

NCSHA 2016 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Visit ncsha.org/awards to view the Annual Awards Call for Entries.

Instructions: Type entry information into the form and save it as a PDF. Do not write on or scan the form. If you have any questions contact awards@ncsha.org or 202-624-7710.

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name: _____

HFA: _____

Submission Contact: (Must be HFA Staff Member) _____ **Email:** _____

Please provide a 15-word (maximum) description of your nomination to appear on the NCSHA website.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page:

HFA: _____

Entry Name: _____

Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
Annual Report	Empowering New Buyers	Federal Advocacy	Financial
Creative Media	Encouraging New Production	State Advocacy	Human Resources
Promotional Materials and Newsletters	Home Improvement and Rehabilitation		Operations
			Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY

NOMINATES

NJ HMIS

NEW JERSEY HOMELESS MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEM



FOR THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE HOUSING AGENCIES
2016 ANNUAL AWARDS FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

**National Council of State Housing Agencies
2016 Annual Awards for Program Excellence**

HFA: New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
Category: Special Achievement
Entry Name: New Jersey Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS)

RESPONDING TO IMPORTANT STATE NEED: First-ever statewide HMIS collaborative

The New Jersey Statewide Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS) Collaborative is a unique technology partnership between state agencies and local communities. It includes the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and 19 Continuum of Care (CoC) local homeless planning communities. The NJ HMIS Collaborative was established in 2003 to collect data on homelessness throughout participating counties to guide local and state planning efforts in reducing and ending homelessness by assisting participating CoCs and their provider agencies in fulfilling U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HMIS requirements needed to receive HUD McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance funding.

Abram L. Hillson joined NJHMFA in 2004 bringing over 30 years of experience in the Information Technology field. As project manager for the NJ HMIS Collaborative, Hillson spearheaded the development and implementation of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) across New Jersey. He built the NJ HMIS team and took the lead in developing all aspects of the NJ HMIS Collaborative. He was recognized by HUD in 2008 with an Outstanding HMIS Achievement Award for Effective Project Management for the State of New Jersey.

The NJ HMIS Collaborative selected (Affordable Wide Area Relational Database) AWARDS software from Foothold Technology as its HMIS software solution. AWARDS serves as a computerized data collection tool specifically designed to capture client level system wide (statewide) information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. NJHMFA is the administrative entity for the NJ HMIS Collaborative which made the Foothold Technology software available to participating agencies. NJ HMIS provides training and technical support to user groups across the state at significantly lower costs than each CoC would otherwise have to pay if they enlisted individual vendors. These savings were achieved through economies of scale by the development of the Collaborative. Participating CoC's in New Jersey include 19 of the state's 21 counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties. Bergen and Middlesex Counties opted to secure their own software vendors.

By capturing HUD-mandated Universal Data Elements, HMIS enables providers to record unique, unduplicated client records, establish participation in a project within a date range, and identify clients who meet time criteria for chronic homelessness.

The Universal Data Elements include: •Name •Social Security Number •Date of Birth •Race •Ethnicity •Gender •Veteran Status •Disabling Condition •Residence Prior to Project Entry •Project Entry Date •Project Exit Date •Destination •Personal ID •Household ID •Relationship to Head of Household •Client Location Code •Length of Time on Street, in an Emergency Shelter or Safe Haven.

Program-Specific Data elements are those specific to a funding source to that particular entity, such as “homeless person that is HIV positive,” or “family at risk of homelessness.” This data provides information about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided, and client outcomes that are required for federal reporting and that may be used by more than one federal funder program:

•Housing Status •Income and Sources •Non-Cash Benefits •Health Insurance •Physical Disability •Developmental Disability •Chronic Health Condition •HIV/AIDS •Mental Health Problem •Substance Abuse •Domestic Violence •Contact •Date of Engagement •Services Provided •Financial Assistance Provided •Referrals Provided •Residential Move-In Date •Housing Assessment Disposition •Housing Assessment at Exit.

INNOVATIVE: Implementation of Biometric Finger Scanning Technology

Currently, the NJ HMIS Collaborative is the only HMIS implementation that integrates the use of biometric technology for the capture of services for homeless and at-risk populations.

- 2011 - The NJ HMIS Collaborative explored the use of biometric technology to help improve the capture of data, and to provide a streamlined process for use by provider agencies mandated by HUD to collect client information and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.
- 2012 - NJ HMIS contracted with the Eyemetric biometric finger scanning and facial recognition solution. By June of 2012, NJ HMIS defined the business requirements to improve the number and type of services being captured for service programs, to introduce the ability to capture recurring clients in shelter programs, and to automatically interface with NJ HMIS.
- 2013 - NJ HMIS introduced innovative biometric finger scanning technology for the entire New Jersey Statewide HMIS Collaborative. With the Eyemetric vendor, HMIS expanded existing system’s functionality to create and implement highly customized biometric tracking system to increase quality and scope of data delivery to capture real time use of client services. NJHMFA houses the database and allows the web interface between the biometric system and NJ HMIS.
- 2014 – NJ HMIS implemented the ability to capture electronic signatures associated with the finger scan. In addition, the application has been improved to display more demographic information on the screen, such as household composition, historical transactions, and the date and timestamp of when clients’ fingers were scanned. Lastly, reporting capability was expanded to produce the United States Department of Agriculture’s The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) form, which includes electronic signatures.
- 2016 - The project has been implemented in five pilot sites: four nightly emergency shelters and three drop-in centers, both accommodating repeat transient populations daily; and two food distribution programs, which served a variety of clients.

PROVIDES BENEFITS THAT OUTWEIGH COSTS: Participating CoCs are able to provide services more efficiently; reduce the amount of time required to process clients; free up man-hours previously used for data entry; and achieve real-time capture of services provided to the client. Cost savings of more than \$2 million per year in man hours and record-keeping materials such as EBT cards, has been realized. The use of biometrics has been able to save providers 182,000 man hours per year.

Nationally Recognized: NJHMFA-HMIS Collaborative's Use of Biometric Technology

NJHMFA-HMIS was featured in *Governing* magazine in 2013 for its innovative approach to using biometrics in communities that serve the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. Please see PDF attachment entitled, *The Benefits of Fingerprinting the Homeless, Heaton, B. (2013, April 16)*.

Target Population/Scope of Services:

NJ HMIS currently serves 100,000 clients across 1,800 programs. This population includes individuals and families who are homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. The population served by the biometric initiative spans four nightly emergency shelters; three drop-in centers; and two food distribution programs. These programs served over 22,000 clients, which is approximately 20% of the population statewide. Nearly 500 clients per night receive services ranging from food distribution, bed for night, clothing bundles, showers, etc.

ACHIEVES INTENDED RESULTS:

The combined impact of the NJ HMIS Collaborative implementation statewide, together with the usage of biometric technology, achieved increased participation by the agencies involved; better client experience with the service delivery and programs; and the reduction in man-hours required for data entry into the HMIS. Other agencies have inquired about expanding the use of this technology across programs outside of the NJ HMIS. Also, an outstanding unique feature is the NJ HMIS website that keeps a real time record of any openings for housing in a particular county for viewing by the public:

<https://hmis.njhmfaserv.org/>

What makes NJ HMIS unique in the United States:

- Has been used as a model for other HMIS projects around the nation;
- Is a statewide collaborative servicing 19 out of 21 counties;
- Has a website where training videos and tip sheets can be found: <https://hmis.njhmfaserv.org/> ;
- Website's "counties" tab shows shelter bed/unit utilization in real time, viewable by the public so that agencies looking to refer a consumer for housing services can check the website, call the agency and verify the vacancy availability;
- Has partnerships with other state agencies such as DFD, DCF, and DCA;
- NJ HMIS team is comprised of a Director, Project Manager, three Technical Assistants, a Project Assistant and a Help Desk Data Quality specialist. Most HMIS teams are not as well-staffed.

Scope of NJ HMIS Collaborative as of 2016:

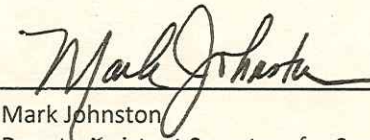
- **270 Divisions** (agencies that provide services to needy homeless populations);
- **774 Active Users** (case managers/staff/volunteers who have logged into the system to provide services and record client data);
- **1,483 Programs** (each agency can have one of several program to serve a specific population such as veterans, HIV/Aids, families, mental health, homeless youth, etc.);
- **75,640 Unduplicated Current Clients** – those who may have utilized various services for different programs are counted only once;
- **477,915 Unduplicated Overall Totals** - all those served at some point in time including some who may have been discharged and no longer utilize services.

2008 Outstanding HMIS Achievement Award
Effective Project Management

Presented to

Abram Hillson, HMIS Project Director
State of New Jersey

September 23, 2008



Mark Johnston
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development acknowledges that successful Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) implementations rely on a broad-based community collaboration. This award recognizes outstanding HMIS achievements in 2008 for effective project management.



HARVARD Kennedy School

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INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARDS

This certifies that

**Biometric Homeless Management Solution
State of New Jersey**

has been named a

Semifinalist

of the 2015 Innovations in American Government Award competition

DAVID R. GERGEN
*Chairman, National Selection
Committee*

STEPHEN GOLDSMITH
*Director, Innovations in American
Government Awards Program*

ANTHONY J. SAICH
*Director, Ash Center for Democratic
Governance and Innovation*

The Benefits of Fingerprinting the Homeless

BY: [Brian Heaton](#) | April 16, 2013

Fingerprint scans have been used for years by government agencies to help improve security, identify criminals and reduce welfare fraud. But in a new twist, New Jersey will soon use it to track and manage food, shelter, medicinal services and other basic necessities it provides to its homeless population.

The Garden State is deploying a new biometrics data management system (BDMS) that includes a Web-based fingerprinting component. Once online, the system will enable state officials to more efficiently track who is receiving homeless services and the types of services rendered.

Like many other states hit hard by the recession, New Jersey has seen its homeless population rise and the demand for services increase substantially. The state entered 79,604 people* into the New Jersey Homeless Management Information System (NJHMIS) in 2012 -- up from 61,167 in 2011 and 56,754 in 2010, according to Abram Hilson, assistant director for NJHMIS.

This appears in our free [Technology e-newsletter](#). Not already a subscriber? [Click here](#).

The project, which is modeled after a program in Bergen County, will start with with five locations that will serve as beta sites for a three-month period. If successful, New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) plans to offer the technology to approximately 224 county and nonprofit organizations providing homeless services in the state.

Bergen County has been scanning the fingerprints of people coming into its food banks since 2010. The technology has improved both the accuracy of records and the speed in which people receive their food.

Initially, state officials wanted to wait until the benefits of Bergen's program were proven before adopting a similar system, Hilson said. But confident in its value, the state is moving forward, investing in an upgraded version that is different from Bergen's in several ways.

For example, the biometric system used in Bergen County requires someone to manually upload fingerprint data. The new state system, however, operates in real-time. When a person comes in and has their fingerprint scanned, staff members immediately see a record of all the services that individual has received -- food, clothing, shelter, etc. They record what services the homeless person needs and the data is automatically provided to the NJHMIS through a Web service.

Driving the high-tech identification system is the need for timely information about the state's homeless population and the services they're using. More accurate statistics are critical to the financial viability of the agency because funding from the federal government is based on the amount of services delivered. In addition, the system will automate a number of tasks, freeing up personnel to handle other important work, according to Hilson.

"Not only will this [fingerprint scanning system] save time because you don't have to stand in line to fill out paperwork or sign anything," Hilson said. "[You] just simply come in, put your finger there and then go about your business and get services."

In instances where fingerprints can't be read, the system is also designed to perform facial recognition as a secondary means of identifying a client, according to Ray Bolling, CEO of Eyemetric Identity Systems, which developed the system. Though the system will store the fingerprint and facial recognition data, shelter visitors don't have to worry because their information will not be shared with law enforcement databases.

Funding for the pilot program comes primarily from federal grants and will be paid out of the housing agency's budget, according to Hilson. The state's housing agency runs NJHMIS, while a collaborative of nonprofits and county offices contribute participation fees that will help pay for the project.

"We are really hoping this technology will help agencies that usually experience a large volume of repeat clients," said Erin Lue-Hing, NJHMIS data quality analyst. "It might not be something that would particularly work for everybody, but we are seeing a growing interest."

**The NJHMIS numbers for 2010 through 2012 do not include Bergen County.*

This article was printed from: <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/gov-fingerprinting-helps-homeless-services.html>