

# **Georgia Pathways Homeless Management Information System**

**Policies And Procedures Manual**



**<hmis>**

**Version 2.1**



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## **Section A. Background and Structure**

### **A.1 HMIS Background**

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. An HMIS is typically a web-based software application that homeless assistance providers use to coordinate care, manage their operations, share information and better serve their clients.

HMIS implementations can encompass geographic areas ranging from a single county to an entire state. They are based primarily on the Continuum of Care geography. A HUD Continuum of Care is the primary decision making entity defined in the funding application to HUD as the official body representing a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. An HMIS helps to link homeless assistance providers within a community and create a more coordinated and effective housing and service delivery system.

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other planners and policymakers at the federal, state and local levels use aggregate HMIS data to obtain better information about the extent and nature of homelessness over time. Specifically, an HMIS can be used to produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons, understand patterns of service use, and measure the effectiveness of homeless programs.

The Georgia Homeless Management Information System was started in 2002. Pathways Community Network was designated as the State of Georgia's sole HMIS provider. The PATHWAYS COMPASS has been around since 1999 when it was developed to assist homeless service providers in Atlanta to share information and case manage their clients. By 2004, Pathways incorporated the HUD data standards and had added a number of agencies to the system from across the state. Currently the Georgia HMIS has over 300 active agencies and covers six of the seven Georgia Continuum's of Care. Active agencies have entered over 450,000 individuals and families into PATHWAYS COMPASS since 1999. The Georgia HMIS is a shared system, meaning agencies that are serving the same person can view information and coordinate services using HMIS.

### **A.2 HUD Requirements and HMIS Data Standards**

HUD published the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Revised Data Standards Final Notice on March, 2010. The Final Notice describes the types of changes from the July 30, 2004 notice and an introduction to the 2010 Data Standards Notice including the new Program Descriptor Data Elements, Universal Data Elements, and Program Specific Data Elements for HUD-funded providers that must collect data from clients receiving homeless assistance services. The privacy and system security standards for providers remain the same as presented in the July 30, 2004 Final Notice.

Access the Revised Data Standards at:

<http://hmis.info/Resources/7523/Final-Revised-HMIS-Data-Standards-March-2010.aspx>

Access the Privacy and System Security Standards from the July 30, 2004 Final Notice at:

<http://www.hmis.info/Resources/724/Data-Standards-Training-Module-1-Handout-HUD-Data-and-Technical-Standards.aspx>

Access the Frequently Asked Questions document developed by Abt at:

<http://www.hmis.info/ClassicAsp/documents/2010%20HMIS%20Data%20Standards%20Training.pdf>

### **A.3 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)**

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is a report to the U.S. Congress on the extent and nature of homelessness in America. The report is prepared by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about the demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity to house homeless persons. The report is based primarily on Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data about persons who experience homelessness during a 12-month period.

The AHAR uses aggregate HMIS data from communities across the country to produce a national report on homelessness to the U.S. Congress. The AHAR is designed to:

- Develop an estimate of the number of homeless persons nationwide;
- Create a descriptive profile of homeless persons;
- Understand service use patterns; and,
- Estimate the nation's capacity to house homeless persons.

The AHAR is based on an unduplicated count of homeless persons within each community, and focuses on persons who use emergency or transitional shelters. Thus, the AHAR reports only on the number of sheltered homeless persons and does not account for homeless persons who: only use a supportive service program, are formerly homeless and living in permanent supportive housing; or are service resistant and do not access any type of homeless service program during the study period.

Eventually, all Continuum of Care will most likely submit AHAR data. Therefore, it is important that all programs, especially those that provide shelter or housing, enter data accurately and in a timely manner.

For more information on Annual Homeless Assessment Report, see <http://ahar.hmis.info/>

## **A.4 Georgia HMIS Organization, Management and Contacts**

### **Project Goals**

The goals of the GA HMIS Project are:

- 1) Assist homeless persons to navigate the continuum of care
- 2) Assist homeless service agencies with information allowing them to better serve their clients
- 3) Assist homeless agencies, local, state and Federal entities with information on numbers of homeless persons, reasons for homelessness, services they require, services they receive, gaps in services, etc.

### **Project Organization**

The Georgia HMIS is a collaborative statewide effort to implement HMIS across six of the seven Georgia continuum's of care. Columbus-Muscogee has a separate HMIS implementation. The Lead Agency for the Georgia HMIS project is the Department of Community Affairs. The lead agency oversees the HMIS project and manages the Supportive Housing Program grant from HUD, however each Continuum of Care is responsible for ensuring that the implementation is successful in their Continuum. Many of the Continuum of Care also have HMIS staff that work specifically on HMIS issues in that Continuum.

### **HMIS System Development and Planning**

Each CoC is responsible for soliciting feedback from agencies and stakeholders and communicating that feedback to the Steering Committee. Each CoC should establish an advisory group made up of agencies and other stakeholders in order to solicit feedback on HMIS implementation. The CoC representative should then bring this feedback to the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee is made up of representatives from each of the six continuum of care, the DCA project manager, and Pathways staff. The role of the steering committee is to oversee overall implementation and request enhancements to the Pathways system.

### **HMIS Implementation**

Each CoC is responsible for ensuring that all agencies in that CoC are adhering to the State or Local CoC HMIS policies. The CoC lead should coordinate directly with Pathways in order to develop a training and technical assistance plan that will allow them to troubleshoot any problems in implementation. Agencies can also request training and technical assistance from Pathways directly, however, Pathways should communicate these requests as well as any training and technical assistance provided to the Continuum of Care representative on a regular basis.

If a user or agency has a request for a **system enhancement** they should communicate the request to their CoC lead that will pass it on to the project manager once it has been reviewed. The HMIS enhancement request form can be downloaded from the DCA website:

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/documents/HMISEnhancementRequest.doc>

### **Pathways System Errors**

## Georgia HMIS Standard Operating Procedures

For issues related to system errors, agencies and the continuum of care representatives should communicate directly with Pathways. System errors can be reported through the system itself using the “Contact Support” link or by calling Pathways Support at 866.818.1032, option 2 or 404.639.9933, option 2 in the Atlanta area. You may also contact Support by email at [support@pcni.org](mailto:support@pcni.org). Pathways will provide the steering committee and project management with regular updates on any system errors reported and the status of their repair.

### Contacts

The key contact at the Department of Community Affairs is the Project Manager, Lindsey Stillman. The lead contacts at Pathways are Jeanette Pollock, Pathways Support & Training Manager and Tommy Phillips, Pathways Community Relations.

Cobb, Augusta/Richmond and Tri-J Continuum of Care have dedicated HMIS staff that are the lead contact for any HMIS issues.

Cobb HMIS Administrator – Joan Toder ([jtoder@hotmail.com](mailto:jtoder@hotmail.com))

Augusta HMIS Administrator – Henry Holt ([hholt@augustaga.gov](mailto:hholt@augustaga.gov))

Tri-J HMIS Administrator – Shenelle Smith ([shenelle.smith@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:shenelle.smith@fultoncountyga.gov))

Tri-J HMIS Database Specialist – Gbolade Okestra Soneyin ([Gbolade.Soneyin@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:Gbolade.Soneyin@fultoncountyga.gov))

Tri-J HMIS Research Analyst – Yarnecia Hamilton ([Yarnecia.Hamilton@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:Yarnecia.Hamilton@fultoncountyga.gov))

Balance of State HMIS Administrator – Lindsey Stillman ([lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov](mailto:lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov))

Balance of State HMIS Data Analyst – Dave Totten ([dave.totten@dca.ga.gov](mailto:dave.totten@dca.ga.gov))

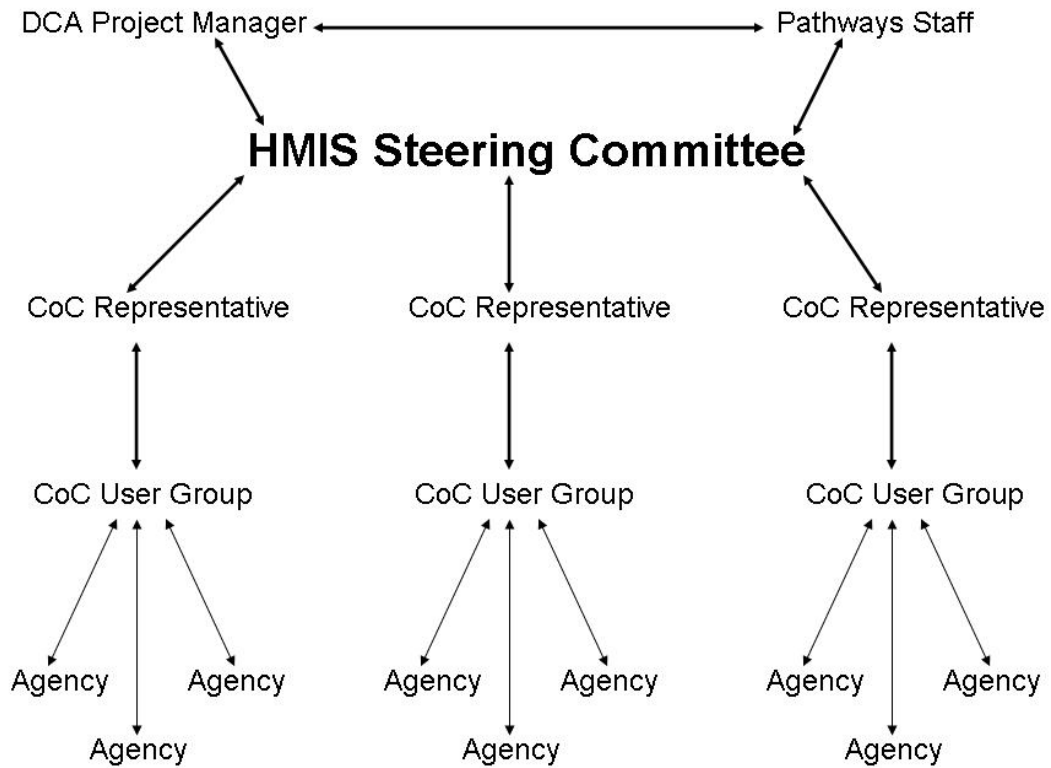
In Continua without a dedicated HMIS Administrator, agencies should contact the CoC Lead for any HMIS issues. The lead contacts for Continuum of Care without HMIS staff are as follows:

Athens/Clarke – Evan Mills ([Evan.Mills@co.clarke.ga.us](mailto:Evan.Mills@co.clarke.ga.us))

Savannah/Chatham – Mark Baggett ([mbaggett@homelessauthority.org](mailto:mbaggett@homelessauthority.org)),

If your agency is located in Columbus/Muscogee, you should contact the Continuum of Care Lead, Liz Dillard ([liz@homelessresourcenetwork.org](mailto:liz@homelessresourcenetwork.org)) for information on the Columbus/Muscogee HMIS Implementation.

**PROJECT ORGANIZATION CHART**



**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

User

- Maintain C&E Certification
- Maintain Password
- Obtain Client Consent
- Enter and Update Data
- Adhere to Privacy and Security Policies

Agency

- Attend Advisory/User Group Meetings
- Ensure Adherence to Relevant HMIS Policies
- Ensure Adherence to HMIS Privacy and Security Policies
- Communicate Concerns and Enhancement Requests to Continuum Representative
- Communicate Bugs to Pathways and Continuum HMIS Administrator
- Request Support and Technical Assistance from Pathways when needed

## Georgia HMIS Standard Operating Procedures

### Continuum of Care HMIS Representative(s)

- Run Continuum User Group
- Attend Steering Committee
- Inform Agencies of Continuum Specific Policies
- Monitor HMIS Utilization by CoC Agencies
- Communicate Concerns and Enhancement Requests to Project Manager
- Communicate Bugs to Pathways
- Troubleshoot Implementation and Training Needs
- Provide additional assistance to agencies as needed
- AHAR submission

### Lead Agency Staff (DCA)

- Manage GA HMIS SHP Grant
- Coordinate Steering Committee
- Obtain Feedback from Continuum Representatives
- Compile Continuum Requested Enhancements for Steering Committee
- Monitor Project Progress and Deliverables
- Monitor Adherence to HUD HMIS Data and Technical Standards and Guidelines
- Communicate National HMIS Best Practices to Steering Committee

### Pathways Staff

- Attend Steering Committee
- Develop Enhancements as Directed by Steering Committee
- Assist Continuums with Monitoring Data Quality and Completeness
- Monitor Agency and System Security
- Repair System Errors in a Timely Manner
- Ensure System is Operational and Accessible
- Provide Ongoing Reports to Project Manager and Steering Committee regarding: Data Quality; Training and Technical Assistance Provided; Enhancement Project Progress; Bug List and Fixes; HMIS Utilization Rates; Security Audit Findings

## **A.5 State and Local HMIS Policies**

DCA has developed a policy regarding utilization of HMIS for all DCA grantees and Balance of State Continuum of Care grantees. The policy can be found on the DCA website at: [http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/documents/HMIS\\_Policy\\_7-07-09.pdf](http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/documents/HMIS_Policy_7-07-09.pdf). This policy may be updated periodically.

DCA grantees should also refer to the Housing Support Standards regarding additional requirements regarding PATHWAYS COMPASS. Information regarding the HSS Standards can be found on the DCA website at: <http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/HousingSupportStandards.asp>

Each additional Continuum of Care may have a Continuum policy regarding HMIS implementation. Agencies should contact Continuum leadership regarding any Continuum

specific requirements. If there are no specific Continuum Policy for their county and the agency is not a DCA grantee, the agency should follow general the Georgia HMIS Standard Operating Procedures on HMIS implementation found in this manual.

Additional funders (e.g. United Way, Salvation Army, local governments) may have additional requirements regarding the use of the Pathways System. Agencies should consult each of their funders to ensure they are aware of all relevant requirements.

### **A.6 Domestic Violence Agencies**

According to the HUD Federal Register dated March 16, 2007 [FR-5056-N-01], agencies that are classified as Domestic Violence Agencies should not enter any identifying information into HMIS. Specifically, the register states:

*“The new Confidentiality provision directs victim service providers not to disclose, for the purposes of HMIS, personally identifying information about any client. In accordance with this statutory requirement, victim service providers must maintain the confidentiality of personally identifying information of the providers’ clients.”*

**At this point in time, HUD has instructed Domestic Violence agencies not to use HMIS to enter any client level information, including non-identifying information.**

## **Section B. Agency and User Procedures**

### **B.1 New Agency Procedures**

#### **Step 1. Sign Agency Agreements**

1. Complete General Service Agreement Form
2. Complete Business Associate Addendum
3. Complete Exhibit A Pricing form
4. Complete Waiver Certification Form (if applicable)
5. Complete New Agency Form
6. Ensure system and equipment requirements are met
7. Complete Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Continuum and/or Funders if applicable.

All agency forms should be completed and returned to Tommy Phillips at Pathways Community Network, Inc. by fax or mail. Keep a copy of all documents for your files. Proceed to step two.

#### **Step 2. Ensure Agency Meets Technical Requirements**

Recommended Computer Specifications:

Processor:	300 MHz Processor PC
Operating System:	Windows 98 or above
Memory:	128 MB RAM
Browser:	Internet Explorer 5.0 or greater, Mozilla Firefox
Internet Access:	DSL or better

Agencies must also be able to meet applicable security requirements. Detail on security requirements can be found in section D.2 of this manual.

#### **Step 3. Designate PATHWAYS COMPASS Agency Administrator**

This individual(s) will have the capability to configure the PATHWAYS COMPASS HMIS system to mirror the services the agency provides. The Administrator will be able to configure/update: Agency info, Custom fields, Funds, Keywords, Programs, Program Profile, Reasons, Referrals, Services, Beds, Admissions, Sites, Assessments, Reservations and Users. This individual will also want to sign up for the Agency Administrator Training that is provided.

#### **Step 4. Set up Programs and Complete Program Profiles**

Each Agency will need to complete a Program Profile for each type of program or service that is captured in the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. This profile will allow for better tracking of data and quality control, rendering more effective use of the system as well as quality data needed for HUD reporting.

Agencies should use the following guidelines when setting up programs in HMIS:

- All programs which provide shelter or housing must set up a program in the HMIS system.

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- Separate programs should be set up for emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, overflow and winter shelter, and vouchers.
- Separate program should be set up for programs that cross multiple continuum of care. For example, if a program has beds or units in both Dekalb and Gwinnett County, they should set up two separate programs in HMIS – one for the beds in Dekalb County and one for the beds in Gwinnett County.
- If a program has separate beds or units in separate counties but within the same Continuum (i.e. Tri-J or Balance of State), they should contact their Continuum of Care Lead for guidance on whether or not they need to set up separate programs by county.
- Programs cannot be more than one type.
  - If services are provided as part of enrollment in a shelter or housing program, the agency does not have to set up a separate program for these services unless the agency chooses to do so.
- If a service program is required to produce an Annual Progress Report for HUD, they must set up a program in HMIS.

**Instructions for Setting up Agency Sites and Programs (and Bed & Unit Inventory where applicable) in PATHWAYS COMPASS can be found at:**

[http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Program\\_Profile\\_Guide\\_V51626\\_Document\\_V1.1.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Program_Profile_Guide_V51626_Document_V1.1.pdf)

### **Step 5. Designate who will be authorized system users and their access level**

It should be determined who within the Agency will be utilizing the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. For each User, a User Access Checklist (UAC) will need to be completed. The UAC determines each Users access to the Client and Client Visit Menu, the Reports Menu, and the My Agency Menu.

## **B.2 New User Procedures**

Once the agency administrator has designated a user access level and completed the User Access Checklist, the user must complete several key steps in order to gain access to the system.

1. Visit [www.pcni.info/trainings](http://www.pcni.info/trainings) to get a listing on the available Confidentiality & Best Practices Trainings.
2. Sign up for and attend the Confidentiality & Best Practices Training.
3. Sign the attendance roster and pass the Confidentiality & Ethics post test by 70%.

### **Step 1. Attend Confidentiality & Best Practices Training**

In order to obtain a PATHWAYS COMPASS User ID and password, each user will be required to pass the Confidentiality & Ethics with a score of 70% or above.

This training is offered monthly and the training schedule is posted on the [www.pcni.info](http://www.pcni.info) page, where you can also sign up electronically.

In extenuating circumstances a user needs to access the system prior to attending a Confidentiality & Best Practices training. If a user needs access to the system before they are able to attend the Confidentiality & Best Practices training, they can complete a user

responsibility that can be obtained from the Support Team or can be accessed at [www.pcni.org](http://www.pcni.org) under Forms. However, this method should be the exception and not the rule.

### **Step 2. Obtaining a Password**

Each PATHWAYS COMPASS system user is required to maintain a private password that allows them access to the system. This password is not to be shared with anyone. This password is initially set up when a system user completes the Confidentiality & Best Practices Training with a passing score of 70%. Each subsequent year the system user is required to be recertified (attend another Confidentiality & Best Practices Training).

Within 2-3 business days of completing Confidentiality & Best Practices training, each new user should receive an email with their PATHWAYS COMPASS User Id and temporary password to activate their account. The account becomes activated once the User has logged in with their User Id and created a new password.

### **Step 3. Logging into PATHWAYS COMPASS**

Once you have received via email your user id and temporary password, you have the information to now log in. If you do not receive this information via email, it may be one of the reasons listed below:

- An email address was not provided
- The email address provided may not have been legible
- The system may not have sent it as it should

In any event, if you have not received your login information after 3 days, please contact the Support Team.

If you have received the login information:

1. Go to [www.pcni.info](http://www.pcni.info)
2. Go to the PATHWAYS COMPASS login link (located on the right hand side of the picture).
3. In the Instructions box there are three links.
  - a. If you are required to use a registered computer click here.
  - b. If you are not required to register a computer, click here.
  - c. If you need to download the Java Runtime download, click here.

If this is your first time logging on, you will need to click on the link for the Java Runtime Environment download. Follow the prompts. Once you have downloaded the JRE download, you will need to go back to the Instruction box. Unless you have been directed by the Support Team, you will need to follow the instructions for Logging on for a registered computer.

### **Logging on for a registered computer:**

Once you are back at the Instruction box,

1. Click on the first link (If you are required to use a registered computer). The Java coffee like screen will appear. You will then see the login box.
2. Enter your User Id and temporary password you received or were given by the Support Team. The screen will say you are being redirected to a secure site.

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3. Click Continue (if necessary) and another login screen will appear.
4. Enter your User Id and Temporary Password again. You will see a message saying your password has expired, please provide a new one. This new password should be 8 to 14 characters and must include at least 1 number. It cannot include your name or the name of your agency.
5. You should now see the Search Page. When you see this page, you have logged in successfully. You will need to remember your password, as Pathways does not store this information.

### **Logging into a non-registered computer:**

In order to have the requirement removed, the Computer Registration Request must be completed and submitted to the Pathways Support/Training Coordinator. On that form a valid business reason must be included as part of your request. Ultimately, your CoC has the right to deny the request (See form in Appendix). If the Request has been granted:

1. Go to [www.pcni.info](http://www.pcni.info)
2. Go to the PATHWAYS COMPASS login link (located on the right hand side of the picture).
3. In the Instructions box, click on the second link (Not required to log in by a registered computer).
4. Enter your User Id and temporary password you received or were given by the Support Team. You will see a message saying your password has expired, please provide a new one. This new password should be 8 to 14 characters and must include at least 1 number. It cannot include your name or the name of your agency.
5. You should now see the Search Page. When you see this page, you have logged in successfully. You will need to remember your password, as Pathways does not store this information.

### **Step 4. Attend New User Training**

Each authorized system user should attend a New User Training. In this training the user will learn what are the required HUD Data Elements, and how to: Sign on to the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, Navigate the pages within the system, Search for clients, Work with the Search Results, Verify and modify the authorization status of a client, Perform an Intake Process, Enroll and Discharge a client from a program. Additionally, the User will learn how to work with the following client information records: General, Household, Residential, Client Goals, Client Status Indicators, Financial, Services, and Program.

## **Section C. Data Entry and Data Quality**

### **C.1 Client Authorization and Intake**

Prior to a client's data being entered into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, every client must read, complete and sign a Client or Family Authorization Form for each agency that provides services to them. The Authorization Forms are available for download from the Reports Menu under "Lists". This form allows the client decide if they wish to have their information entered in to the HMIS database. If the client agrees to have their information entered into the system, they must sign the Client Authorization Form. This Client Authorization Form should reside in the clients file for future verification and auditing purposes.

A Client Authorization Form should be completed for all unaccompanied adults. The Family Consent Form should be used by those parents/guardians with minor children. If there is more than one adult in a family, the second adult should sign their own client authorization form rather than signing the family authorization form. For example, if you have a family of four with two adult and two children, one adult can sign a family authorization for themselves and the children and one adult should sign a client authorization just for themselves.

If the client declines to have their information entered into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, the client information should not be entered in to PATHWAYS COMPASS. The Client Authorization Form should reflect they declined and the form should be inserted into the client file for future verification and auditing purposes.

#### **Client Opt-Out Form:**

The client has the right to revoke their authorization at any time for any reason. If the client wishes to revoke the client authorization, an Opt-Out client form should be completed, signed and dated and inserted into the client file. Additionally, Authorization should be turned off within PATHWAYS COMPASS which will deny any member within the agency to access that client file. The Opt-Out form can be accessed by clicking on List under the Reports menu, then select Blank Forms, and then select the Blank Authorization Opt-Out Form.

#### **Client Authorization Expired:**

The Agency HMIS Administrator or Executive Director sets the time period in which a client can be seen by an agency before another authorization form is required to be completed again when the agency first signs up for PATHWAYS COMPASS. This duration can be updated at any time by the Executive Director. If the client authorization duration is not specified, by default the duration will be 1529 days before another authorization is required by a client. Once a client authorization is expired, the agency will have to obtain another signed authorization before they are able to enter additional information into the system.

#### **Client Intake:**

This is the process in which a client or potential client will go through a process where information is gathered and entered into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. Client Intake includes entering new client data or updating information for a client that is already in the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. Any client intake should start with a thorough client search to

make sure the client is not already in Pathways. All efforts should be taken to ensure duplicate records are not created within the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. Conducting a thorough client search at Intake will help reduce the number of duplicates within the system. For further instructions on how to conduct a client search to avoid duplicates, refer to the PATHWAYS COMPASS User Guide.

Each agency should enter and/or update the Universal Data Elements for all household members and Program Specific Data Elements (where required) at intake. Detailed information about these data elements can be found below. Ideally, an agency would input the information into Pathways during the intake, however when paper intake forms are necessary agencies can use their own in-house forms if they collect all required information or can follow the Sample Intake Form available from the Pathways website:

[http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Paper\\_Client\\_Intake\\_Form\\_with\\_New\\_Data\\_Standards\\_9\\_1\\_20101.doc](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Paper_Client_Intake_Form_with_New_Data_Standards_9_1_20101.doc)

Care should be taken to make sure that all of a client's information is updated (such as housing status, marital status, household, etc.) at intake if they have an existing record in the system

## **C.2 Required Data Elements**

The HUD March 2010 Data Standards outline three categories of required data elements. Two of these categories are at the client level and the third, Program Descriptor, is at the program level.

### **HUD Universal Data Elements:**

The Universal Data Elements are to be collected from all clients served by all homeless assistance programs reporting to the HMIS. Universal data elements are needed for Continuums of Care (CoC) to understand the basic dynamics of homelessness in their communities and for HUD to meet Congressional direction to: develop unduplicated counts of homeless services users at the local level; describe their characteristics; and identify their use of homeless assistance and mainstream resources.

The Universal data elements are: Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, Ethnicity, Race, Gender, Veteran Status, Disabling Condition, Residence Prior to Program Entry, Zip Code of Last Permanent Address, Program Entry Date, and Program Exit Date.

The PATHWAYS COMPASS system automatically generates the unique person identification number, the program identification number and household identification number data elements.

### **HUD Program Specific Data Elements:**

Program Specific Data Elements as defined in the final Notice, are data elements that are required for programs receiving certain types of funding, but are optional for other programs. Program specific data elements are necessary to complete the Annual Progress Reports (APR's) required by programs that receive funding under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

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The program specific data elements that are required for HUD's current APR reporting include: Income and Sources, Non-Cash Benefits, Physical Disability, Developmental Disability, Chronic Health condition, HIV/AIDS, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence, Destination, Date of Contact, Date of Engagement, Financial Services Provided, Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services Provided. Program specific data elements that are optional for some programs include Employment, Education, General Health Status, Pregnancy Status, Veteran's Information, Children's Education, Reason for Leaving, and Services Provided. Some of these optional elements may be required for certain programs and funding streams.

### **Program Descriptor Data Elements**

These elements are required of all programs in a Continuum of Care and provide descriptive information about an agency and their programs. Detailed information about completing the Program Descriptor elements can be found at:

[http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Program\\_Profile\\_Guide\\_V51626\\_Document\\_V1.1.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Program_Profile_Guide_V51626_Document_V1.1.pdf)

For more guidance on the HUD data standards:

<http://hmis.info/Resources/7523/Final-Revised-HMIS-Data-Standards-March-2010.aspx>

### **DCA Data Requirements**

DCA may request additional data elements of its grantees. If you receive funding from DCA refer to the DCA HMIS Policy and the Housing Support Standards for information about additional data collection requirements. These requirements can be found at:

[http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/documents/HMIS\\_Policy\\_7-07-09.pdf](http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/documents/HMIS_Policy_7-07-09.pdf)

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/HousingSupportStandards.asp>

### **Continuum of Care Data Requirements**

Each Continuum of Care may have additional data element requirements. You will need to consult with your CoC to verify what additional data elements may be required. Balance of State Continuum of Care Grantees should follow all DCA HMIS and HSS requirements.

### **Timelines for Data Entry**

Each agency should follow the guidelines set forth by their respective Continua of Care relating to data entry timelines. However, whenever possible, it is best to input the data as soon as possible, in order to maintain the most current support being offered to a client.

DCA and Balance of State Continuum of Care Grantees, data should be entered within one week of intake/enrollment. Clients should be discharged from the HMIS program within one week of their discharge.

When client information is entered, the dates entered for enrollment and discharge should be the ACTUAL dates that an individual entered or left the program, not the date of data entry/update.

### **C.3 Programs (Enrollment and Discharge)**

#### **Program Enrollment:**

The PATHWAYS COMPASS system includes a program enrollment wizard that allows the user to enroll a client in to one or more programs. The client remains in the program based upon the expected length of stay as determined by the agency administrator. This requires programs to be configured prior to enrolling a client into a program.

#### **Program Discharge:**

In order for a client to be discharged from a program, the client must first be enrolled in a program. Once the client has completed or the time has expired for the client to be in the program, such as Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing, the client should be discharged from the program. Failure to discharge the client on a timely basis will skew the data and will impact the accuracy of reporting, such as the HUD APR Entry Report and the HUD APR Exit Report.

The PATHWAYS COMPASS system includes a discharge wizard which guides the user through the process of collecting HUD-required information when a client leaves a program. Refer to the User Guide for more guidance on discharging a client

### **C.4 Updating Data**

Care should be taken to make sure that the clients information is updated (such as housing status, marital status, household, etc.) each time the client file is reviewed. At the very minimum, data should be updated at program enrollment, once a year for long term programs, and at program discharge. It is recommended that at every visit by a client, the universal data elements should be verified to ensure the latest information in the client record is complete. Suggested updates that should also occur with each client visit should include: Income, Services Rendered, Housing Status/Residence, Household composition. While there are more suggested data elements, updating information on a client should occur as often as reasonably possible.

### **C.5 Data Quality and Data Integrity**

#### **Reducing Duplicates:**

All efforts should be taken to ensure duplicate records are not created within the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. Conducting a thorough client search at Intake will help reduce the number of duplicates within the system. For further instructions on how to conduct a client search to avoid duplicates, refer to the PATHWAYS COMPASS User Guide or click on the Conducting a client search tutorial. If you do create a duplicate, please contact Pathways Support regarding ways to eliminate the duplicate.

**Improving data quality**

- One of the most effective ways to collect quality data is to make sure your agency develops clear data collection and entry standards that are implemented by all staff members entering data into the PATHWAYS COMPASS HMIS system.
- There should be a shared understanding of purpose and process. Minimally, each staff member should have a document that outlines the data collection process and explains the importance of accurate data and maintaining data quality.
- Establish a Rapport with Consumers. Often people in a vulnerable position of being homeless may give incorrect information intentionally or unintentionally for a host of reasons. Inaccurate information can be minimized by establishing a rapport with the consumer.
- Paper forms should closely resemble the layout of the Intake screens within the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. A sample client intake form in word format is available for download from:

[http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Paper\\_Client\\_Intake\\_Form\\_with\\_New\\_Data\\_Standards\\_9\\_1\\_20101.doc](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/Paper_Client_Intake_Form_with_New_Data_Standards_9_1_20101.doc)

- Proofread any hard copy of information that has been entered.
- Periodically review data quality at your agency. Emphasize and communicate any issues with data quality into already scheduled staff meetings.

## **Section D. Data Ownership, Security and Access**

### **D.1 HMIS Privacy and Security Standards**

HUD released HMIS Privacy and Security Standards in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data and Technical Standards Final Notice on July 30, 2004. The notice presents privacy and system security standards for providers, Continuums of Care and all other entities that use or process HMIS data.

Access the Privacy and System Security Standards from the July 30, 2004 Final Notice at: <http://www.hmis.info/Resources/724/Data-Standards-Training-Module-1-Handout-HUD-Data-and-Technical-Standards.aspx>

### **D.2 Agency Privacy and Security Procedures**

All agencies must comply with the current HMIS Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security standards issued in the HUD Notice on 7/31/2004. These standards require, but are not limited to: installing virus protection software, with an automatic update on every computer that accesses HMIS; activating a locking screen saver on every computer that accesses HMIS; developing a data privacy policy and notice; posting the agency's privacy notice on its premises and website (if one exists); installing an individual or network firewall; and posting "purpose for data collection" signs at each intake desk. Information on how to develop a privacy policy can be found at:

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/downloads/HUDPrivacyPolicyRequirements.pdf>

For information about how to implement the security procedures required by HUD and Pathways, please contact the Pathways Support Team.

### **D.3 Pathways Privacy and Security Procedures**

#### **Pathways Privacy Policy**

Pathways Community Network will not sell or rent personally identifiable information that we collect, and will not collect or share personally identifiable information from visitors or system users without first informing them that information will be collected, whether or not it could be shared, and with whom it might be shared. We will not share any individual's personally identifiable information without that individual's permission.

**Log Files:** We may use IP addresses to analyze trends, administer the site and gather broad demographic information for aggregate use. IP addresses are not linked to personally identifiable information.

## Georgia HMIS Standard Operating Procedures

**Links:** Pathways Community Network web sites contain links to other sites. Please be aware that Pathways is not responsible for the privacy practices of such other sites. We encourage our users to be aware when they leave our site, and to read the privacy statements of each and every web site that collects personally identifiable information. This privacy statement applies solely to information collected by Pathways Community Network's web sites.

**News Service:** If a user wishes to subscribe to our news service, we require contact information such as name and email address.

**Surveys:** From time-to-time our site requests information from users via surveys. Participation in these surveys is completely voluntary and the user therefore has a choice whether or not to disclose this information. Information requested may include contact information (such as name and address), and demographic information (such as zip code, age level). Survey information will be used for purposes of monitoring or improving the use and satisfaction of Pathways Community Network's services.

### **Pathways Security Policy**

Pathways Community Network takes every precaution to protect the information of people who use our services. When you submit sensitive information via the PATHWAYS COMPASS application website, your information is protected both online and off-line. When our case management system users are asked to enter sensitive information (such as a social security number) the information is encrypted. While on a secure page, the lock icon on the bottom of web browsers such as Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Internet Explorer becomes locked, as opposed to un-locked, or open, when you are just 'surfing'. While we use SSL encryption to protect sensitive information online, we also do everything in our power to protect user-information off-line. All of our users' information, not just the sensitive information mentioned above, is restricted in our offices. Only employees who need the information to perform a specific job (for example, a technical support representative) are granted access to personally identifiable information. Furthermore, ALL employees are kept up-to-date on our security and privacy practices. Every quarter, as well as any time new policies are added, our employees are notified and/or reminded about the importance we place on privacy, and what they can do to ensure our customers' information is protected. Finally, the servers that we store personally identifiable information on are kept in a secure environment, in a locked data center.

The use of this system constitutes an express consent to the monitoring of system use and security at all times. If such monitoring reveals possible violations of the law, pertinent information will be provided to law enforcement officials. Any persons using this PATHWAYS COMPASS, or information obtained from this application, without proper authorization or in violation of these policies and procedures may be subject to civil and/or criminal prosecution. Any persons enabling access by an unauthorized individual may also be subject to internal disciplinary actions in addition to civil and/or criminal prosecution.

These policies are applicable to all users (employees, contractors, and others) of agencies, partners and funders and the computer systems, networks, and any other electronic processing or communications and related resources used in conjunction with the PATHWAYS COMPASS HMIS system and/or data obtained through the HMIS system.

## Georgia HMIS Standard Operating Procedures

Pathways Community Network places highest priority on the security of its systems, and the private information they contain. Pathways, its staff and volunteers continually work to protect data and systems:

1. Confidentiality. Access to client information must be tightly controlled and people with access to confidential information must understand their personal responsibility to maintain its confidentiality.
2. Integrity. Client information must be protected so that it cannot be modified while in transit or storage. Reported data must be accurate.
3. Availability. Systems must be available to users when and where they need them.

If an employee leaves your agency, inform Pathways as soon as possible so that their account can be deactivated.

### **Information Security Procedures:**

All Pathways Community Network employees and volunteers are responsible for protecting the confidentiality and security of Pathways data systems and the human services client information they contain. Information concerning the security related tasks an employee is responsible for are included in the employee's job description. The agency is responsible for ensuring that information that is printed from the PATHWAYS COMPASS is also kept confidential, private and secure.

### **HIPAA**

Pathways Community Network consulted with HIPAA experts at Price Waterhouse Coopers to ensure that its privacy and security features meet or exceed requirements of the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). PATHWAYS COMPASS was one of the first such systems in the country to fully comply with HIPAA. Agencies that are covered by HIPAA include health care providers, health care plans, or healthcare clearinghouse. These agencies should ensure that they complete the appropriate Business Associate Addendum when they sign their Pathways Contract.

For more information about HIPAA visit the following website:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/coveridentities/index.html>

## **D.4 Access to Data**

### **Data Sharing across Providers**

The Pathways HMIS gives individual clients complete control over which agencies can view their information. At point of service the client may authorize an agency to access existing information in the HMIS, and to add information about the client to the HMIS. When the client approaches another organization, the authorization process is repeated. This ensures that no agency accesses a client's record without that client's specific permission, and it significantly increases client confidence in the HMIS.

The PATHWAYS COMPASS system allows for data sharing across agencies, but also has color coding to enhance security measures that help to limit data access across agencies.

Color coding within PATHWAYS COMPASS application:

Dark Blue Areas: Information accessible for all agencies.

Teal Areas: Information only accessible by the recording agency.

Red Areas: Information only accessible by the User entering the data within the agency.

### **“Protected” Information**

Protected Agency: Certain agencies that deal substantially with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, or legal services are designated as Protected Class agencies. If your agency is a Protected Class agency, all Client Services Information records (including referrals) are hidden, or protected, from view by any other agency. This includes all Need Information records as well.

Protected Need Codes: If a non-Protected Class agency creates a need record that uses a Protected Need Code, then that record is treated as if the agency that creates it is a Protected Class agency (i.e., protected at the agency level). In addition, if the record is a referral to a Protected Class agency, then it is visible only to the creating user (i.e., protected at the user level).

For more detail, go to the User's Guide under the Protected Class Agencies and Need Codes section.

### **Access to Data for Monitoring**

Department of Community Affairs, as the lead HMIS agency, and your Continuum of Care representative will have access to your agency's data for monitoring purposes and aggregate reporting purposes. All staff at DCA and the Continuum of Care who have access to data will undergo Confidentiality and Ethics training as well as additional Community Administrator Training. Other funders may have access to your data for monitoring purposes based on their funding agreement with your agency.

### **Unauthorized Access to the PATHWAYS COMPASS system:**

Any user accessing the PATHWAYS COMPASS system must be affiliated with an active member agency. Additionally, each system user must attend the required Confidentiality & Ethics Training or have completed a User Responsibility Form in order to be given a User Id and Password. Unauthorized access is prohibited and are grounds for legal action.

## **D.5 Client Grievances**

### **Grievance Procedure:**

- A client has the right to appeal his or her individual complaints related to their HMIS data to the entering agency in accordance with the agency's established grievance policy.
- Complaints about the conduct or practice of HMIS may be filed in writing to the Executive Director of Pathways or to the Project Manager at the Department of Community Affairs.
- Agencies are responsible for establishing an internal grievance process to handle client complaints and grievances related to consent and release of information related to the HMIS system.

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If a client has a grievance regarding erroneous data entry or inappropriate use of their data, they will need to follow the agency's established guidelines, standard operating procedures or protocol on resolving these issues.

### **Revoking Authorization:**

The client has the right to revoke their authorization at any time for any reason. If the client wishes to revoke the client authorization, an Opt-Out client form should be completed, signed and dated and inserted into the client file. Additionally, Authorization should be turned off within PATHWAYS COMPASS which now would deny any member within the agency to access that client file.

## Section E. Reporting

### E.1 Introduction to Pathways Reporting

PATHWAYS COMPASS is a Community Information Sharing System for HMIS. The easiest and most accessible way to share this information is through the COMPASS Reports. The reporting module provides quick intuitive on demand reporting, analysis and data export for sharing the information stored in your HMIS.

Reports were designed to help you

- Make better decisions that support the success of your organization
- Know and understand your clients (What is working)
- Tap into and analyze data
- Help manage your organization and resources
- Produce accurate and up to date counts
- Monitor Agency Performance

The reports can provide users a variety of options for printing and sharing their HMIS information. An abundance of standard reports and data exports can be accessed by any user that has access rights. For a list of all the current reports and exports available in PATHWAYS COMPASS - Refer to

<http://data.memberclicks.com/site/pat/RM-CurrentListofReportsV5.16.26Dv1.3.pdf>

Your HMIS administrator controls access to different reports for each user. You should contact them if you would like access to the reports available in COMPASS.

All reports depend on the quality of information captured during data entry. Complete and accurate data is crucial for accurate reporting. Accurate reports, in turn help with funding, grant writing, staffing, tracking services and forecasting.

#### Report Formats

For most all of your report requirements PATHWAYS COMPASS provides an easy to use menu system where users can generate reports one of two formats – **PDF or HTML**.

**HTML** displays reports very quickly on the screen and does not require any additional software. These reports are not formatted to print on paper.

**PDF** (Portable Document Format) requires that [\*Adobe Acrobat Reader\*](#) (or any software that can display PDF documents) be installed on your computer. It may also take a little more time to display on your screen.

PDF display is easier to read and scroll through online, and easier to print on paper. In addition, [\*Adobe Acrobat Reader\*](#) adds the capability to search the report online for words or phrases. The reports can also be saved and transmitted by email.

## Report Filters

Filters and Parameters are the mechanism PATHWAYS COMPASS uses to customize the standard on demand reports for your organization's particular requirements. Filters allow you to narrow the scope of data that meets the conditions of the filter.

Filters may be as simple as entering a Begin and End Date or as specific as program type or demographic. To simplify the use of filters in statistical reports many of the reports ask you if you want to apply filter conditions. If you answer YES, a list of available filters appear. This will then generate a report based on the filters you specify.

PATHWAYS COMPASS has incorporated into the Statistical Standard Reports the ability to filter a report by Need Code, Outcome, Homeless Status, Chronically Homeless Status, Referral Status, Disbursement, Reservation and Area (by County, City or Zip Code). Other reports may have different filter capabilities.

## E.2 Reporting Categories

With the large number of reports available in PATHWAYS COMPASS, these reports have been organized by Categories of User, Function and Type. These reports have been organized in the Reports module by Category to help simplify the selection of Reports. These organization categories are briefly described below: (see Online Reports Manual available at: <http://www.pcni.info/mc/page.do?sitePageId=115878> )

**List Reports** - These reports includes agency lists by Code and Name and blank forms like Barriers to Housing Stability Assessment, Authorizations, Opt-Out, and Privacy Practice.

**Summary Reports** – These reports include detailed client level data on key areas such as Programs, Services, Authorizations and Custom Fields.

**Funds Reports** – These reports provide disbursement details and totals by Fund or Need.

**Statistical Reports** – These reports provide statistical data (numerical) with no client level identification.

**Agency Reports** – These reports are customized based upon specific request from an agency. There is generally a fee associated with these reports.

**Data Exports** – These reports are the raw data that has been entered into the system. These reports are in the .csv format and shown in Excel and allows for some modification to content and format.

## E.3 Commonly Required Reports

**ESGP**-This report provides data on services received. This report can be filtered at the program level allowing for reporting of services at the program level.

**APR-** This report provides information on a subset of clients enrolled in a program. This report provides the demographic information, program enrollments and program discharges for clients that receive homelessness assistance funding.

**QPR-** This report is provides an unduplicated breakdown of those clients who have received housing assistance and/or prevention assistance and the Financial Assistance and Housing Relocation & stabilization Services the client may have received. This information is reported on a quarterly basis.

### **E.4 Advanced Use of Report Tools**

#### **Using Reports to Monitor Data Quality**

**System Utilization Report-** This report provides overall information on the agencies system utilization by a specified date range. This report includes data for Authorizations, Services, Program enrollments and discharges, bed utilization, etc...

**Alerts** – These reports are located in across several report categories and are targeted on those client records where there is incomplete information. These reports include Alerts for Currently Authorized Clients and Alerts for Clients in Programs.

#### **Using Data Exports**

It would be difficult to anticipate and format all of the reports required by HMIS users. Therefore PATHWAYS COMPASS provides an Export utility to deliver unformatted data that can be downloaded to your local system and imported into different database reporting systems. Some of the exports available for download are Basic Client Demographics, Finance, Household, Housing Status, Education, Goals, HPRP, System Utilization, Programs and Bed Counts, HPRP, QPR and much more. For a description of these files and the menu commands and parameters needed to create them. (see [DATA EXPORT REPORTS](#) at: <http://s3.memberclicks.com/site/pat/RM-DataExportReportsV5.16.26Dv1.2.pdf> )

The PATHWAYS COMPASS Data Export feature creates a CSV format data file for download to your local computer which contain information about client demographics and transactions. Such a file can then be downloaded to your local computer and imported into a spreadsheet or database application. Once the information is in your local application, it can be processed, viewed, printed, etc. according to the needs of your agency.

Comma Separated Values (CSV) is a format for a data file that is commonly used to transfer information from one computer system to another. Practically every major spreadsheet and database application can import and work with data that is formatted this way.

The most commonly used Reporting software is Microsoft Excel which allows user to import their PATHWAYS COMPASS Data directly from the CSV Export File. Excel features common spreadsheet tasks like sorting on fields, filtering, grouping, calculation functions as well as creating Charts and Graphs for data visualization.

Microsoft Access is another common database application that can read your COMPASS Exported data. Access provides tools for working with your database, creating views and formatted reports.

### **Advanced Reporting Solutions**

Oracle Discoverer is an ad hoc reporting tool that allows for additional manipulation of data fields. Users have the ability (based upon business views) to manipulate formatting, creating graphs, analyze data via pivot tables, use drilling, parameters, conditions, totals, percentages, calculations, sorting data, sharing and printing reports. There is an additional charge for the Oracle Software. Please contact a Pathways representative to find out more about Oracle Discoverer.

Oracle SQL Developer is a free *and fully supported* graphical tool for database development. With SQL Developer, you can browse database objects, run SQL statements and SQL scripts, and edit and debug PL/SQL statements. You can also run any number of provided reports, as well as create and save your own. SQL Developer enhances productivity and simplifies your database development tasks.

Other Report Writing Tools are available to create custom reports, charts and data visualization from PATHWAYS COMPASS exports. These database, spreadsheet and report writing tools include but are not limited to Microsoft Excel, IBM Lotus 1-2-3, OpenOffice.org Calc, Microsoft Access, OpenOffice.org Base, FileMaker, ESRI ArcGIS.

## Section F. System Support, Training and Technical Assistance

### F.1 Training

Pathways provides training via classroom, web cast and on-site. All Pathways training, locations, dates and times are listed on [www.pcni.info/training](http://www.pcni.info/training). Each user can register for the training most conducive to their learning style. The most common training courses are described below.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Required?</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
Confidentiality & Ethics Training	Yes	Explain what guides a Human Services Professional, explain the HIPAA Federal Mandates, explain State of Georgia Reporting Requirements, and additional mandated reporting requirements.	Ability to use a computer, including the use of a mouse and keyboard and a basic understanding of the Windows operating system. The ability to navigate the Internet, including the use of a browser and the ability to recognize and choose a link.
New Users Training	Yes	Process and Update a client record, which may include: Conduct a client search, working with the General Page, residence page, household page, income page, service page, client enrollment and discharge from a program(s). Additionally, users will learn what data that must be entered to run ESG, CDBG, and HUD APR reports.	The ability to use a computer, including the use of a mouse and keyboard and a basic understanding of the Windows operating system. The ability to navigate the Internet, including the use of a browser and the ability to recognize and choose a link.
Reports Training	No	Identify the category and the reports that are under each category Describe what data drives what reports Run a report, including: Enter parameters, display a pdf report, use Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the report online, and print a report. Additionally, some of the most common reports will be discussed.	User must take Confidentiality & Best Practices, New Users Training, and must have access to Reports Menu.

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Agency Administration Training	Yes - Admin Only	Demonstrate how to update the Agency Info page, create a Preferred Services list, add/edit/delete Users and Access levels, Custom fields, Keywords, Fields, Funds, and Program	User must have complete Confidentiality & Best Practices, New User Training, Reports Training and must be given Agency Menu access rights by the Supervisor or Executive Director.
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In addition to these primary training courses, there are often project specific or topic specific trainings available including but not limited to HPRP, Program Profile, Housing Support Standards, and System Utilization Report. For a full list of training opportunities, see: [www.pcni.info/training](http://www.pcni.info/training)

To assess the various trainings for HMIS, visit [www.pcni.info](http://www.pcni.info) and select Training Schedule. You can register online, by email at [support@pcni.org](mailto:support@pcni.org) or by phone at: 404-866-1032 option 2 toll free at 866-818-1032 option 2.

### F.2 Technical Assistance

#### Technical Assistance Prerequisites:

1. Attend Confidentiality & Ethics training, pass with 70% or greater
2. Attend User Training
3. Attend Reports Training (where applicable)
4. Attend Agency Administration Training (where applicable)
5. Complete Pre-Onsite Assessment Form and submit to Support Team
6. Entering data into PATHWAYS COMPASS system
7. Basic knowledge of computer, use of browser, and mouse, navigate to various pages.

#### Technical Assistance Process:

The Technical Assistance/Training Specialist will work with an Agency to help them achieve HMIS compliance on the PATHWAYS COMPASS system. The proper personnel should be in attendance to make sure each user within the agency follows the same protocols and procedures needed to ensure good data quality. The outline below will serve as a guideline. Additional assistance, will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

### Technical Assistance Visit:

Who should attend: All personnel that will be entering data into PATHWAYS COMPASS.

The TA will:

- Assess the agency's intake process and offer recommendations where necessary.
- Ensure that the agency is capturing the required data so they are in compliance.
- Reinforce and clarify concepts learned from the User Training.
- Utilize the Pre-Onsite Assessment Form to verify the agency configurations are setup to capture the required data for reports such as: ESG, CDBG, HUD APR and any other funder requirements.
- Discuss optional configurations that may be addressed in the visit or may be discussed on a subsequent visit.

For more information on requesting a TA, contact the Support Team at [support@pcni.org](mailto:support@pcni.org) or by phone at 404-639-9933 option 2 or toll free at 866-818-1032 option 2. Note: It is the expectation that the agency will be utilizing the system prior to their scheduled TA visit.

### F.3 Online Resources

The following online documents can be found at [www.pcni.info](http://www.pcni.info) under Forms, Documents and Videos:

**User Access Checklist**

**User Responsibility Statement**

**General Service Agreement** - *The main agreement between your organization and Pathways*

**Business Associate Addendum** - *A data sharing agreement required under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)*

**Business Associate Requirement Waiver Form** - *For organizations not required to comply with HIPAA regulations*

**New Agency Form** - *Complete this form and send it to the Pathways Support Team so they can create or update your organization's system accounts.*

**Referral Only Agency Form** - *Complete this form and send it to the Pathways Support Team so they can add to a list of agencies that your agency can use to record client referrals. This form is not required.*

**Oracle BI Discoverer Viewer users guide** - *The complete Oracle Discoverer Viewer manual, which explains how to use all features of this user friendly reporting tool.*

**Oracle BI Discoverer Plus users guide** - *This manual describes how to use all features and functions of the powerful Oracle BI Discoverer Plus custom reporting system.*

**PATHWAYS COMPASS Quick Reference Card** - *The QRC contains information such as how to log into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, check training class schedules and enroll online, and contact the Support Team.*

**PATHWAYS COMPASS User Guide** - *Step-by-step procedures for all of the end-user PATHWAYS COMPASS system functions, including logging in, searching, intake, building households, program enrollment and discharge, and recording services.*

**HUD Data Elements Guide** - *This job aid describes the data elements required in the COMPASS HMIS for the HUD Annual Performance Report (APR) and gives instructions on entering them and running the PATHWAYS COMPASS reports that relate to the APR.*

**PATHWAYS COMPASS Reports User Guide** - *How to display and print reports, plus a complete description of all the standard reports that come with the system. This includes the Data Export feature.*

**PATHWAYS COMPASS Administration Guide** - *The procedures needed to create configurations to ensure the required data is captured and maintain information about your agency's profile, display information, programs, funds, end-users, and more!*

In addition, Quick Reference "How To" Guides available:

**Program & Service:** *This Quick Reference Guide contains instructions to: a) enroll a client in a program and record a service for that client in one transaction; b) discharge a client from one or more programs.*

**Sample Client Intake Form:** *This sample form can be used as a starting point for agencies to use when creating their own Client Intake form. Download this form and then modify it to suit your agency's needs.*

**PATHWAYS COMPASS Quick Reference Card:** *The QRC contains information such as how to log into the PATHWAYS COMPASS system, check training class schedules, and contact the Support Team.*

The following Tutorials are available:

**Program Profile** – This tutorial walks the user through the various screens that must be configured to set up a Program, the Bed and Unit Inventory (where applicable) and Program Type Questionnaire.

**HPRP User Training** - This tutorial walks the user through each screen where data must be entered to capture HPRP data.

## F.4 Reporting System Issues

Pathways provides several ways in which to report system outage, problems, or questions. Users can communicate with the Support Team by:

Email: [support@pcni.org](mailto:support@pcni.org)

Phone: 404-639-9933 option 2 (local)

Phone: 866-818-1032 option 2 (toll free)

Any request or system problems should be submitted to the Support Team. Phone requests are discouraged as it does not provide adequate documentation of who, when, where, what and other specifics that are needed to maintain an accurate listing of all support queues.

### Process for minor quick system errors:

- 1) System errors that are reported to the Support Team are tested to confirm it is a system error
- 2) The error is discussed with the Development Team for a timeline for completion
- 3) The Development Team fixes and then sends to QA for testing
- 4) Client is notified

**Process for major system errors:**

- 1) System errors that are reported to the Support Team are tested to confirm it is a system error
- 2) The error is discussed with the Development Team for a timeline for completion
- 4) A resource is assigned to work on the error
- 5) The Development Team interacts with Support to ensure the details are correct
- 6) The Development Team fixes and then sends to QA for testing
- 7) Client is notified

Please keep in mind that other priorities and impact of the system error will be taken into consideration when determining the timeline for addressing system errors.

## **F.5 Requesting Enhancements**

An enhancement to the system includes an additional data element, report, or function that was not previously in the system. Enhancements do not include fixing an existing function of the system. System errors should be communicated directly to Pathways Support. If Pathways Support determines the request is an enhancement rather than a System Error, they will communicate this to the requestor who should then follow enhancement request protocol.

If an agency would like to request an enhancement to the system, they should communicate this request to the HMIS representative for their continuum of care directly or through the advisory/user group. Continuum of Care HMIS contacts can be found on page 6 of this manual.

Once the continuum of care HMIS representative has determined that the request is a priority for the continuum, they will communicate this request to the DCA HMIS Project Manager. The project manager will then compile all requested enhancements for discussion at the steering committee meeting. All GA HMIS enhancements will be approved by the steering committee and/or project manager before placement in the GA HMIS development pipeline. If an agency has an enhancement request that they need immediately, they may contact Pathways for information about any fees associated with an enhancement outside of the GA HMIS project.

The HMIS Enhancement Request Form can be downloaded from the DCA website.

## Section G. Monitoring

### G.1 Data Monitoring

Each continuum of care or funder may have individual monitoring procedures. For specific information on monitoring, agencies should contact their funder or continuum of care representative.

If your agency receives DCA funding, agency utilization of the system is monitored on a quarterly basis in addition to being monitored during on-site visits. For more information about DCA monitoring, contact Lindsey Stillman ([lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov](mailto:lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov)). Information defining common DCA data concerns and providing information about how to correct them is available at:

[http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/SpecialNeeds/programs/documents/HMIS\\_Monitoring\\_Correction\\_Guidance\\_Q4.pdf](http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/SpecialNeeds/programs/documents/HMIS_Monitoring_Correction_Guidance_Q4.pdf)

There are multiple ways in which an agency can monitor their own data quality and completeness in order to prevent any data concerns during monitoring. These include running the system utilization report and checking the program roster on a regular basis. For more information on the system utilization report, see the Reports User Guide at:

<http://www.pcni.info/mc/page.do?sitePageId=115878>

### G.2 Privacy and Security Monitoring

Security Audits will be conducted periodically by Pathways Staff in pursuant to the baseline standards defined in the HUD 2004 Data and Technical Standards.

<http://www.hmis.info/Resources/724/Dta-Standards-Training-Module-1-Handout-HUD-Data-and-Technical-Standards.aspx>

These Security Audits will focus on the following areas:

*Physical Access to Systems with Access to HMIS Data*

*Disaster Protection and Recovery*

*Disposal*

*System Monitoring*

*User Authentication*

*Electronic Data Submission*

*Electronic Data Storage*

*Security*

*Privacy Standards*

Contact Pathways Support for a template of the Pathways Agency's Security and Privacy Policy Audit.

DCA and other funders may also monitor during on-site visits to ensure that the agency is following the key privacy and security standards. For information about what HMIS aspects are monitored during on-site visits, contact Lindsey Stillman ([lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov](mailto:lindsey.stillman@dca.ga.gov)).

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Pathways Documents, Forms and Tutorials –**  
**<http://www.pcni.info/mc/page.do?sitePageId=62689>**

**DCA HMIS Website -**  
**<http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/hmis.asp>**

**HUD HMIS Info Website – [www.hmis.info](http://www.hmis.info)**

**HUD Homelessness Resource Exchange – [www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info)**