

Name, SSN, & DOB

Universal Data Elements and Data Quality

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Data Quality Questions in HMIS

This Document will outline the following topics:

- **Introduction to Data Quality: Completeness, Consistency, and Accuracy**
- **Universal Data Elements (UDES)**
- **The Three unique UDES used to identify Clients**
 - **3.01 Name**
 - Overview of the UDE
 - Data Quality Questions
 - Data Quality Errors and how to correct them
 - **3.02 Social Security Number**
 - Overview of the UDE
 - Data Quality Questions
 - Data Quality Errors and how to correct them
 - **3.03 Date of Birth**
 - Overview of the UDE
 - Data Quality Questions
 - Data Quality Errors and how to correct them

Data Quality: Completeness, Consistency, and Accuracy

Data Completeness

All data entered into HMIS must be as complete as possible. Completeness refers to fully answering each field. Ensuring completeness helps create accurate client profiles and provides a clear picture of needs within a Continuum of Care (CoC).

Data Consistency

All agencies in the MD BoS CoC should work consistently to reduce duplication of Client Records in HMIS. HMIS End Users are trained to search for existing clients records, using various client identifier data, before creating a new client record in HMIS.

Data Accuracy

Data accuracy refers to how well the data reflects a client's real-world situation and the programs providing housing and services. Achieving accuracy can be challenging, as it relies on both the client providing correct information and the case worker's expertise in documenting and entering data **into HMIS**.

All client data entered into HMIS must reflect what the client self-reports. The most effective way to assess accuracy is by comparing HMIS records with paper documentation or trusted records from other providers.

Universal Data Elements (UDES)

HMIS Data Standards include collecting data on Universal Data Elements (UDES), which all HMIS participating continuum projects are required to collect from the client and enter in the system. UDES are required of every project entering into HMIS regardless of how the project is funded.

HMIS data is used for producing **unduplicated estimates** of the number of people experiencing homelessness, identifying basic demographic characteristics, and analyzing for patterns of service use. The collection of personal information is critical to distinguish unique individuals from one another to make counts as accurate as possible.

Three Unique UDES used to identify clients

There are Three Unique Universal Data Elements(UDES) used to identify clients, and allow the system to create unduplicated client records. Each of the UDES below include an additional data quality question to ensure the completeness, consistency, and accuracy of this critical information.

- **3.01 Name**
- **3.02 Social Security Number**
- **3.03 Date of Birth**

3.01 Name

Name and Name Data quality is 3.01 of the Universal Data Elements in the HMIS Data Standards

1. The Data is collected about All Clients
2. For all Funded Program
3. For All HMIS Project Types
4. Collected during the record creation and can also be updated when enrolling a client who already has a record in HMIS.

HMIS Record Naming Best Practices

1. HMIS Records should use a client's full and accurate name whenever possible.
2. If the Client doesn't associate with their legal name, the name entered into HMIS should reflect the name the client identifies with, unless legal name is required by the funder (ex. VA)
 - Record the full first name used by the client. Preferred name is acceptable over legal name unless legal name is required by funder.
 - Record the full last name used by the client in the format the client prefers. (e.g., with hyphen or without hyphen).
 - Record "Jr.", "Sr.", etc. as applicable.
3. Generally projects are not required to verify that the information provided matches legal documents, and HMIS records are not expected to include "dead names" or otherwise unused legal names. Best practices is to be aware of the funders' record-keeping requirements and if maintaining copies of legal documents is a requirement, they should be collected, and pertinent information updated in HMIS accordingly.
4. Doing this as a standard practice makes it easier to find records when searching and avoids creating duplicate records.

Street Outreach and Coordinated Entry Name Data Quality

1. Street Outreach and Coordinated Entry projects may record a project entry with limited information about the client and improve the accuracy and completeness of client data over time by editing data in an HMIS as they engage the client. The initial entry may be as basic as the *'Project Start Date'* and a "code name" (e.g., "Redhat Tenthstreetbridge") response in the name field that would be identifiable for retrieval by the worker in the system.
2. Over time, the data must be edited for accuracy (e.g., replacing "Redhat" with "Robert") as the worker learns more details, more information about the client is obtained.

3.01 Name Data Quality Responses and When to use them.

Name Data Quality Response	When to use?
Full name reported	If the client's complete First and Last names are recorded.
Partial, street name, or code name reported	A Name other than the full, accurate name is recorded, including placeholder or modified names for security reasons.
Client doesn't know	The client is unable to provide their name, instead of using "Partial, street name, or code name reported," when a false or made-up name is entered.
Client prefers not to answer	The client chooses not to provide their name, instead of using "Partial, street name, or code name reported" for a made-up name.
Data not Collected	The worker did not attempt to collect the client's name.

1. **Full Name Reported** - Select "Full name reported" for "Name Data Quality" if complete, full first and last names have been recorded as provided by the client.
2. Select "**Partial, street name, or code name reported**" if a name other than the full and accurate name is recorded. This may include a placeholder name such as a street name or code name for street outreach clients or a name modification made for security reasons.
3. Select "**Client doesn't know**" when the client does not know their name. Use "Client doesn't know" rather than "Partial, street name or code name reported" if a false name/made-up name was entered to create a record in the system solely because the client did not know or was unable to provide their name.
4. Select "**Client prefers not to answer**" when client chooses not to provide their name. Use "Client prefers not to answer", rather than "Partial, street name, or code name reported" if a false name/made up name was entered to create a record in the system solely because the client prefers not to answer or tell staff their name.
5. Select "**Data not collected**" if the worker did not attempt to collect the client's name.

3.02 Social Security Number

Rationale: To support the unique identification of each person served.

1. Who? The Data is collected about All Clients
2. What Funders? For all Funded Program
3. What Projects? For All HMIS Project Types
4. Collection Point? Collected during the record creation and can also be updated when enrolling a client who already has a record in HMIS.

Why use client SSN's in HMIS?

- **Unique Client Identification**
SSNs help uniquely identify clients, reducing the risk of duplicate records at Project Start.
- **Facilitates Data Sharing**
SSNs enable seamless data sharing across projects, ensuring accurate client identification.
- **CoC Unduplicated Count**
When data isn't shared, unique identifiers like SSNs help avoid duplication in HMIS, especially when name and date of birth may be the same.
- **Access to Mainstream Programs**
SSNs are required for many mainstream programs, aiding clients in accessing vital services to address homelessness.

Data Collection Requirements

- **SSN & Data Quality**
Record the nine-digit SSN and the appropriate "SSN Data Quality" in separate fields.
 - **Tip! Using 999-99-9999 is flagged in the Community Services (HMIS) System and will cause errors.**
- **PATH, CoC, ESG Programs**
Only required to collect the last four digits of the SSN, but collecting all nine digits is allowed.
- **Verify SSNs for Existing Clients**
When enrolling a client, verify and correct SSNs if necessary. Do not replace a 9-digit SSN with a 4-digit SSN unless requested by the client.
- **Clients Without an SSN**
If a client does not have an SSN, select "Client doesn't know." Federal law prohibits denying services to clients who refuse or do not know their SSN, unless SSN is a statutory requirement for service eligibility.
 - **Exception for SSVF Grants**
 - Homelessness Prevention or Rapid Re-Housing services through Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grants, Veterans must provide their SSN to receive services because it's relevant to verifying their eligibility. The Veteran's household members, however, may decline to provide their SSN.

3.02 Social Security Number Data Quality Responses and When to use them.

Name Data Quality Response	When to use?
Full SSN reported	A complete and valid SSN is provided.
Approximate or partial SSN reported	Any SSN other than a complete and valid 9-digit SSN, regardless of the reason, is provided.
Client doesn't know	A Client does not know or does not have an SSN.
Client prefers not to answer	A client prefers not to provide any part of their SSN, regardless of the reason.
Data not Collected	No attempt was made to collect an SSN for the client.

3.03 Date of Birth

1. **Why?** To calculate the age of persons served at time of project start or at any point during project enrollment and to support the unique identification of each person served.
2. **Who?** All Clients
3. **What Funders?** All Programs – All Components
4. **What Projects?** All HMIS Project Types
5. **Collection Point?** Record Creation

Data Collection Requirements

- **Record Full DOB**
Record the month, day, and year of birth for every person served.
- **Verify DOB Accuracy**
Verify and correct the DOB when enrolling a client with an existing record in HMIS.
- **Estimating DOB**
 - If the client can't remember their year, estimate it based on their age.
 - If the client can't recall the month or day, use "01" for both.
 - If a client is not able to estimate their age within one year of their actual age, select "Client doesn't know".
 - If the client can provide their birth year but declines to provide their day of birth and month, record an approximate date as indicated above and indicate that the response is "Approximate or partial DOB reported"
 - Select "Client prefers not to answer" when a client declines to provide their birth year.
 - "Client doesn't know," "Client prefers not to answer," and "Data not collected" are explanations for missing DOB data. None of these three options are valid in conjunction with a valid or approximated date entered in 'Date of Birth'.

3.03 Social Security Number Data Quality Responses and when to use them

Name Data Quality Response	When to use?
Full DOB reported	The complete Date of Birth is provided by the client.
Approximate or partial DOB reported	The client cannot or chooses not to provide their full or exact date of birth but provides their year of birth.
Client doesn't know	If client is not able to estimate their age within one year. Used as an explanation for missing DOB data.
Client prefers not to answer	A client prefers not to provide any part of their DOB, regardless of the reason.
Data not Collected	No attempt was made to collect a DOB for the client.