

**Columbus-Muscogee / Russell County
Continuum of Care
Homeless Management Information System (CC-HMIS)**

Interagency Network Data Sharing Agreement

The Columbus-Muscogee / Russell County Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (CC-HMIS) is a computerized information system designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. The system will be used for a variety of reasons, including efficient data sharing between authorized Contributing HMIS Organizations (CHOs), which will in turn provide more effective and streamlined services to clients. The system is administered by the Columbus Continuum of Care through Home for Good acting as the HMIS lead agency.

Each CC-HMIS CHO will have access to data entered by its own staff about the clients they serve. As well, each CC-HMIS user will have access to general client data for all open client records in order to reduce the creation of duplicate client records. In order to systematically share client data [as defined in the Policies and Procedures manual with other CHOs, the interested organizations must jointly establish an Organization Partner Agreement formalized by the execution of this agreement. This is one of the primary security measures specified in the Policies and Procedures manual to maintain the confidentiality and security of client information.

This Organization Partner Agreement is entered into on _____(day/mo/yr) by the organization listed on the attachment to this agreement. This executed Organization Partner Agreement shall establish a data sharing network comprised solely of those Contributing HMIS Organizations listed on the attachment.

Each organization listed on the attachment agrees as follows:

I. General Understandings:

A. In this agreement, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. “Client” refers to a consumer of services;
2. “Direct Partner Agency” shall refer generally to any service provider organization which directly enters in the CC-HMIS database;
3. “Participating Agency” shall refer generally to any service provider organization which participates in this Data Sharing Agreement;
4. “Data Sharing Network” shall refer collectively to all service provider organizations that are participating in this Data Sharing Agreement;
5. “CC-HMIS” refers to the ClientTrack Columbus System governed and adopted by the Columbus Continuum of Care as the official Homeless Management Information System;

6. "System Administrator" refers to the designated individual at Home for Good who will be responsible for overseeing the daily technical aspects of the CC-HMIS;
 7. "Notice of Uses and Disclosures" shall refer to the standard CC-HMIS form or a comparable form developed by the Agency, which incorporates the content of the standard CC-HMIS Notice of Uses and Disclosures form;
 8. "Client Consent for Network Data Sharing" shall refer to the standard CC-HMIS form or a comparable form developed by the Agency, which incorporates the content of the standard CC-HMIS Client Consent for Network Data Sharing form.
- B. The Board appointed executive officer of each Participating Agency is ultimately responsible for ensuring that users within his/her agency abide by all policies stated in this Interagency Network Data Sharing Agreement.
 - C. Only the Agencies, which have been both, listed on the attachment and whose executive Directors have signed the agreement and dated the signatory page shall be considered a Participating Agency in this Data Sharing Network.
 - D. Each Participating Agency understands that any additions, subtractions or modifications to the original list of Participating Agencies shall require notification to all remaining Participating Agencies and the System Administrator.
 1. **Authorization:** The System Administrator shall authorize data sharing to begin among a network. Data Sharing shall not begin without authorization from the System Administrator. Authorization shall not be granted until the System Administrator obtains the original copy of this Interagency Network Data Sharing Agreement, which has been signed and dated by the Executive Director of each Participating Agency.
 2. Each Participating Agency shall retain a copy of this Interagency Network Data Sharing Agreement.

II. Confidentiality: The Participating Agency shall uphold relevant federal and state confidentiality regulations and laws that protect Client records. The Participating Agency shall only release client records with written consent by the client or the client's guardian, unless otherwise specified in its Notice of Uses and Disclosures.

- A. The Participating Agency shall abide specifically with the provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and all rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the authority granted therein (collectively, and collectively with HIPAA, the "HIPAA Regulations" and including, but not limited to, those set forth in 45 C.F.R. §§ 160-164 (2003), all as supplemented, replaced and amended from time to time). The Participating Agency shall also comply with any other State law regulating the privacy and confidentiality of personal information.
- B. The Participating Agency shall abide specifically by federal confidentiality regulations as contained in the Code of Federal regulations, 42 CFR Part 2 regarding disclosure of alcohol

and/or drug abuse records. In general terms, the federal rules prohibit the disclosure of alcohol and/or drug abuse records unless disclosure is expressly permitted by written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by CFR Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose. The Participating Agency understands the federal rules restrict the use of the information to criminally investigate or prosecute any alcohol or drug abuse patients.

- C. The Participating Agency will not solicit or input information from clients into the CC-HMIS unless it is essential to provide services or perform one of the functions described in the Notice of Uses and Disclosures.
- D. The Participating Agency agrees not to release any confidential information received from the CC-HMIS database to any organization or individual for the purpose other than those specified in the Notice of Uses and Disclosures without specific written consent by the client.
- E. The Participating Agency agrees not to release any client information collected by other Participating Agencies stored within the CC-HMIS database to any organization or individual not in this Data Sharing Network, unless specified in the Notice of Uses and Disclosures.
- F. The Participating Agency will ensure that all persons accessing the CC-HMIS have completed the policy and application training modules required for their user type, have executed an CC-HMIS User Agreement, and have been issued his/her own User ID and password for the CC-HMIS. The Participating Agency will ensure that all persons who are issued a User ID and password for the CC-HMIS abide by this Interagency Data Sharing Agreement, including the confidentiality rules and regulations.

III. Notice and Informed Consent: Participating Agencies shall use the required client notification and/or consent procedure described in the CC-HMIS SOP prior to entering any client level data in the CC-HMIS.

- A. Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Data and Technical Standards Final Notice published in the Federal Register on July 30, 2004; revised March 2010 and the CC-HMIS policies and procedures, each Participating Agency will prominently display an CC-HMIS notice of Uses and Disclosures or a notice developed by the Participating Agency that incorporates the content of the Continuum approved CC-HMIS Notice of Uses and Disclosures form, in its program offices where intake occurs, and will provide a written copy of the Notices to all clients enrolling in the Participating Agency programs and services. The Participating Agency will update its Notice of Uses and Disclosures as needed to comply with federal law and regulations and with CC-HMIS policy changes.
- B. The Participating Agency shall provide a verbal explanation of the CC-HMIS and shall make special accommodations to assist the client in the event that an individual needs special accommodations, is not literate in English or has difficulty understanding the consent form.
- C. The Participating Agency will implement the appropriate procedures necessary to enforce the client notification and consent procedures and to ensure that Participating Agency personnel diligently present the Notice of Uses and Disclosures to incoming Clients. The Participating

Agency understands that proper notice, as defined by the Standard Operating Procedures, is required **before** entering client information into the CC-HMIS.

- D. The Participating Agency understands that informed, written client consent, as defined by the Standard Operating Procedures, is required **before** authorizing any general client information to be shared with authorized Participating Agencies. The Participating Agency also understands that informed, written client consent must be received from the client at the time of initial client intake in order to authorize data sharing with other agencies in this Data Sharing Network. Informed, written client consent shall be documented by completion of the CC-HMIS Client Consent for Network Data Sharing Form.
- E. The Participating Agency shall keep signed copies of the Client Consent for Network Data Sharing forms on file for a period of three years (or specific end date, if client has indicated one) after the completion of the consent timeframe. The Participating Agency shall make copies of the Client Consent available to other Participating Agencies upon request.
- F. The Participating Agency shall not knowingly enter false or misleading data under any circumstances.
- G. If, at any time, the Client submits a written revocation of Client Consent for Network Data Sharing to a Participating Agency, the Participating Agency is responsible for terminating authorization to share the Client's information within the CC-HMIS. The written revocation will not apply retroactively to Client information that was shared prior to the revocation.
- H. The Participating Agency understands that Clients have the right to refuse to sign the Client Consent for Network Data Sharing. Services will be provided to Clients regardless of whether the Client agrees to release his or her information for the purpose of interagency data sharing, provided the Client would otherwise be eligible for services.

IV. Use of Shared Data by Participating Agencies: The Participating Agency shall comply with and enforce the User Agreements and the CC-HMIS Standard Operating Procedures. The Board appointed Executive Director of the Participating Agency is responsible for establishing and monitoring proper procedures for agency staff access to and use of the CC-HMIS.

- A. The Participating Agency agrees only to allow access to the CC-HMIS based upon need. Need exists only for those program staff, volunteers or designated personnel who work directly with clients or who supervise staff working directly with clients and for those program staff, volunteers or designated personnel with data entry or data-related agency administrative responsibilities.
- B. User roles shall limit each user's access and ability to modify or delete portions of shared Client information. Participating Agencies have agreed to a common level of user access that is appropriate to the job function of each user. Each Participating Agency will assign appropriate user access to authorized Agency users based upon their functions.
- C. The Participating Agency shall establish business controls and practices to ensure organizational adherence to the CC-HMIS Standard Operating Procedures regarding Interagency Data Sharing.

CC-HMIS Contributing HMIS Organizations

Chattahoochee Valley Jail Ministry (including Safehouse, Grace House & Trinity House)

Home for Good

Homeless Resource Network

House of T.I.M.E

New Horizons

Open Door Community House

Salvation Army

Stewart Community Home

Valley Interfaith Promise