

Template Introduction

The goal of this document is to provide a template for creating a by-name data (BND) Operations Manual. Developing a BND Operations Manual gives communities the opportunity to agree on transparent procedures and policies that will promote the use and maintenance of a comprehensive, secure, and effective by-name data set.

Note that the template often refers to by-name data (BND). This term is used interchangeably with the by-name data set. Both terms refer to the universe of data that includes by-name data about everyone in a community experiencing homelessness. This language is a subtle but important shift from the By-Name List (BNL). BNL refers to a list of people, but BND refers to the dynamic universe of data.

Things to consider when creating a BND Operations Manual:

- Decide which stakeholders are involved in drafting and approving the manual. Be sure to involve a diverse set of partners. We **highly** recommend involving people with lived experience (PLEH) and frontline staff.
- The goal of this manual is to document BND policies and procedures in one document. Some of the information in the template may exist in other policies and procedures. If that's the case, it is recommended that relevant language and/or documents are linked or referenced in the manual rather than rewritten or paraphrased so that they are accessible and remain consistent across the system.
- View the BND Operations Manual as a living document and consider how this manual will need to change over time. For example, which sections will need to be revised when HMIS Data Standards are updated? What other events would trigger updates in the manual?

★ **Adapt the template as needed to fit your needs, and contact a BFZ coach if you have questions!**

How to use this template:

This template is organized into sections that are recommended to include in a BND Operations Manual. Each section is organized as follows:

- Section name and the intended goal of the section.
- A list of suggested information to include in the section.

It's recommended that communities follow the steps below to begin developing a BND Operations Manual:

1. Read through the entire template and think about what does and doesn't work for your community.
 - Maybe splitting this information into two documents makes more sense for your community.
 - Maybe you need multiple versions of this document for different populations and subpopulations?
2. Review the **suggested information** prompts and use them as a guide to develop the section.
 - Do certain prompts cover policies and procedures already in place in your community? If so, where do these policies and procedures live?
 - Are there additional topics that your community wants to cover in the manual?
 - Are there prompts that are not relevant to your community?
3. Start drafting text for your own manual!

By-Name Data Operations Manual

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A. Introduction

The introduction section is an opportunity to describe why having a comprehensive BND is important for your community. It is also an opportunity to create transparency about how policies and procedures are created and establish avenues for feedback.

Suggested information to include:

- 1. Define BND and describe why it is important for your community.**
 - How can BND help people experiencing homelessness?
 - What is the value add of the BND for providers, front-line staff, and agencies?
 - What is the value-add of the BND for your entire community?
 - How will having BND help your community achieve its strategic goals?
- 2. Define the goals of the operations manual and an overview of what the manual will include.**
- 3. Briefly describe who drafted and approved this document and the process for how to ask for more information and provide feedback.**
 - How will changes be made to this process?
 - How frequently are updates made?
 - Who decides on what changes are made?

B. BND Definitions

The BND is intended to include everyone in a community experiencing homelessness, meaning that the data set will likely have a larger universe of people than those included in HMIS. For example, people identified as experiencing homelessness in non-HMIS participating service providers such as victim services providers or adjacent systems like criminal justice, health, and education. Creating a BND definitions section will clarify who is included in the BND and how populations are defined for stakeholders operating within and outside the homeless response system.

Suggested information to include:

- 1. Describe the universe of people who will be included in the BND.**
 - How does the BND get populated?
 - What data sources make up the BND? HMIS, VA lists, DV, etc?
- 2. How does your community define (sub)populations in the BND?**
 - Definition of literally homeless
 - Definition of when someone is considered inactive in the homeless response system
 - Definition of chronic homelessness
 - Definition of a family
 - Definition of a youth

- Definition of a veteran
- Other community-specific definitions

C. BND Data Security

Establishing clear language about the security of client information on the BND is crucial. Not only will this help you secure personally identifiable information (PII) and protect clients' data, but it will also give partners clarity on how sensitive client information is managed and secured. Transparent expectations and policies on data security can strengthen community trust in the BND.

Suggested information to include:

- 1. Who has access to the BND?**
 - Who has read access?
 - Who has write access?
- 2. How is client data in the by-name data set safely secured?**
 - What software is the BND stored in, and what security measures does this software offer?
 - Who is responsible for managing the data security of the BND?
 - What data security procedures do you have in place to secure PII? What is the protocol if there is a data breach?
 - What process do you have for securely including data from DV providers in the by-name data set?
 - What process do you have for securely including data for people interacting with service providers outside of HMIS?
- 3. What data-sharing agreements have to be signed to access the by-name data set?**
 - What are the client consents and ROIs in place for clients to include their personal data in the by-name data set? Is the function/purpose of the BND being explained to clients, and if yes, how?
 - What data-sharing agreements are in place for providers to view client data on the BND?

D. BND Roles and Responsibilities

This section aims to create a shared understanding of what activities need to happen, when, and by whom to have a comprehensive and accurate by-name data set. These activities should be outlined so that each person with a BND role is clear on the scope of their responsibilities and what is expected of them on an ongoing basis.

Suggested information to include:

- 1. Describe ongoing BND activities.**
 - What is the process for updating the BND? Who updates the BND?
 - When and how often does client data need to be updated? Who updates the BND, HMIS, and other data sources?
- 2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved with the BND.**
 - What are end users' roles and responsibilities?

- Which programs/agencies/upstream systems (health systems, criminal justice, schools, child welfare, etc.) contribute data to the by-name data set?
- How often/when are end users responsible for updating the by-name data set?
- What are BND managers' roles and responsibilities?
 - Who is responsible for managing the BND?
 - What are the responsibilities of the person(s) managing the BND?
 - How often is the BND manager responsible for updating the BND?
- Other roles and responsibilities?

E. BND Management and Data Quality

Setting up a BND Quality Plan allows a community to define what BND data quality means and how it will be monitored. Ideally, this section will be as specific as possible so data managers and end users are on the same page about data quality monitoring. After reading this section, end users should have the information they need to understand why collecting quality data is important and what data is crucial for maintaining an accurate by-name data set.

Suggested information to include:

1. Explain BND quality oversight.

- How is BND quality continuously monitored?
- Who is responsible for BND quality monitoring?
- What is the responsibility of end-users to keep information accurate?
- What key data fields must be monitored to produce a comprehensive by-name data set?

2. Get into the specifics of what data quality means and how it will be measured.

- How does your community define data completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and consistency? Do you have specific benchmarks that you want the by-name data set to meet?
- What specific processes should everyone follow to ensure complete, accurate, timely, and consistent BND?

F. BND Mechanics

Documenting the mechanics of the BND will help you create sustainable data practices. This section is particularly detail-oriented. The goal of this section is to have enough detailed information documented so that if the person responsible for managing the BND leaves tomorrow, their replacement could read this section and understand the following:

- How will someone show up in the data as actively homeless, newly identified as homeless, inactive, returned from housing, returned from inactive, moved into housing, and no longer meeting the population criteria of in the BND?
- How to report BFZ metrics.

Suggested information to include:

1. What triggers someone to get added to the BND?

- What programs/services must a client engage with to show up in the BND?
- What must an end user do to add their client to the by-name data set?
 - Are these steps different for non-HMIS participating providers or clients (including those that have not consented and DV clients)? If so, how?
- What data elements must be complete/up-to-date for someone to be added to the BND? Where do these data elements live (HMIS or another data source)?

2. What triggers someone to be indicated as not actively homeless in the by-name data set?

- Do you remove clients from the by-name data set? If so, in what cases do you do this, and what's the process for removing clients from the BND?
- How do you know if someone is no longer actively homeless in the BND?
- What data elements must be complete/up-to-date to indicate someone is not actively homeless in the by-name data set? Where do these data elements live (HMIS or another data source)?

3. What triggers a return to homelessness in the by-name data set?

- How will you know if and when someone returns to active homelessness in the BND?
- What data elements must be complete and up-to-date to track whether someone returns to active homelessness? Where do these data elements live (HMIS or another data source)?

4. How do you address multiple program enrollments with differing information?

- For example, if someone is enrolled in a street outreach and a day shelter program on two different days, how do you determine when someone's current episode of homelessness started?
- How does a coordinated entry enrollment change when a person is enrolled in different services (i.e., street outreach, emergency shelter, or a rapid rehousing program)?

5. How do you know if a client is in a specific population and/or subpopulation in the BND?

- How can you tell if a client is part of a subpopulation of interest in the BND?
 - Chronic (including those that time into chronicity)
 - Veteran
 - Others?
- How can you tell if a client is part of a population of interest in the BND?
 - Single Adults
 - Youth
 - Families
 - Others?
- How can you tell if a client changed population or subpopulation statuses in the BND?
- What data elements must be complete/up-to-date to track population and subpopulation statuses? Where do these data elements live (HMIS or another data source)?

6. What is the step-by-step process you follow to report the monthly BFZ metrics?

- How do you calculate the BFZ metrics as aggregate numbers? For example:
 - Do you run a report in HMIS that produces this report?
 - Do you calculate the BFZ metrics in another software (a specific program or programming language, Excel, or something else)?
- Describe actional steps so that instructions can be documented for staff.