



Frequently Asked Questions

1. WHAT IS A DATA WAREHOUSE?

Data warehousing is the consolidation of multiple data sources into one centralized database to create a collection of information, derived directly from operational systems. In this case, the specific purpose is to support statewide policy decisions, not day-to-day business operations, at the regional and state level.

2. WHY SHOULD OHIO HAVE A DATA WAREHOUSE?

The Ohio Continuums of Care (CoC) have come together as a group to leverage learning across the multiple communities, and to facilitate the creation of a statewide system that initially brings Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data together for a composite picture of the homeless population and services across Ohio. The goal is to include data from other systems in Ohio which may include corrections, health and mental health, and human services. A data warehouse will move the state towards the development of a holistic picture of homelessness and issues related to poverty in Ohio thereby furnishing reliable, comprehensive data to inform state, regional, and local plans and improve coordination, policy making and resource allocation.

3. WHEN WILL THE DATA WAREHOUSE BE OPERATIONAL?

The data warehouse is currently in the development stage. The Ohio Human Services Data Warehouse (OHSDW) Steering Committee, composed of representation from each participating CoC, plans to have the data warehouse operational within the next year.

4. WHERE WILL THE DATA WAREHOUSE BE HOUSED?

The data warehouse will be physically housed at the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA).

5. WHO IS RUNNING THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

The data warehouse is governed by a steering committee composed of eleven members including one representative from each of the participating CoCs, OHFA, and from the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO). COHHIO will be an ex-officio member of the OHSDW Steering Committee and will not have voting privileges. These constituents will act on behalf and with the authority of their respective agencies/CoCs to make decisions for the use and functions of the OHSDW and all data and other information entrusted to the collaborative group.

6. WHAT BENEFITS WILL OUR COMMUNITY GET FROM A DATA WAREHOUSE?

The primary benefits foreseen in working with data at a statewide level will be to:

- Identify cross-system use of services, analyze trends, identify mobility patterns, and assess the impact of investments in housing and human services to inform funding and policy decisions on the state and local levels.
- Facilitate the identification of system gaps and opportunities for cross-system collaboration.
- Use data to educate the public, elected officials, and other policymakers on the cross-system issues that affect the stability of households and communities.

7. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

The HUD's Universal Data Elements and Program Level Data Elements will be included in the data warehouse. No identified client information will be included.

8. WILL THE DATA WAREHOUSE PRODUCE REPORTS?

Yes. Reports will be developed using the data in the data warehouse. All reports will be expressly identified and agreed upon between the participating CoCs.

9. HOW WILL THIS DATA WAREHOUSE PROJECT KEEP OUR CLIENT INFORMATION SAFE AND SECURE?

Maintaining the privacy and security of the client data contained in the data warehouse is the highest priority during the development and implementation of this project. The data warehouse will observe all HMIS, HIPAA, and local, state, and federal privacy and security policies. Additionally, a data warehouse steering committee including local CoCs, HMIS administrators and agencies was created to establish privacy and security policies to guide the implementation of the data warehouse.

All participating CoCs mutually acknowledge that certain types of personal, health and financial data are protected by Government regulations and laws, including but not limited to the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a et seq.), HIPAA Privacy Rule (104-191 P.L.), and the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1306(a)).

Specific de-identification guidelines will be developed prior to data sharing. All PII data will be encrypted to protect the identity of any individual.

10. WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS DATA WAREHOUSE?

To protect client confidentiality and the security of data, access to de-identified raw data will be extremely limited. Local communities will only have access to aggregate reports specific to their region and their community upon approval of the data warehouse steering committee.

11. WHY SHOULD MY AGENCY PARTICIPATE?

Your agency does not have to participate directly in this project, but your participation will be through the approved participation at the CoC level. The data warehouse will use HMIS data collected as part of your daily operations to meet the requirements of HUD, ODSA, or your local community funders.

12. HOW WILL THIS HELP MY ORGANIZATION?

The data warehouse will provide you and your community with detailed information on how persons access all service systems in their efforts to maintain or regain housing.

13. WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

Participating in the data warehouse is completely voluntary. Each Ohio CoC was invited to participate on the OHSDW Steering Committee to oversee the planning and implementation of the data warehouse.

14. THIS SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE TRACKING PEOPLE. HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?

The information in the data warehouse will be de-identified. That means that no information that will identify any person will be included in the data warehouse.

15. I ALREADY ENTER DATA INTO HMIS. WILL I HAVE TO ENTER DATA INTO THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

No. The data included in the data warehouse will originate from currently collected HMIS data. You will not have to enter data into the data warehouse. Day-to-day operations of HMIS will not be disrupted and all current systems for data reporting and technical assistance for HMIS operation will remain unchanged.

16. WILL THIS JEOPARDIZE THE BENEFITS MY CLIENT RECIEVES IN ANY WAY?

No. Information included in the data warehouse will be de-identified by the CoC before it is received in the central data warehouse. There is no way for anyone looking at the data to be able to determine who is being served.

17. WHAT WILL IT COST OUR COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE?

There is no cost to participating communities other than time of the identified steering committee member and HMIS System Administrator.

18. HOW DO I GAIN ACCESS TO THE DATA IN THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

All third-party requests data or reports whether made to an individual, organization, CoC, or OHFA, must be in writing and transmitted immediately to the OHSDW Steering Committee. The committee is responsible for consideration and decisions related to the request or demand. No third-party requests for data or reports may be granted without prior approval from the steering committee.

19. WHO OWNS THE DATA IN THE DATA WAREHOUSE?

Each CoC, and their respective agencies, will retain ownership of any and all data entered into the data warehouse on their behalf from their HMIS implementation.