# WHY FUND MINNESOTA'S HMIS

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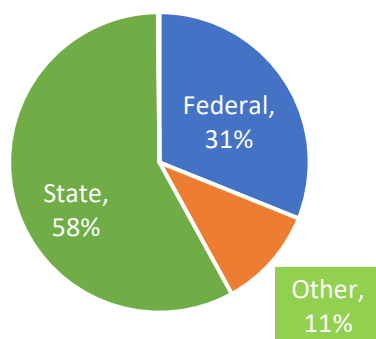SECURED STATE FUNDING FOR HMIS WILL GUARANTEE ESSENTIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MINNESOTA'S HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM.
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## WHAT IS HMIS?
Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the data infrastructure to collect and store client-level and program-level information about those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Over 240 homeless service organizations in Minnesota use the database to facilitate housing referrals and monitor and evaluate their programs. Minnesota's HMIS is operated by the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA), the state system administrator. The Minnesota HMIS Governing Board oversees ICA's operation, providing strategic guidance.

## WHAT DATA IS IN HMIS?
Three types of data are collected: **client data** – name, date of birth, social security number, demographics, service needs and housing history -, **program data** – funding type, available beds, population focus, program requirements -, and **transaction data** – for example, a family's program enrollment date.
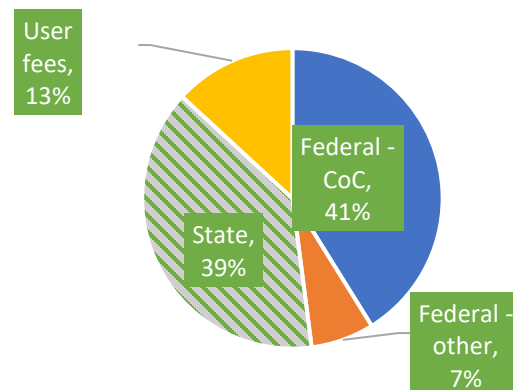
## WHO USES IT?
The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires HMIS use for many programs who receive federal funding. Its use is also mandated by ten (10) state programs, including the Department of Human Services (DHS) Housing Support, and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP). Last year, Continuum of Care (CoC) leadership and local community partners across Minnesota used HMIS data to help secure over $37M in federal funding.

<div style="border:1px solid; background:#cce6f5; padding:8px;">
THE STATE REQUIRES PROGRAMS TO ENTER DATA IN HMIS BY STATUTE
BUT DOES NOT YET GUARANTEE ITS FUNDING.
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### MN's HMIS Use by Program



Federal, 31%
State, 58%
Other, 11%

### Secured Income by Program



User fees, 13%
Federal - CoC, 41%
State, 39%
Federal - other, 7%

*While over half the programs the HMIS maintains are state-funded, less than half of the $2.5M HMIS budget is state dollars. These dollars are not secured.*

## HOW CAN HMIS HELP KEEP STATE-FUNDED PROGRAMS ACCOUNTABLE?
Through ICA's proactive monitoring and a jointly run data quality initiative, funders can monitor programs for effective use of funds.

## IS HMIS SECURE? WHO HAS ACCESS?
HMIS is a secure platform with comprehensive data privacy requirements. ICA staff, licensed and trained users who provide direct service, CoC leadership, and state program staff requiring HMIS can access data. ICA manages access levels for users depending on their role. HMIS

data privacy policies require users only view client records when there is a business reason to do so. All agencies who participate in HMIS sign a Business Associates Agreement and, where required, additional data use agreements where HIPAA or other data regulatory requirements apply.

## HOW IS HMIS USED?

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| **TO GET PEOPLE HOUSED:** | Community planners and housing providers use HMIS to facilitate housing referrals to place individuals and families into available permanent housing units. In Minnesota's largest county, HMIS helps clients reserve available shelter beds each night through a single point-of-entry. |
| **FOR EVALUATION AND MONITORING:** | ICA aggregates HMIS data for required federal and state reporting and produces summary data and statistics on homelessness in Minnesota. HMIS data recently helped the state evaluate effectiveness of pilot programs like Landlord Risk Mitigation and Homework Starts with Home. |
| **TO UNDERSTAND RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION:** | Nearly 90% (24,000) of the homeless service beds in Minnesota are tracked in HMIS year-round. As programs change – whether adding warming centers, shifting population focus, or adding new units, ICA ensures that HMIS represents that change. |

## IS IT CLIENT-CENTERED? As a trusted community partner since 2016, ICA collaborates with local,

regional, and state program partners to design or improve existing data collection requirements in a way that collects only what is necessary to provide service and evaluate program outcomes. Additionally, clients must give consent before their information is shared within HMIS.

## HOW IS SENSITIVE INFORMATION PROTECTED? Personally identifying information (PII)

is used to create a unique identifier for each client; this allows program staff to share a client ID without reference to PII. When HMIS is used for reporting, that data is de-identified and aggregated. Strict protections for research inquiries are in place; identifiable information is never publicly shared.

## DO WE RECOGNIZE DATA SOVEREIGNTY FOR TRIBAL NATIONS? Yes. The

Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is an important HMIS partner with a presence on HMIS Governance. In 2022, HMIS Governance adopted a policy that requires system planners to obtain consent through resolutions with Reservation Tribal Councils for permission to use data originating from Tribal-specific programs.

> ## WHY FUND HMIS? **HMIS shows the most comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of our state's collective effort and impact toward preventing and ending homelessness**. Minnesota should **permanently invest** in this resource.