

Maricopa County Community Data Sharing

Affinity Groups - Data Sharing Recommendations:

1. The Data Sharing Plan will cover both HMIS and HMIS comparable databases used for Coordinated Entry (e.g., Homelink).
2. Create policies and procedures for data sharing, use and disclosure through the Baseline Data Sharing document.
3. ROI has been updated to meet minimum requirements for data sharing. Privacy Sign for posting will be updated as well.
4. The Privacy Notice documents data use and sharing system-wide; and with third party entities (e.g. researchers, special initiatives, and funders).
5. All system data disclosure has a process of CoC approval.

Recommended groups:

Standing Strong for Families (SSFF)/Family Housing Hub (FHH): Service providers who are fully on-boarded to the FHH and serve households with minor children. Data elements above the Universal Data Elements currently shared will be determined by SSFF.

HEART/Single adults: Service providers who are fully on-boarded to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) for households with no minor children. Data elements above the Universal Data Elements currently shared will be determined by HEART.

Youth/RHY: Service providers who are fully on-boarded to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) for youth; including unaccompanied minors and youth aged 18-24. Data elements above the Universal Data Elements currently shared will be determined by the Youth CES.

POLICY FOR ESTABLISHING AFFINITY GROUPS

A guiding principle in the development of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Coordinated Entry System (RCES) is the development of a client-centered system of care. The development of a client-centric information system(s) that provides an accurate portrayal of a clients' history of services helps professional service providers to coordinate services and reduces the trauma a client faces when repeating the common information providers collect. The knowledge of the history of services, paired with appropriate client consent, will assist in more appropriate referrals for service and coordination of care. In addition, research and planning efforts that utilize aggregate data help to improve the overall homeless services system and spur the community to adapt and change systems to benefit current and future clients.

Policy: The MAG Continuum of Care recognizes "affinity groups" that share data based on a business need to know and coordination of care for particular subpopulations of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Continuum limits the number of affinity groups to facilitate the seamless management of the HMIS database.

Procedure: In order to form an affinity group, providers shall present a proposal to the Performance Standards and Data Quality work group stating: 1) the need for the affinity group; 2) membership process for the affinity group; and 3) the data set to be shared. PSDQ will evaluate whether the need to form the affinity group outweighs the need for limiting the number of small data share agreements. Providers should note that the expansion of affinity groups beyond that which has been previously approved by the Continuum is strongly discouraged. If PSDQ determines there is a need for a **new** affinity group, PSDQ will recommend to the CoC Board the formation of the affinity group. All new affinity groups are subject to CoC Board approval.

Data Sharing and Affinity Groups Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will affinity groups impact aggregate reporting from HMIS?

No. We have been assured by the HUD Technical Assistance team and Community Information and Referral that affinity groups do not impact aggregate reporting from the HMIS system.

2. In order to be an HMIS user, must an agency belong to one of the affinity groups?

No. Affinity groups are collectives of CoC approved providers, who agree to share client-level data relevant to coordination of services and housing placement. Many agencies use HMIS and do not belong to a data sharing group. There is a mechanism for joining an affinity group if the work of your agency would benefit from sharing additional data with an affinity group, but you are not required to join.

3. What is shared by the Continuum?

The CoC already shares a broad array of data in HMIS. Currently, all agencies utilizing HMIS share personal identifying information (name, date of birth, and Social Security Numbers), demographic information (race, ethnicity, and gender), veteran status, whether the client or a member of the family has a disabling condition, and the client's history of housing services. If you are unable to see these data elements, there may be an issue with how HMIS is set-up for your agency. Contact Community Information and Referral at HMIS@CIR.org if you believe that you are not seeing data that is shared throughout the system.

4. How does data sharing impact referrals from the Family Housing Hub?

The process of referrals from the Family Housing Hub will not change. Records will continue to be unlocked upon acceptance into a housing project.

5. What happens if my agency wants to share data with an agency that is not in an affinity group?

There is a process to form new affinity groups through the Performance Standards and Data Quality work group. For more information contact Anne Scott at ascott@azmag.gov.