Missouri Balance of State
Continuum of Care

New Member Onboarding
Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care

Abstract

This document is to help new members of the Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care become familiar with the structure, elements and processes of the MO BoS CoC

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Section I: Background

Background of the Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care

Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and service funding for homeless families and individuals. Most CoCs were formed in the mid-1990s. This is when the Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) introduced programs to encourage a community response to homelessness. Also in 1995, HUD started requiring communities to submit a single application to streamline the process. HUD then provided points of consideration to applications that used a community collaborative planning process when preparing their applications for funding.

The Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care (MO BoS CoC) started in 1998 under the Missouri Association of Community Action Agencies (MACA). In 1999 the BoS moved under the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH). This is when the Department of Mental Health started leading the application and community process. GCEH was established in 1987 by Governor John Ashcroft. The original name was the Missouri Interagency Task Force on Homelessness; this group formed in response to two federal initiatives, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act being one. This task force included representatives from key state departments and representatives from other local Continuum of Cares and non-profits.

In 2006, Missouri Housing Development became the lead agency for BoS CoC. In May 2009, the Mckinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was amended to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. In 2020 Community Partnership of Southeast Missouri (CPSEMO) became the Lead Agency/ Collaborative Applicant for Balance of State.

Section II: Membership

The Continuum of Care, or CoC is tasked with organizing and delivering housing options along with supportive services (case management, other services offered by programs) to meet the needs of homeless individuals/families located in the 101 counties of the Balance of State.

To ensure the Continuum of Care is functional, it should be composed of various representatives including, but, not limited to:

- Non-profit agencies that serve the homeless
- Mental Health Providers

- Community Actions Centers
- Domestic Violence Providers
- Department of Mental Health

- Treatment Centers
- Local Government
- Law Enforcement
- Housing Authorities
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Schools
- Employment Offices

- Youth Services
- Hospitals/Clinics
- Food Pantries/ Soup Kitchens
- Individuals with Lived Experience
- Invested Individuals or Organizations

In addition, to ensure the CoC is successful in meeting the needs of the homeless population located in its coverage area, it is vital that representatives are not only members of the CoC, but actively engaged in the governance bodies of the CoC, including the Board, regional meetings, and CoC committees.

General Membership
- General Membership helps with strategic decision making and information sharing to promote community commitment to end homelessness and minimize the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness.
- Members include representatives from organizations and agencies, and individuals from the community interested in the well-being of homeless and formerly homeless individuals and families. Members can also include homeless and formerly homeless persons.
- To keep membership in good standing, CoC members must meet the following expectation:

  o Renew CoC Membership annually; there is no cost for membership.

  o One representative of the organization must attend the biannual Full CoC Membership meetings for updates, voting and other information.

  o One representative of the organization must complete the CoC provided training provided twice a year (usually put out by the Lead Agency at the same times of the Full CoC Membership meetings).

  o CoC-funded organizations must adhere to CoC Written Standards.

Section III: Purpose and Structure

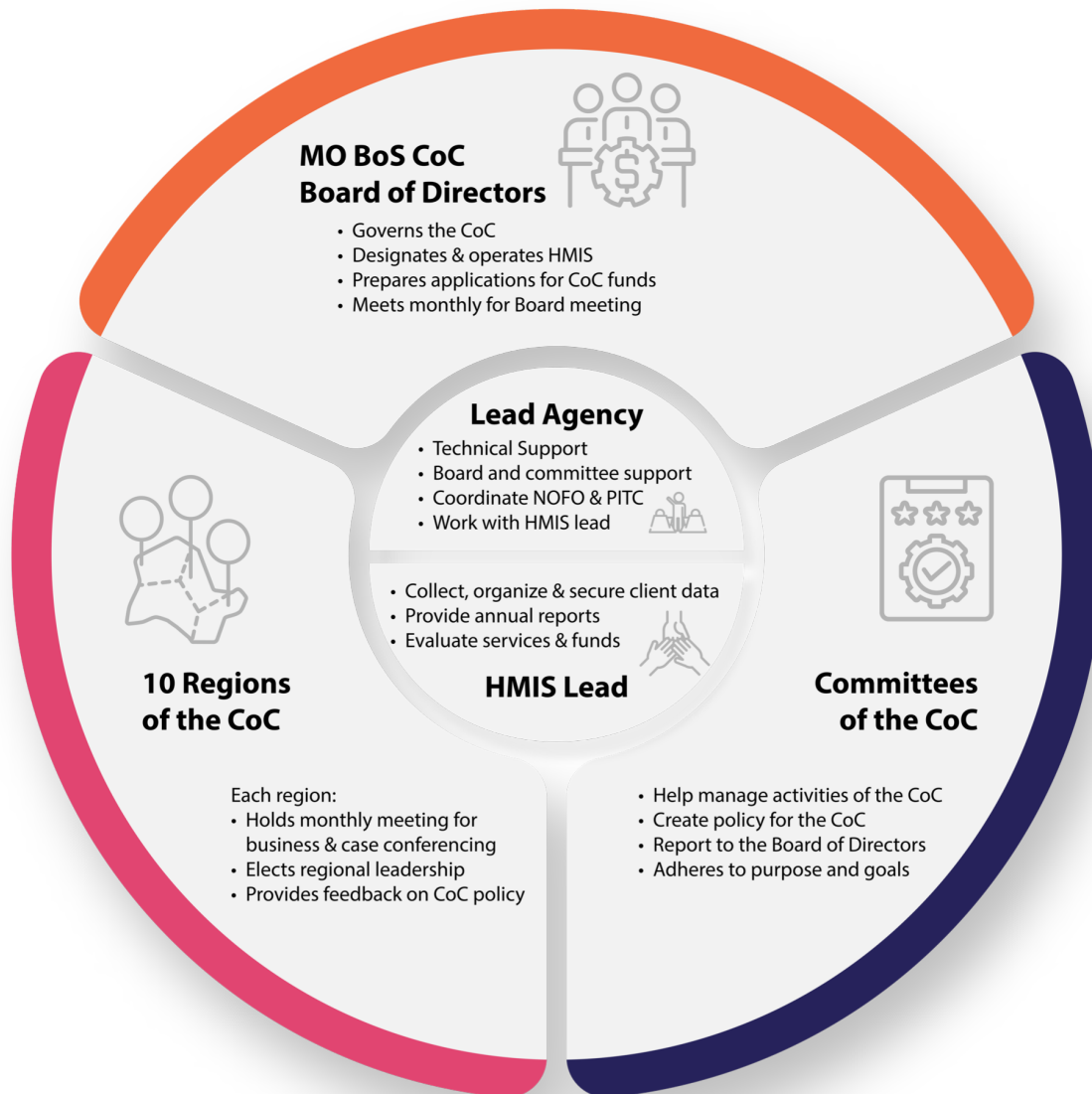The MO BoS CoC is a body of members that work together to coordinate community policies, strategies, and activities toward ending homelessness for the one hundred and one (101) counties of the Balance of State of Missouri. Its work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses, educating the

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community on homeless issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring project and system level CoC performance. The Board is the primary decision-making body of the CoC and responsible for its function, including establishing the process for applying, reviewing and prioritizing project applications for funding in the annual HUD Homeless Assistance CoC Grants competition.

Structure:

MO BoS CoC Board of Directors
- Governs the CoC
- Designates & operates HMIS
- Prepares applications for CoC funds
- Meets monthly for Board meeting

Lead Agency
- Technical Support
- Board and committee support
- Coordinate NOFO & PITC
- Work with HMIS lead

- Collect, organize & secure client data
- Provide annual reports
- Evaluate services & funds

HMIS Lead

10 Regions of the CoC

Each region:
- Holds monthly meeting for business & case conferencing
- Elects regional leadership
- Provides feedback on CoC policy

Committees of the CoC
- Help manage activities of the CoC
- Create policy for the CoC
- Report to the Board of Directors
- Adheres to purpose and goals

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The CoC is made up of cross-sector organizations, agencies, and individuals that collectively coordinate homeless assistance activities and resources in the community. To facilitate the CoC achieving its goals, it operates under a governance charter and structure, which in the MO BoS CoC is made up of a combination of committees and regions operating under the decision making body of the Board of Directors. The MO BoS CoC and MO BoS CoC Board of Directors are responsible for the following activities: Operating a Continuum of Care, CoC Planning, Designating and Operating a HMIS, and Preparing an Application for CoC funds. The Lead Agency (CPSEMO) and HMIS Lead (ICA) work together to ensure that the CoC is running smoothly and as the Board has designated.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the primary-decision making body of the MO BoS CoC. Board membership includes representatives from all Regions within the Balance of State, as well as At-Large representatives. The Board includes ex-officio members, which are composed of the Lead Agency (CPSEMO) and HMIS Lead Agency (ICA). Board representation includes broad and diverse membership and represents the homeless population served within the CoC. Members are encouraged to participate from all sectors, including victim services providers, human trafficking, sexual assault, youth, education, healthcare, law enforcement, local, state and federal government, emergency assistance, LGBTQ, addiction and recovery, formerly homeless persons, veterans, public housing authorities, community action agencies, and all homeless services.

Committees:
Committees are an important part of the MO BoS CoC's governance structure. The CoC may establish committees, subcommittees, or workgroups that are made up of CoC members and other interested parties to act on behalf of the CoC and carry out the work of the CoC. All committees, subcommittees, and workgroups are responsible to the Board. The following are the standing MO BoS CoC Committees:

Committee Summary
- Coordinated Entry Committee- The Coordinated Entry Committee creates and reviews policies and procedures for agencies participating in the Coordinated Entry Process. This committee also offers support for Coordinated Entry and provides advice for those who are new to the CE System. Finally, this committee informs the MO BoS CoC governing Board of new Coordinated Entry-related HUD requirements.

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- Grants Committee- The Grants Committee is responsible for researching new funding opportunities for the BoS CoC to apply for. Additionally, the Grants committee works in collaboration with the Performance Committee to review fund distribution within the BoS CoC. Finally, the Grants committee annually completes the project Rank and Review Process for the NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity).

- Performance Committee- The Performance Committee keeps track of the performance of projects benefiting from CoC funds, as well as the overall performance of the CoC. The committee creates performance targets (based on HUD system performance measures), develops the evaluation process, reviews project performance, reports this data to the Board and recommends training as needed. Additionally, the Performance Committee works with the Coordinated Entry Committee to create and monitor data collection standards and conducts the annual evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System.

- Membership Committee- The Membership Committee is responsible for collaborating with CoC groups (committees, workgroups, Board, etc.) on key elements of member recruitment and needs. This committee is responsible for welcoming new members of the CoC and keeping current members up to date of significant changes. Finally, this committee works to foster re-engagement of lapsed members and works to seek new members.

- Point in Time Count Committee- Through recruitment, training and appointment of leadership, the Point in Time Count Committee works with the Lead Agency and HMIS Lead Agency to execute the Point in Time Count (PIT) and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) annually. This committee develops a plan for the PIT Count, provides guidance and support on the annual changes to PIT and HIC as needed, ensures safety for all members involved and ensures the proper submission of data to HUD from the counts.

- Youth Service Committee- The Youth Services Committee works to represent the needs of youth and young adults who interact with the homeless system of care. The committee works to identify the needs of youth, coordinates with other committees, and ensures that youth are represented in the CoC's decision-making process.

- Racial and Gender Inequities Committee- The Racial and Gender Inequities Committee works to ensure that the inequities that exist within and outside of the homeless system of care are identified and addressed. The committee does this through collaboration with partners,

other committees and focusing on the experience of those with lived experience to ensure that representation and treatment of all populations are as equitable as possible.

- Veterans Services Committee- The Veterans Services Committee works to represent the needs of Veterans who may interact with the homeless system of care. The committee identifies the needs of Veterans within the MO BoS CoC, coordinates with other committees or groups as needed, develops and recommends training for working with Veteran clients and ensures that the experience of Veterans is represented in the CoC decision making process.

- Victim Services Committee- The Victim Services Committee works to represent the needs of people fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assult, stalking or human trafficking who may interact with the homesless system of care. Through data quality, collaborative efforts and partnerships within and outside the CoC, the Victim Services Committee works to ensure that this population's voice is heard.

- Youth Action Board- The Youth Action Board (YAB) works to empower youth and young adults, aged 24 and under, by providing voice and active participation in the decision-making process of the CoC. The Youth Action Board strives to ensure that the homeless system of care is responsive to the distinct challenges that youth and young adults may face.

A member of the Board of Directors is assigned to each committee and each committee designates leadership from its membership body. Elected committee leadership is voted on annually at the last meeting of the year. These groups aim to be diverse in terms of geography, race, gender, socioeconomic status, lived experience, job position, and age. All virtual meetings are hosted by the Lead Agency and posted on our website under the MO BoS CoC Calendar.

> *Feel free to sit in on a committee meeting if you are interested in what that group has to offer, and reach out to each Committee Chair via this link for more information.*

Regional Structure
The MO BoS CoC uses a regional structure to access all 101 counties that make up the Balance of State. There are 10 regions across the rural areas of Missouri. All CoC

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organizational members are expected to participate in CoC business at a regional level. The monthly regional meeting provides a space for organizations to network in the local community, inform on resources available, discuss regional issues, and more. View regional virtual meeting information here. Reach out to the Lead Agency for more information on specific regions within the CoC.

All CoC Regions:
- host a monthly regional business meeting where agencies provide updates about the region and their agency
- host a monthly case conferencing that consists of coordinating clients and resources
- elect the following Regional leadership: Regional Chair, Regional Vice-Chair, Secretary, Coordinated Entry Lead, Regional Board Member, Level 4 List Holder, and "Paper" List Holder- Non-HMIS PL annually
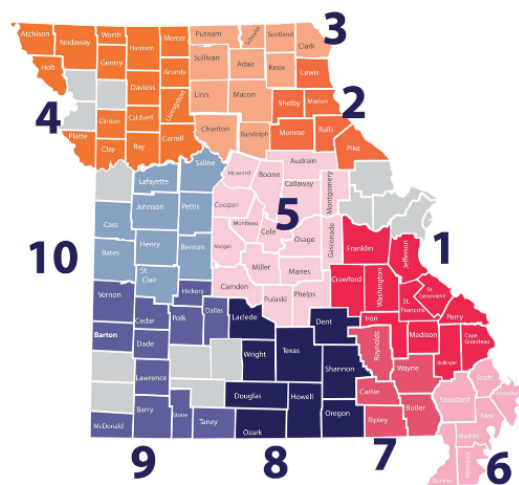
**The Missouri Balance of State
Continuum of Care
Regional Map**

Key Elements:
CoC Acronym List - Common abbreviations used in CoC work and discussion.

Lead Agency of the CoC
Community Partnership of Southeast Missouri (CPSEMO) was selected by the Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care Board as the Lead Agency of the CoC in August of 2020.

The Lead Agency's role for the Continuum of Care is to provide technical support to agencies in and around the MO Balance of State CoC. It is available to provide support

to the Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care Board and all its committees. The Lead Agency acts as the Collaborative Applicant on behalf of the CoC and will coordinate and execute the yearly NOFO process in a complete and comprehensive manner, aligned with HUD directives and timelines, promote community-wide planning & strategic use of resources to address homelessness, coordinate and produce the Point-in-Time Count Report and work closely with the HMIS Lead to capture HUD required data. (*Refer to the sections of this document that expand on those topics for more explanation.*)

Contact the Lead Agency CoC Team: support@moboscoc.org

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
HMIS is an electronic data collection system that stores information about individuals who seek homeless services. It also enables organizations that provide homeless

assistance and operate homelessness prevention programs to improve the services they provide by collecting information about client needs and producing any reports required by their funders. *See Section VII for more information.*

Section IV: Financial Resources for CoC projects

The Continuum of Care assists agencies with multiple funding resources through either direct funding or affiliated funding sources that rely on the services of the Continuum.

The Continuum of Care Funds
Announced annually by HUD through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Colloquially known as the "CoC NOFO" this funding stream is secured through the work of the Collaborative Applicant (Lead Agency). The Lead Agency creates a Consolidated Application that consists of a cumulative explanation of CoC efforts, collaborations, and system performance. It also includes individual project applications from CoC members that have applied for funds through local competition. In FY2021 the total reward was over $5 million.

CoC NOFO Process:
- CoC application – Questions about the work of the CoC and performance
- Project Applications – individual projects that are seeking funding

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- Project Rank and Review – CoC decision on funding priority
- Consolidated Application – Collection of all parts of the application
- Grant Agreements - Agency agreements with HUD offices to execute grants

Emergency Solutions Grant

The Missouri Housing Development Commission is the primary state recipient of funds through the Emergency Solution Grant. Each year they issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to agencies in Missouri. Applicants apply to MHDC and are awarded funds according to geographic allocations and funding priorities.

- ESG funded projects are expected to participate in the work of the Continuum of Care program through committee engagement, Membership participation, and Coordinated Entry.
- ESG funded projects are required to receive referrals from the Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System when applicable (e.g. Prevention, Shelter, and Street Outreach programs do not receive referrals)

- ESG grants should operate in compliance with Program Standards set by both MHDC as the funding body and The Missouri BOS CoC. ESG standards are developed collaboratively by MHDC and State CoC bodies.

Missouri Housing Trust Fund (MHTF)

MHDC oversees the application and award process for the Missouri Housing Trust Fund. This fund provides vital services for many agencies to complement the work of the Continua in our state.

- The Missouri Balance of State CoC provides annual feedback to MHDC regarding select areas of participation with the work of the CoC.

Missouri Housing Innovation Program (MOHIP)

Much like the MHTF, the Missouri Housing Initiative Program is awarded to agencies through a competition overseen by MHDC. This fund also works to complement the CoC efforts.

- The Missouri Balance of State CoC provides annual feedback to MHDC regarding select areas of participation with the work of the CoC.

Section V: Housing Programs

Housing programs operate within the CoC and offer support and services in a variety of ways, depending on the purpose. This includes: mental health & disability support,

substance abuse support, case management, rental assistance, and any other aspects of the specific program.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is permanent housing in which housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability in achieving housing stability. The CoC utilizes a system that prioritizes Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing first.

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) is permanent housing that provides short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness.

Transitional Housing (TH) provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing.

Homeless Prevention provides short-term or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services.

Emergency Shelter (ES) means any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

Section VI: Coordinated Entry System

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is an approach to connect people to housing and service interventions that will end their homelessness. Coordinated Entry ensures that the highest need, most vulnerable households in the community are prioritized for housing and services first.

Access Point-Client Entry
The MO BoS CoC ensures that access points are available across the CoC and offer entry in an easy, fair, and consistent manner. Telephone-based access is permitted, and each region will have multiple access points to ensure that services are available throughout the counties.

Prioritization
Prioritization within the MO BoS CoC is based on the principle of helping the most vulnerable first. The CoC will prioritize the most vulnerable and those with the most severe needs. This is the primary factor in determining service and housing allocation.

Prioritization List (PL)

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The CoC utilizes a system that prioritizes persons by measures of chronicity and vulnerability. Prioritization was established at the BOS CoC wide level. Please note that the Prioritization List is not a "wait list". If there are not enough resources to assist households within 60 days or less, the MO BoS CES Committee should make immediate updates to prioritization standards to more precisely differentiate and identify resources for those households with the highest needs and most acute vulnerability.

Regional Case Conferencing and Referrals
The 10 regions of the CoC host individual case conferencing meetings to cover the 101 counties of the Balance of State. Housing projects obtain referrals at case conferences or by contacting the Level 4 Access Point. Case Conferencing will generate referrals to clients based on the prioritization. Referrals are made to all programs that clients may be eligible for among participating agencies (including non-CoC related projects such as ministries and privately funded partners).

Section VII: DATA & Homeless Information Management System (HMIS)

The purpose of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is to collect, organize, and utilize private, sensitive, and confidential information of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the CoC. HMIS was developed to establish a

common set of guidelines for the type of information that organizations would gather. Information collected biny HMIS helps provide an accurate count of the homeless

population, track the patterns of services used, as well as the locations of populations and services. This data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of services and to analyze where funding would be most appropriate.

The Missouri Balance of State Continuum of Care designates and approves an independent agency to serve as the HMIS lead within our continuum of care. Our designated HMIS agency is The Institute for Community Alliances (ICA). ICA is responsible for maintaining the HMIS database and equipping CoC end users with access and training necessary to collect HUD required information for project participants. As per Agency Agreement our HMIS agency provides many supports for our Data needs and reporting obligations to HUD.

- Institute for Community Alliances is available for response at the following email:
  - MOHMIS@icalliances.org - Helpdesk email for general support and questions
  - Michael Tonarely - HMIS manager for the Missouri Balance of State.
    - michael@icalliances.org
  - https://icalliances.org/missouri Statewide resources including Data, contact information, and

- ICA has also provided a reference site for HMIS processes and workflows:
    - https://icamissouri.helpscoutdocs.com

ICA utilizes the ServicePoint Software to maintain participant data. ICA Missouri has created a shared instance of the software to allow for data sharing and tracking of clients between the various CoC's of the state. Please note that this does not include all CoCs. Joplin, Springfield, St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Joseph, and the Missouri Balance of State Continua of Care are all included in the shared software instance.

HMIS data and resources are used to generate a few annual reports for our Continuum. HUD requires that CoC's provide regular data submissions for the Point in Time Count, Housing Inventory Count, System Performance Measures, and the Longitudinal Systems Analysis.

- Point in Time Count and Housing Inventory Count (PIT/HIC)
    - While officially considered two different reports, the PIT and HIC datasets are an annual assessment of all persons experiencing homelessness and housing resources available during a specific Point in Time.
    - The Point in Time Count is conducted by a team of staff and volunteers throughout the entire CoC coverage area. HUD requires the PIT count be conducted in the last 10 days of January each year.
- The Housing Inventory Count is led by ICA's staff and counts all occupied and available beds for the given night. Agencies are responsible for responding to information surveys sent out by ICA.
- System Performance Measures - HUD monitors the progress of Continua of Care across 7 distinct performance measures.
    - Measure #1: Length of time persons remain homeless
    - Measure #2: The extent to which persons who exit homelessness to permanent housing destinations return to homelessness
    - Measure #3: Number of homeless persons
    - Measure #4: Jobs and income growth for homeless persons in CoC Program-funded projects
    - Measure #5: Number of persons who become homeless for the first time
    - Measure #6: Homelessness prevention and housing placement of persons define by Category 3 of HUD's Homeless definition in CoC Program-funded projects
    - Measure #7: Successful housing placement
    - Further Information:
        - https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/#guidance
        - HUD training videos to explain each resource: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/#trainings-and-videos

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- Longitudinal System's Analysis
  - This is a data set that HUD requires from all CoC's. It is collected by our HMIS agency, ICA, and submitted to HUD annually. It is used in system monitoring and provides a resource for CoC's to assess service gaps and challenges within our system of care.

Non-HMIS Data

Agencies that are considered Victim Services Providers; providing services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; are required to protect client identities by use of an HMIS comparable database system. VSP agency client information should not be entered into the shared HMIS instance used by other CoC agencies.

- HUD resources for HMIS comparable databases: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6305/hmis-comparable-database-manual/
- ICA provides a database verification process to ensure all VSP agencies are in compliance with HMIS obligations.