



Elevate Branson

Program Guidelines for Providing ESG Assistance

1. Eligibility of individuals and families for assistance under the ESG Program

To be considered eligible for assistance, clients and all household members must supply true and complete information requested necessary for the administration of the program, including but not limited to:

- Presenting as truly unsheltered homeless at the time of first contact and through additional future interactions
- HMIS staff will enter a client if the client has lost his/her forms of identification but the client will need to begin working with staff to obtain those documents as soon as possible as they will be necessary for housing placement.

2. Procedures for coordination among emergency shelter providers, essential service providers, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing assistance providers, other homeless assistance providers, and mainstream service and housing providers.

The Elevate Connections Coordinator and Connections Director are HMIS Level II Access Point certified and have partaken extensive trainings to be able to use the coordinated entry system. Through this system, our staff are trained to do a prescreen, intake, and VI-SPDAT scoring with clients experiencing homelessness. As a part of their certification, they are also trained to enter referrals for services within the HMIS Service Point system which triggers for organizations within the client's desired living region to know there is someone in need of their organization's services. Our HMIS Level II certified staff partake in a monthly regional coordinated entry and case conferencing meeting and any HMIS hosted trainings throughout the year.

3. Termination of services provided

If a client displays behavior considered unacceptable to staff and volunteers, the client is given a choice to correct behavior by staff. If behavior is not corrected, the client will be notified that they are no longer eligible for services through Elevate Branson. If the client does not agree with the termination, he/she is welcome to file a formal grievance but by doing so is in no way obligated to a return of services before a final decision has occurred by the Executive Director or President of the board.

4. Formal grievance process

Elevate Branson's formal grievance policy is attached.

5. Policy for participation in HMIS

Elevate Branson offers for all clients to sign a release of information (ROI- see attached) that will allow for participation in HMIS. The case managers can contact the HMIS administrator ICA, or a victim services provider if a client does not wish to sign an ROI. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was developed to meet a data collection requirement made by the United States Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Congress passed this requirement in order to



get a more accurate count of individuals who are homeless and to identify the need for and use of different services by those individuals and families. We are collecting statistical information on those who use our services and report this information to a central data collection system.

In addition, many agencies in this region use HMIS to keep computerized case records. This information may be provided to other HMIS participating agencies if the client has signed a ROI. The information the client may agree to allow us to collect and share includes: basic identifying demographic data such as name, address, phone number and birth date, the nature of his/her situation and the services and referrals he/she receive from this agency. This information is known as Protected Personal Information or PPI. In the event staff have a client present as a victim of abuse, we currently partner with the Council on Families in Crisis for a non-HMIS intake. This allows for the victim to remain nameless and be placed on the prioritization list. All agencies using the HMIS share their data with other participating agencies, with the exception of *Blind Service Providers*. These *blind* agencies serve specific protected client populations such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and/or substance abuse and mental health, and do not share client information.

GENERALLY, all personal information we maintain is covered by this policy. Generally, the client's personal information will only be used by this agency and other agencies to which the client is referred for services.

Information shared with other HMIS agencies helps us to better serve our clients, to coordinate client services and to better understand the number of individuals who need services from more than one agency. This may help us to meet the client's needs and the needs of others in our community by allowing us to develop new and more efficient programs. Sharing information can also help us to make referrals more easily and may reduce the amount of paperwork.

Maintaining the privacy and safety of those using our services is very important to us. Information gathered about the client is personal and private. We collect information only when appropriate to provide services, manage our organization, or as required by law. All agency staff with current HMIS access are required to sign a confidentiality statement.

6. Procedures to ensure that clients are entered into HMIS, timeframe for data to be entered and the process for ensuring confidentiality.

Elevate Branson enters client information into HMIS within three days of intake.

Elevate Branson follows all HUD confidentiality regulations that are applicable to this agency, including those covering programs that receive HUD funding for homeless services. Separate rules apply for HIPPA privacy and security regulations regarding medical records.

This agency will use and disclose personal information from HMIS only if a signed ROI from the client is on file and in the following circumstances:

- To provide or coordinate services to an individual.
- For functions related to payment or reimbursement for services.
- To carry out administrative functions including, but not limited to legal, audit, personnel, planning, oversight or management functions.



- Databases used for research, where all identifying information has been removed.
- Contractual research where privacy conditions are met.
- Where a disclosure is required by law and disclosure complies with and is limited to the requirements of the law. Instances where this might occur are during a medical emergency, to report a crime against staff of the agency or a crime on agency premises, or to avert a serious threat to health or safety, including a person's attempt to harm himself or herself.
- To comply with government reporting obligations.
- In connection with a court order, warrant, subpoena or other court proceeding where disclosure is required.

7. Procedures and Policies to ensure the records of anyone who applies for and/or receives ESG assistance are kept confidential.

All individual's records that apply for and/or receive ESG assistance are kept in a secured locked office in a secured filing cabinet. Hard copies are kept on hand for auditing purposes. All other documented information is kept in HMIS or other comparable databases after individuals have signed releases of information. All releases of information are kept up to date to ensure clients know where their information is being kept and are consenting. The only people who can access this information are people who are HMIS compliant within the organization.

8. Procedure for targeting and providing services related to street outreach.

Elevate Branson has an established relationship with the sheltered homeless community in Branson (those living in extended-stay motels), as well as those individuals living in surrounding wooded areas. Street outreach is initiated through monthly meal delivery to the extended stay motels. Our neighbors at the extended stay motels have the most contact with our unsheltered neighbors in the woods. In the winter, we partner with our local warming shelter to bring the unsheltered to our services and in the summer, most of the unsheltered homeless come to our doors for services because they have been referred by a friend. This effort is used as an entry point for all other Elevate Branson services including case management.