



HMIS Privacy Policy

This Policy describes the privacy practices related to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) client data that is maintained by the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County (the Coalition), as the HMIS Lead Agency designated by Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care (CoC). This Policy describes how these data may be used or disclosed. Clients' personal information is collected only when appropriate. The Coalition is committed to keeping clients' personal information private.

The Coalition assumes that clients agreed to allow collection of their personal information by providing consent at the service site(s) and to allow its use or disclosure as described in this Policy. Clients can inspect their personal information that is maintained in HMIS. Clients can ask the Coalition to correct inaccurate or incomplete information. The Coalition responds to questions and complaints. A copy of this Privacy Policy is available upon request.

Scope

This Policy only applies to transactions made and data gathered on Houston/Harris County HMIS ClientTrack website and does not apply to any other website or application. The terms of this Policy shall govern all interactions with the Coalition through either the Coalition's website or e-mail. A link to the Policy can be found on the HMIS section of the Coalition's website and is posted at the Coalition office lobby within reasonable, plain view.

This Policy is not a legal contract. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of clients' protected personal information (PPI). Upon request we will provide clients with a copy of this Policy and get their written acknowledgement of its receipt. We must follow the terms of this Policy that are currently in effect.

Changes to This Policy

Changes to our privacy practices and the terms of this Policy may apply to all client information in HMIS. We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Policy at any time, including protected personal information created or received before we made the changes, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Policy. A copy of the revised Policy will be posted at our location and on our website, and available upon request.

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of clients' personal information. We are required to provide this Policy of our privacy practices, legal duties, and clients' rights concerning their protected personal information. We must follow the privacy

practices that are described in this Policy while it is in effect. This Policy takes effect immediately, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

Reasons for Disclosures

For Law Enforcement Purposes

We may disclose protected personal information about HMIS clients to law enforcement officials for law enforcement purposes, such as:

- In response to a court order, subpoena or other legal proceeding.
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
- When information is requested about an actual or suspected victim of a crime.
- To report a death as a result of possible criminal conduct.
- To investigate allegations of misconduct that may have occurred on our premises.
- To report a crime in emergency circumstances.
- For other purposes as required by law.

For Funeral Directors, Coroners and Medical Examiners

We may disclose clients' protected personal information as necessary to allow these individuals to carry out their responsibilities.

For National Security and Intelligence We may disclose clients' protected personal information to authorized federal officials for national security and intelligence activities.

For Research Projects with Contracted Third Parties

We may disclose client data for research purposes only if the following conditions have been met:

- A signed Data Use & Security Agreement with the contractor is in place before any data is shared.
- The data will be shared for a predetermined time period as stated in the Agreement with the contractor.
- The use and scope of the data research is provided as part of the Agreement.
- Results of the research may not affect any individual's current program participation.

Uses or Disclosures That Require Client's Authorization

Other uses and disclosures will be made only with client's written authorization. A client may cancel an authorization at any time by notifying our Compliance Officer in writing of his/her desire to cancel it. If the client cancels an authorization it will not have any effect on information that we have already disclosed. Examples of uses or disclosures that may require client's written authorization include the following:

- A request to provide protected personal information to an attorney for use in a civil law suit.
- A request to provide protected personal information to a requesting medical professional.

Rights under the Privacy Policy

The information contained in a client's record maintained by the Coalition within the HMIS software is the physical property of the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County.

Clients whose data exist in HMIS have the following rights:

Right to Request Restrictions

The client has the right to ask us not to use or disclose his/her protected personal information for a particular reason. The client may ask that family members or other authorized individuals not be informed of specific protected personal information.

That request must be made in writing to our Compliance Officer. If we agree to the request, we must keep the agreement, except in the case of a medical emergency or law enforcement.

Right to Inspect and Copy Protected Personal Information

The client has the right to request to inspect and obtain a copy of his/her protected personal information. The client must submit the request in writing to our Compliance Officer. If the client requests a copy of the information or we provide a summary of the information we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, summarizing, and/or mailing it to the client.

If we agree to the request we will notify the client. We may deny the request under certain limited circumstances. If the request is denied, we will let the client know in writing and he/she may be able to request a review of our denial.

Right to Request Amendments to Protected Personal Information

The client has the right to request that we correct his/her protected personal information. If the client believes that any protected personal information in the record is incorrect or that important information is missing, he/she must submit the request for an amendment in writing to our Compliance Officer. We do not have to agree to the request. If we deny the request we will tell the client why. The client has the right to submit a statement disagreeing with our decision.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Personal Information

The client has the right to find out what disclosures of his/her protected personal information have been made. The list of disclosures is called an Accounting. The Accounting may be for up to six (6) years prior to the date on which the request has been made. We are not required to include disclosures for National Security or Intelligence purposes, or to correctional institutions and law enforcement officials. The right to have an Accounting may be temporarily suspended if it will impede the Coalition's activities. The notice of suspension should specify required duration of the suspension. Requests for an Accounting of disclosures must be submitted in writing to our Compliance Officer. The client is entitled to one free Accounting in any twelve (12) month period. We may charge the client for additional Accountings.

Other Information

Contact Us

For any questions regarding this privacy policy, please contact:

Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
600 Jefferson, Suite 2050
Houston, TX 77002

Ph: 713 739 7514

Fax: 713 739 8038

Email: hmis@homelesshouston.org

To file a complaint with us, contact the Compliance Officer by phone or by mail at the contact address provided above:

Compliance Officer: Ron Jeffers, Chief Financial Officer

We support clients' right to protect the privacy of their personal information. We will not retaliate in any way if a client chooses to file a complaint with us.

For any other questions or to request more information about Houston/Harris County HMIS, please contact:

Erol Fetahagic, HMIS Administrator

Ph: 713 739 7514 x 6013

Email: efetahagic@homelesshouston.org

Changes to Privacy Policy

The Coalition may revise the HMIS Privacy Policy at any time. This Policy is posted at www.homelesshouston.org/hmis and at the Coalition office. Please visit the Coalition's website periodically to review our current policies and other documentation.