



MARICOPA HMIS

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

PREFACE

Maricopa Homeless Management Information System

Overview

Congress has established a national goal that all communities should be collecting an array of data about homelessness, including unduplicated counts of individuals who are homeless, their use of services and the effectiveness of local assistance systems. In order to achieve this objective, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encouraged communities to develop a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and has provided funding through the Supportive Housing Program, Continuum of Care process to assist in the implementation of systems to collect this data.

Background

The Maricopa HMIS implementation began with a community wide planning process in December 2001. The Maricopa Association of Governments, on behalf of the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness and the Community Information & Referral, Inc. (CI&R) of Maricopa County, convened a planning process to identify the high level requirements for the Maricopa Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and to select a software vendor that would meet the requirements of the local community and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Community Information & Referral is the Grantee and host agency for implementation of the Maricopa HMIS. This planning process, which included representatives of homeless provider agencies, city, county and state government agencies, private foundations, and private information technology experts, developed a design for the system and presented its recommendations to the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness and its Planning Subcommittee for approval.

Following the approval, the planning participants developed a Request for Proposals, identified potential software vendors, and issued a public invitation to bid on the requirements. The resulting recommendation, also approved by the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness and its Planning Subcommittee, was that the CI&R enter into negotiations with Bowman Internet Systems, LLC for ServicePoint, and contract for co-location of the servers and database with Bowman Internet Systems.

The creation and implementation of the Maricopa HMIS could not have become a reality without the support of six funding partners: The Lodestar Foundation, The Arizona Department of Housing (formerly The Governor's Office of Housing Development), The Arizona Community Foundation, The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, The Valley of the Sun United Way, and the Maricopa Association of Governments/AZ Department of Economic Security. Local funds were utilized for both the planning and implementation phases of project.

Implementation

The Maricopa HMIS implementation structure includes a User Group, an Advisory Board and the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness through its Planning Subcommittee.

The User Group is responsible for oversight of the implementation, development of policies and procedures and problem resolution regarding system implementation. This serves as a forum for current and future users to discuss their implementation status, raise questions and participate in the policy setting process.

The Maricopa HMIS Advisory Board which is comprised of community, local government, business and agency stakeholders provides advice and guidance regarding the overall implementation of HMIS and serves as a forum for key stakeholders to be provided information about the implementation of HMIS, to participate in the planning and policy setting, to assist in fund raising and to understand the potential of HMIS implementation.

The Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness and its Planning Subcommittee monitors the implementation of HMIS and serves as the final decision maker for issues that are not resolved at the User Group or CI&R Director Level.

The Project Team, comprised of the CI&R Director and representatives of Symmetric Solutions, Cannon & Associates (providing planning, facilitation and oversight services) and TechSelect Consulting (providing web services, and financial services) meet on a bi-weekly basis to review implementation status, plan next steps, resolve outstanding issues and ensure the Project stays on track.

The Maricopa HMIS Policy and Procedures Manual was developed by the HMIS Users Group. They are designed to support implementation and ongoing use of the System to ensure strict client confidentiality, security of information and consistent application of the functions provided by *ServicePoint*. The User Group and the Project Team will continue to update these Policies and Procedures as needed.

For information regarding the implementation of the Maricopa HMIS contact the project web site at www.cirs.org/hmis or Community Information and Referral at 602-263-8845.

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This Policy & Procedures Manual may be copied in part or in full when due acknowledgement is provided to the Maricopa HMIS.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. *Anonymous client*: A client entered into the database with a unique computer generated identifying code acting as a reference for that client.
2. *Client*: Any person who received, applied for or was denied services by a Provider Agency.
3. *Client Identifying Information*: Any information or a combination of data that would allow an individual client to be identified including but not limited to name, nick name, social security number, military identification number, health insurance carrier number.
4. *ClientPoint*: A module of ServicePoint that allows users to enter, edit, view, or print client information. ClientPoint offers sophisticated features such as building and tracking family relationships, restricting client records, and conducting case management.
5. *Client's guardian*: Any person legally responsible for a minor or an adult, according to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.). All references to "client" in this policy also apply to "client's guardian."
6. *Close to real-time*: Data entry within one business day.
7. *Computer virus*: A self-replicating piece of computer code, which resides in active memory and partially or fully, attaches itself to files and/or applications.
8. *Computer worm*: Similar to viruses, worms reside in active memory of computers and replicate themselves and will usually interfere with normal computer use or a computer program. Unlike viruses, worms exist as separate entities and do not attach themselves to other files or programs.
9. *Consultation*: A discussion, usually by phone, reminding the End-user or Provider Agency, of proper security and/or confidentiality practices(s), following confirmed inappropriate action(s).
10. *Custom Report*: A report, which can be created by HMIS Provider Agencies using the ServicePoint Report Writer.
11. *Deficiency*: An insufficiency in the software application.
12. *End-user*: Any person given access to the database including staff and volunteers.
13. *Error*: A documentable occurrence that prevents an end-user from proceeding further.
14. *Firewall*: A system or group of systems that enforces an access control policy between two networks. The system may contain a pair of mechanisms: one that exists to block Internet traffic, and the other that exists to permit Internet traffic.
15. *HMIS Provider Database*: A software application, which allows HMIS staff to track all communication relating to Provider Agencies.
16. *Malicious code*: An illegitimate computer code, which produces an undesired effect including Trojan horses, viruses and worms.
17. *Maricopa HMIS database*: The Homeless Management Information System's database, also know as HMIS database and/or database.
18. *Outside source(s)*: Organization(s) who are not current HMIS Provider Agencies.
19. *Performance*: The lack of execution and/or operation of the software.
20. *Probation*: A trial period of time, not greater than one hundred and eighty days (180), in which an End-user or Provider Agency addresses and corrects inappropriate actions(s).
21. *Provider Agency*: An agency authorized to participate in the Maricopa County Homeless Management Information System.

22. *Quality of Data Issue*: Any concern that decreases the accuracy and completeness of the data as defined by the Minimum Data Requirement.
23. *Real-time*: Immediate data entry upon seeing a client.
24. *Reinstatement Corrective Action Plan*: A modified Corrective Action Plan developed specifically for the purpose of preparing and assessing the appropriateness of reinstating a previously terminated Agency as an HMIS Provider Agency.
25. *ResourcePoint*: A module of ServicePoint that allows for adding, editing, classifying, locating agency, program, and service data by city, state, county, zip code or keyword search options. Also allows printing of agency location maps and publication of the resource database to a publicly accessible web site or printed directory.
26. *Restricted client*: A client whose name is known by only the entering Provider Agency, HMIS System Administrator II, and those agencies the client grants access to his/her name.
27. *Sanctions*: Penalties for noncompliance specified by the HMIS User Group and CI&R Executive Director.
28. *Self-replicate*: Makes copies of itself.
29. *ServicePoint*: A web-based information management system for service providers of an agency, coalition or region of any size which provides client tracking, case management, agency and program indexing, and reporting – all in a real-time environment.
30. *ShelterPoint*: A module of ServicePoint that allows viewing of shelter availability, checking clients in and out, and referral or making of reservations for clients to shelters.
31. *Suspension*: An act of postponing database access, after an End-user or Provider Agency receives written notice via certified mail explaining a breach of contract, quality of data issue or improper security and/or confidentiality practices, where the guilty party received previous warning(s) and did not correct inappropriate actions.
32. *Technical Support Staff*: Include, in ascending order, Help-desk personnel, Application Specialist, HMIS System Administrator and Bowman Internet System's Help desk personnel.
33. *Termination*: The act of ending database access, after an End-user or Provider Agency receives an appropriate written notice via certified mail explaining the reasons for cessation of database use.
34. *Trojan horse*: A malicious, security-breaking program, which pretends to be a benign application such as a screen saver, a game, or some other valuable program; but purposefully causes something the user does not expect. Unlike a virus, Trojan horse do not replicate, but Trojan horse programs attacks pose one of the most serious threats to computer security.
35. *Written Warning*: A printed notice informing the End-user or Provider Agency of a confirmed inappropriate action and a corrective explanation of the desired conduct.