



GA HMIS BY-LAWS 2021

Georgia HMIS Steering Committee

By-Laws

Section I: Name

The name of the organization shall be Georgia Homeless Management Information System (GA HMIS) Steering Committee. This committee serves the following Continua of Care (CoC), known collectively as the “GA HMIS Collaborative”:

GA-500	Atlanta
GA-501	Georgia Balance of State
GA-502	Fulton County
GA-503	Athens-Clarke County
GA-504	Augusta-Richmond County
GA-506	Marietta-Cobb County
GA-507	Savannah-Chatham County
GA-508	DeKalb County

Section II: Purpose

The GA HMIS Collaborative operates a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to record and store client -level information about the numbers, characteristics, and needs of persons who use homeless housing and supportive services and for persons who receive assistance for persons at risk of homelessness.

The Governance Structure and Authorities for the CoC’s HMIS are prescribed by federal statutes and HUD regulations that can be accessed at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1491/hmis-tools-governance-structure-steering-committee/> -regulations –and -notices/. The HMIS is used to aggregate data about the extent and nature of homelessness over time; produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons; understand patterns of service use; and measure the effectiveness of homeless assistance projects and programs. Data produced is used for planning and education.

Because the CoCs listed in Section I share a single Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), it is crucial for the HMIS to be managed collaboratively and transparently, and for uniform priorities and standards to be established across the whole HMIS implementation, for the good of all participating CoCs. These By-laws outline the authority of the GA HMIS Steering Committee, the governance roles, responsibilities, and relationship of Georgia’s aforementioned participating CoCs and the HMIS Lead Agency. The Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (Authority), the grantee has designated the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to serve as the HMIS Lead for the Georgia HMIS Collaborative.

The purpose of the GA HMIS Steering Committee (Committee) is to collaboratively manage the implementation and administration of the shared HMIS in accordance with the requirements established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), its Federal partners, and the shared priorities of the GA HMIS Collaborative. Additionally, the Steering Committee strives to identify ways to help provider agencies record, report, and improve their services through the shared HMIS by serving as a conduit between CoCs and the HMIS Lead.

The benefits derived from utilizing the HMIS system include: Understanding the extent and scope of homelessness, producing an unduplicated count, identifying service gaps, informing program design and policy decisions, and development of a forum for addressing community-wide issues.

Section III: Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Continua of Care

Each CoC listed in Section I has agreed to participate in the statewide HMIS implementation through a Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with DCA on behalf of the GHFA, and has agreed to collaboratively govern HMIS through these by-laws. The responsibilities listed below will be carried out in accordance with each CoC's governing processes. At a minimum, each CoC agrees to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Adopt and/or re-affirm adoption of these by-laws and participate in an annual review and request updates to these by-laws;
- Appoint two voting members, in writing, as specified in Section IV, to serve on the GA HMIS Steering Committee to provide oversight of the implementation and represent the Continuum in GA HMIS decision-making;
- Accept the HMIS software chosen by the GA HMIS Collaborative as the designated software for its Continuum;
- Designate the HMIS Lead chosen by the GA HMIS Collaborative to manage the Continuum's HMIS and apply for/receive HUD HMIS funding on behalf of their CoC;
- Require that all agencies and users in their respective CoC jurisdiction comply with the GA HMIS policies and procedures of the GA HMIS Collaborative;
- Ensure that service providers in their respective CoC jurisdiction adequately meet the minimum HMIS participation requirements as established by the GA HMIS Steering Committee;
- Designate at least one user in the CoC to be a CoC HMIS Administrator, who would be authorized to have administrative-level access to the data for the specific CoC for purposes of providing oversight and user support, as well as to monitor agency compliance with Federal Data Standards;
- Direct all requests and concerns to the HMIS Lead, including, but not limited to, software vendor management, HMIS enhancements, system errors, and project status to allow the HMIS Lead to more efficiently manage communications and centralize feedback and input across all participating CoCs;
- Require that participating agency users meet the minimum training requirements established by the GA HMIS Steering Committee;
- Participate in the commitment of funding the implementation of the GA HMIS project;
- Ensure HMIS privacy and security protocols are integrated into agency policies and practices;
- Conduct ongoing data analysis and evaluation to help drive planning and funding decisions; and
- Prepare, review, and submit all HUD required Continuum-level reports (i.e., Housing Inventory Chart, Point in Time Count, Annual Homeless Assessment Report, and System Performance Measures) with support from the HMIS Lead.

CoCs may individually identify additional priorities, policies, procedures, and requirements for their respective CoC, so long as no conflict is created with the priorities, policies, procedures, and requirements created by the GA HMIS Steering Committee under authority of these by-laws, and provided they assume the burden of enforcing any additional requirements.

Responsibilities of the HMIS Lead

The HMIS Lead agrees, at a minimum, to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of its ability:

Project Management

- Oversee the day-to-day operations and management of the GA HMIS;
- Enter into an Memorandum of Agreement with each CoC for the provision of HMIS services;
- Obtain and maintain GA HMIS Participation Agreements with all participating agencies and users;
- Administer HUD HMIS awards for all Continua participating in the GA HMIS Collaborative, in accordance with the MOAs between GHFA and these jurisdictions and in concert with these by-laws;
- Provide staff support for GA HMIS Steering Committee meetings;
- Develop and maintain a process for the Committee to submit, track, review, and approve requests for system enhancements and development projects; and
- Develop and maintain a tracking and communication process that will allow the Committee to stay informed about vendor activities related to compliance, enhancements, bug fixes, and new development projects.
- Develop a process for software development request.

System Functionality

- Enter into a formal contractual relationship with the GA HMIS vendor that outlines the requirements and responsibilities of the vendor, including those required by HUD and its Federal partners through its data and technical standards, rules, notices, etc.;
- Monitor the vendor's software system for compliance with all current data and technical standards, statute, regulation, and notices;
- Monitor the vendor's software system for compliance with any other required standards set by other federal partner and state programs that require HMIS use;
- Provide assistance to the GA HMIS Collaborative that the GA HMIS Steering Committee deems necessary to ensure that the comparable database used statewide by Victim Service Providers meets the minimum standards set forth by HMIS regulations and notices;
- Monitor that the software vendor provides reasonable development timeframes, provides CoCs with the ability to produce all HUD required reports, including related reports needed to assess data quality, timeliness, and completeness; and,
- Provide CoC Administrators, the CoC-identified user who is authorized to have administrative-level access to the data in a specific CoC for purposes of providing oversight and user support with tools necessary to monitor agency compliance with Federal Data Standards, including reports and access to raw agency data; and
- Ensure that the software continues to meet the needs of the GA HMIS Collaborative.

Policies and Procedures

- Develop and maintain GA HMIS Policies and Procedures in accordance with HUD requirements and notices and CoC needs for approval by the GA HMIS Steering Committee;
- Develop and maintain a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS in accordance with HUD requirements for approval by the GA HMIS Steering Committee; As specified by MOA with each CoC, assist CoCs in monitoring participating agency compliance with security, privacy, and confidentiality policies; and
- Develop minimum general participation and timeliness standards for agencies for approval by the GA HMIS Steering Committee.

Training and Technical Assistance

- Develop minimum training requirements for participating agency users for approval by the GA HMIS Steering Committee;
- Ensure required basic training is available to participating agency staff and accessible on a regular basis;
- Identify and provide additional training that may be needed to ensure good data quality for HUD and the federal partners;
- Ensure technical assistance and help desk support is available and accessible to participating agencies on a regular basis; and
Ensure CoCs have access to reports, technical assistance, and training required to develop a data quality improvement plan when necessary.

Responsibilities of the GA HMIS Steering Committee

Except where stated otherwise in these by-laws, the GA HMIS Steering Committee has authority on all matters regarding HMIS and is responsible for providing oversight of the HMIS implementation, and for providing counsel, guidance, and assistance to the staff members, governing bodies, and contributing providers within each of the eight (8) participating CoCs. The Steering Committee agrees, at a minimum, to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of its ability:

- Participate in decision making and approve system-wide priorities, policies, protocols, procedures, and other requirements needed to implement the GA HMIS, including but not limited to Standard Operating Procedures, privacy policies, security policies, data quality standards, timeliness standards, and provide input and direction to the HMIS Lead;
- Collaborate on goals and objectives that support shared HMIS activities;
- Disseminate information to the respective CoCs about GA HMIS, the Steering Committee, and HMIS Lead activities, policies, procedures, and training;
- Provide counsel, guidance, and assistance to HMIS staff within their respective CoC;
- Identify, develop, and implement strategies for improving HMIS coverage and data quality throughout the geographic region of the participating Georgia CoCs;
- Provide support to individual CoCs in their efforts to identify and eliminate potential barriers to the use and improvement of the GA HMIS;

- Confirm that the comparable database used statewide by Victim Service Providers meets the minimum standards set forth by HMIS regulations and notices;
- Monitor for the collaborative availability of funding for the implementation of the GA HMIS project.

Section IV: Membership and Officers

Committee Composition

The GA HMIS Steering Committee is a partnership of representatives from each of the participating Continua of Care listed in Section I, and the HMIS Lead, and contains one class of member. Each CoC shall have equal voting rights except as may be provided elsewhere in these by-laws. The Committee is composed of the following:

1. Two representatives from each Continuum of Care (one from the Collaborative Applicant, and one with a solid technical understanding of HMIS, such as an HMIS power user). Each CoC shall designate their two representatives by whatever means established within that CoC and provide those names to the HMIS Committee Chairs in writing within the timeframes stated elsewhere in these by-laws.
2. One representative from the HMIS Lead Agency, appointed by the chief official of the HMIS Lead.

Appendix A lists the appointments by each CoC and by the HMIS Lead. Necessary changes to Appendix A do not constitute a change to these by-laws and do not require Committee approval.

Terms of Office

Each Steering Committee member shall serve with no term limit. Each CoC can change their appointees at any time to ensure their membership is reflective of the CoC needs as stated in the section below.

Appointment of Committee Members

Each CoC and the HMIS Lead is responsible for the appointment of a designee to the HMIS Steering Committee Chairs in writing.

Unanticipated vacancies will be filled as outlined in Section IX.

Officers

The GA HMIS Steering Committee shall have two co-chairs, one elected chair and one chair being filled by the HMIS Lead. Any member of the GA HMIS Steering Committee is eligible to serve as a chair. The elected chair position shall be filled by a simple majority vote. The newly elected chair shall assume office at the close of that meeting and shall serve a term of one year. Elected chairs may only serve a maximum of two full terms consecutively. If an officer is elected due to a need to fill a vacancy, that officer will serve for the remainder of the vacating officer's term. This partial term will not count toward the consecutive term limitation. The current designated HMIS Lead shall fill the non-elected co-chair position without any term limitations until such time that a new HMIS Lead is designated by the GA HMIS collaborative.

The elected chairperson's duties will be to:

1. Serve as primary point of contact for the Steering Committee;
2. Co-facilitate and preside over GA HMIS Steering Committee meetings with the HMIS Lead;
3. Facilitate the development of meeting agendas with the HMIS Lead; and
4. Encourage communication and participation of all Steering Committee members.
5. Monitor effectiveness of the HMIS Lead.

The HMIS Lead's duties as a co-chair will be to:

1. Record and distribute meeting minutes;
2. Co-facilitate and preside over GA HMIS Steering Committee meetings with the elected chairperson;
3. Maintain the committee and subcommittee appointment lists;
4. Co-develop and disseminate the meeting agendas; and
5. Distribute meeting notices

The Chairpersons shall be ex-officio members of all committees created by this Steering Committee.

Section V: Subcommittees

The GA HMIS consists of two types of Subcommittees - Standing Subcommittees and Ad Hoc Subcommittees. Any member of the HMIS Steering Committee is eligible to serve on any subcommittees. For membership on the Standing Committee, candidates must be approved by a simple majority vote of the GA HMIS Steering Committee Members.

The GA HMIS Steering Committee may create ad hoc subcommittees as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Georgia HMIS Implementation. Membership on an Ad hoc Subcommittee is not restricted to GA HMIS Steering Committee members and may include any individual from the at-large GA HMIS collaborative who has an active account with an agency on the GA HMIS system. The creation of any ad hoc meetings will be documented in the minutes of the meeting in which the subcommittee was created. At a minimum, each ad hoc committee must have a chair, and that chair must be an existing GA HMIS Steering Committee member. Ad hoc committees are not voting committees and only provide suggestions and recommendations to the Governance and Policy Subcommittee

Any individual (guest) that does not use the HMIS system but is requesting entry to an ad hoc meeting will need to notify and get approval from the chair of said committee. The contributing guest should be someone who touches the homeless system in some capacity and can provide relevant insights to the subject matter being discussed.

Standing Committee

Governance and Policy Subcommittee

The Governance and Policy Subcommittee is responsible for keeping these by-laws and any

related appendices up to date. In addition, it will assist the HMIS Lead in policy and procedures development and maintenance by providing feedback during initial drafts. At a minimum, this means conducting an annual review of the by-laws, appendices, and all related policies and procedures and recommending changes to the Steering Committee for approval.

The Governance and Policy Subcommittee is also responsible for working with the HMIS Lead and other relevant organizations to develop and approve a template for MOAs for approval by the respective CoCs. The purpose of this is to ensure that each CoC has the same minimum requirements in their MOA and that CoCs do not add requirements that conflict with the goals of the GA HMIS Collaborative as a whole.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

Data Collection, Reporting & Evaluation Subcommittee

The Data Collection, Reporting & Evaluation Subcommittee members work in conjunction with the HMIS Lead in reviewing, evaluating and analyzing data collection and processes not only for HUD programs, but also other federal partners such as Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, and other faith-based and non-profit agencies not participating in HMIS. This committee will make recommendations to the GA HMIS Steering Committee to encourage potential areas of change/improvement. This committee will also provide input on any updates to the Data Quality Plan.

Section VI: Meetings and Attendance

General Meetings

At a minimum, the GA HMIS Steering Committee will conduct six meetings per year, with increased frequency when needed. A minimum of two weeks advance notice of meeting dates, times, and locations will be provided to all GA HMIS Steering Committee members, as well as posted on the <https://dca.ga.gov/safe-affordable-housing/homeless-special-needs-housing/homeless-management-information-system-hmis> website. The meetings for the following calendar year will be scheduled during the last meeting of each calendar year so that members may plan accordingly.

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the GA HMIS Steering Committee may be taken without a meeting, if all members of the Steering Committee unanimously consent to taking action without a meeting. If consent is not collected at a meeting (i.e. consent is collected through electronic means instead), written consents must be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Steering Committee. Action by written consent has the same force and effect as the in-person vote of the Steering Committee members. Written consent includes electronic written communication such as email.

Members must maintain adequate participation to ensure continuity in the process. Remote access to the meetings will be provided as needed, and remote participation will serve as attendance. "Adequate participation" is defined as either a) a minimum member attendance of 4 meetings per year, if only six meetings are held, or b) if more than six meetings are held in a particular year, a minimum of 75% of the meetings held.

Should a member experience a last -minute issue that prevents attendance, the member shall notify the Co-Chairs via telephone or email.

A Committee member or officer may be removed if the member is in violation of the attendance policy stated above.

Section VII: Voting

Each Continuum of Care shall have one vote. Committee actions shall require a majority vote from a quorum of the Steering Committee (5 of 8 CoCs). A quorum shall be defined as a simple majority of the CoCs, subject to the provision that at least one member (or Proxy) from each of the Continua be present. A minimum of five of the eight CoCs must be present for any vote to occur. Voting by simple majority shall prevail except as may be provided elsewhere in these by-laws. The HMIS Lead shall retain the right to settle any matters resulting in a tie vote.

Electronic Voting

Electronic voting is allowed, if vote responses represent a quorum of CoCs. A simple majority vote from 5 of 8 CoCs is required.

Proxy Voting

At times, situations (such as geographic constraints) may occur that make it difficult or impossible for a CoC to vote at some meetings.

The CoC who wishes to use a third party to vote for the respective CoC will issue the third party a written proxy statement. A copy of the written proxy statement shall be forwarded to the one of the co-chairs at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting date on which the proxy shall be placed in effect.

The proxy statement will provide the following information:

1. The name of the CoC issuing the proxy;
2. The party who will vote (a non-committee member can be designated); and
3. Whether the proxy is limited to the vote on a particular question or if the proxy is valid for all votes at a specific meeting.

A proxy statement shall only be valid for a specific meeting and the proxy statement will expire upon adjournment of that meeting. While a proxy allows a vote to be cast in the event of a CoC's absence, from an attendance perspective, the member(s) are considered absent when a proxy is used.

Section VIII: Resignation, Replacement, and Removal of members and officers

A Committee member or Chairperson may resign from the Steering Committee by:

1. Submitting a written notice to the Chairperson, or
2. A CoC may choose to replace their respective Steering Committee members at any time by submitting a written notice to the Chairperson.

A Committee member or officer may only be removed if a meeting is called specifically for this reason and only if the member:

1. Commits a violation of the Conflict of Interest Code as outlined in Section X;
2. Commits a violation of the Code of Conduct as outlined in Section XI; or
3. For just cause, as defined below.

If a member wishes to call a meeting for the purpose of removal of another member, they must first notify the Chairpersons, at which point, notice must be sent by one of the Chairpersons to both the Collaborative Applicant and Board of the potentially affected CoC, and all GA HMIS Steering Committee members, stating that the proposed removal is the purpose of the meeting and include the reasons for the proposed removal. The person recommended for removal and any additional representation desired by the affected CoC shall have the opportunity to speak on his or her behalf prior to a vote of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may deliberate without the person recommended for removal present, prior to a vote. A member or officer may only be removed from the Steering Committee by a 2/3 majority vote of the remaining Steering Committee members.

Just cause is defined as (but is not limited to):

1. Charged with a crime that would subject the member to debarment, suspension, disqualification or other exclusion from participating in a federally funded transaction pursuant to federal law.
2. Unprofessional behavior or acts of moral turpitude.
3. As defined by a 2/3 majority of the Steering Committee.

Section IX: Unanticipated Vacancies

Aside from vacancies due to lack of appointment, as described in Section IV of this document, unanticipated vacancies in a CoC position on the Steering Committee shall be filled, in writing, by the respective CoC.

Steering Committee members who are appointed due to an unanticipated vacancy will complete the remaining term of the committee member he or she was replacing.

Aside from a vacancy due to lack of appointment, as described in Section IV of this document, an unanticipated vacancy of the HMIS Lead representative shall be filled within thirty (30) days through appointment, in writing, by the chief official of the HMIS Lead. During this allotted time frame, the HMIS Lead forfeits its single vote.

Section X: Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest Code shall govern the performance, behavior, and actions of the GA HMIS Steering Committee and its members.

1. No Committee Member shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a bid or contract supported by Federal funds if a conflict of interest is real or apparent to the reasonable person.

2. Conflicts of interest may arise when any Committee Member has a financial, family, or any other beneficial interest in the vendor firm selected or considered for an award.
3. No Committee Member shall do business with, award contracts to, or show favoritism toward a member of his/her immediate family, spouse's family or to any company, vendor or concern who either employs or has any relationship to a family member; or award a contract or bid which violates the spirit or intent of Federal, State and local procurement laws and policies established to maximize free and open competition among qualified vendors.
4. Committee Members shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, gifts, consulting fees, trips, favors or anything having a monetary value in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100) from a vendor, potential vendor, or from the family or employees of a vendor, potential vendor or bidder; or from any party to a sub-agreement or ancillary contract.
5. As permitted by law, rule, policy or regulation, the Steering Committee shall pursue appropriate legal, administrative or disciplinary action against a committee member, vendor or vendor's agent who is alleged to have committed, has been convicted of or pled no contest to a procurement related infraction. If said person has been convicted, disciplined, or pled no contest to a procurement violation, said person shall be removed from any further responsibility or activities on behalf of the Steering Committee.

Section XI: Code of Conduct

GA HMIS Steering Committee members are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and respect, and the utmost civility and decorum.

At all times, the best interest of the GA HMIS Collaborative should influence the decisions made by the GA HMIS Steering Committee members. Personal relationships must not result in special considerations, including bias, nepotism, or favoritism that influences the performance of their official duties in a manner contrary to the interest of the GA HMIS Collaborative.

GA HMIS Steering Committee members are expected to exercise adequate control and supervision over matters for which they are individually responsible.

Section XII: CoC Withdrawal from the GA HMIS Collaborative

CoCs may withdraw from the GA HMIS Collaborative at any time by submitting written notice to the GA HMIS Steering Committee chairpersons; however, any CoC that does so will forfeit their access to both the HMIS Lead and the HMIS Implementation identified by the GA HMIS Collaborative. If a CoC fails to adopt these by-laws or amendments to these by-laws, such failure shall constitute a decision to withdraw from the GA HMIS Collaborative.

Section XIII: Exceptions to GA HMIS Steering Committee Authority

HMIS Lead changes

In the event that the HMIS Lead for the GA HMIS Collaborative must be changed, and this change is not initiated by the HMIS Lead, the GA HMIS Steering Committee must seek a 2/3 majority approval of the CoCs in the GA HMIS Collaborative to initiate the process. Additionally, the documented process by which the new HMIS Lead is selected, regardless of the reason a change was initiated, must also be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the CoCs in the GA HMIS Collaborative.

HMIS Software changes

In the event that the HMIS Software must be changed, the GA HMIS Steering Committee must seek a 2/3 majority approval of the CoCs in the GA HMIS Collaborative to initiate the process. Additionally, the documented process by which the new HMIS Software is selected must also be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the CoCs in the GA HMIS Collaborative.

Section XIV: By-Laws

Adoption

These by-laws shall be in effect upon approval by a 2/3 majority vote of the CoCs listed in Section I. Each CoC is responsible for determining the process by which they vote. Approval shall be by signatures which are documented and stored by the Chairpersons.

Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed by the Governance and Policy Subcommittee not less than annually. Any proposed changes will be provided to the full GA HMIS Steering Committee membership for comments at least 21 calendar days in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting, at which point the process outlined in Section XV will be followed if amendments are needed.

Section XV: Amendments

Recommendations to change or amend these by-laws may be made by any GA HMIS Steering Committee Member and shall be submitted at a regular meeting of the GA HMIS Steering Committee. Proposals shall stand for action and be open for discussion among members. If the proposal is accepted by a majority vote of the GA HMIS Steering Committee, the change(s) will be proposed to the Board of each CoC. Final changes must be voted on by each CoC, with each CoC voting by its established method. Each CoC will have 30 calendar days to submit their written vote to the HMIS Lead for record and tabulation.

If approved by a 2/3 majority of CoCs, the proposed change(s) will be accepted and the HMIS Lead shall update the document to reflect the changes and will distribute updated copies to all members before the next regular GA HMIS Steering Committee meeting.

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of GA HMIS Bylaws

The Continuum of Care, a member of the Georgia HMIS Collaborative, (CoC Name)

- Accepts and adopts these Bylaws for the GA HMIS Steering Committee.
- Appoints the following two people to be the CoC representatives on the GA HMIS Steering Committee.

CoC Representative 1

Name/Title Agency/Company

Relationship to CoC Contact email/phone number

CoC Representative 2

Name/Title Agency/Company

Relationship to CoC Contact email/phone number

Individual Authorized to enter into this Agreement

Printed Name Signature

Authorizing Role for the CoC Date