

What is Safe Harbors?

Safe Harbors is a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that collects information over time on the characteristics and services needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

What is the purpose of Safe Harbors?

Safe Harbors' goal is understanding. Safe Harbors works with community agencies to collect information that creates a clear picture of who is using emergency or supportive services and what help is most needed. Collecting information on clients leads to: improved programs, more specialized services, and timely access to needed resources.

Do I have to participate?

It's up to you whether or not you wish to participate fully in Safe Harbors, and no one will ever be denied services based on their participation. If you agree to participate, your information will be stored in the HMIS system for seven years after you stop receiving services and then deleted. Providing complete identifying information, such as name, date of birth, and social security number is the best way to ensure that your data will be used. You may request to see your data in Safe Harbors or request that personally identifying information be omitted or removed from the system.

How will my data be used?

Your data will be kept in a secure data system that can only be accessed by people who are given a username and password by the Safe Harbors staff and have the system installed on their computer. Safe Harbors provides information that helps funders and the Committee to End Homelessness in King County to:

- Understand how programs meet the needs of people who have found themselves without permanent housing or who need emergency services
- Improve coordination of services and target resources to where they will do the most good in solving homelessness
- Help advocates and policy-makers tell the story of homelessness in King County and generate public support for our efforts
- Measure the overall service system's progress in ending homelessness

No individual, identified client data will be accessible at any time to anyone not authorized through Safe Harbors to access the database. Summary reports regarding client characteristics and service trends will be available to stakeholders upon request and as they are needed.