



FAQ Handout: FY 2026 HMIS Data Standards Update **Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation**

Q: What's changing?

- As of 10/1/2025, HUD is retiring Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation data elements from the federal HMIS Data Standards. *
- A new "Sex" question will be added and required for all clients.

Q: Why is HUD making this change?

- HUD is following federal Executive Orders
- HUD is aligning HMIS with other federal data systems.
- This does *not* mean gender identity and sexual orientation data aren't important — just that they are no longer federally required.

Q: Why are we still collecting Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation locally?

- Our community is committed to:
 - Serving all people equitably.
 - Identifying disparities and gaps.
 - Ensuring inclusive, person-centered care.
 - Advocating for needed resources.
- Without this data, we lose visibility into who is experiencing homelessness and how systems are performing for different groups.

Q: Is collecting Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation mandatory locally?

- We *strongly encourage* programs to continue collecting this information when:
 - The client is comfortable sharing.
 - The staff is trained to ask in a respectful, trauma-informed way.
 - The client understands their answers are voluntary and confidential.

Q: Will HMIS still have these fields?

- Yes. These fields will remain available in HMIS for local data collection.

Q: What if a client doesn't want to answer?

- That is always okay. Clients should never feel pressured.
- "Client doesn't know" or "Client prefers not to answer" remain valid responses.

Q: Will there be training?

- Yes! We'll provide updated dedicated time during September and October to cover the FY2026 HUD HMIS Data Standard changes for questions and discussion ahead of the October 1, 2025 change.

***Our HMIS is funded by State and Federal funds.**