

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the new Epi Info data reporting system for Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH) grants related to the System of Care (SOC)

This FAQ document will be updated as users have additional questions about Epi Info, a new data reporting system replacing Excel spreadsheet reporting forms for several BBH Children's Office grantees.

Information about data entry and installation can be found at <https://dhhr.wv.gov/BBH/data/Pages/Epi-Info.aspx>.

If your questions about using Epi Info are not answered in this FAQ, please reach out as follows:

- For technical questions (e.g., installation, troubleshooting, data entry), **email the System of Care (SOC) Helpdesk at dhhrbbhepiinfo@wv.gov**. Responses are prioritized by issue type; most requests will receive a response within two hours.
- If a phone call or video conferencing is needed to help, that can also be arranged with the SOC Helpdesk at dhhrbbhepiinfo@wv.gov.

Please note, the Helpdesk inbox is not a secured email address, so please do not send PHI or PII to the inbox.

Why is the BBH Children's Office switching from Excel spreadsheets to Epi Info?

The BBH Children's Office and grantees have expressed interest in having analyzed programmatic data more readily available to measure progress and share successes with funders, stakeholders, and others seeking data for systemic improvement or compliance purposes. At the same time, the state is shifting away from Microsoft products, including Excel.

What are the benefits of Epi Info?

The intuitive design of Epi Info will save grantees' data entry time by using customized logic that guides users to only view and report the information that is relevant to their program. It also uses data validation to ensure only relevant information is entered in each data field, resulting in less data entry error and cleaning time.

Another benefit is that data can be entered and stored within Epi Info without internet access, though internet is required to submit data packages to BBH. Further, Epi Info allows multiple users to input program reporting data into the system for review, rather than relying on a few key personnel for data entry.

Epi Info also includes multiple user-friendly visual dashboards to better interpret and track data among programs. In fact, one of the primary reasons for adopting Epi Info is the ability to assess child, youth, and young adult outcomes.

Who can see the data entered into Epi Info?

We understand the privacy of your clients is incredibly important for your agency. Please be assured that **no other provider agencies can see the client data you enter into Epi Info.**

Transmission of information to the BBH server is through a Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP), which encrypts the data from the agency computer to the secure BBH server. Only BBH staff will be able to access the data for reporting needs. At no time will the data be shared with other provider agencies.

The Epi Info data will only be available on your local workstation and within the BBH secure server once it is shared over the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP).

How do I request SFTP credentials for data package submission?

To request SFTP credentials, please reach out to Jessica Karmazin, jessica.s.karmazin@wv.gov at BBH.

Who do I contact if I am having trouble with my SFTP?

If you are having trouble with your SFTP account, please reach out to Jessica Karmazin at jessica.s.karmazin@wv.gov for assistance.

Why is BBH requiring personally identifiable information including date of birth, legal name, and the last four digits of a client's social security number?

BBH is requesting this information to link clients across Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) bureaus and to track the outcomes of children, youth, and young adults for DHHR's agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and BBH's System of Care evaluation. These are the data necessary for making these linkages. Based on your feedback, we reduced the requirement of the full social security number to just the last four digits.

Is it important for us to collect names?

Yes. We have tried to limit the amount of identifiable information to be collected. To link clients across DHHR bureaus (e.g., BBH, Bureau for Children and Families, and Bureau for Medical Services), the data must have a high level of integrity, and to do that, BBH needs **three data points**:

1. first and last legal name;
2. date of birth; and
3. the last four digits of the client's social security number.

Using only date of birth and the last four digits of a social security number can result in greater error and an inability to link clients in the database, which is of utmost importance.

It is also imperative that a client's full legal name (at least first and last name) is used, rather than a nickname, to ensure the highest level of data integrity.

Isn't sharing client names with BBH a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)?

No. Sharing Protected Health Information (PHI) with BBH is allowed for Health Oversight Activities without first obtaining an individual's authorization. This covers activities related to the oversight of the healthcare system.

The fact sheet explaining this authorized use can be found on the [HealthIT.gov website](https://www.healthit.gov/fact-sheet/health-oversight-activities).

It seems like a lot more data is being requested than what was being collected in the Excel workbooks.

We hear your concerns about the burden of data entry for your staff. Epi Info may seem like it has a lot of data fields, but in fact, more than 90% of the data being collected by Epi Info was already being collected in the Excel workbooks. Some new items have been added to meet BBH's grant reporting and evaluation needs. While there might be a bit of a learning curve, we believe that data entry time will go down as you become more familiar with navigating the system and that the benefits of Epi Info surpass what was possible with the Excel workbooks.

An added benefit of Epi Info is its use of data validation and drop-down functionality, which makes data entry much easier with fewer data entry errors. One other major difference with Epi Info is that your agency owns the data you put into Epi Info, and you can use it for analysis and reporting through a simple export to Excel. It also ensures secure transfer of Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personal Identifiable Information (PII) to BBH.

How frequently will we submit data to BBH using Epi Info?

Based on the feedback we received from you, data submission in Epi Info will be **required once per month**, consistent with the previous Excel workbook submission and your grant statement of work (SOW). Of course, you also have the **option to submit data multiple times per month** if needed.

How do I enter data?

For a quick guide on how to enter data into Epi Info, please see the "Common Technical Questions" on the BBH Epi Info Website at <https://dhhr.wv.gov/BBH/data/Pages/Epi-Info.aspx>.

What computer equipment do I need to enter data?

Epi Info is most compatible with Windows products. For Mac users, there is an option to use an emulator, which allows a copy of Microsoft Windows to be run on the Mac, but this will require the installation and purchasing of both the emulator and a Microsoft Windows license. Once installed, the has the ability to operate like a PC.

Where can I find the Epi Info documentation and downloads?

The Epi Info documentation and downloads can all be found on the [BBH Epi Info website](#).

When will Epi Info data entry officially launch?

Based on your feedback, the launch of Epi Info has been postponed until October 1, 2021, to allow more time for incorporating your feedback, creating this FAQ document, and continuing training and technical assistance.

How do I collect programmatic reporting data between now and the Epi Info launch in October?

Updated PDF data entry forms will be distributed to users in early August. Please complete and retain these PDFs to submit to BBH using the secure file transfer protocol (SFTP). Please do not email the PDFs to the BBH reporting mailbox due to the Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personal Identifiable Information (PII) contained in them. The BBH Children's programmatic team will work with BBH compliance to explain this temporary pause in reporting.

There are several reasons these PDFs are being used in place of the Excel workbooks.

- The PDFs will help orient you to the Epi Info system;
- The PDFs contain a few new data fields compared to the older Excel workbooks needed for BBH reporting, the DOJ agreement, and SOC evaluation;
- Your regular programmatic reporting data collected with these PDFs will need to be entered into Epi Info once it launches. Capturing the data on the PDFs will help expedite this process because the data fields will look very similar, and in most cases identical in the PDFs as the data fields in the Epi Info system.

Thank you for embarking on this new data collection adventure with us.