
MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands CONTINUUM OF CARE

Homeless Management
Information System
HMIS - REHOUSING
DATA COLLECTIVE
DATA EXCHANGE
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES

Version 1.0

February 2024

MA-503 CAPE COD AND ISLANDS CoC

HMIS / REHOUSING DATA COLLECTIVE DATA EXCHANGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

These Policies and Procedures have been developed to outline the process for data exchanges between MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (MA) Rehousing Data Collective (RDC), the statewide homeless data warehouse, in a manner that ensures the transfer of quality data that are accurate, complete, and timely.

KEY PARTNERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands Continuum of Care: MA-503 CoC encompasses Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties and is the Lead Entity for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). MA-503 is responsible for collecting data elements as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for submitting annual reports, and for providing unduplicated statistical demographic reports on the numbers and characteristics of clients served and on program outcomes.
- WellSky Inc.: the vendor (vendor) of Community Services, the HMIS software purchased and implemented by MA-503 for its HMIS – WellSky is responsible for managing data imports from cloud storage (Kiteworks) into HMIS on a bi-monthly basis. WellSky also provides technical assistance and guarantees that csv files are formatted correctly in Community Services and that required federal reports can be generated through Community Services.
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rehousing Data Collective (RDC): a statewide homeless database that collects and aggregates data from all MA Continuums of Care to allow for better planning, program development, and the facilitation of quality care for homeless individuals across the state, to guide policy, and to assess needs at the local, state, and national level – the availability of mandated and optional federal reports.
- MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC): the governmental entity responsible for administering the RDC – HLC provides infrastructure, security, staffing, and technical assistance for CoCs that enter or upload data to or download data from the RDC.

- Covered Homeless Organizations (CHO): any homeless organization that records, uses, or processes protected personal information on homeless clients for an HMIS – CHOs contribute data either directly or indirectly into HMIS and are responsible for maintaining data security standards and data quality as listed in the [MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands HMIS Policies and Procedures](#), specifically Section 4 and Appendix 7.

BACKGROUND

There are several ways in which data are contributed to the MA-503 HMIS.

Most CHOs enter data directly into the CoC's HMIS using WellSky's Community Services, the system software authorized by the CoC. (See CHO 1 in Data Contribution Flow Chart below).

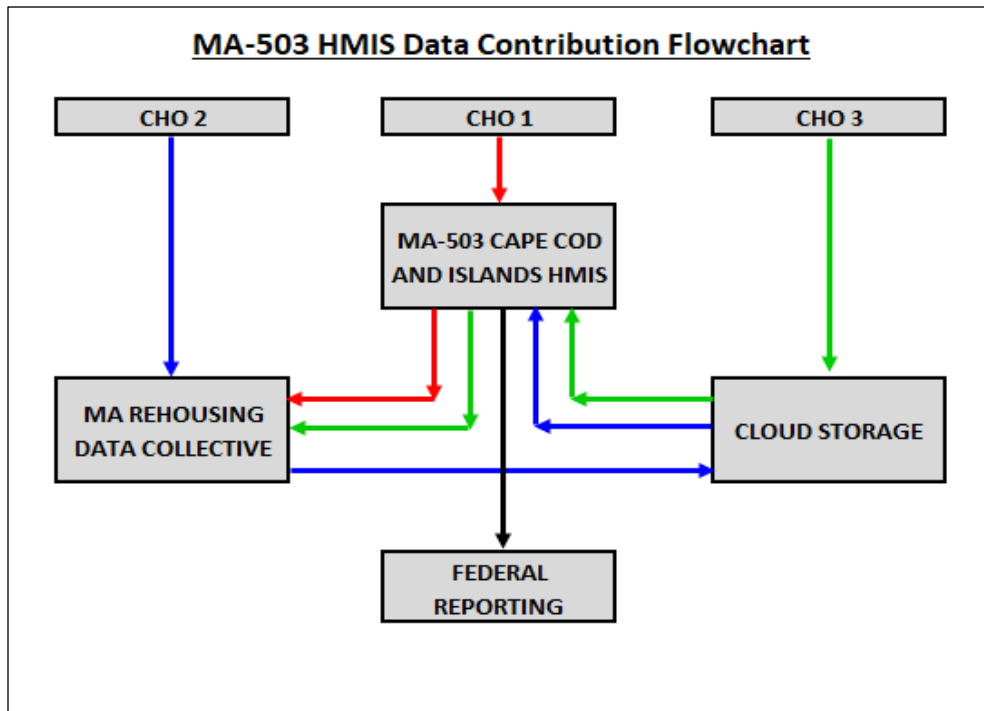
Certain projects in the Cape and Islands region are required by funders to participate in HMIS but do not enter data directly into the MA-503 system¹. Those projects enter data into the RDC, and MA-503 downloads their csv files from the RDC and saves them to cloud storage for eventual import into HMIS by WellSky. (See CHO 2 in Data Contribution Flow Chart below).

There are some agencies (outside agencies) that do not enter data directly into either MA-503 HMIS or the RDC². Those outside agencies have data sharing agreements with MA-503 and utilize HMIS-compliant software, that is, software that can generate the csv files in the proper format to be included in federal reporting. The outside agencies' csv files are saved to cloud storage and then imported into MA-503 HMIS by WellSky. These projects are later included MA-503 uploads into the RDC. (See CHO 3 in Data Contribution Flow Chart below).

MA-503 has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC), the governmental entity which administers the RDC, to upload csv files from our HMIS into the data warehouse for all projects that do not enter data directly into the RDC. These uploads include all projects in the MA-503 HMIS with the exception of those projects that already enter data directly into the RDC (see Footnote 1).

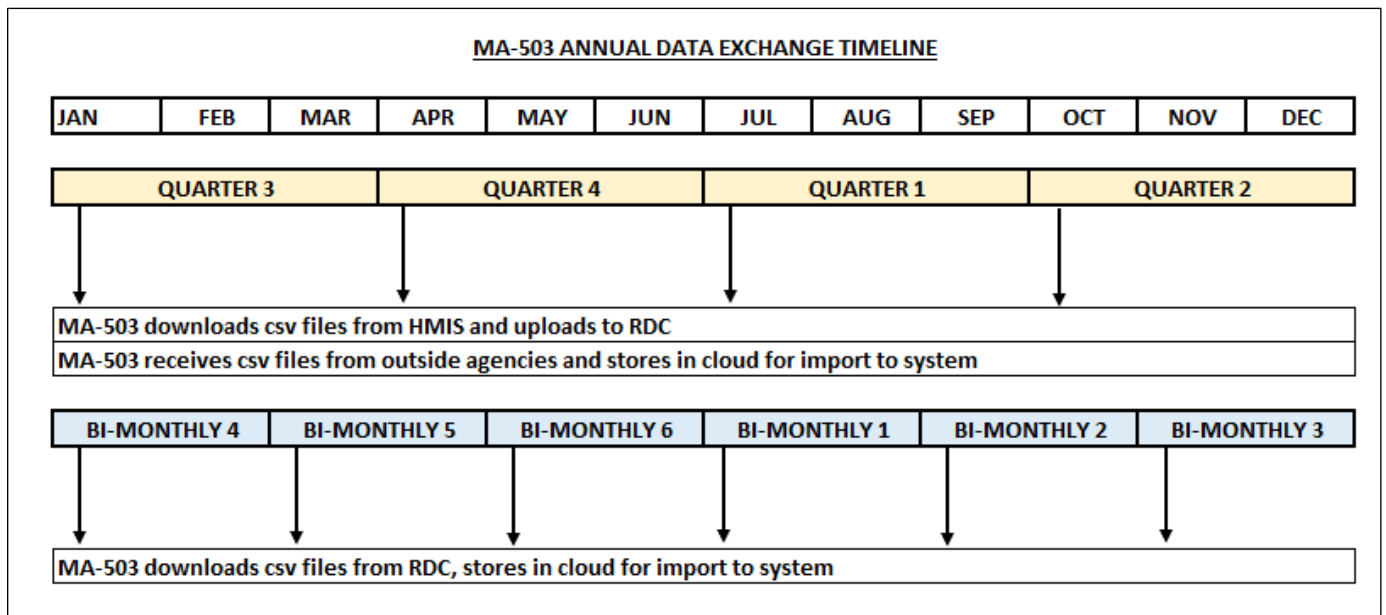
¹ Currently, four projects administered by the MA Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter system: Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) Carriage House, HAC Cataumet Village, HAC Scattered Sites, and Community Action Committee of the Cape and Islands (CACCI) Safe Harbor; and two Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) projects administered by the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNEOC): VNEOC SSVF Homelessness Prevention and VNEOC SSVF Rapid Re-housing.

² Currently, three projects administered by the Homeless Prevention Council (HPC): HPC Case Management, HPC DYRS, and HPC MHSA.



TIMETABLE FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED DATA DOWNLOADS, UPLOADS, AND IMPORT

- On a **QUARTERLY** basis, MA-503 downloads all files from HMIS and uploads into RDC. Uploads exclude projects that already enter data directly into the RDC.
- On a **BI-MONTHLY** basis, MA-503 downloads csv files from RDC for projects that enter data directly into the RDC. Files are saved to cloud storage until they can be imported into HMIS.
- On a **QUARTERLY** basis, outside agencies generate csv files and send them to CoC via encrypted email. Csv files are saved to cloud storage until they can be imported into HMIS.



PROCESS STEPS

[1] Downloading csv files from RDC

- Within one week (seven days) of the end of each quarter, the HMIS System Administrator (Sys Admin) and the RDC Sys Admin should meet to confirm those project files to be downloaded by the CoC. At that time, the RDC Sys Admin should notify the HMIS Sys Admin of any data quality issues or other problems that could impede a download of clean and accurate files (see [MA-503 CoC HMIS Policies and Procedures](#), Section 4). If any situations exist that might interfere with these downloads, it is the responsibility of the RDC Sys Admin and the CoC Sys admin to collaborate to resolve these issues by the next bi-monthly meeting or prior to any reporting deadline, whichever comes first.
- The HMIS Sys Admin should download csv files for each individual project and save downloaded csv files to Kiteworks or to any other cloud storage system designated by the vendor. The HMIS Sys Admin should ensure that csv files are mapped to the appropriate projects in the system.

[2] Importing csv files into HMIS

- Within one week (seven days) of the end of the bi-monthly fiscal period, the HMIS Sys Admin will contact outside agencies to request individual csv files for each of their projects. The Sys Admin will save individual outside agency csv files to cloud storage to await import into HMIS.
- The vendor will be notified that all csv files – from RDC and outside agencies - are ready for import into the system. The vendor will import files to a demo site, where the HMIS Sys Admin will validate data. Any data quality issues will be addressed by the Sys Admin, who will collaborate with pertinent data partners to correct project data errors: project managers, agency administrators, data entry staff, outside agencies, HMIS vendor, RDC Sys Admin, HMIS Committee, or any other agencies/partners involved in project data quality (see [MA-503 CoC HMIS Policies and Procedures](#), Section 4).
- When data have been validated and data quality issues resolved, the HMIS Sys Admin will notify vendor that csv files may be imported to the HMIS live site. The vendor will advise HMIS Sys Admin when the import has been completed.

[3] Uploading csv files to the RDC

- The HMIS Sys Admin will create a specific reporting group to generate a single csv file

from the HMIS. The reporting group will contain all projects, including those from outside agencies but will exclude projects which enter data directly into the RDC (See Footnote 1).

[4] Data Quality

- Workflows outlined in this document will adhere to the [MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands CoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual](#), specifically Section 4 and Appendix 7.
- Prior to creating csv files, the HMIS Sys Admin will run data quality reports to ensure that data elements are as complete, accurate, and timely as possible.
- Within one week (seven days) of the end of the fiscal quarter, the HMIS Sys Admin will run and download a full single HML export for the entire reporting group.
- The HMIS Sys Admin will upload the full HML export to the RDC and notify the RDC Sys Admin that the upload has been completed.

[5] Annual Reporting

- Annual Performance Report (APR) – The CoC will confirm data quality in collection and reporting following guidance in the [MA-503 Cape Cod and Islands CoC Plan for Collecting and Submitting Continuum of Care Data Through an APR](#).
- System Performance Measures (SPM) – The CoC will prepare data and confirm data quality for the annual SPM utilizing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [System Performance Measures HDX 2.0 Data Submission Guidance](#).
- Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) – The CoC will prepare data and confirm data quality for the annual LSA utilizing HUD's [EVA](#) data quality tool.
- Point in Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) – The CoC will prepare annual PIT and HIC data and confirm data quality for both HMIS data and survey data following HUD [Point in Time Count and Housing Inventory Count Guidance](#).