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A pair of hands is shown holding a small, textured house model. The house is made of a material that looks like woven paper or fabric, with a gabled roof and a small window. The hands are positioned as if presenting the house. The background is a soft, out-of-focus image of a person's face, suggesting a focus on human care and support.

An Introductory Guide to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development



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1. Introduction

This guidebook provides background information and guidance on the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). The guide describes the AHAR data reporting requirements and also reviews the data submission process via the HUD Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX), a web-based data collection tool available at www.hudhdx.info. This guide is designed primarily for people and communities interested in participating in the AHAR for the first time. It can also be used as a reference guide for communities that participated in previous AHARs.

This chapter provides a general overview of the AHAR, briefly discussing the origins of the project, the types of communities that participate in the AHAR, and the uses of AHAR data. The remainder of the guide proceeds as follows:

- Chapter 2 details the AHAR data collection schedule and reporting requirements.
- Chapter 3 focuses on the data submission process via the HDX.
- Chapter 4 presents a list of AHAR resources.

1.1. What is the AHAR?

The AHAR represents the first effort to use administrative data to produce national estimates of homelessness.

HUD selected a research team from Abt Associates and the University of Pennsylvania to complete the AHAR. The AHAR research team collects, reviews, and analyzes aggregate HMIS data for the AHAR. The team also compiles the Point-in-Time (PIT) counts and housing inventories that CoC's report to HUD via the Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX). To collect the HMIS data, liaisons from the research team work one-on-one with community representatives to generate the data, review the quality of the data, facilitate the reporting process, and help resolve any data-quality issues. The research team analyzes the data and prepares the annual reports, which are published each summer and provide an overview of homelessness during the previous year.

What is the AHAR?

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is a report to the U.S. Congress on the extent and nature of homelessness in the United States. It provides counts of the homeless population and describes their demographic characteristics and service use patterns. The AHAR is based on local data from Point-in-Time counts, Housing Inventory Counts, and Homeless Management Information Systems.

1.2. What data are reported to the AHAR?

The AHAR is based on three types of data: Point-in-Time counts of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a single night in January; housing inventories of emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and Safe Haven programs; and 12-month counts of people using homeless residential programs based on HMIS data. This guide focuses on the HMIS data source, but Chapter 4 presents information on completing PIT counts and housing inventories.

The HMIS data used in the AHAR are based largely on the universal data elements in HUD's HMIS Data Standards¹. All HMIS data are reported in the aggregate for each community to the research team. The data represent any person who spends at least one night in an emergency shelter, transitional housing program, or permanent supportive housing program during a 12-month reporting period, from October 1 to September 30 of the following year. Data are reported separately for individuals and persons in families in these program types. Thus there are six reporting categories:

- Emergency Shelters for Individuals (ESIND);
- Emergency Shelter for Families (ESFAM);
- Transitional Housing for Individuals (THIND);
- Transitional Housing for Families (THFAM);
- Permanent Supportive Housing for Individuals (PSHIND); and
- Permanent Supportive Housing for Families (PSHFAM).

These reporting categories are submitted separately for all persons in these programs (or the "All Persons AHAR") and for veterans only (or the "AHAR Veterans Supplemental Report"). The data reported to the All Persons AHAR and the AHAR Veterans are the same, except data for the AHAR Veteran report should contain data *only* on veterans in these programs. The data collection process for the AHAR Veterans report takes place at the same time as the data collection for the All Persons AHAR. Thus, in total there are 12 separate reporting categories for which communities can submit data to the AHAR. There is also a Summary reporting category that captures information on people who used multiple programs during the reporting year to derive an unduplicated count of all persons using homeless assistance programs.

AHAR Veterans Supplemental Report

Since 2009, HUD has asked AHAR participants to provide supplemental data on homeless veterans. The data elements and reporting categories are the same as the regular report, but only include adults who identified as veterans in the regular AHAR. The reporting period and data collection deadlines for the Veterans supplemental report are the same as for the regular AHAR.

¹ Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Data Standards- Revised Notice, March 2010. Available online at: www.hudhre.info.

HMIS data are submitted to the AHAR research team via the *Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX)*, a dynamic web-based tool designed to collect and manage AHAR data, as well as Housing Inventory data, Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data, and Homelessness Pulse Project data. Submitting AHAR data via the HDX is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.3. Who participates in the AHAR?

All (CoCs) are encouraged to participate in the AHAR and submit data for the entire continuum. In fact, the number of continuums participating in the AHAR has grown dramatically since HUD completed the first AHAR in February 2007. Participation in the AHAR is now a scoring factor in the application for funding that CoCs submit to HUD each year.

However, for the purposes of developing a nationally representative sample, HUD randomly selected 102 jurisdictions—or AHAR sample sites. Each sample site is a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) jurisdiction, and there are four types of CDBG jurisdictions: large cities, medium-sized cities, urban counties, and non-entitlement (i.e., rural) areas. Sample sites may geographically encompass an entire CoC or may be a smaller geographic area within a CoC. CDBG jurisdictions correspond to the geocodes that CoCs use to complete the Housing Inventory Count, and thus can be identified using these codes.

Data submitted to the AHAR from a sample site should be limited to homeless service providers located within the CDBG jurisdiction, and in some cases, may only represent a portion of a CoC. In these infrequent cases, the data submitted for the sample site and the data submitted for the balance of the CoC (if applicable) must be mutually exclusive. Members of the AHAR research team can help communities with this issue.

1.4. How is the AHAR used?

The AHAR is the only source of data that is available annually on the extent and nature of homelessness nationwide. As such, the AHAR provides federal and local policymakers with a deeper understanding of who is homeless and how homelessness changes over time. This information can be used to inform the public and help policymakers craft appropriate intervention strategies to prevent and end homelessness in America.

The AHAR is also used by local communities who want to better understand the number, characteristics, and service needs of people using homeless services. This provides a data-driven understanding of the community's homeless population to inform local homeless assistance planning. Communities can also use AHAR data for the CoC application, community planning, strategic plans to end homelessness, consolidated plans, and funding applications.

2. Overview of the AHAR Process

This chapter provides an overview of the AHAR process. The chapter describes the AHAR schedule, the AHAR reporting requirements, and the data submission process. It also discusses some of the most common data quality issues encountered by communities when submitting data to the AHAR.

2.1. AHAR Schedule

The 12-month homeless estimates reported in the AHAR are based on HMIS data on the use of homeless residential programs from October 1 through September 30. Beginning on October 1st of each year, AHAR team members (or AHAR liaisons) contact participating communities to collect their data. Thus, October 1 is an important date because it marks both the start of a new AHAR reporting cycle and the start of data collection from the previous 12-month reporting period.

The schedule for submitting data to the AHAR is:

- **November 15:** draft data for the All Persons AHAR and the Veterans Supplemental Report must be submitted to the HDX.
- **January 13:** final data for the All Persons AHAR must be completed. Data are deemed final when: (1) the community has addressed or explained all data quality concerns identified by the AHAR research team *and* (2) the research team has obtained confirmation from the primary CoC contact that the data are accurate.
- **January 20:** final data for the Veteran's Supplemental Report must be completed. Data are deemed final when: (1) the community has addressed or explained all data quality concerns identified by the AHAR research team *and* (2) the research team has obtained confirmation from the primary CoC contact that the data are accurate.

The AHAR data are compiled and analyzed by the research team between January and March, and the final report is released in June. Trainings are offered in September or October to:

- introduce the AHAR process to communities that are new to the AHAR;
- provide an overview of the AHAR process;
- review the data reporting requirements;
- introduce communities to the HDX;
- demonstrate how to improve the quality of AHAR data; and
- increase the capacity of communities to participate fully.

From October to December, the data submission period, communities should focus on compiling their data, running HMIS queries to generate the data required for

reporting, reviewing their data quality, submitting the data via the HDX, resolving any data quality issues, and finalizing the data submission. From January to September, communities should focus on expanding their HMIS implementation to increase provider coverage in their HMIS, conducting routine data quality checks, and participating in AHAR trainings as needed.

2.2. Criteria for Participating in the AHAR

There are four criteria for participating in the AHAR:

- (1). ***A community’s AHAR data must be generated from an HMIS.*** HUD requires that all AHAR data submissions be generated from an HMIS. Data generated from hard copy records or electronic systems that do not fully constitute an HMIS will not be accepted into the AHAR.

- (2). ***Communities must have at least 50 percent of beds community-wide represented in their HMIS, excluding domestic violence provider beds.*** A community’s HMIS bed coverage rate is equal to the total number of beds in HMIS divided by the total number of beds in the community. The bed coverage rate should account for all beds in the community, including both HUD and non-HUD funded beds. *For the purposes of reporting to the AHAR, bed coverage rates are calculated separately by reporting category.* Any reporting category below 50 percent is excluded from the AHAR. In the example below, three reporting categories (i.e., ES-IND, TH-FAM, and PSH-FAM) are below 50 percent and thus ineligible for the AHAR. The other reporting categories could still be used in the AHAR.

Determining AHAR Eligibility Based on HMIS coverage rates				
Program Type	Beds in HMIS	Total Inventory	Bed Coverage Rate	Sufficient Bed Coverage for AHAR Participation?
ES-IND	5	15	33%	NO
ES-FAM	15	20	75%	YES
TH-IND	20	30	67%	YES
TH-FAM	0	30	0%	NO
PSH-IND	10	10	100%	YES
PSH-FAM	10	40	25%	NO

The AHAR section of the HDX website has built-in adjustments to account for service providers that do not participate in HMIS. The adjustments are based on a community’s bed inventory and are designed to provide an accurate count of sheltered homeless persons community-wide, even though some providers do not participate in HMIS. For example, if an ES-IND program has 50 participating beds and 50 non-participating beds and reports 100 persons stayed in their participating beds during the reporting period, the adjusted

total count of people in ES-IND would be 200. These adjustments are illustrated in each community's Extrapolation Report, described below.

- (3). ***Communities must collect accurate entry and exit dates for all clients served.*** The most common data quality issue is that programs are either not entering all clients served into their HMIS or they are not reliably exiting clients from the HMIS after they leave their programs. These problems become evident when reviewing communities' *bed utilization rates*. A bed utilization rate is equal to the total number of persons served on any given day divided by the total number of beds available on that day. In the AHAR, bed utilization rates are calculated separately by reporting category (ES-IND, ES-FAM, TH-IND, TH-FAM, PSH-IND, and PSH-FAM). Reporting categories with unreasonably low or high rates that cannot be explained by the community are excluded from the AHAR.

Typically, programs that report that less than 65 percent of their beds are occupied are failing to enter all clients into their HMIS, while programs that report that over 105 percent of their beds are utilized are failing to exit clients from their HMIS. However, there may be valid explanations for low or high utilization rates. Family programs may have low *bed* utilization rates but high *unit* utilization rates if all the units are full but family sizes are smaller than the program's bed inventory. High utilization rates may occur during the winter months when providers offer cots or mats to shelter as many persons as possible. Reporting categories with low or high bed utilization rates that are adequately explained by the community can be included in the AHAR. Any local explanations for high or low utilization should be entered as a note on the Question 2 page of the AHAR HDX section.

- (4). ***Communities must have reasonably low missing values.*** Data completeness is an important measure of data quality, and communities that submit data for client characteristics that are mostly blank or missing will not be accepted into the AHAR.

2.3. The AHAR Reporting Requirements

A community's HMIS must have certain capabilities in order to submit data for the AHAR. The HMIS must be able to:

- (1) ***Produce accurate, de-duplicated counts of sheltered homeless persons on any given day, on an average day, and during a one-year period.*** The accuracy of these counts depends on the ability of service providers to capture entry and exit dates for all clients served, as well as sufficient personally identifying information to properly de-duplicate all client records.
- (2) ***Identify client overlap across reporting categories.*** An HMIS must be able to account for persons who are served in multiple reporting categories and

produce counts of persons using any combination of reporting categories. For instance, the HMIS must be able to tabulate how many people were served in ES-IND only; ES-IND and ES-FAM; ES-IND and TH-IND; ES-IND, ES-FAM, and TH-IND; and so on. This information is used to adjust for persons who use multiple programs and to generate a de-duplicated count of homeless persons.

(3) **Count persons by household type.** The AHAR counts different types of households: individual adults; adults in families with children; children in families with adults; households with only adults; households with only children (i.e. households with multiple children and no adults); and unaccompanied youth.

- Family (FAM) households are households with at least one adult (a person at least 18 years old) and one child (under 18)
- All other households, such as households with only adults or households with only children are considered individual (IND) households

(4) **Generate counts of persons with certain demographic characteristics and previous housing situations.** The AHAR tabulates persons by ethnicity, race, gender, age categories, veteran status, disability status, household type, household size, and previous living situations.

The demographic characteristics of persons served during the AHAR reporting period are based on the first program entry date within each reporting category.

For example, if a person accesses multiple ES-IND providers during the AHAR reporting period, his demographic characteristics reported to the AHAR should be based on his first program entry into an ES-IND provider. If a person enters a program before the start of the reporting period but is still in the program at the start of the reporting period (October 1), then his characteristics will be based on his status as of October 1.

Similarly, if a person enters a TH-IND provider on February 1 and then joins his family in a TH-FAM provider on June 1, the demographic characteristics reported in the TH-IND category should be based on his status on February 1 and the characteristics reported in the TH-FAM category should be based on his status on June 1.

What is the definition of a “family” in the AHAR?

For the purposes of the AHAR, a family is defined as two or more persons who present together for services and at least one person is an adult *and* one person is a child. All other household configurations—such as two married adults or a juvenile parent and her children—are reported in the IND reporting categories.

- (5) **Generate total lengths of stay for each person by reporting category and cross tabulate the data by gender and age.** The total length of stay by reporting category is equal to the cumulative sum of nights spent in any program within that category. For instance, if a client stays for 14 nights in an ES-IND program, 20 nights in a different ES-IND program, and then 30 nights in the original ES-IND program, then the total length of stay is 64 nights (or $14 + 20 + 30 = 64$).
- (6) **Count the total number of households with children by reporting category.** Counting households can be challenging because household compositions are fluid and communities have many different ways to identify a family household. For the purposes of the AHAR, a family household must always include at least one adult and one child. For calculating the total number of family households served during the 12-month reporting period, the first household that a person presents with during the reporting period is counted. Anytime a person is served in a family household for the first-time that is considered a new household. Note that this method of counting households will count two households if part of a family receives services (e.g., mother and son) at one time and then later the full family (e.g., mother, father, and son) receives services; however, it will count only one household if the full family comes in for services first, then part of the family comes in for services later.



Tip: Many HMIS software providers have pre-programmed (or "canned") AHAR reports that generate the required data automatically. Contact your vendor representative about the availability of a canned AHAR report.

3. Submitting Data via the HDX

This chapter describes the process of entering and submitting AHAR data through the Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX). The HDX is a dynamic, web-based data collection tool that was designed specifically to collect data on homeless programs for HUD. All data submission to the AHAR occurs through the HDX.

3.1. What is the HDX?

The HDX is a new HUD website for communities to use to report local data for the following four reports on homelessness:

- The Housing Inventory Count
- The Point-in-Time Count (PIT)
- The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)
- The Homelessness Pulse Project

It can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week at <http://www.hudhdx.info>. The tool also allows communities to generate local reports based on AHAR data for any community that participates in the AHAR. The local reports display a community's data compared to the national data for comparative purposes, which may highlight important differences between a community's homeless population and the national profile of homelessness.

Screenshot of HDX Homepage

HUD.GOV
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Secretary Shaun Donovan

Homelessness Data Exchange
[Home](#) [Login](#)

Welcome to the Homelessness Data Exchange website

The Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX)
The Homelessness Data Exchange is an on-line tool designed to allow Homeless Continuums of Care to submit data to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for:

- [The Annual Housing Inventory Count](#)
- [Homeless Point-in-Time Counts](#)
- [The Annual Homeless Assessment Report](#), and
- Quarterly Homeless Counts through [the Homelessness Pulse Project](#).

These reports are based primarily on data collected and maintained in Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).

Users who are the designated contact for submitting their community data may [login](#) using their HMIS.info account.

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC)
The Housing Inventory Count collects information about all of the beds and units in each Continuum of Care homeless system, categorized by five Program Types.

1. Emergency Shelter: Total number of emergency shelter beds and units that are designated to serve people who are homeless and are recognized as part of the formal homeless system.

AHAR DEADLINES
11/30/10 First Draft of Data
01/14/11 Final Draft of Data

TRAININGS
Register for a session now by clicking a date:
[AHAR 101 on 10/5 @ 3pm EDT](#)
[AHAR for Experienced on 10/6 @ 3pm EDT](#)
[AHAR 101 on 10/7 @ 11am EDT](#)

AHAR Local Reports
[Register as an AHAR site](#)

HDX RESOURCES
[HDX Training Modules I through V](#)
This file provides instructions on how to enter data for the Housing Inventory Count and the Point-in-

To use the HDX, users must log in to the website. To log in, choose the “Log in” button in the upper left-hand corner of the webpage. If you have an account with hmis.info, your HDX log in username and password are the same. If not, you can open an account with the link provided below the log in box, the “Create an Account” link. If you have problems creating an account please click on the “Technical Support” link at the bottom of the page.

A primary contact is designated for each community based on the primary contact listed in a community’s CoC registration page on *e-snaps*. The primary user can add other users to the HDX and assign read/write privileges to the additional users. The primary user is the only person who can submit the data to the AHAR team for review and confirm the data as

accurate and final. A primary user may be responsible for more than one participating AHAR community. In these cases, the primary user can toggle between sites by using the “Change Site” link in the top-middle of the page. While communities’ data submissions may be improved by allowing additional stakeholders to view and comment on the data, each continuum should limit the number of users who can edit their data to ensure that the data remain secure and accurate.

Levels of Access in the HDX

- (1). **Primary Contact:** The primary contact can view, edit, or add data and is the only person who can add other users for a particular community. The primary contact also serves as the point-of-contact for the AHAR liaison.
- (2). **Write:** Users can view, edit, or add data for submission.
- (3). **Read:** Users can review the data but cannot edit data in the HDX.
- (4). **Submit:** User has sole ability to submit a category of data in the HDX.

3.2. Using the AHAR section of the HDX

AHAR data collection is an iterative process in which community representatives work with their AHAR liaison to submit, revise, and confirm their submission. The goal is to compile the most complete and accurate data possible, which will both improve the precision of the AHAR and provide reliable data for communities to use for local purposes. This section details how to enter data and the process for confirming and finalizing data.

Throughout data entry, users can view summaries of all their AHAR data on the “Site Status” tab of the AHAR HDX section. The current status of each reporting category is displayed here, as well as the name of the AHAR liaison. Users can click on a site name (circled below in red) to reach the “My Data” page for either the All Persons report or the Veterans report. The screenshot below displays a sample Site Status page:

Screenshot of AHAR Site Status Page

Homelessness Data Exchange Now viewing data for AK-500 - Anchorage Welcome, Louise Rothschild | Log Out

Home Dashboard HIC PIT AHAR PULSE Messages Reports HDX Admin

AHAR Site Status My Data Upload

Sites & Reporting Types

Not Activated | Not Started | In Progress | In Review | Complete | Confirmed

Filter by TA Person: Any Filter by AHAR Site Code: Any Filter by Reporting Type: Any Filter by Errors/Warnings: Any

Filter by Shell Status: Any Shell Is: greater than or equal to Not Activated

Site Name - Reporting Type	ES-FAM	ES-IND	TH-FAM	TH-IND	PSH-FAM	PSH-IND	SUMMARY	TA Person	Primary Contact	Messages	Errors	Usability Warnings
AK Anchorage All Persons	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	RJ de la Cruz	Sandy Olibrice	0	78	0
AK Anchorage Veterans	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	RJ de la Cruz	Sandy Olibrice	0	0	0

The “My Data” tab of the AHAR section is the cornerstone of the AHAR data submission process. This is where you can separately enter and view data for all reporting categories, as well as enter and view data in the summary reporting category. To move back and forth between the My Data tab for the All Persons AHAR report and the Veterans Supplemental report, click on the Site/Type arrow and select a site from the dropdown menu that will appear (circled below in red).

Screenshot of AHAR My Data Page

AHAR Site Status My Data Upload

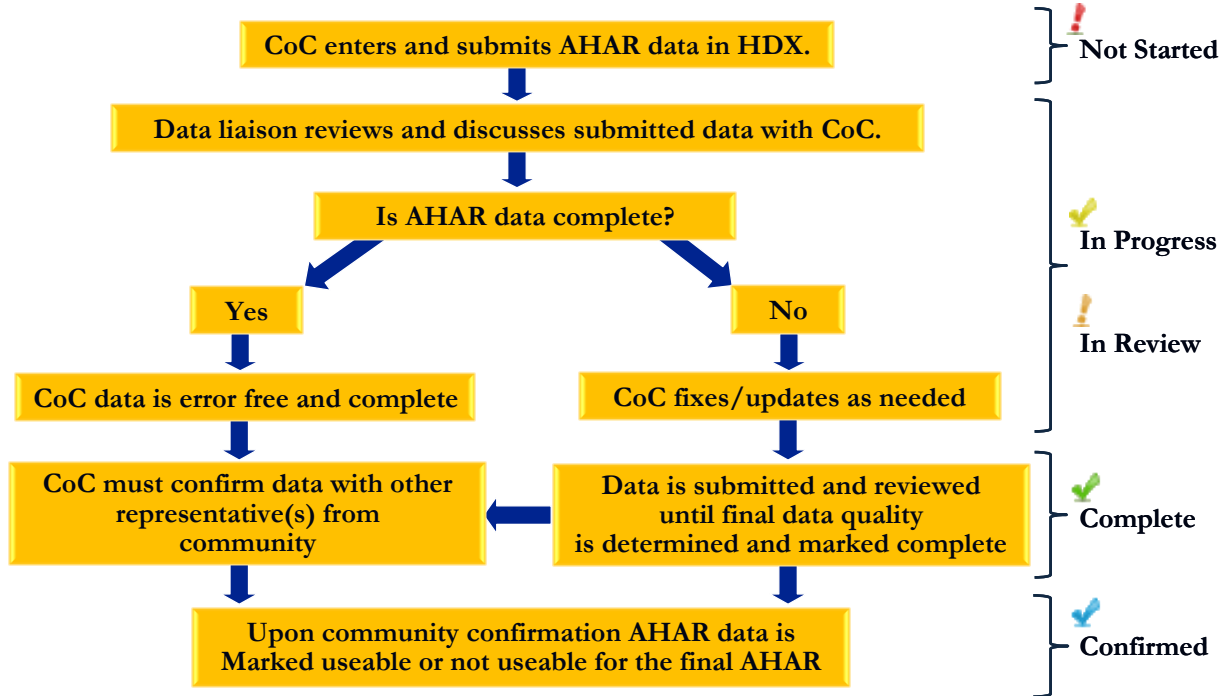
Year: 2010 Site/Type: **AK - Anchorage - All** Contact: Sandy Olibrice

Confirm As an: AK - Anchorage - Veterans of data to confirmed.

Shell - Reporting Type	Complete	Validation	Reporting Status	Status	Used in Final AHAR
ES-FAM Emergency Shelters for Families Last Update: 10/5/2010 (joc)	0%	0 Errors 0 Usability Errors	Not Selected	Not Started	TBD
ES-IND Emergency Shelters for Individuals Last Update: 10/5/2010	0%	0 Errors 0 Usability Errors	Not Selected	Not Started	TBD
TH-FAM Transitional Housing for Families Last Update: n/a	0%	0 Errors 0 Usability Errors	Not Selected	Not Started	TBD

The data collection process has five steps, which are reflected in the Status field on the “My Data” tab. Under each reporting category, a field indicates the status of your submission: not started, in progress, in review, completed, and confirmed. Below is a flow chart of the data collection process.

AHAR Data Collection Process



(1.) Initial Data Entry: Not Started

Manual Data Entry:

Data entry can be completed manually or can be automatically uploaded using the AHAR XML schema. HMIS vendors can request an updated XML schema through the Vendors Help Desk on the HUDHRE at www.hudhre.info/helpdesk. Data entry should be completed for each reporting category with at least 50 percent bed coverage. To begin manually entering data, navigate to the “My Data” tab of the AHAR section as seen above. Select the reporting category for which you would like to enter data and click on “Enter Data.” Next, select the question you would like to work on from the dropdown menu on the toolbar by clicking on the desired question. Enter information for the selected question in the white boxes located beneath each question.

After you start entering data into a reporting category, the status will automatically change to “In Progress.” When you are finished entering data, make sure to hit the gray “Save and Next” or “Save and Previous” button in the upper corner of each question.

Data Upload

The “Upload” tab of the AHAR section is designed to make reporting easier for communities. This page allows users to upload draft data directly from an XML file onto the HDX. Not all HMIS vendors have developed this capability yet, so users should consult with their HMIS vendor about the availability of this feature.

If your system allows uploading XML-formatted data, it can be done in a few quick steps:

- (1). Click on the “Browse” button and then select the XML file you have saved on your computer.
- (2). Hit the “Validate” button.
- (3). Select the reporting categories you would like to upload and hit “Upload Existing Categories.” The data are then uploaded into the AHAR section.
- (4). Please review your uploaded data in the “My Data” section for representativeness and possible errors before submitting it for review by your AHAR liaison.

Remember that the XML upload feature will overwrite any existing data your community already submitted to the AHAR section. If you receive an error message that your XML file cannot be uploaded, you should proceed to the Messages portion of the website to notify your AHAR liaison. Communities should review the data for representativeness and possible errors prior to submitting the data to the AHAR team for review.



Tip: Footnotes clarifying AHAR questions or terms are located below the data entry questions in the "Help" box.

(2.) Community Review: 🟡 In Progress

The “In Progress” status field indicates that the user is working on the data submission. Communities should review their data for accuracy and completeness prior to submitting it to the AHAR team. Community representatives who generate the AHAR data are advised to show the data to other members in the community, including the HMIS administrator, the CoC lead, and local providers as appropriate.

Throughout the data submission process, you may see yellow “Warning” or “Usability Warning” boxes on the screen after you provide data for each question. These warning boxes indicate that there appears to be an error in the inputted data. You can continue to enter data without addressing these error messages, but they will remain flagged for the final validation report. If you believe that the data are indeed correct, please use the “Notes” link in the upper right corner of each screen to explain to the AHAR liaison why you believe the data are correct. The “Notes” field can also be used to explain unusual situations or clarify how the data element was calculated.

Screenshot of an AHAR Validation Error


ES-FAM Question 3: Age* [\(Click to hide all errors/warnings\)](#)

Age of Children:	# of Persons
Under 1	a. <input type="text" value="10"/> Log (0)
1 to 5	b. <input type="text" value="3"/> Log (0)
6 to 12	c. <input type="text" value="5"/> Log (0)
13 to 17	d. <input type="text" value="9"/> Log (0)
<hr/>	
Total:	27

Age of Adults:	# of Persons
18 to 30	e. <input type="text" value="25"/> Log (0)
31 to 50	f. <input type="text" value="15"/> Log (0)
51 to 61	g. <input type="text" value="60"/> Log (0)
62 or older	h. <input type="text" value="15"/> Log (0)
<hr/>	
Total:	115

Missing this information	i. <input type="text" value="0"/> Log (0)

Persons Reported:	142

 **Error**
The Sum of persons by age (142) should equal the Unduplicated count of persons (100).

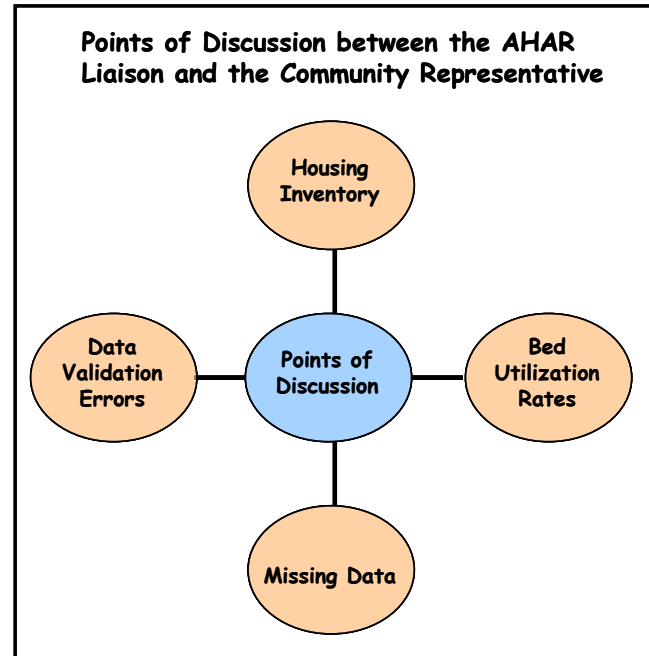
Once all of the data are entered for all questions, you should generate the data validation report by clicking on the “Validation Report” button at the top right-hand side of the screen. The built-in validation system identifies potential errors in the AHAR data you have just entered. To address any validation issue in the report, double-click on the AHAR question identified in the validation report. You will automatically be returned to that question.

It is important to remember that the validation report identifies many, but not all, types of data errors. Furthermore, the validation report cannot suggest whether the data accurately represent homeless persons in your community. Therefore, it is important that you review all the data and make sure it is reasonable before submitting it to your AHAR liaison.

(3.) Draft Data Submission: 🚧 In Review

Draft data that have been entered in the HDX and reviewed by the community should be submitted to the AHAR team for review by November 15. Once you have reviewed the data validation report and corrected any data errors, you can submit your data to the AHAR liaison for review by clicking the gray “Submit Data” button. Each category is submitted separately and as soon as it is ready for review, not just when all categories are complete. The AHAR liaison will be notified automatically to review your data. The AHAR liaison will respond with feedback on your data as soon as possible, usually within two business days. You will not be able to edit your data while it is under review.

The AHAR liaison may ask you to recheck your data, and it is common for a community to submit multiple drafts of its data. If changes are necessary, the community will investigate potential sources of the discrepancies. This may include talking with providers, working with the HGIS system, or requesting vendor support.



(4.) Final submission and confirmation of data: ✅ Complete

After reviewing your AHAR data, your AHAR liaison will contact you to discuss your submission. If your liaison determines that the data need additional work, then the status will be changed back to “In Progress,” and you will be able to make any necessary changes. After you correct the data, you should submit the data back to the AHAR liaison for review by clicking the gray “Submit Data” button. The AHAR liaison will mark the reporting category as “Complete” when the data have been deemed final. At that point, your liaison will generate an email through the HDX that asks you to discuss your data submission with other stakeholders in your community. These discussions should focus on the validity of the data and how well it represents the clients served in the community. A Data Summary Report generated by the HDX will be attached to the email to facilitate these discussions. Communities must confirm their final data in the HDX by January 13 for the All Persons AHAR and January 20 for the Veteran’s Supplemental Report. The AHAR will not include data until it has been confirmed by the community.



Tip: Discussing the AHAR data with a wide range of stakeholders helps ensure that the final submission accurately represents the community's homeless population.

(5.) Final review and determination of usability:  **Confirmed**

Once data for all submitted reporting categories are complete and you have reviewed the data with the appropriate stakeholders, select the “Confirm Data” button to indicate that the data are considered final and confirmed. If you need to make changes to your data, simply change the status of the reporting category back to “In Progress.” Once the changes are made, you can resubmit the data for review and the data submission process proceeds as described above.

The AHAR liaison, in conjunction with other members of the AHAR team, will make the final determination regarding the usability of your data for the AHAR. In general, data are deemed usable if they meet the AHAR criteria for participation and the data have been confirmed by the community. The usability of each reporting category is assessed independently. Your liaison will generate an email through the HDX that indicates which reporting categories will be utilized in the AHAR.

3.3. Other sections of the HDX

The HDX includes other features to help communities communicate with their AHAR liaison, upload files and produce reports for local use.

Messages

The “Messages” tab of HDX allows you to ask questions or send messages directly to your AHAR liaison. This internal messaging system also offers a way to troubleshoot the website, as well as to request technical assistance related to AHAR participation.

Files

The “Files” tab allows users to upload files related to the AHAR, as well as to access files that are uploaded by the AHAR research team.

Reports

The “Reports” tab of the HDX allows users to print their AHAR data by reporting category and to create various reports about homelessness in their communities. These reports are useful to confirm a community’s AHAR data and also for local purposes, such as program planning or to solicit other sources of funding. A list of HDX reports is described below.

Reports Available in the HDX

Name of AHAR Report	Description
Local Reports	This report provides a comprehensive look at the data submitted by a community. It features tables, graphs, and charts that present the data reported for the year, as well as comparisons to previous year's data (if available). The report includes a cover, introduction, and table of contents, making it suitable for distribution to local stakeholders.
Data Summary Report	Designed to help communities review their AHAR data, this report provides unduplicated counts of homeless persons, bed and family unit utilization rates, and length of stay data for each of the four reporting categories.
Extrapolated Counts	For jurisdictions that do not have 100 percent bed coverage, this report provides homeless counts that include estimates for those providers that do not participate in HMIS. Communities should review this report as part of the data confirmation process.
Demographics Report	This report provides a visual breakdown of the demographic characteristics of persons served during the AHAR reporting period.
Prior Living Situation Report	This report categorizes the prior living situations of the homeless people counted in the AHAR data for the community.
Lengths of Stay Report	This report focuses on clients' length of stay during the AHAR reporting period.
Long Term Stay Report	This report presents demographic data on individuals who used emergency shelter for more than 180 days during the AHAR reporting period and compares these numbers to the total number of homeless people that used homeless shelters in the community during the AHAR reporting period.

4. AHAR Resources

The AHAR team has developed numerous resources with information on participating in the AHAR. Places to look for this information include:

- HDX (<http://www.hudhdx.info>) provides links to XML Upload tools, AHAR technical assistance documents, AHAR tools, and regular AHAR updates from the AHAR research team.
- HDX Sandbox (<http://sandbox.hudhdx.info>) provides a website where communities can view the AHAR reporting requirements, enter data into the Sandbox, view automated data validation flags, and generate local reports. The Sandbox is a place for communities to “play” with their data and gauge the quality of their AHAR submission; it is not the place to submit a community’s official AHAR data.
- Hmis.info provides information on HMIS implementation and allows users to network with other HMIS staff to share ideas and information.
- Hudhre.info contains detailed information on all HUD homeless programs, as well as funding allocations for each program and CoC. The latest AHAR trainings are posted here.

There are several technical assistance documents that communities may find helpful in beginning the AHAR process. A description of each document and a link to each is provided below, along with links to the documents.

- [Bed Utilization Tool](#) helps communities track monthly shelter usage by provider. Monitoring these data can help avoid missing or inaccurate entry and exit dates.
- [HMIS Self Assessment Process](#) can help CoCs identify problems they may be experiencing with HMIS and find TA resources to address the challenges.
- [A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People](#) describes several methods for identifying, counting, and learning something about homeless people who are unlikely to be found in shelters or in other residential programs within a local homeless assistance network. *Look for an updated guide coming soon!*
- [A Guide to Counting Sheltered Homeless People](#) describes recommended methods for collecting data on *sheltered homeless populations*, that is, homeless persons residing in emergency shelter or transitional housing. *Look for an updated guide coming soon!*
- [2011 Housing Inventory Instructions](#) provides instructions to communities on how to complete their Housing Inventory Count in the HDX.

- [Garbage In, Garbage Out: Strategies to Ensure Data Quality](#) provides tips and tricks to collecting, entering, and reporting valid, reliable data. It includes real world examples of effective data quality monitoring strategies, and incentives to encourage users to enter quality data.
- [List of HMIS and AHAR Acronyms and Definitions](#) helps you familiarize yourself with key HMIS and AHAR concepts.
- [AHAR Data Quality: Tips and Strategies](#) defines data quality, reviews why it is important, and explains how best to monitor data quality.
- [AHAR Memo on Improving Missing Data Rates](#) provides specific strategies for reducing missing rates for disability status, veteran status, and prior living situation. It also includes system-level approaches to address data completion, including technical fixes, workflow solutions, and incentives for case managers and data entry staff.

In addition to the above resources, you can always contact the AHAR research team to get more information on AHAR participation or technical assistance for your community.

To Request AHAR Assistance

There are four easy ways to request AHAR assistance:

1. Email: AHAR@abtassoc.com
2. Submit questions via the Virtual Help Desk on HUDHRE.info.
3. Submit a question to your AHAR Liaison on the HDX website.

