BFZ By-Name Data Management Manual Guide

This document aims to guide communities in creating a by-name data (BND) Management Manual that aligns with the BFZ initial quality data standards. Developing a BND Management 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 dataset. Communities can use this guide as a starting point for developing their own by-name data management protocols and are encouraged to adapt this guide to their local context.

*Note that the guide often refers to by-name data (BND). This term is used interchangeably with the by-name dataset. 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 Management Manual:

* Identifying who will take ownership of drafting a BND Management Manual and moving the project along is critical. While involving a diverse group of stakeholders to gather input and approval is necessary, an individual or small group will need to take charge of managing the process. We **highly** recommend involving people with lived expertise and frontline staff. BFZ increasingly finds that communities that engage these groups develop more equitable, responsive, and effective policies.
* The goal of this manual is to have all BND policies and procedures in one document. Some of the information in the guide 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.
* The BND Management Manual should be viewed as a living document that will need to change over time. Consider documenting the cadence to review, update, and approve the manual annually, at a minimum. Other items to think about include which sections will need to be revised when HMIS Data Standards are updated and what other events would trigger updates in the manual.
* The manual should be accessible for stakeholders and partners to review.

## Suggested ways to use this guide to develop a by-name data management manual:

1. Read through the entire guide and think about what does and doesn’t work for your community.
   * Weigh the benefits of having one centralized document with what makes the most sense in your context
     1. Does splitting this information into two documents make more sense for your community?
     2. Do you need multiple versions of this document for different populations and subpopulations?
2. Review the **suggested information** as a guide to develop each section.
   * Does the information already exist in your community? If so, where do these policies and procedures live, and how will you connect it back to the manual?
   * Are there additional topics that your community wants to cover in the manual?
   * Which topics are not relevant to your community and can be removed from the manual?
3. Review the **recommendations for developing each section** as you brainstorm how to amend existing or create new content for your policy.
4. Review the **community examples on the** [**By-Name Data Management section**](https://login.builtforzero.org/toolkit/quality-data-toolkit/bnd-management/tool-by-name-data-management-manual/) **of the Quality Data Toolkit** to help you overcome the dreaded writer’s block. You can use the examples to start thinking about structure and language for your manual. These examples are publicly available, so feel free to copy language if it’s relevant to your community.

# Section 1: Introduction

The introduction section is an opportunity to describe why having 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.
2. Define the goals of the data management manual and an overview of what the manual will include.
3. Briefly describe who drafted and approved this document and the process to request more information and provide feedback.

### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* Consider how by-name data management practices help people experiencing homelessness, providers, frontline staff, and your community as a whole.
* Provide high-level, easy-to-understand information about how your BND is generated and managed in a way that is understandable to a lay person.
* Note how the manual will be kept up to date and who or what team will manage that process.

# Section 2: BND Definitions

The BND is intended to include everyone in a community experiencing homelessness, meaning that the dataset will likely have a larger universe of people than those included in HMIS. For example, people experiencing homelessness served who are served by non-HMIS-participating programs or victim services providers may not be in HMIS, but should be included in the BND. 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.
2. Include relevant definitions to help establish a shared understanding and transparency. Be sure that local definitions align with federal and Built for Zero definitions. Some terms to consider including are:
   * Literally homeless
   * Inactive in the homeless response system
   * Chronic homelessness
   * Family
   * Single Adult
   * Youth
   * Veteran
   * Other community-specific definitions

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### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* Provide details on which data is included as part of the BND; be specific about which providers and databases contribute data (i.e., HMIS, VA lists, DV, etc).
* Include definitions that are already in place in your community and use this as an opportunity to update definitions as necessary.
  + Consider how definitions may change over time or how local definitions may differ from state or federal definitions.

# Section 3: 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 dataset. 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 activities to keep the BND up to date, including who is responsible.
   * Who is responsible for making sure program enrollments are updated and closed, as needed?
   * When should household type be updated, and how are these updates managed?
   * Who is responsible for entering housing move-in information?
2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved with the BND.
   * What are end users' roles and responsibilities?

* What are BND managers' roles and responsibilities?
* Other roles and responsibilities?

### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* Consider how updates to the original data source (i.e. HMIS, HOMES, etc.) impact data in the BND.
* Include information about how the BND is managed locally. Is it one person’s responsibility to pull the data and another person’s responsibility to prepare the list for case conferencing? Be clear on how the data is managed and who is responsible for each part.

# Section 4: 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 accurate data is important and what data is crucial for maintaining an up-to-date by-name dataset.

## 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 dataset?
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 dataset to meet?
   * What specific processes should everyone follow to ensure complete, accurate, timely, and consistent BND?

### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* Consider how data quality is monitored for the data sources that are part of the BND (i.e., how do the timeliness requirements outlined in your HMIS data quality plan align with the BND data quality monitoring?)
* Don’t reiterate practices that are already outlined in other data quality protocols; rather, focus on data-quality practices that are specific to BND management (i.e., monitoring implementation of the inactive policy).

# Section 5: 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 a specific population or subpopulation in the BND?
* How to report BFZ metrics.

## Suggested information to include:

1. How someone is added to the BND and how they are identified as new or returned.
   * How will you know if and when someone returns to active homelessness in the BND?
2. How someone would be identified as no longer actively homeless in the BND.
   * Are individuals removed from the BND? If so, in what cases do you do this, and what’s the process for removing clients from the BND?
3. How multiple program enrollments with differing information are addressed.
   * 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?
4. How an individual's population and/or subpopulation is identified in the BND.
   * How can you tell if someone changed population or subpopulation statuses in the BND?
5. The step-by-step process followed 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 actionable steps so that instructions can be documented for staff.

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### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* The intention of this section is to document practices for transparency and sustainability. Provide detail on the related data elements used to identify someone’s status in the BND and how changes to those data elements may impact them (i.e., what happens if someone with a long program length of stay has a disability recorded after one year of experiencing homelessness?). The more detail the better!
* Consider edge cases that may need to be explained and include detail for how those cases would be addressed.

Optional section that does not relate directly to the scorecard work:

# 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. Details on who has access to the BND and how someone requests access to the BND.
   * Include information on any data-sharing agreements that have to be signed to access the by-name data set.
2. Information about how client data is safely secured, including protocols for and restrictions on sharing data.

### Recommendations for developing this section of your BND management manual:

* Consider how read and write access may be different across different individuals or providers.
* Reference back to and include information on data security measures for software that the BND is stored in.
* Consider local data breach protocols and how those relate to the BND. If they don’t, include information on how data breaches are handled for the BND.
* Call out any special considerations for data from systems outside of HMIS, specifically data from DV providers.
* Ensure there are up-to-date client consent forms and release of information (ROI) forms in place for clients to include their personal data in the by-name data set and that the function/purpose of the BND is clearly explained to those receiving services.
  + Explain steps for tracking clients who decline services or have not signed an ROI.