

Proposed Changes to First Responder HMIS Access

The Data Committee has voted in favor of changing the overall scope of the current Law Enforcement Officer HMIS Access policy to encompass all First Responders. This proposed change is made in hopes to clarify the access criteria for HMIS. Under this new version of the policy, all first responders (including law enforcement, firefighters, EMS, and security personnel) must be affiliated with a local homeless outreach team to have access to HMIS.

Current Policy

Below is the full text of the current policy:

“In regards to law enforcement, the TX BoS CoC limits HMIS access only to the homeless outreach team members associated with a specific police department. This decision was made by the TX BoS CoC Data Committee on August, 31st, 2021, and is subject to change.

At this time, the Data Committee recommends the following conditional access for law enforcement: homeless outreach team members will have write, view, and edit access for Street Outreach programs, and for Coordinated Entry purposes, they will have view access and the ability to make referrals.

In keeping with best practice, Street Outreach staff members who are not law enforcement officers may complete coordinated entry assessments provided that they make the individual aware that the information will not be used for investigative purposes, and additionally, during Coordinated Entry training this staff person and their supervisor would submit a statement to this effect.

A person qualifies as a law enforcement officer for the purposes of this policy if the person is:

- (a) Employed by a law enforcement agency, and;
- (b) In carrying out such employment, the person is sworn to uphold, and make arrests for violations of, federal, state, tribal, county, township, or municipal laws.”

Suggested Changes

The suggested changes would apply to first paragraph only, in order to broaden the scope of the policy to include all first responders and not only law enforcement. The paragraph would read as follows:

“In regards to first responders (such as law enforcement, fire fighters, EMS, and security personnel), the TX BoS CoC limits HMIS access only to the homeless outreach team members associated with a specific local government. This decision was first made by the TX BoS CoC Data Committee on August, 31st, 2021, and is subject to change.”

The rest of the policy would remain unchanged, and the restrictions to Coordinated Entry access within HMIS would be applicable to law enforcement officers.