



# Comparable Databases for Victim Service Providers

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# Webinar Instructions

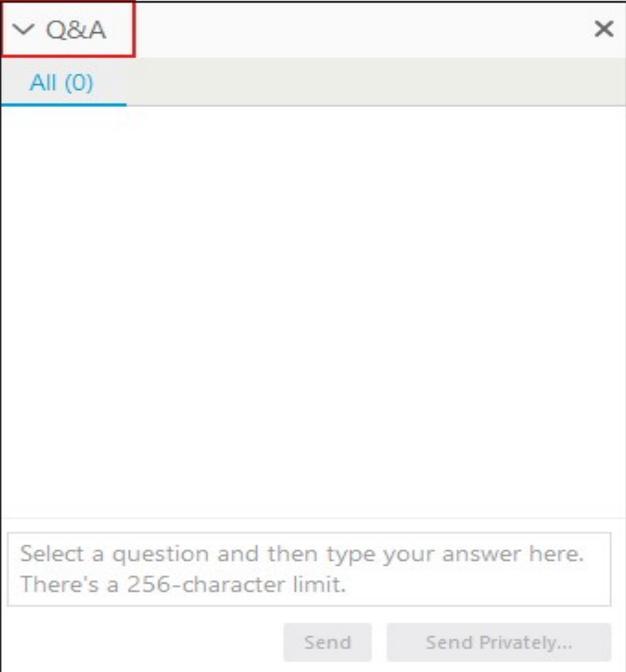
- Webinar will last about 60 minutes
- Access to recorded version
- Participants in 'listen only' mode
- Submit content related questions in Q&A box on right side of screen
- For technical issues, request assistance through the Chat box

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# Content Questions?

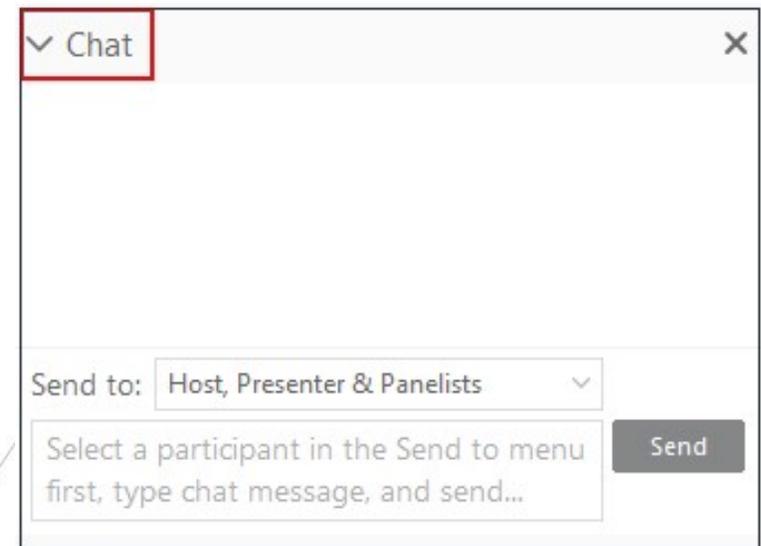
- Please submit your content related questions via the Q&A box
- Send to Host, Presenter and Panelists



A screenshot of a Q&A interface. At the top left, there is a dropdown menu labeled 'Q&A' with a downward arrow. To the right of this menu is a close button (an 'X' in a square). Below the menu is a header bar that says 'All (0)'. The main area of the box is empty. At the bottom of the box, there is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Select a question and then type your answer here. There's a 256-character limit.' Below the input field are two buttons: 'Send' and 'Send Privately...'. The entire interface is enclosed in a thin black border.

# Technical Questions?

- Please submit any technical issue related questions via the Chat box
- Send the message directly to the Host
- Host will work directly with you to resolve those issues



# About NHSDC

The National Human Services Data Consortium (NHSDC) is an organization focused on developing effective leadership for the best use of information technology to manage human services. NHSDC provides information, assistance, peer to peer education and lifelong learning to its conference participants, website members and other interested parties in the articulation, planning, implementation and continuous operation of technology initiatives to collect, aggregate, analyze and present information regarding the provision of human services.

NHSDC holds two conferences every year that convene human services administrators primarily working in the homeless services data space together to learn best practices and share knowledge. The past 3 events have been put on with HUD as a co-sponsor. Learn more on our web site [www.nhsc.org](http://www.nhsc.org).

After this virtual conference is over, NHSDC will be sending out a survey to learn about your experience. Please help us by signing up for emails and participating in the survey!



# Collaborative Solutions, Inc.: What We Do

Collaborative Solutions works in partnership for the empowerment of human services organizations and communities in order to positively impact special needs populations.



- **Value:** All individuals have a right to housing that is adequate, accessible, and affordable
- **Goal:** Impact supportive housing systems to meet the needs of vulnerable populations
- **Impact:** Build capacity of communities and maximize their long-term impact on areas of housing, health, and services

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# National Network to End Domestic Violence



- The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a social change organization dedicated to creating a social, political and economic environment where violence against women no longer exists.
- NNEDV's Collaborative Approach to Safe Housing for Survivors Project provides training and technical assistance to improve coordination between domestic violence and homeless services from racial equity lens.
- NNEDV's Safety Net Project addresses the intersection of technology and abuse, and provides training and technical assistance to advocates, law enforcement, legal services, social services providers, survivors, and other stakeholders.

Twitter @nnedv.org

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# DV & Housing TA Consortium

## Four Federal Agencies:

- Family Violence Prevention & Services Program/HHS
- Office on Violence Against Women/DOJ
- Office for Victims of Crime/DOJ
- Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs/HUD

## Five Technical Assistance Providers:

- National Alliance for Safe Housing (NASH)
- Collaborative Solutions, Inc. (CS)
- National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDDV)
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)

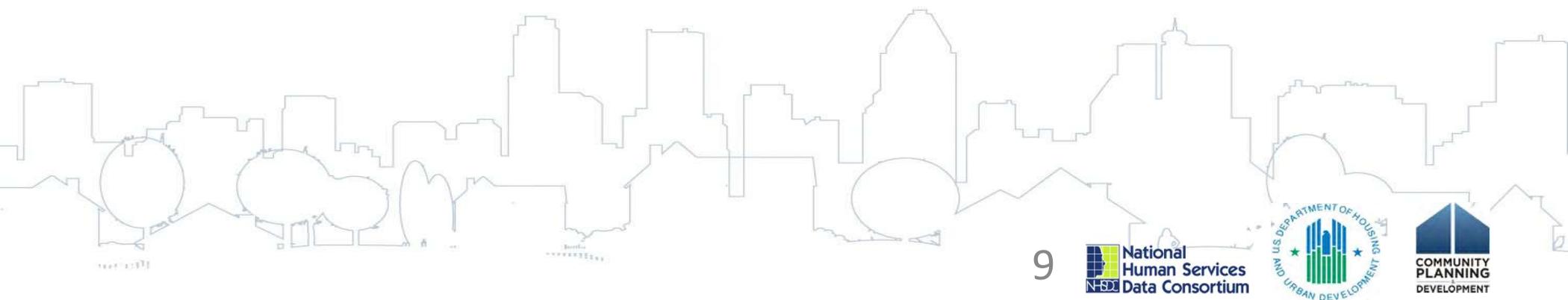


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# West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- WVCADV is a statewide non-profit organization comprised of a Coalition Statewide Office and 14 licensed domestic violence programs. WVCADV represents the only statewide network of domestic violence service providers and experts that provide specialized direct services for families, training, education, and policy development.



# Overview

- What is a Comparable Database?
- Why do we need a Comparable Database?
- How do you know if you need to use a Comparable Database?
- Key considerations when selecting a Comparable Database and working with Comparable Database vendors.
- West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- COVID-19 Guidance

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# Poll Question

Is your agency...

- A. Currently using a Comparable Database?
- B. Searching for a new Comparable Database vendor?
- C. Looking to upgrade your existing database?
- D. Unsure?

# What is a Comparable Database?

- Comparable Database (not HMIS) used by Victim Service Providers to collect client information
- HUD-compliant Comparable Database:
  - Relational Database
  - Meets minimum HMIS Data Standards
    - <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf>
  - Meets minimum standards of HMIS Privacy and Security
    - <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2004HUDDataandTechnicalStandards.pdf>
  - ESG-CAPER and APR reports for SAGE

# What is a Comparable Database? (Continued)

- Use more stringent security and privacy standards per VAWA
- Victim Service Provider Controls:
  - Who can access the system
  - Who can see client information
- Data fields that can be modified and customized to benefit clients
- Mutually agreed upon by VSP and HMIS Lead

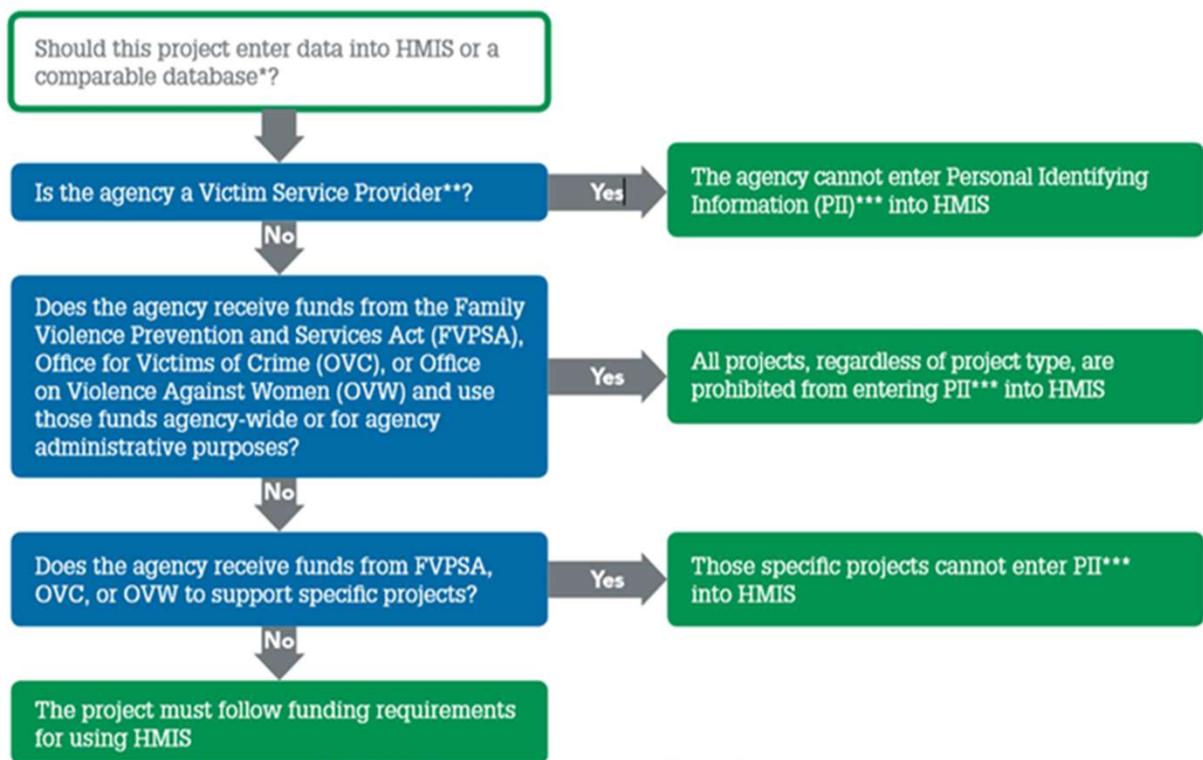
# Why do we need a Comparable Database?

- Confidentiality provisions in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA).
  - Forbids victim service providers from entering personally identifying information into shared databases like HMIS.
  - Information entered into a Comparable Database is confidential and cannot be shared with any 3rd parties outside of the agency.
  - Only aggregate level data can be shared for reporting purposes.
- HMIS Proposed Rule
  - Victim service providers who receive funds that require HMIS participation must use a comparable database.

# How do you know if you need a Comparable Database?

- The HEARTH Act defines a “victim service provider” as a private nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such term includes rape crisis centers, battered women’s shelters, domestic violence transitional housing and programs, and other programs.
  - HMIS use across an agency is prohibited for agencies that do not meet this definition but receive and use funding in an agency wide capacity:
    - Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)
    - Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)
    - Family-Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)
- HMIS use for a specific project is prohibited for agencies that do not meet this definition but receive and use these funding sources for that specific project
- Most agencies fall into one of these categories

# Comparable Database Decision Tree



# Key Considerations for Comparable Databases

- Database encryption
- User authentication
- Data purge
- Contracting with a comparable database vendor
- Other guidance

- HMIS Software Vendor Capacity Checklist

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Software-Vendor-Capacity-Checklist.pdf>

- Technology Safety

<https://www.techsafety.org/selecting-a-database>

# Database Encryption

- Minimum of 128-bit encryption and utilization of SSL certificates
- At-Rest encryption?
- Zero-Knowledge encryption?
- Encryption key management?
- Must be clearly defined by the vendor

# User Authentication Best Practices

- Complex passwords
- Required password updates
- Automatic logout when idle
- Automatic account deactivation when system not accessed
- Automatic user lockout after unsuccessful login attempts
- Concurrent logins not allowed
- Consider two-factor authentication

# Data Purge

- Best practice for victim service providers
- Data should be routinely destroyed as soon as the program no longer needs the data to provide client services or to satisfy grant/legal requirements
- Key Considerations
  - Delete vs. Purge
  - Manual vs. Automatic
  - All Data vs. Selected Data/De-Identification
  - Data may still exist in database backups

# Other Comparable Database Considerations

- Other reports-customizable
  - VOCA, STOP, FFV, OVW, OVC and other state, local, and foundation reports
- Costs – licensing vs. total cost of ownership
- Company reviews
- References

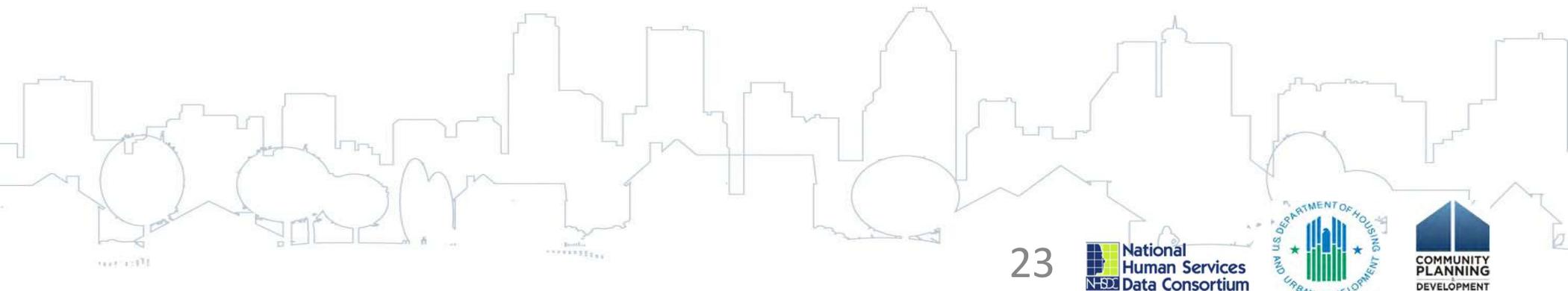
# Key Considerations when contracting with a Comparable Database Vendor

- Clearly defined and prioritized deliverables.
- Specified procedures for HUD compliance updates, system upgrades with expected release timelines and user acceptance testing.
- Technical support terms.
- Training.
- Defined processes/liabilities in the event of a security breach.
- Protocols for responding to subpoenas, warrants or law enforcement requests.
- Conflict resolution processes.
- Contract termination process.
- Monitoring protocols.

# West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

**Aaron Dunn**

Statewide Database Coordinator for the  
West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence



# WVCADV's Solution

- "Closed" System
  - Same program; providers cannot see or access other provider's data
- Allows standardization of data collection
- Can aid in applying for HUD funding
  - APR/CAPER
- Provides De-identified client info for collaboration
- TA/training provided through demo environment

# COVID-19 Guidance for Victim Service Providers

- No changes to data collection requirements as it relates to COVID-19
- As of today, HUD will not be asking traditional homeless service providers to collect data on COVID-19 status
- Some CoCs have added in information on this however, but it is not required
- Guidance could still be forthcoming

# Questions and Contacts

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