Contents

Q: What is the difference between Clarity and HMIS? ................................................................. 2
Q: Which agencies go through the Department of Commerce for HMIS training and which do not? ...... 2
Q: I have a staff person that needs to use HMIS. What are the HMIS Training Requirements for HMIS Access? ......................................................................................................................... 3
Q: Why do I have to take the HMIS required trainings? .................................................................... 3
Q: How do I register for an HMIS training? .......................................................................................... 3
Q: What types of HMIS trainings are there? ......................................................................................... 5
Q: I registered for a training but did not receive a confirmation email................................................ 5
Q: I registered for HMIS Training to gain access to HMIS. What can I do before my training date? ..... 5
Q: What is the deadline for registering for a training? ......................................................................... 6
Q: Is there a refresher I can take for using HMIS? ............................................................................... 6
Q: I cannot attend my registered training. How do I cancel my registration? ................................. 6
Q: Can I see available HMIS trainings by date? .................................................................................. 6
Q: Can I be emailed notifications when there are new HMIS Trainings available? .............................. 7
Q: Does Commerce pay for travel or provide meals? .......................................................................... 7
Q: Where do I park for an in-person training? .................................................................................... 7
Q: Can I re-take HMIS trainings? ........................................................................................................ 8
Q: I’ve taken my required New User training(s), what’s next? ............................................................. 8
Q: How long does it take to get HMIS access? .................................................................................... 8
Q: I, or another staff person at my agency, is leaving the agency or no longer needs HMIS access. Do I need to do anything? ................................................................................................. 8
Q: Can we have training at our agency or locally? ............................................................................ 8

Webinar Help...................................................................................................................................... 8

Q: What is a “Webinar” and what do I need for it? ............................................................................. 8
Q: What should I do to prepare for a Webinar? ................................................................................... 9
Q: How do I ensure I get credit for my Webinar attendance? ............................................................ 9
Q: My Webinar link says it is invalid or it opens a window saying the Webinar is over. ...................... 9
Q: I am trying to attend a Webinar training but it already started and I’m having troubles. How do I get help? ........................................................................................................................................ 10
Q: How do I troubleshoot technical issues during a Webinar? .......................................................... 10
Q: What is the difference between Clarity and HMIS?
A: HMIS stands for “Homeless Management Information System.” “Clarity” is the name of a type of HMIS software, by BitFocus, used by the Department of Commerce for Balance of State users.

Q: Which agencies go through the Department of Commerce for HMIS training and which do not?
A: Commerce is the HMIS administrator for agencies in the Balance of State. King County, Pierce County, Clark County, Snohomish County, and Spokane County are NOT part of the Balance of State. Agencies in those counties do not take HMIS trainings through Commerce except for these exceptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-BOS County</th>
<th>Take HMIS Training through Commerce for...</th>
<th>For all other HMIS Trainings go through...</th>
<th>Exceptions &amp; Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King County Agencies</td>
<td>- Opioid State Targeted Response (STR) Program Specific Data Entry Training only. - All HMIS trainings for the Thurston County branch of the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)</td>
<td>King County (Website)</td>
<td>Only STR program folks take the Commerce STR training (and no others). LIHI take all Commerce HMIS Trainings (such as those required for new users). All other new users go through their County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce County Agencies</td>
<td>- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) for Balance of State entry only - STR Program staff (at Comprehensive Life Resources)</td>
<td>Pierce County (Website)</td>
<td>Only BOS SSVF and STR program folks must take Commerce HMIS Trainings such as those required for new users. All other new users go through their County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark County Agencies</td>
<td>STR Program staff (at Community Services Northwest) only</td>
<td>Clark County (Website)</td>
<td>Only STR program folks must take Commerce HMIS Trainings such as those required for new users. All other new users go through their County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish County Agencies</td>
<td>- Youth Program working with the Commerce Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) (at Service Alternatives) - STR Program staff (at Compass Health - Everett)</td>
<td>Snohomish County (Website)</td>
<td>Only OHY programs and STR program folks must take Commerce HMIS Trainings such as those required for new users. All other new users go through their County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane County Agencies</td>
<td>- SSVF Program Staff for BOS entry only - STR Program staff (at Catholic Charities)</td>
<td>Spokane County (City HMIS Website)</td>
<td>Only BOS SSVF and STR program folks must take Commerce HMIS Trainings such as those required for new users. All other new users go through their County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yakima County joined the Balance of State in 2018 and all their HMIS Trainings are provide by Commerce. If you have questions, please contact our HMIS Trainer. You may only take our HMIS trainings if you are officially employed or volunteering at an HMIS participating agency.
Q: I have a staff person that needs to use HMIS. What are the HMIS Training Requirements for HMIS Access?

A: The HMIS Access process explained fully in our [HMIS Training Catalog](#). If your agency is not currently using HMIS through the Department of Commerce, please contact our [HMIS Help desk staff](#) to request new agency forms.

If your agency is already using Clarity HMIS through Commerce—read on for Training Requirements:

- All new users must complete the HMIS New User and HMIS Clarity Software trainings either by Webinar or by in-person training. For Webinars, we ask that you later attend the in-person equivalent of the new user trainings when available within reasonable driving distance. If the staff person previously took training but has not used HMIS in over 6 months they may be required to retake the training or take a HMIS Clarity Software Training.

- Webinar attendees, will only get credit for attending if the following happens:
  - All attendees must have pre-registered for the Webinar.
  - Computer Sharing: If sharing a computer with other attendees, you must provide the instructor the first and last name(s) of all in attendance during the webinar.
  - Attendees need to participate for the entirety of the webinar.
  - For HMIS New User required trainings, we ask that you later attend the in-person equivalent of trainings when available within reasonable driving distance.

- In-person trainings:
  - Attendees must pre-register online a minimum of 2 days in advance to reserve a spot and to be emailed the required visitor parking permit.
  - Attend the whole training: if you are over 15 minutes late or do not complete the whole training, you will NOT receive full credit.
  - If needed, you can split your HMIS New User and HMIS Clarity Software training over different days if available. Contact your [HMIS Trainer](#) for details.

- You must attend trainings yourself—another staff person cannot pass on information to you in the place of required trainings.

- Upon completion of the required new-user trainings, all users must retake trainings biannually to maintain HMIS access.

Remember: DO NOT share HMIS access with any new staff that have not completed their required HMIS Trainings, as this is a violation of our HMIS security policy.

Q: Why do I have to take the HMIS required trainings?

A: Besides adhering to federal and state requirements around HMIS usage and trainings, we at the Department of Commerce take HMIS usage and client confidentiality seriously. In order to ensure all HMIS users are aware of HMIS security and other requirements, to ensure user competency, and to help with data quality—we require certain HMIS trainings. For current users, we require, at a minimum, biannual retraining because data standards and protocols often change over time. For details on training requirements, see our [HMIS Training Catalog](#).

Q: How do I register for an HMIS training?

A: From the [HMIS webpage](#) click on the [HMIS Training Registration Calendar](#) tab. Click on the training time/name you want to see or register for. Use the pop up box side scroll bar to read through the description. Click on “Register for this event” to go to the registration page.
Provide all information requested for registration. Please use a valid work or volunteer email and check that your email address is correct before saving. Typos in your email = not receiving registration confirmation. **You must register 2 days prior for in-person trainings at Commerce in Olympia.** Contact your [HMIS Trainer](#) if you want an exception.

For Webinars, at the registration page be mindful of the drop down for date/time and pick the correct one.

*Example of GoToWebinar registration screen:*

**Webinar- HMIS New User & Clarity Software Training**
Q: What types of HMIS trainings are there?
A: Our [HMIS Training Catalog](#) lists the types of Clarity HMIS trainings we offer. Our [HMIS Training Registration Calendar](#) shows the dates and times of upcoming trainings with registration links.

Q: I registered for a training but did not receive a confirmation email.
A: It is likely you had a typo in your email when you registered. Re-register and be sure your email is correct. If this does not work:

- Check your email junk/spam folder. Whitelist or save as “Safe Sender” the GoToWebinar email or emails from customercare@gotowebinar.com or anything GoToWebinar.
- Contact the [HMIS Trainer](#) if the second registration attempt fails and it’s not in your junk/spam folder.

Q: I registered for HMIS Training to gain access to HMIS. What can I do before my training date?
A:

- Did you receive the training registration confirmation? If No, check your junk/spam folder or re-register for the training.
- For Webinars: Test [GoToWebinar](#) well in advance to ensure it runs smoothly on your computer. Review the [GoToWebinar Attendee Guide](#).
- For in-person trainings: review parking instructions and other details on the Eventbrite event page using the link in your registration confirmation email. Print your visitor-parking permit. If you are not emailed the visitor-parking permit 2 days prior, contact your [HMIS Trainer](#).
- Visit and bookmark our HMIS webpage ([www.commerce.wa.gov/hmis](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/hmis)) and familiarize yourself with the page materials.
- Read your agency’s Informed Consent Form. A generic version of [Commerce’s HMIS Informed Consent Form](#) is on our HMIS webpage.
- Read the [HMIS User Policy Agreement](#) we have on our HMIS webpage.
- Review the [HUD Data Standards Manual](#) topics.
- If you require special accommodations, please notify the instructor two weeks or more before the training date.
- If traveling from afar, please contact the instructor before booking travel to ensure the training has not been canceled due to low registration.

**Q:** What is the deadline for registering for a training?

**A:**
- **In-person** trainings: register a minimum of 2 days before the actual training date. If at Commerce in Olympia, this is to ensure you receive the required parking permit and information. For all locations is to secure a computer and materials. However, we encourage pre-registration a week or more in advance to ensure the training is not canceled due to lack of registrations. We cannot guarantee availability or space for last minute registration attempts.
- **Webinar** trainings: we encourage you to pre-register at least 2 days in advance, as a Webinar may be canceled due to lack of registrants. If you are more than 15 minutes late for a webinar you’ll not get full attendance credit.

**Q:** Is there a refresher I can take for using HMIS?

**A:** Yes, you can take the HMIS Clarity Software training by Webinar or in-person to re-learn how to use the Clarity software. If you are interested in additional features, you can take the HMIS Additional Clarity Software Training. HMIS Training details are in the [HMIS Training Catalog](#) and the [HMIS Training Registration Calendar](#) to find dates and registration links.

**Q:** I cannot attend my registered training. How do I cancel my registration?

**A:** You can cancel using the link provided in your registration confirmation email. Full instructions are in our [HMIS Training Catalog](#).

**Q:** Can I see available HMIS trainings by date?

**A:** Yes. View our [HMIS Training Registration Calendar](#) to find dates and registration links. The “Agenda” view enables you to view a list by dates.

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![View a list of trainings by date.](#)
Q: Can I be emailed notifications when there are new HMIS Trainings available?

A: If you use Google Calendar, you can add our HMIS Training Registration Calendar (WA Commerce) to your shared calendars.

Through Google Calendar you can choose whether to have notifications for events, and whether you want to get notifications over email or in your browser.

1. Open Google Calendar on your computer.
2. In the top right, click Settings.
3. At the top of the page, click the Calendars tab.
4. Next to your calendar’s name, click Edit notifications.
5. Click Add a notification or edit an existing notification to modify. You can use the drop down to choose Email.
6. At the bottom of the page, click Save.

Note: To get notifications on your computer, you need to have Google Calendar open in your browser.

Q: Does Commerce pay for travel or provide meals?

A: No. Commerce does not pay for, or reimburse food or travel expenses, but trainings are free of charge. Commerce does not provide food and drinks for trainings. However, the instructor or attendees may bring snacks to share. For trainings at the Olympia Department of Commerce building, due to food allergies please do not bring peanut or citrus products into the building.

Q: Where do I park for an in-person training?

A: Parking information is on the Eventbrite event page, which is linked in your registration confirmation email. For trainings at the Department of Commerce in Olympia:

- A visitor parking permit and map to the Long Term Visitor Parking lot will be emailed to you at least 2 days prior to your training date.
- Print the permit and display it on your dashboard the day of. Your vehicle will be towed if you do not display the permit on your dashboard or you park in the wrong parking lot.
- A location link is also available on the Eventbrite event page.
- If the Long Term Visitor Parking lot is full, you will need to find street parking. Some street parking require meter fees.
Q: Can I re-take HMIS trainings?
A: Yes. Take and re-take any HMIS trainings you need. There are no restrictions on how many training you can take or re-take.

Q: I’ve taken my required New User training(s), what’s next?
A: After successfully completing the required trainings, we will need to verify your employment with the HMIS participating agency. After verification, you will receive your login information. Details about the process in our HMIS Training Catalog under HMIS Access and explained during the HMIS Clarity Software Training. Beforehand you can read the User Policy, Responsibility Statement and Code of Ethics to prepare yourself for agreeing to it electronically in HMIS once you have access. After you have HMIS access, if you only took the new user Webinar trainings we ask that you later attend the in-person equivalent of trainings when available within reasonable driving distance.

Q: How long does it take to get HMIS access?
A: This is hard to answer, as part of the process is dependent on if you meet the requirements, have taken the required HMIS trainings, and how long it take to verify your employment. We offer the new user required trainings at least twice a month, so give yourself at least two weeks to finish the process. Please read about training requirement and details about the process in our HMIS Training Catalog. The access process is also explained during the HMIS Clarity Software Training.

Q: I, or another staff person at my agency, is leaving the agency or no longer needs HMIS access. Do I need to do anything?
A: Contact the HMIS help desk if you or another staff person no longer requires HMIS access. Per the Agency’s Partner Agreement to use HMIS, the agency should notify Commerce when a HMIS user no longer needs access.

Q: Can we have training at our agency or locally?
A: It depends on the need. If you have five or more people needing HMIS training in your region, we can provide local HMIS training. Contact your HMIS Trainer to request a local training. Regional trainings tend to be in the Spring and Summer months when travel conditions are fair and based on need. Check our HMIS Training Registration Calendar to find training dates for various locations. For those within driving distance of Olympia, we offer in-person HMIS trainings frequently.

Webinar Help

Q: What is a “Webinar” and what do I need for it?
A: Some HMIS Trainings are available by Webinar. A Webinar is conducted online using GoToWebinar. Watch this quick demo video or review the GoToWebinar Attendee Guide to learn more. You will need a computer with internet access, the link in your confirmation email, and computer audio/mic or a phone for audio. Prior to the Webinar, test GoToWebinar on your computer to ensure system compatibility.
Q: What should I do to prepare for a Webinar?
A: You will need a computer with internet access, the link in your confirmation email, and computer audio/mic or a phone for audio. Prior to the Webinar, test GoToWebinar on your computer to ensure system compatibility and that your webinar training is problem free. To learn more about GoToWebinar, watch this quick demo video to learn more or review the GoToWebinar Attendee Guide.

Q: How do I ensure I get credit for my Webinar attendance?
A: You need to:
- Register for the Webinar providing all registration information correctly.
- Attend the entirety of the training Webinar. 15 minutes or more late or leave early = no credit.
- If sharing a computer with other Webinar attendees, at the start of the Webinar using the “Questions” feature within the Webinar control panel, send the instructor the first and last names of all attendees.

To help your Webinar go smoothly and avoid missing it:
- Pre-test GoToWebinar on your computer to ensure system compatibility.
- Start your Webinar early to ensure you have time to deal with any technical issues you may have.
- Watch this quick demo video of GoToWebinar to learn how to use it beforehand.

Q: My Webinar link says it is invalid or it opens a window saying the Webinar is over.
A:
- Check if you are using the correct Webinar link for the correct time and date. If you used the wrong link, register for the correct Webinar. If you attempt to use a Webinar link for an older Webinar, it will say it is invalid.
- Re-register for the Webinar and use the link in your confirmation email. Use the HMIS Training Registration Calendar to find registration links.
Webinars are subject to cancellation if there are no registrants, no participants within 15 minutes of start, or due to heavy technical difficulties. We recommend you register at least two days before the Webinar to ensure you are notified of any issues.

Q: I am trying to attend a Webinar training but it already started and I’m having troubles. How do I get help?

A: Once the Webinar has started, the instructor will not be able to answer emails or phone calls for technical assistance nor can HMIS TA staff interrupt the Webinar to access the instructor or attendee information. Use the GoToWebinar Attendee Guide for detailed instructions. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will not receive attendance credit. You can register for and attend the same Webinar offered in the future. Please see the other topics in this FAQ to pre-plan for a successful Webinar experience.

If you successfully joined the Webinar and experience technical difficulties, message the instructor using the Questions feature of the Webinar.

Q: How do I troubleshoot technical issues during a Webinar?

A: Webinars are over the internet so if you’re internet connection is spotty or lost, you notice the Webinars stops or stutters. Check that your internet connection is stable. If that is not the issue, you can try restarting the webinar, but let the trainer know what happened. Use the GoToWebinar Attendee Guide for Audio instructions (either by computer headphones or telephone) or more. If you loose audio too much or video, restart the Webinar. Contact your HMIS Trainer if you continue to have issues.