# Berks County Continuum of Care HMIS Governance Charter

Berks Coalition to End Homelessness, Inc.

PA-506

Updated April 2022

# Purpose

The Berks County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) records and stores client-level information about the numbers, distinguishing features, and needs of persons who use homeless and near homeless housing programs in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

HMIS is used to aggregate data about the extent and nature of homelessness over time, and to produce unduplicated counts of homeless persons in Berks County. HMIS also provides in-depth reporting on the needs of clients using homeless services, which can be used for planning and education. HMIS data are used several times throughout the year to provide reports to HUD and assess program effectiveness.

HMIS is required by HUD for HUD-funded programs and participation by non-HUD funded programs is also encouraged.

# Identified Interested Parties

The HMIS operates alongside the following interested parties. Descriptions below identify how the party interacts with the HMIS in Berks County:

1. The Berks Coalition to End Homelessness (BCEH) is the Collaborative Applicant for the Continuum of Care funding through HUD.

2. BCEH serves as the HMIS Lead agency and houses the HMIS Director as well as other staff to support HMIS. BCEH receives HMIS grant funds provided by HUD.

3. The CoC Body- The CoC Body, also called the Coalition, is open to any organization or individual that has an interest in the community-wide commitment to prevent and end homelessness in the City of Reading and Berks County. "Relevant organizations" include nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, political subdivisions and other government entities, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve veterans or homeless and formerly homeless individuals, and interested community members. The group meets monthly to discuss CoC needs, receive training, etc. There are several sub-committees of the CoC Body.

4. HMIS Sub-Committee of the CoC-The HMIS sub-committee is an advisory committee made up of user representatives from participating HMIS organizations. This sub-committee works closely with the HMIS Director and staff. The sub-committee recommends suggested changes and upgrades to the system as well as system policies to the CoC.

5. Participating HMIS Organizations -Participating  HMIS organizations are agencies and/or programs that participate in the data collection through the HMIS. These organizations provide data to the CoC and BCEH for decision making purposes, as well as to run their own reports for funding streams.

## Designations

1. HMIS Solution - BCEH designates Wellsky's software known as 'ServicePoint' or 'Community Services', as the official HMIS for the Reading and Berks County CoC's geographic area.

2. HMIS Lead -The CoC designates Berks Coalition to End Homelessness as the HMIS Lead to operate the CoC's HMIS.

## Responsibilities of the HMIS Lead

The HMIS Lead is responsible for:

1. Ensuring the operation of, and consistent participation by, the grant recipients of CoC and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding, as well as those faith-based or privately funded agencies also participating in the system.

2. Providing oversight of the HMIS and any necessary corrective action to ensure the HMIS is compliant with federal standards.

3. Developing and maintaining written HMIS policies and procedures for all HMIS participating organizations in the CoC.

4. Executing written Participation Agreements with each participating organization, which includes information on the obligations and authority of the HMIS Lead and the organization, as well as security requirements and client privacy information. Methods for dealing with failure to comply with the Participation Agreement or the HMIS Policies and Procedures are outlined in the HMIS Policies and Procedures.

5. Serving as the applicant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for CoC grant funds to be used for HMIS activities for the CoC's geographic area, and entering into grant agreements with HUD to carry out the HUD-approved HMIS activities.

6. Monitoring data quality and taking necessary actions to maintain high quality data from all participating organizations.

7. Completing the following tasks:

a. HMIS Policies and Procedures - The HMIS Lead must adopt written policies and procedures for the operation of the HMIS that apply to the HMIS Lead, participating organizations, and the CoC. These policies and procedures must comply with all applicable Federal law and regulations, as well as applicable state or local government requirements. The HMIS Lead may not establish any local standards that contradicts, undermines, or interferes with the implementation of the HMIS standards.

b. Unduplicated Count -The HMIS Lead will, at least once annually or upon request from HUD, submit to an unduplicated count of clients served. An analysis of unduplicated counts may be provided upon request of the CoC, participating organizations, or by request of HUD.

c. Reporting -The HMIS Lead will submit timely, accurate reports to HUD as required.

d. Privacy- The HMIS Lead must develop and maintain a privacy policy.

e. HMIS Standards -The HMIS Lead must comply with HMIS standards issued by HUD, and must ensure the HMIS vendor is in compliance as part of its contract.

f. Participation Agreements -The HMIS Lead must maintain Participation Agreements with all participating organizations.

g. Participation Fee - The HMIS Lead shall not require a license fee for participating organizations. If this practice changes, the HMIS Lead is required to discuss the need for a fee per-user-license schedule with the CoC and HMIS Sub-Committee of the CoC to determine a fair and accurate price.

h. Data Quality- The HMIS Lead will provide monthly data quality reports to each organization to ensure the consistency, accuracy, and completeness of the HMIS data being entered by participating organizations. This policy is outlined in the Policies and Procedures in more detail.

i. Monitoring -The HMIS Lead will develop, and implement, in conjunction with the HMIS Sub-Committee, a plan for monitoring the HUD-funded participating organizations and their usage of the HMIS.

## Responsibilities of the CoC Body

The CoC Body is responsible for acting in an advisory capacity to the CoC leadership on the following topics:

1. Suggested single information system as the official HMIS software for the geographic area.

2. Recommend an HMIS Lead to operate the HMIS.

3. Providing suggestions for governance of the HMIS Lead, including:

    a. The requirement that the HMIS Lead enter into written HMIS Participation Agreements with each Participating HMIS Organization.

    b. The participation fee, if any, charged by the HMIS.

4. Maintaining documentation evidencing compliance with the governance charter.

5. Reviewing and revising policies and plans for the HMIS required by federal regulation.

## Responsibilities of the HMIS Sub-Committee

The HMIS Sub-Committee will work with the HMIS Lead to:

1. Review and revise privacy, security, and data quality plans for the HMIS, as well as the policies and procedures for the HMIS.

2. Review and implement a plan for monitoring the HMIS to ensure that:

    a. HUD-funded participating organizations consistently participate in HMIS;

    b. HMIS is satisfying the requirements of all regulations and notices issued by HUD;

    c. The HMIS Lead is fulfilling the obligations outlined in its HMIS Governance Charter and Agreements with participating organizations.

## Responsibilities of the Participating HMIS Organizations

Participating HMIS organizations are responsible for:

1. Complying with all documentation set forth by the HMIS Lead to govern the HMIS Solution in the CoC. This includes such items as the Policies and Procedures, Privacy Policy, End User Agreement, Participation MOU, and Monitoring Plan.

2. Complying with federal regulations regarding HMIS.

3. Complying with federal, state, and local laws that require privacy or confidentiality protections. When a privacy or security standard conflicts with other federal, state, or local laws that the participation organizations must follow, the organization must contact the HMlS Lead and collaboratively determine the best course of action.