

# MINNESOTA'S HMIS DATA STANDARDS GUIDE

## CONTENTS

About This Guide.....	2
HUD Universal Data Elements .....	3
HUD Common Program Specific Data Elements.....	3
Minnesota Universal Data Elements.....	4
M1 Tribal Membership .....	4
M2 Veteran Question Series.....	5
M3 Extent of Homelessness .....	6
M4 Prior Permanent Residence Series .....	7
M5 County where resides.....	7
4.11 Domestic Violence .....	7
Comparison of Picklist Values: Client doesn't know, Client prefers not to answer, Data not collected .....	9
Sources.....	9

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide provides information to standardize data collection across Minnesota based on requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the State of Minnesota. This guide was created by the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA).

- **HUD Data Elements:** This Minnesota guide no longer includes content from the HMIS Data Standards Manual and HMIS Data Standards Data Dictionary, because the best way to make sure you have the most complete and up-to-date information about the HUD Universal and Common Program-Specific data elements is to get it directly from HUD. HUD's materials can help you know what data collection is required in HMIS to meet their requirements.

We recommend:

- [HMIS Data Standards Manual](#) - click this link for broader information about each data element, including why it is important, how it is defined, and instructions for how to collect it. You can also find links to other federal partner program manuals here.  
[HMIS Data Standards Data Dictionary](#) – click this link for more technical information about each data element, including brief summaries of wording and logic changes for the FY24 Data Standards.

In each document, we recommend navigating by clicking the links in the Table of Contents; they will help you quickly find what you need.

- **Minnesota Data Elements:** This guide includes data elements that are required to be collected by all projects entering data into Minnesota's HMIS. These data elements are reviewed biannually by MN's HMIS Governing Board. These data elements are not covered in the federal documents referenced above. We have included the Field and Response Categories within this document as Minnesota does not have a corresponding Data Standards Manual nor Data Standards Data Dictionary for these data elements.
- **Can't find a data element in this guide?** Check your Program Specific User Guide organized by program at [hmismn.org/forms-and-instructions](https://hmismn.org/forms-and-instructions), or your Federal Partner Program Manual for federal programs. *This guide does not include information about all program specific data elements, simply the data elements that are common to most programs.*

## HUD UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS

HMIS Universal Data Elements (UDEs) are elements required to be collected by all projects participating in HMIS, regardless of funding source.<sup>1</sup>

The UDEs are the basis for producing unduplicated estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness, accessing services from homeless assistance projects, basic demographic characteristics of people experiencing homeless, and patterns of service use, including information on shelter stays and homelessness over time.

### Universal Identifier Elements (One and Only One per Client Record)

- 3.01 Name
- 3.02 Social Security Number
- 3.03 Date of Birth
- 3.04 Race and Ethnicity
- 3.06 Gender
- 3.07 Veteran Status

### Universal Project Stay Elements (One or More Value(s) Per Client, One Value Per Project Stay)

- 3.08 Disabling Condition
- 3.10 Project Start Date
- 3.11 Project Exit Date
- 3.12 Destination
- 3.15 Relationship to Head of Household
- 3.16 Enrollment CoC
- 3.20 Housing Move-In Date
- 3.917 Prior Living Situation

## HUD COMMON PROGRAM SPECIFIC DATA ELEMENTS

The Program Specific Data Elements (PSDEs) are elements that are required by at least one of the Federal Partner homeless programs. Some of the program specific data elements are collected across most programs. These are called “Common” Program Specific Data Elements. We are covering the Common Program Specific Data Elements in this section.

4.02 Income and Sources	4.03 Non-Cash Benefits	4.04 Health Insurance
4.05 Physical Disability	4.06 Developmental Disability	4.07 Chronic Health Condition
4.08 HIV / AIDS	4.09 Mental Health Disorder	4.10 Substance Use Disorder
4.11 Domestic Violence	4.12 Current Living Situation	4.13 Date of Engagement
4.14 Bed-Night Date	4.19 Coordinated Entry Assessment	4.20 Coordinated Entry Event

# MINNESOTA UNIVERSAL DATA ELEMENTS

The data elements in this section will not appear in any HUD published materials as they are only used in Minnesota. For that reason, we have added a table to each element with the field name and response categories.

M1 Tribal Membership

M2 Veteran Question Series

M3 Extent of Homelessness

M4 Prior Permanent Residence Series

M5 County Where Resides

4.11 Domestic Violence

## M1 TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP

**Data Collected About** All Clients

**Data Collection Point** Record Creation

**Rationale** To connect and refer tribal members to available services and to assist Tribal Nations with obtaining accurate homeless data.

**Data Collection Instructions** If the client self-identifies as “*American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous*” as one of the five racial categories, then a response to “*If Native American, of which tribe are you an enrolled member?*” is required. If none of the client’s self-identified racial categories are “*American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous,*” the question can be left unanswered.

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
1 If Native American, of which tribe are you an enrolled member?	HUD 3.04 Race and Ethnicity Field 1 & Response 1 <i>American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous</i> <sup>2</sup>	Lower Sioux Indian Community in the State of Minnesota
		Mdewakanton Sioux Indians
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - Bois Forte
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - Fond du Lac
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - Grand Portage
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - Leech Lake
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - Mille Lacs Band
		Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - White Earth
		Prairie Island Indian Community in the State of Minnesota
		Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
		Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota
		Upper Sioux Community
		Other
		Not enrolled member of any tribe
		Not applicable

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
		Client doesn't know
		Client prefers not to answer
		Data not collected

## M2 VETERAN QUESTION SERIES

**Data Collected About** All Adults

**Data Collection Point** Project Start

**Rationale** A veteran is someone who has served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty. The questions below attempt to enumerate these distinctions, and this is why it is asked in addition to *Veteran Status* (3.07).

**Data Collection Instructions** This should be updated for clients who turn 18 while participating in the program on the Entry Assessment into the project. Has client ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (e.g., served in full-time capacity in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard) OR served in the National Guard or as a reservist? If no, skip to next section.

As part of Heading Home: MN's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, the **MN Homeless Veteran Registry** attempts to ensure that Veterans experiencing homelessness have access to appropriate housing and services. This registry is optional and separate than HMIS.

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
1 Did you serve on Active Duty, or in the National Guard or Reserves?	None	0 No
		1 Yes, Active Duty (including National Guard and Reserves)
		2 Yes, National Guard, but never activated/deployed
		3 Yes, Reserves, but never activated/deployed
		4 Both Guard & Reserves, but never activated/deployed
		8 Client doesn't know
		9 Client prefers not to answer
		99 Data not collected
A Has client been referred to the Homeless Veteran Registry?	Field 1; Response 1, 2, 3, 4	0 No
		1 Yes
		8 Client doesn't know
		9 Client prefers not to answer
		99 Data not collected

## M3 EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS

**Data Collected About** Head of Household and Adults    **Data Collection Point** Project Start

**Rationale** To document a household's homeless status based on MN definition of homelessness and to determine who in the homeless response system meets the criteria for Long Term Homeless. This data can be valuable to determine state resources and making appropriate referrals to programs within the Coordinated Entry System.

**Data Collection Instruction** Not currently homeless can be used for homelessness prevention projects.

*Long-Term Homelessness:* Persons including individuals, unaccompanied youth, or families with children who lack a permanent place to live continuously for a year or more or at least four times in the past three years. Time spent in an institutional care or correctional facility shall be excluded when determining the length of time a household has been homeless except in the case where an individual was in a facility for fewer than 90 days and was homeless at entry to the facility.<sup>3</sup>

*Doubled Up/Couch Hopping:* Doubled up or couch hopping is considered an episode of homelessness if a household is doubled up with another household (and duration is less than one year) and couch hops as a temporary way to avoid living on the streets or in an emergency shelter.<sup>3</sup>

*Transitional Housing (TH):* Time spent in transitional housing is a neutral event. It is not considered time housed or time homeless when determining LTH eligibility.<sup>3</sup>

*Institutions:* Time spent in an institutional care (treatment, hospital, foster care, etc.) or correctional facility (jail or prison) is a neutral event. It is not considered time housed or time homeless except in the case where an individual was in a facility for fewer than 90 days and was homeless at entry to the facility. That time can be considered time homeless.<sup>3</sup>

Evaluate the housing history prior to and after TH or an institutional stay to determine if it meets the state's LTH definition. NOTE: Minnesota's definition does not require that the person have a disabling condition.<sup>3</sup>

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
1    Extent of Homelessness by Minnesota's Definition	None	Not currently homeless
		1 <sup>st</sup> time homeless and less than 1 year without home
		Multiple times homeless, but NOT meeting LTH definition
		Long term: At least 1 year, or at least 4 times in past 3 years

---

## M4 PRIOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE SERIES

**Data Collected About** Head of Household and Adults    **Data Collection Point** Project Start

**Rationale** To identify the location of the household's last permanent residence, which may be different than the current location of the household. This data can be valuable when attempting to understand the scope of assistance and resources that are needed in a region that may not have a variety of interventions to end and prevent homelessness.

**Data Collection Instructions** A permanent address is an apartment, house, or room where the client last lived for 90 days or more. Shelters and time-limited housing are not permanent addresses.

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
1 State (Location of prior residence)	None	1 Minnesota
		2 [Picklist of the remaining 49 States]
		3 Washington, D.C.
		4 Other Country – Outside US
A County of prior residence (MN only)	Field 1; Response 1	1 [Picklist of all MN counties]
B City of prior residence (MN only)	Field 1; Response 1	1 [Lookup field of all Minnesota cities]

---

## M5 COUNTY WHERE RESIDES

**Data Collected About** Head of Household    **Data Collection Point** Project Start, Update

**Rationale** To link client household data to the relevant Minnesota county. Necessary to improve counts of persons who are served within a CoC that operates across multiple counties.

**Data Collection Instructions** Select the county where the head of household is staying at the time of project entry. A new *County where Resides* record must be created at any time during a project stay if a client moves into a different county while enrolled.

Field	Dependency	Response Category/Data Type
1 County where resides	None	[Picklist of all MN counties]

---

## 4.11 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On July 1, 2019, this HUD Common Program Specific Data Element became a Minnesota Universal Data Element. The language in the FY 2024 Data Standards was changed to remove the word “victim” from the term “domestic violence victim/survivor,” but Minnesota voted to continue using both “victim” and “survivor” terms, as both are experiences an individual can have (simultaneously or at different times). The following data collection instructions have been copied from the [HMIS Data Standards Manual](#).

**Data Collected About** Head of Household and All Adults    **Data Collection Point** Project Start, Update

**Rationale** To indicate whether the Head of Household and other adults served are survivors of domestic violence. Ascertaining whether a person is a survivor of or fleeing from domestic violence is necessary to provide the person with the appropriate services to prevent further abuse and to treat the physical and psychological injuries from prior abuse. Also, ascertaining that a person may be experiencing domestic violence may be important for the safety of project staff and other clients. At the aggregate level, knowing the size of the population of persons experiencing homelessness who have also experienced domestic violence is critical for determining the resources needed to address the problem.<sup>1</sup>

**Data Collection Instructions** In separate fields, indicate (1) if the client is a survivor of domestic violence, (2) when the experience occurred, and (3) if the client is currently fleeing domestic violence. Verification of domestic violence experience is not required.<sup>1</sup>

*Domestic Violence* records created at project start are to reflect the information as of the date of project start. 'Information Date' for those records must reflect the date of project start.<sup>1</sup>

Projects should be especially sensitive to the collection of domestic violence information from clients and should implement appropriate interview protocols to protect client privacy and safety such as:

- Asking this question in a private location and not in the presence of a romantic partner;
- Delaying all entry of data about clients identified with a recent history of domestic violence; or
- Choosing not to disclose data about clients with a history of domestic violence to other homeless projects.<sup>1</sup>

If clients are providing inconsistent information (e.g., indicating that they are currently fleeing an abusive situation but their response to 'When experience occurred' is "One year ago or more"), clarification should be facilitated by staff. Staff can help clients understand that the HEARTH Act definition of a DV includes "when a person is experiencing trauma or lack of safety related to, or fleeing to attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life threatening conditions related to the violence against the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized" which is broader than a specific violent episode. The definition also includes people who have no safe residence and lack the resources to obtain other safe permanent housing. There are situations where the act of fleeing takes place weeks or months after a particular violent episode, but the conditions within the home remain dangerous. With this clarification, the staff and client together can determine the best response for 'When experience occurred.'<sup>1</sup>



## COMPARISON OF PICKLIST VALUES: CLIENT DOESN'T KNOW, CLIENT PREFERS NOT TO ANSWER, DATA NOT COLLECTED

Most fields in HMIS have these options available as responses. These are used as explanations for missing data, and should be used to mean the following:

**Client doesn't know** means that the intake worker asked the client the question and they did not know the answer.

**Client prefers not to answer** means that the intake worker asked the client the question and the client knows the information but does not want to provide the information to record in HMIS.

**Data not collected** means that, for whatever reason, the intake worker was unable to, or did not, ask the client the question.

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>FY 2024 HMIS Data Standards (Manual), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Version 1.3, August 2023, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual-2024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>FY 2024 HMIS Data Standards Data Dictionary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Version 1.3, August 2023 <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Dictionary-2024.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Long-Term Homelessness (LTH) Definitions and Eligibility Questions, Minnesota Housing, March 2017, [www.mnhousing.gov/get/MHFA\\_011066](http://www.mnhousing.gov/get/MHFA_011066)

## Version Updates

1	
2	<p>3.20 Housing Move-In Date: Updated Data Collection Point from “Interim Update” to “Occurrence Point (Must be between Project Start and Project Exit)”</p> <p>4.13 Date of Engagement: Updated null fields to read “Data Collected About Head of Household and Adults” and “Data Collection Point Occurrence Point (At point of engagement; often Project Start or Update)”</p> <p>Included new MN Universal Data Element, <b>Tribal Membership</b>.</p> <p>Updated document title to Minnesota Universal Data Elements</p>
3	<p>Added new MN Universal Data Elements, <b>County where resides</b> and <b>Domestic Violence</b> series</p> <p>Updated MN Universal Data Elements, <b>Foster Care</b> and <b>Recent Institutional History</b></p>
4	<p>Updated numbering convention (e.g. 3.1 is now 3.01)</p> <p>3.917 Prior Living Situation: Renamed from “Living Situation” to “Prior Living Situation”</p> <p>4.06 Developmental Disability and 4.08 HIV/AIDS: Removed dependent field "Substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently"</p> <p>4.12 Current Living Situation: Renamed from “Contacts” to “Current Living Situation”</p> <p>Added new Common Program Specific Data Elements <b>4.19 Coordinated Entry Assessment</b> and <b>4.20 Coordinated Entry Event</b></p> <p>Removed 4.18 Housing Assessment Disposition</p>
5	<p>Removed retired MN Universal Data Elements: fields B-F of the Veteran Series, Foster Care, Recent Institutional History, one field of the Prior Permanent Residence Series: “How long since client had permanent place to live (permanent address)?”</p> <p>Updated Source document to FY 2022 HMIS Data Standards Manual</p> <p>3.04 Race: Revised language</p> <p>3.06 Gender: Revised language and element structure</p> <p>Added new Element Numbers and Field Numbers to Minnesota’s Universal Data Elements</p> <p>4.09 Revised from “Mental Health Problem” to “Mental Health Disorder” throughout</p> <p>4.10 Revised from “Substance Abuse” to “Substance Use Disorder” throughout</p> <p>Updated Rationale and Data Collection Instructions for HUD Universal Data Elements and HUD Common Program Specific Data Elements to align with clarifying language HUD supplied in the FY 2022 HMIS Data Standards Manual, most substantially: 3.03 Date of Birth, 3.15 Relationship to Head of Household, 3.20 Housing Move-In Date, and 4.12 Current Living Situation</p>
6	<p>Removed rationale and data collection instructions for HUD Universal Data Elements and HUD Common Program Specific Data Elements data collection details. Added instructions on how to access HUD Exchange for this information.</p> <p>Updated Source documents to FY 2024 versions.</p> <p>Changed 3.16 element name to “Enrollment CoC”</p> <p>Changed “Client Refused” to “Client prefers not to answer” in all applicable HMIS data elements</p> <p>Added “Not applicable” as a response option to the <b>Tribal Membership</b> data element.</p> <p>Updated <b>Domestic Violence</b> language from FY 2024 HMIS Data Standards Manual.</p>