

5. Will HMIS projects count against my housing total in the Continuum of Care exhibit when calculating the "Housing Emphasis" points?

No. HMIS is a line item this year that is separate and apart from supportive services. Only housing activities and supportive services are used in calculating the "Housing Emphasis" points. As such, HMIS requests will not be included in this calculation.

6. How can we use HUD McKinney-Vento competitive funds to implement and operate a community-wide HMIS?

HMIS projects can be shared or dedicated. If the costs of the HMIS implementation are shared, then the project is classified as the type of housing or activity that it is providing. For example, if a transitional housing facility is sharing the cost of the HMIS implementation with other providers, that project continues to be classified as TH.

New this year, however, is the classification of dedicated HMIS projects as their own component, or type in the project exhibit and Project Priorities Chart. In the past, HMIS projects were classified as SSO projects. In order to accurately portray the purpose of these projects, they will be categorized independently from SSO projects. If your project was funded as an SSO HMIS and you are requesting renewal funding, you should classify your project as an HMIS, not an SSO project.

7. What standards will be used for assessing the cost-effectiveness of a proposed new or expanded HMIS?

HUD has not placed any limits on the size of the grant to fund a new or expanded HMIS, given the different number and size of homeless providers, the size of the geography involved, and the varying administrative arrangements required for implementing and operating a CoC-wide HMIS. However, HUD will look at the scope and reasonableness of the proposed activities compared to other communities in the cost-effectiveness review.

P. Strategies for Accessing Mainstream Assistance Programs

1. Why is HUD emphasizing the use of mainstream assistance programs?

Significant resources are needed to address the various housing and supportive service needs of homeless persons nationwide. Congress appropriates several *hundred billion* dollars each year for mainstream assistance programs, such as Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps and SSI. Homeless persons are typically eligible for one or more of these major assistance programs, which can provide many of the services that are currently funded by HUD's Supportive Housing Program (SHP). For a number of years, over half of all of HUD's competitive homeless assistance funds were used to provide supportive services, as opposed to housing. The 2001 Competition was the first time in six years that trend was reversed. As providers assist homeless persons in identifying and successfully accessing mainstream assistance programs, the need to use HUD homeless resources to provide supportive services will decline, allowing HUD's funds to be increasingly used to develop more needed housing.

Because of the important role played by these mainstream programs, the law requires applicants to certify that if their organization's project(s) are selected for funding as a result of this competition, they will coordinate and integrate their homeless program with other mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which homeless populations may be eligible.