

Guidance for Management of Program Data

Data management is the systematic development, implementation, and application of procedures to operationalize the quality and security of data systems. In accordance with Head Start Program Performance Standard (HSPPS) [45 CFR §1302.101\(b\)\(4\)](#), programs are required to implement a coordinated approach to the management of program data that supports its **availability, usability, integrity, and security**. A program must establish procedures on data management and have them approved by the governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council. These four indicators will help programs establish procedures that ensure data quality and the effective use and sharing of data, while protecting the privacy of child records.

Use this self-evaluation to assess data practices in each of the four indicator areas. It offers programs an opportunity to reflect upon their work in each area. The supporting guidance feature at the end of each section provides suggestions for writing data management procedures. The final section, Leadership and Governance, has been added to highlight the role of leadership in data management.

Rate each element on a scale of 1 to 5.

- 1 – No, we haven't done this.
- 2 – We have identified this as an area of need.
- 3 – We are working toward this.
- 4 – We are almost there.
- 5 – Yes, we have accomplished this.

Programs can use their scores to develop action plans to move forward in establishing data management procedures. They can also use them to acknowledge and improve upon what has already been accomplished.

Indicator 1: Availability

<p>Data availability is concerned with how accessible data is to end users and various applications. It defines the degree to which data is obtainable with the necessary information technology (IT) and management procedures and tools required to access and manage data.</p>	
1a. The program identified the data needed to monitor HSPPS compliance and progress on five-year goals.	
1b. The appropriate technology is in place to meet the program's needs, including an automated fiscal accounting system.	
1c. Management has access to data in a timely manner.	
1d. Data is made available to the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council for use in decision-making.	
1e. Data is shared across program areas and among job classifications to enable staff to understand program operations and client needs.	
1f. Systems are in place to ensure hardware is up to date and functioning properly.	
1g. Procedures address data recovery during an unforeseen event.	
1h. Availability procedures address sharing data with external partners, including but not limited to relevant service providers and appropriate state-level data systems.	
<p>Availability – Supporting Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how data will be prioritized and tracked. • Explain how data will be shared with leadership, across programs, and with staff. • Describe processes for obtaining and maintaining software, making timely reports, and backing up data. <p>Other:</p>	

Indicator 2: Usability

<p>Data usability describes the extent to which data can be effectively and efficiently used to perform tasks, make decisions, and solve problems. It also refers to the ease with which software and web applications can be employed to achieve desired goals.</p>	
2a. Software and web applications track the data the program needs.	
2b. Staff are able to effectively use software and web applications to address their job responsibilities.	
2c. Child and family intake forms, surveys, fiscal reports, and other recordkeeping documents are aligned with established software and web applications.	
2d. Data is gathered and shared in a timely manner.	
2e. Reports are accurate, appealing, accessible, and audience-specific.	
2f. Usability procedures address sharing data with external partners, including but not limited to relevant service providers and appropriate state-level data systems.	
<p>Usability – Supporting Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the software and web applications that will be used to track information. • Describe how staff will be trained to manage data. • Describe the processes programs will use to ensure staff will properly use data collection systems. • Provide timelines and responsibilities for gathering and compiling data. <p>Other:</p>	

Indicator 3: Integrity

<p>Data integrity refers to the accuracy and consistency of stored data, indicated by an absence of any alteration in data between two updates of a data record. It is imposed within a database at its design stage through the use of standard rules and procedures, and is maintained through the use of error-checking and validation routines.</p>	
3a. The organization has policies and procedures in place to ensure data are accurate, complete, timely, and relevant to the program and stakeholders.	
3b. Data management policies require staff and contractors who collect, maintain, and receive data to participate in ongoing data quality and integrity training.	
3c. Procedures are in place to minimize data entry errors.	
3d. Data elements share the same meaning at all locations (e.g., the age of children served is reported consistently across all centers for the Program Information Report (PIR)).	
3e. Systems are in place to guard data from accidental or malicious access, including breaches or attacks.	
3f. Procedures related to data quality and integrity are regularly reviewed and adjustments are made as necessary.	
3g. Integrity procedures address sharing data with external partners, including but not limited to relevant service providers and appropriate state-level data systems.	
<p>Integrity – Supporting Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the policies and procedures that ensure data is accurate and of high quality (e.g., data entry, user requirements and procedures). • Describe how the staff will be trained on data quality and integrity. • Describe the process for reviewing and updating data management policies and procedures. • Describe how internal communication systems will help identify potential data integrity issues. <p>Other:</p>	

Indicator 4: Security

<p>Data security works to protect data from destructive forces and unwanted actions. It includes privacy measures that prevent unauthorized access to computers, databases, and websites. Data security also safeguards data from corruption. Data security is an essential aspect of IT for organizations of all sizes.</p>	
4a. There are policies and procedures that ensure personally identifiable information (PII) and other data are only accessible to authorized personnel.	
4b. Policies and procedures address the secure transfer of data.	
4c. There are varying levels of access to data based on job responsibilities.	
4d. Security technologies such as disk encryption, back-up systems, data masking, and data purge control are in use.	
4e. Security procedures address sharing data with external partners, including but not limited to relevant service providers and appropriate state-level data systems.	
<p>Security – Supporting Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the procedures used to ensure PII and other data are only accessible to authorized personnel. • Describe how data security procedures are ongoing and regularly executed. • Describe how security procedures address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Persons responsible for data security ○ Data training for authorized users ○ Data storage methods ○ Data back-up and recovery ○ Response to data breach ○ Data transference (e.g., agency to agency, email, texting, USB) ○ Data encryption ○ Data purge (i.e., destruction) ○ Employee use of program equipment and personal devices <p>Other:</p>	

Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance play an integral role in establishing a program's data management systems. Activities include organizing program staff to collaboratively and continuously improve data quality through the creation and application of data-related procedures, as well as the oversight of operations.

1. Data management procedures are developed with input from relevant stakeholders, including, at a minimum, the governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council.

2. Data management procedures address the four indicators: availability, usability, integrity, and security.

3. Data management procedures address the quality of data, the effective use and sharing of data, and the privacy of records.

4. Data management procedures are reviewed on an annual basis and revised as needed.

5. Staff are provided with orientation and ongoing training on data-related procedures.

6. Procedures for each of the four indicators address sharing information and data with external partners, including but not limited to relevant service providers and appropriate state-level data systems.

