



VT HMIS Software Migration and Custom Reporting

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is not just a database. It is an online ecosystem, built up over many years, with interconnected tables of data for organizations, programs, persons, and services. ServicePoint was in use for more than 20 years. 20 years of additions and changes in agencies, projects, persons served, and reports made the system what it was at the end of the system use. And that ecosystem cannot be replaced in a few days, few weeks, or even in a few months.

There are presently twice as many HMIS staff working on the new system development than are typically assigned to administer the system when it is fully functional. And despite doubling the staff resources available (which subsequently costs twice as much), it will still be many months before the system is at a level that has all the information needed by end-users.

The first priority in a system migration is to move all the client data. This includes the projects, activities (program enrollments, services, etc.) and persons that were served in defined historical period of time. While there are technical specifications on how this work is done, those specifications are limited to the standardized federal data. Everything else is custom related work, and that process can be very time consuming. The more custom data, the longer the process to get the information into the new system.

The last part of the migration process are the custom reports. Custom reports do not and can not be migrated from one system to another. The databases utilize their own unique reporting platforms, Business Objects XI (aka ART) in ServicePoint and Looker in Clarity. That means that the entire reporting ecosystem has to be built from scratch. Custom reports cannot be built until the data needed to populate them are migrated. This is also challenging because the staff with the specialized skills to build custom reports are also the same staff responsible for the data migration.

The most important custom reports to be built first are Coordinated Entry prioritization reports, which also are among the most complex and difficult reports to build in any reporting environment. Once those reports are complete, the next slate of reports that get built are required funder reports, then agency specific reports. This also does not account for any requests for reports that are completely new that are needed for any of the above reasons, nor does it account for any changes in data collection that would require updating existing reports, or any changes in the reporting tool that may impact how reports are built.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your System Administrator at the HelpDesk:
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