



BC Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Data Management System Advisory Committee

OR CHARMS BC Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Advisory Meeting #3

Monday August 10, 2020 - 1:30pm-3:00pm (Zoom)

Present: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Sherman Chan (MOSAIC), Richard Belcham (Inasmuch/MAP BC Co-chair), Derek Chu (Kinbrace / MAP Housing Working Group Co-chair), Iris Solorzano (Options CS), Demetrius Schwab (Union Gospel Mission), Vanessa Roth (Journey Home Community), Julia Wu (BC211), Jenny Moss (MAP Executive)

Regrets: Nicole Stinson (BC Housing), Jenny Lam (Options/ MAP Co-chair),

Meeting Chair: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC)

- Alexandra provided a welcome to everyone from her temporary home in Parksville. BC
- Alexandra also acknowledged the generous financial support of MJEDC.

NEWS: Alexandra asked if any agencies were encountering new claimants and how the COVID summer is progressing.

Iris (Options) Received 2 temporary foreign workers who had problems and helped them with the claim process.

Richard (inasmuch) – found a few folks in community – but vastly different to pre-COVID. Will have vacancies later

Vanessa (JHC) – aware of 2 making entrance over border – they were placed in quarantine; another was quarantined by family. Checking to see if they can safely make a claim.

Alexandra (MOSAIC)– met some inland (Roma) who would like to make a claim but nervous – suffering a lot because of COVID.

Richard – some others who arrived here irregularly (Indian community) - inquiring

Sherman (MOSAIC) – some from Hong Kong wanting to make claims but very afraid – there are 2 MP's, including Jenny Kwan, helping but it's a very sensitive issue.

The Agenda was reviewed:

Updates: project name change, hiring a coordinator

Establishing a Useful Centralized System to Benefit Clients:

- Going Deeper: Building-upon identified system expectations/possibilities.
- Considering who will access the system and other tech needs.
- COVID-19 Considerations
- Discussion: Environmental scan/desk review

ADDITION: Jenny has an announcement and request regarding a call from Immigrant Services, Calgary

- **Next Meeting Date and Wrap-Up**

➤ AGENDA Approved

Alexandra: UPDATES

a) NAME CHANGE

We discussed at the last meeting **creating a better name / acronym for the project** that is easier to remember.

Jenny had suggested that Alex Charlton (formerly ED of SOS) was very adept so she was approached and discussed with Richard some possibilities.

Richard: some of the suggestions were:

RECOURSE, CHUMS, CHAMP

Then: **Claimant - Housing - and - Referral – Management - System (CHARMS)** or **BC CHARMS** – was suggested.

➤ After a short discussion the new title was accepted.

b) Hiring the New Coordinator

Alexandra: – earlier MOSAIC had held interviews, but references were not suitable
Re-posted the position and received 60 applicants – all very qualified and experienced
Shortlisted 5 and interviewed 3 – should finalize next week with MAP approval.

Establishing a Useful Centralized System to Benefit Clients

- **Going Deeper: Building-up on identified system expectations/possibilities**

Alexandra repeated **Target Outcomes** (from PowerPoint) and those established notes from last meeting.

Alexandra: Should have a good desk review of databases completed by next month – she has looked into systems suggested by committee members last month.

One system – **Apricot** (from Social Solutions – same company who created Efforts to Outcomes)

<https://www.socialsolutions.com/software/apricot/> – was worth considering

Plus factors:

- Can be adapted
- ISSofBC BC only turned it down because it couldn't include a payment system – not important for us
- Apricot have different solutions; one called ETO that has the scalability needed. Customizable.
- No idea about licence costs etc.

Conclusion: it's worth having **Apricot** as part of the environmental scan.

Comments:

Joni (MJEDC): we must have requirements well-defined first (before looking at off-the-shelf products)

What are the functions we want? Who are the users?

Alexandra: Agreed: she will create a **Requirements Document** based on our discussion

- **Considering who will access the system and other tech needs.**

Discussion: Who will be using the database?

MAJOR POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

- the system should be self-serve for claimants – or only for settlement workers?
- language options?
- at what point in the claimant journey does the service kick in? On arrival or after first 72 hours?
- worth considering Peacegeeks' Arrival Advisor?
- important considerations such as budget / confidentiality / full data

Discussion details:

Richard – helpful if the system was self-service for claimants

Joni – thought it was just for settlement workers, but there could be 3 possible levels:

- Self-serve for RC's
- Jointly for claimants and settlement workers
- Purely for settlement workers

Demetrius (UGM) A very important parameter is the system Design and User experience – what's it like to use?

Vanessa (JHC) Will it be able to respond in different languages?

Richard: We must consider the budget – do we concentrate our budget and make it a really good tool solely for settlement/housing staff?

Vanessa – if claimants access the system it can be a website link – not an app. Website list is cheaper but app would be nice.

Question: What are the benefits of having claimants use it themselves?

Alexandra – some claimants are nervous about going to an agency and might be happy for an accessible system. But it could push us out of our capacity.

Demetrius – using a settlement worker is sometimes considered demeaning.

Sherman – agreed, it might be optimal if the system could help claimants clarify to themselves where they are in the process, in the geography, then provide a link to a worker.

Joni – if claimants are not interested in going to an agency how would a referral system help build that trust?

Sherman – it would give claimants knowledge that more than one agency exist – could try others

Richard – especially important for scoping – to give us an idea how claimants are connecting with services.

Jenny (MAP) An important question to define is at what stage will this referral system start? Will it be right from the start – replacing bc211 or working with it? CBSA/IRCC have an agreement to provide claimants with bc211 service (formerly First Contact): both the information and the use of the phone 24 hours/day.

Alexandra referred the point to **Julia (bc211)**

Julia (bc211): the partnership involves Canadian Red Cross and I do not know how they would feel about self-serve as they provide 72-hour emergency hotel accommodation to first arrivals.

It may be possible to self-serve – but usually assistance is sought with a referral from bc211.

Especially important will be the interpretation aspect.

Iris: this is supposedly a referral system – not really a self-serve – and people usually want to talk to someone. Maybe the new service would not cover immediate emergency housing, but after 72 hours it would be better for a settlement worker to be involved assessing and then helping.

What other support beyond housing do they need?

Alexandra – advocacy is important so if no accommodation available via Red Cross – we still need the numbers to support an argument for more emergency housing.

Vanessa – self-serve important because it might catch claimants who are not connected with agencies – folks who need to be helped.

BUT – the system would have to be configured so only claimants use it – not other refugees or folks overseas.

Demetrius - suggestion for catching the users:

there could be a COVID-type interface to catch those who get missed by bc211 or don't know where to go.

Joni – mentioned a self-serve provided by Peace Geek's **Arrival Advisor app** – suggest this could be used for self-serve; and the new referral system mostly for settlement workers.

Maybe Peace Geeks have a technical advisor willing to sit on our committee?

Tech company that built Arrival App is Affinity Bridge (<https://affinitybridge.com/>) - based in Vancouver

Joni added she is really concerned about confidentiality – will claimants be happy to create a profile or enter data?

Richard – agreed - will people with vulnerabilities use it?

Maybe better to start just for settlement workers to keep it easier and simpler.

Alexandra/Sherman: both agreed to invite Peacegeeks to provide some technical help.
Need to manage expectations – start with settlement workers at first because otherwise it may become too ambitious.

Vanessa – arrival advisor would have to agree to take on this specialization.

Joni – advised us to think out all our user requirements first – even those things we may not have now. Need big picture even if the product ends up being created in stages.

- **Alexandra** – will make a chart for requirements for everyone to contribute to.
- invite a technical expert to next meeting

• COVID-19 Considerations

Richard – an important factor is will there be a post-COVID spike?

Vanessa – Question: are we going to ask about COVID symptoms and organizing quarantine?

Joni – will we have enough quarantine space if COVID continues?

Richard: if the system adopts a modular intake:

- one module would be health screening. Once the pandemic passes it can be adapted
- or there could be a secondary module about COVID only.

Iris: we would need to do screening along the lines of health authorities

Sherman: another level/module could be matching to landlords – not just claimant housing providers.

Alexandra – this touches on meanwhile spaces – and this could be added at the end.
However funding may not stretch to that.

Demetrius – most agencies are using screening for COVID. E.g. requirements for those coming from another country. UGM would want to do their own screening on top of anything done by the referral system.

• Discussion: Environmental scan/desk review – tabled

Alexandra provided Jenny an opportunity to talk about the **Calgary Gateway** project.

Jenny: MAP has been approached by Casey Kennedy, Dir. Newcomer Services at Immigration Services Calgary as she is interested in creating a similar 'MAP' in Calgary with agencies.

This is because ISC has been awarded the Gateway Project – a case management and referral service for ALL newcomers arriving into Calgary.

Casey wants to:

- learn how we built collaboration on projects though MAP
- learn more about the CHARMS BC project – especially our ideas around creating good intake procedures and what kind of technical requirements we are looking to incorporate in the referral and database systems.

Casey has asked for a preliminary 30-minute discussion with anyone interested and then a longer consultation in the Fall. She suggested that MAP BC and any entity formed in Calgary could work together in the future.

- Jenny to email the request to members along with Gateway Project document received, and doodle poll a meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday September 9, 1:00pm NOTE CHANGE OF DAY PLEASE

Adjournment: 3:00 PM