



BC Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Data Management System Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Advisory Meeting #2

Monday July 6th, 2020 - 1:30pm-3:00pm (Zoom)

Present: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC), Sherman Chan (MOSAIC), Richard Belcham (Inasmuch/MAP BC Co-chair), Derek Chu (Kinbrace / MAP Housing Working Group Co-chair), Iris Solorzano (Options CS), Jenny Lam (Options/ MAP Co-chair), Demetrius Schwab (Union Gospel Mission), Kathy Sherrell (ISSofBC), Vanessa Roth (Journey Home Community), Julia Wu (BC211), Ali Mustafa (Independent), Nicole Stinson (BC Housing), Lavinra Joseph (BC Housing), Leanne Hodaly (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada), Jenny Moss (MAP Executive)

Regrets: Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Joni Rose (MJEDC)

Meeting Chair: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC)

- Alexandra provided a welcome to everyone and a deep acknowledgement that she was speaking from the unceded territories of the Coast Salish people.
- Alexandra also acknowledged the generous financial support of the Ministry of Jobs Economic Development and Competitiveness – (forthwith: MJEDC)

➤ The Agenda was reviewed and approved:

- 1) Approval of June 8 Advisory Committee Minutes
- 2) Finalizing Advisory Committee TORs
- 3) Update: Hiring Project Coordinator
- 4) Discussion: System Scope and Direction
- 5) Next Steps

➤ The Minutes were approved from Advisory Meeting #1 on June 8, 2020

2) Finalizing Advisory Committee Terms of Reference:

During the last meeting, and in subsequent discussions between MOSAIC and the Ministry, the following changes were deemed necessary:

- Proper name for **Journey Home Community** (or JHC)

- **Final decision making:** *Insert p 3:* Final decisions will require approval from the BC Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology representative designate who will confirm that the decision abides by the Agreement #C20Housingreferral shared cost arrangement's contractual framework. This change reflects the need to respect the role of the funding Ministry in the project.
- **Conflict resolution mechanism:** *Insert p 6:* In the event a consensus cannot be reached, MAP BC Co-Chairs make final decisions, pending final approval from MJEDC representative designate who will confirm that the decision abides by the Agreement #C20Housingreferral shared cost arrangement's contractual framework. This change also reflects the role of the Ministry in the project.

➤ **The committee was asked to authorize the above three changes to the TOR – all in agreement.**

Final TOR is attached to these Minutes.

It was also suggested by Alexandra that the committee come up with an easier acronym/name for the project which at the moment is 'Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Data Management System' (RCHRDMS).

To be considered.

3) Update: Hiring Project Coordinator

A core element of the project is a Project Coordinator to be hired by MOSAIC. The job opportunity was posted in December for someone with the following strengths:

- meeting facilitation
- database experience
- strong computer skills
- knowledge of Refugee Claimant system and stakeholders.

Interviews were held in January 2020 and were unsuccessful as all applicants lacked one or more of these core competencies.

MOSAIC then explored the possibility of hiring a consultancy (with MAP Executive approval) and held two meetings with reputable firm. It has since been decided that this will not proceed.

MOSAIC has created a new job posting that was shared on [MOSAIC website](#) and on LinkedIn on June 30 – the job description PDF is attached.

Alexandra asked the committee to think of people who might be suitable and encourage their application. Some applications have been received to date and interviews are being arranged.

Q: How many applicants have been proposed for interview?

A: Three have been shortlisted. Alexandra and Saleem will interview this week.

4) Discussion: System Scope and Direction:

The committee had been asked by email to come prepared to draw from their experience and share their thoughts about: **What you believe must be included in this system to best serve refugee claimants, bearing in mind the overall purpose of the project which is to:**

Develop a centralized system of housing referrals for refugee claimants, with the goal to leverage and compliment or

build-upon the infrastructure of an existing system.

NOTE: This is supposed to be just a first view to inform the Project Coordinator's full scoping exercise. – Not an at depth discussion or decision-binding at this stage.

Discussion Point 1: Identification of databases currently utilized – strengths and gaps

- In the area of housing and or settlement support (*not necessarily RC or housing specific/inclusive.*)
- PROS: Consider what makes this accessible, effective, easily utilized.
- CONS: What potential limitations/gaps are inherent within this system.

Richard (inasmuch) HIFIS: Homeless Individuals & Families Information System

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/hifis.html>

This is a Federal government tool Richard has heard is useful

Nicole (BC Housing) added: HIFIS was developed by the federal government and is used by some Homeless shelters, especially because it can generate reports to BC Housing and in turn for their reports to the government under 'Reaching Home' initiative.

There is expertise at BC Housing who we could consult.

HIFIS collects information like age, family composition, some disability data, but not much about race, ethnicity or immigration status.

The shelters all know HIFIS but not sure they like it – it is improving and there's interest in working with it – used consistently across province and would help with collaboration between MAP, MAP agencies and BC Housing.

Demetrius (UGM) UGM does not use HIFIS as they don't receive funding to use it – but it does have uses for example:

- providing detail on each client.
- protecting information – often siloed at a site because of need for confidentiality – so it does not have the benefit of sharing information, but it is safer.

All web-based – silo nature is a benefit.

Julia (BC211) icarol

<https://www.icarol.com/>

Julia stated there is lots of flexibility regarding the kind of information they want to collect or required information – and the system is straightforward to use.

BUT:

- Not sure if it's possible to share with other agencies beyond login
- Don't know if you can collect case notes. BC211 doesn't use it in this way. But they can create simple profiles to note problematic individuals to avoid.

Richard – because of the experience of going online with COVID they have learned how important it is to have a user-friendly system.

Saleem (MOSAIC) – icare

https://icare-iedec.cic.gc.ca/login_ext

This is the database used by IRCC for reporting purposes for funding programs

Cannot be modified as it's a govt system

OCMS – MOSAIC and several other settlement agencies across Canada use this system that was created by OCASI in Ontario – meeting needs of settlement organizations that can be uploaded into the **Federal reporting** system.

ISSofBC has a similar system.

MOSAIC has been able to modify the program though some organizations don't find it very flexible and continue to use their own systems.

Demetrius (UGM) – Efforts to Outcomes

<https://www.socialsolutions.com/software/eto/>

UGM uses ETO to share information with other shelters.

It has the advantage that they can customize the program themselves

Gaps: ETO is not very user friendly, although it is very powerful. It can be confusing for new users – and needs intensive training.

But it's great for creating online referral databases etc.

Kathy (ISSofBC) - their own program: NewTrack

ISSofBC transitioned to a Microsoft dynamics background so that the database was easily integrated into their settlement services. It has been customized to provide precise uses: e.g. SOS – housing needs and questions like: What kind of housing are they looking for?

What has taken place over a specific time period?

What actions completed? E.g. what did landlord decide etc.

But the launch happened at same time as COVID - so ISSofBC BC knows it has potential But COVID means they haven't seen any arrivals to test the system.

Consultant developed it – so they could fine tune to what staff needs as well as what funder needs.

Vanessa (JHC) – use 'sales force'

<https://www.salesforce.com/ca/>

Staff at JHC have a love / hate relationship with the system

Pros:

- Really good at capturing a profile for an individual or family
- Can make it open or closed
- Can attach emails and documents to each profile
- Can run reports including dashboard reports on specific questions.

Cons:

- Not v user friendly – for example running reports is a bit complicated.

Kathy: Apricot (from Social Solutions – same company who created Efforts to Outcomes)

<https://www.socialsolutions.com/software/apricot/>

Often used for volunteer management – impressive system that was easy to use and easy to customize. This was a choice that ISSofBC seriously considered, but in the end rejected because it was hard to integrate fee for service elements that ISSofBC has for some services.

Nicole – BC Housing has its own system called the [Housing Registry](#) for those in their system as well as non-profit housing they refer to. The Registry has:

- a housing provider side and an applicant side
- keeps up with vacancies and applications.
- Files can be created for case management.
- Can be siloed to protect confidentiality
- Covers whole gamut of housing

Question – does it have an API? (Application Programming Interface) - To create a seamless connection between a new system and theirs?

Response: it was purpose built at BC Housing so staff there can answer questions and Nicole can connect.

Kathy noted – any system must be able to import and export data – like OCASI does.

Discussion Point 2: Defining our system expectations

What do you believe must be included in this system to best serve refugee claimants?

Consider: App, web-based platform, who will access this, what level of information should be shared?

Demetrius: a) it should be able to get info about clients' files which doesn't mean having to call someone

Question: who will have access and be able to see? Can clients input their own needs?

Richard: it should have a dashboard so one could look online to see

a) clients who need housing

b) accommodation available

c) plus a vulnerability index – to see if there's a fit. This could apply to urgency, high needs etc. Could be color coded Red – Orange – Green

This would make it easier to help those urgently needing help as they would be more visible.

Basically: Visible dashboard = shared needs and criteria (traffic lights)

Julia – always a need for more live updates – and a need for a waitlist – spaces available. i.e. all information needs to be really up to date.

Vanessa

Questions:

1) Could RC's fill it out themselves and check their status? This would empower claimants to manage their outcomes and be aware of what housing is available to them as well as what information is accessible about them.

2) Could it be translated into different languages?

3) Re: availability – could we build in information that states that accommodation WILL be available in a couple of weeks – to allow for planning; or only when it is actually available?

Demetrius – future vacancies would be very useful to see for a client in shelter. To help them avoid SRO's

Alexandra – so we want to know what is possible technologically to allow RC's to fill out their form? **Vanessa**: maybe then we would need to have a confidential section

Alexandra – should it be web-based or an APP?

Kathy – web-based is easier to update

- Must be clear about who has access and what are our needs?
- Is it just a dashboard
- Or is it people logging in for case management

Alexandra: Who will access the system? **Clients? Settlement workers? Government/Funders?**

Iris (Options) – remember that clients arrive with little access – they mainly use WhatsApp and we need to think how they can get into the system. Multiple doorways
Maybe something like what bc211 for the shelters as it is a live document – as information can often get outdated quickly.

Sherman (MOSAIC) – emphasized a need to build in case management – re: market housing searches.

Richard – system needs to help government understand the needs of claimants – so we must be able to provide information about how many people need housing? Vulnerable clients? Services available outside Lower Mainland, and even outside this province?

Discussion Point 3: What will be the system's Key Performance Indicators?

How will we know if this system is doing the job we want it to do – in a measurable way?
KPI's must:

- Be quantifiable/measurable and actionable
- Measure factors that are critical to the success of the system
- Tied to our project goals and target project outcomes
- Limited to 5-8 key metrics.

The KPI's will be applied consistently: Particularly during the pilot-project phase of the system

e.g. how many people using system?

is it user-friendly?

is it having results in housing people?

Sherman – what is the market impact of people involved in a housing search?

Demetrius – KPI's can be positive or negative outcomes:

- get housing or drop out?
- system too slow?
- Clients moved over to other systems?

Ali – who can refer? Can it be the family themselves? (Refers back to earlier question)

Richard: KPI's could be measuring the speed of referrals – does it speed up the process?

e.g. if we over-complicate things and make it too difficult then it wouldn't be used.

how easy was this referral to make?

Suggest we incorporate good customer service! Smiley faces – positive reinforcement for using system.

IMPORTANT: Does system respond to special needs like LGBTQ – KPI could be who wasn't referred and why?

Derek (Kinbrace) KPI should measure how the system responds to the needs of the most vulnerable – those who can't go to settlement agencies because of barriers, and would be better off in transition housing with services built in.

Vanessa – it should incorporate a bounce back message with a statement about the next step.

So users know it was successfully transmitted.

Alexandra – perhaps this is a 2-tiered system – from RC needs point of view as well as settlement workers.

Julia – it will be important to design to avoid duplication – i.e. a client not being picked up by 1+ agencies.

This needs to be built in.

Richard – is our desire achievable? Needed? Easy to use?

We could build a system that has a stage 1 & 2

Stage 1 would be for agency use

Stage 2 would be for RC to use - when there's more money and more knowledge/experience.

Julia: must have list – like a list of 3 essential things the system must achieve.

Conclusion:

- Alexandra will make up the list of essential elements and ask for feedback
- Jenny will ask Alex Charlton to design a usable acronym for the project

Next meeting: Aug 10, 1:30pm

Adjournment: 2:53pm