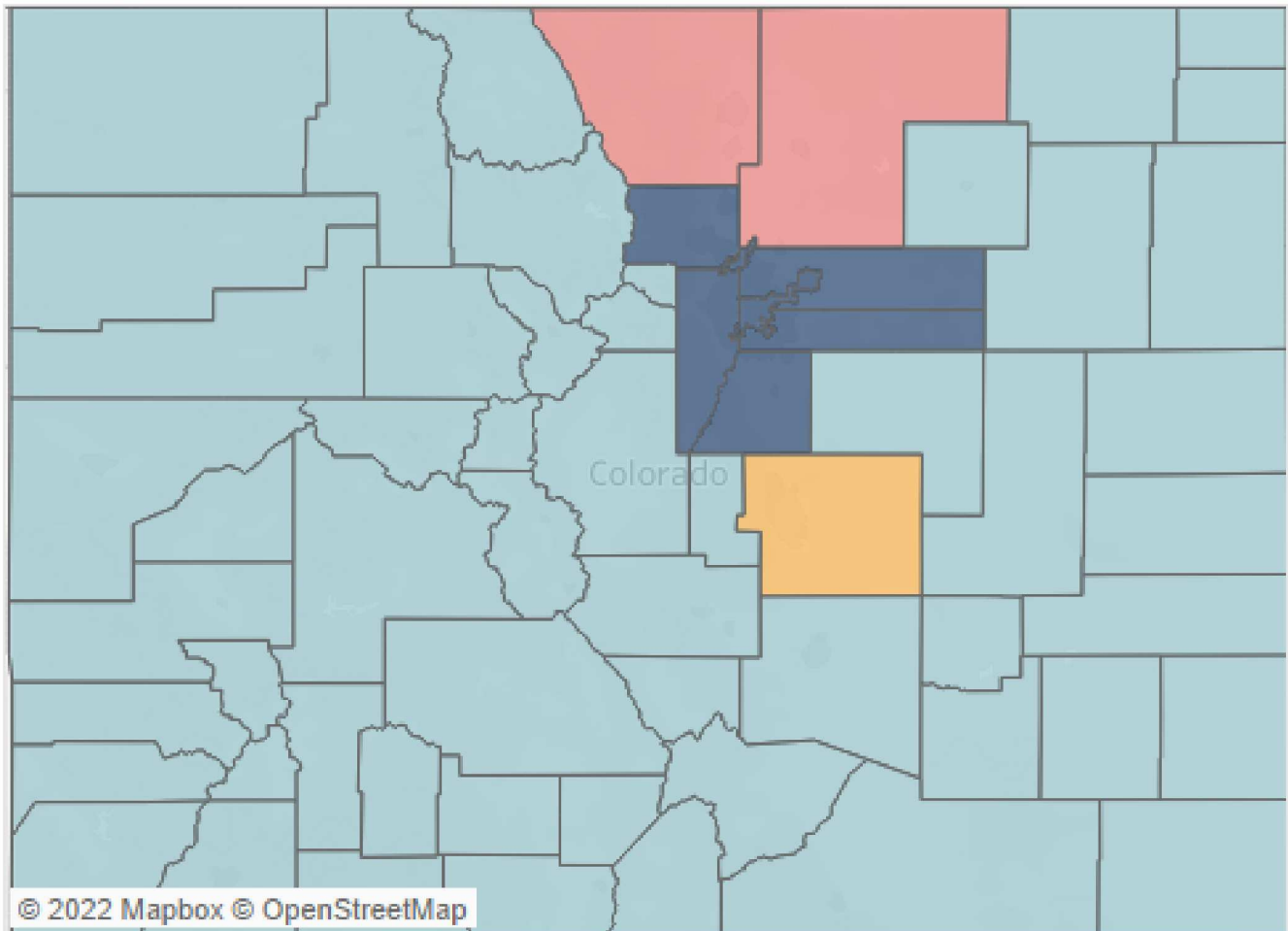
□ Balance of State
■ Metro Denver
□ Northern Colorado
□ Pikes Peak

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A Homeless Management Information System is administered locally to collect data on individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Data can also be collected for people at risk of experiencing homelessness, who receive assistance from homeless service or human services providers. There are other use cases as well for our non-profit providers who are providing assistance/services to community members who are not in housing (ex: food banks, budgeting classes, and things of that nature).

The data collected helps us to better understand the size, characteristics, and needs of the population, and plays a part in program evaluation, grant writing, research coordination, tracking of services provided, and advancing effective fact-based funding and legislative decisions.

The statewide HMIS we use is called Clarity; this software is developed by a company called Bitfocus. HMIS is a web-based system, so it can be used securely from any device.

Clarity is a highly collaborative system, which is crucial for providing optimal care and services for clients.

What is a DPAL?"

A DPAL (Data Partner Agency Liaison) is the HMIS Team's contact at each agency. DPALs help us out in a multitude of ways! The assigned DPAL should be the front-line contact at your agency for staff questions related to HMIS. If the DPAL cannot answer the question (or they're not sure they are answering it correctly), they can then submit a ticket to the HelpDesk.

The role of a DPAL is explained on the DPAL Agreement, but here are a few things that DPALs are also responsible for:

Requesting training for staff
Running data quality reports
Assisting with yearly agency check-ins
Representing their agency at quarterly DPAL meetings

There is a DPAL Zone on Zendesk that contains several different types of resources:
https://cohmis.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/sections/4408712012173-MDHI-DPAL-ZONE-

Funding

If your program receives any type of Federal funding, you are required to use HMIS. You are also required to collect all HUD Data Standards (specific questions designated by HUD).

When applying for any type of funding, it's important that both you and your funder are clear on what type of program you're being funded for, and any reporting requirements they have.

Having this information in place helps the HMIS Team to set up your program correctly in in the system.

Project Types Available for Setup in HMIS

SHELTER

Emergency Shelter
Offers temporary overnight lodging to unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness. Different shelters provide lodging for different populations (individuals, families, etc.). Requirements and limitations may vary by shelter project.

Day Shelter
Offers daytime facilities and services (no lodging) for persons experiencing homelessness, at-risk of experiencing homelessness, or just accessing amenities offered at the building.

STREET OUTREACH

Offers services necessary to reach out to unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services. Provides urgent, non-facility-based care to those who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.

COORDINATED ENTRY

Administers the continuum's centralized or coordinated process to coordinate assessment and referral of individuals and families seeking housing or services, includes the use of a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

SERVICES ONLY

Offers only stand-alone supportive services (other than outreach & coordinated entry) to address the unique needs of participants (such as child care, employment assistance, and transportation services). Participants serves by this project type may or may not be experiencing homelessness
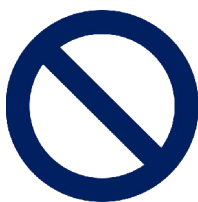
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Offers services and/or financial assistance necessary to keep from moving into an emergency shelter or place not meant for habitation.

HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing
Offers permanent housing and supportive services to assist person experiencing homelessness who have a disabling condition (either individuals with disabilities or families in which one adult or child has a disability) to live independently.

Rapid Re-Housing
Provides housing relocation and stabilization services and short-to-medium term rental assistance as necessary to help individuals or families experiencing homelessness move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

Other Permanent Housing
Offers permanent housing for persons or families who are experiencing homelessness (with or without supportive services). Generally have less eligibility requirements than PSH projects.

Transitional Housing
Provides temporary lodging and is designed to facilitate the movement of individuals or families experiencing homelessness into permanent housing within a specified period of time, but no longer than 24 months.

Safe Haven
Offers supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach persons experiencing homelessness with severe mental illness, who came from the streets and have been unwilling to participate in supportive services.

Joining HMIS

There are a few steps to gain access to HMIS:

Please submit a ticket to our HelpDesk at hmishelp@mdhi.org. Please let us know what kind of program(s) you have, and how you hope the system will benefit you.

Your ticket will be directed to a member of our Provider Engagement team. If you are also interested in OneHome and have any HMIS /OneHome questions, they will arrange a time to meet with you.

Sign up to become a member of our CoC!
This information can be found here:
https://www.mdhi.org/coc.

MDHI's general website can be found here:
https://www.mdhi.org.

For information about OneHome (Coordinated Entry), please see their website:
https://www.onehomeco.org/

Some paperwork is required to gain access to HMIS. A member of the Provider Engagement team will provide you with these documents.

Getting Set Up in HMIS

Our HelpDesk provides a plethora of information: forms and documents, tips, training videos, and more.

These forms will enable the HMIS Team to configure your program(s) in HMIS:
https://cohmis.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/5484598645005-Metro-Denver-CoC-Specific-Project-Setup-Forms-Jotform-

Please see this link for more information on the COHMIS Statewide Policies and Procedures:
https://cohmis.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360013991371-Policy-Procedures

HMIS Training

Staff must complete training to gain access to HMIS. There is an additional training for access to Coordinated Entry.

Since we have a limited number of HMIS licenses and the system is free for providers, it is important that licenses go to staff who will be using the system frequently. This is why DPALs are the only people who can request training; they should know which staff need training and those who do not.

Your DPAL can request training here:
https://cohmis.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/5685750954381-Training-Sign-Up-DENVER

Once the completed request is received, the staff member will be signed up for the Learning Management System (LMS) and receive an automated email with instructions on accessing the LMS. Once the end user has completed all necessary training for their position, they will be granted access to HMIS as applicable and will be asked to sign our user agreement.

All HMIS users will be required to complete Annual Refresher Trainings, which will include any newly-introduced database and HUD regulatory requirements. These trainings normally occur in the fall.

As the HMIS Lead for the Denver Metro Area, MDHI staff will send out email notices to all DPALs and end users to remind them of upcoming training requirements and deadlines.
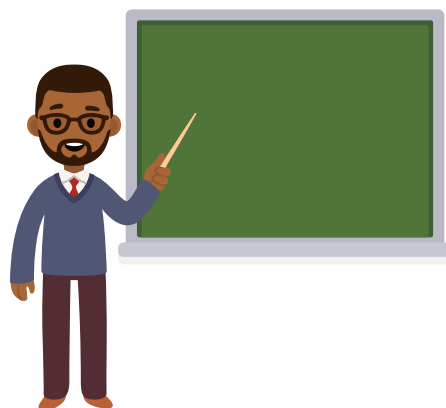
My Agency is in HMIS. Now What?

A member of the Provider Engagement team will check in with you periodically to see how you're doing and if you have any questions.

As always, please direct any general questions to the HelpDesk: hmishelp@mdhi.org

The MDHI HMIS Team

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