



BC Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Data Management Project

Minutes of the CHARMS Advisory Meeting #4

Wednesday September 9, 2020 - 1:30pm-3:00pm (Zoom)

Present: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Sherman Chan (MOSAIC), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Richard Belcham (Inasmuch/MAP BC Co-chair), Derek Chu (Kinbrace / MAP Housing Working Group Co-chair), Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Joni Rose (MJEDC), Iris Solorzano (Options CS), Jenny Lam (Options/ MAP Co-chair), Demetrius Schwab (Union Gospel Mission), 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)

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)
- Alexandra noted the name change for the project – CHARMS going forward. The Mission was repeated.

The Agenda was reviewed and approved.

1. Project Updates: Introducing our new Project Coordinator!

Alexandra introduced **Marzieh Nezakat**, the new Project Coordinator: she has 10 years international experience and coordination in ESL, working with vulnerable communities in Iran. She has a Masters in TESL and a PhD in Applied Linguistics.

Marzieh: thanked everyone for the opportunity and emphasised her enthusiasm to get started with the project.

Members provided short introductions.

2. Scoping Exercise and Desk Review: Apricot system

Based on the discussion of identified databases in Meetings 2 and 3 a chart has been produced of them all with pros and cons. We identified Apricot as a possible candidate so Marzieh has prepared some detailed notes.

Marzieh presented the slideshow attached re: Apricot.

- **Pros:** Ease of use (data & navigation); flexible (track & customize data); filter-based reports; automatic updates based on report criteria; user administration (organizes groups based on filters & high security features); guest user modules (enhances engagement); accurate data management (offers built-in data validation & no duplicate entries); well-integrated (Office 360, Gmail, etc); customer service included (great reviews); constant upgrades & free training; workflow transaction; ability to search through many fields
- **Cons:** need another platform for CRM (customizability is low); works best with Google Chrome (ok on Firefox, not on Internet Explorer); inconsistent personal complaints/reviews; not able to copy profiles, have to re-enter every time; pricing unavailable, has to be negotiated through factors (customization); reporting function could be more interactive

Discussion

Question: **RB:** Is the data held in Canada or US?

Response: Data centers available in Canada

JR: Why are we looking at a system before we nail down the requirements? We could integrate with BC Housing system or another, but we need the requirements first.

AD/RB: Plan is to do both – we are building a Requirements list but also looking at those systems we identified earlier, starting with Apricot that appeared the best fit so far. We are also going to explore BC Housing's system and others that we listed before, at the same time seeing if there's a match with our Requirements List that we are continuously developing, or consider if we need to create one ourselves.

Marzieh (MN) confirmed

AD: In terms of the requirements they are of priority, so we have been contacting a couple of technical representatives in Vancouver to assist us in translating our requirements into technical realities.

3. Identifying a Tech Consultant for the Requirements Document

We have contacted 2 technical specialists from 2 big companies. Unfortunately, they were not able to attend this meeting and it became clear that we need to hire a tech specialist who is not allied with any of the companies.

It has been explained that we need to create a technical requirements document (based on our requirements of the system) that will become the 'call' out to companies to provide a specialist.

The technical requirements need to be created by someone with technical expertise so MOSAIC approached 3 different specialists but because they sign a non-compete document they can't work for pay for anyone else, and it is too much to expect a volunteer to help out.

Lastly, MOSAIC has approached PeaceGeeks and have received suggestions of some candidates who can help.

Conclusion: While the team is organizing the technical side, they are reviewing different systems like Apricot.

RB: how do our requirements and the technical requirements dovetail?

AD: Yes they do dovetail: – we have looked at the process from the fundamental question of what are the various needs of potential users: settlement worker/shelter/client and the key point that is clear is that to have multiple user faces is very expensive. We have been advised by technical experts that it would be better to start with one user: settlement/shelter worker.

RB: Would this become a point that the Advisory Cttee would look at or does this go straight through to the technical requirements document?

AD: The decision would be based on our informed discussions but translated into much more technical language in the Technical Requirements document.

JD: the process must be based on what we are looking for, must be clear who are the users – what qualifies them to be on the system and what do they need. Understanding workflow of the process + understanding the business rules: e.g. can only be in transition housing for 90 days

These rules would help define how the system works and how to produce the reports needed.

Need to be careful not to jump ahead – e.g. who is using it which has not yet been decided.

RB: We did decide because of project size/budget that we need to limit the users to settlement worker/shelter worker model rather than go to multilingual self-service model that's more complex.

AD: Our next step is to develop technical requirements with a tech specialist. And it will be based on our decision to focus on settlement /shelter workers as the users.

Are we in agreement? (Alexandra asked for committee consensus)

DS: service providers

VR: thought we were still undecided – it was suggested that a 2-step process could be looked at later because of cost.

RB: we agreed that it was to be noted in the requirements document that as part of system we could consider a Stage 2, but because of cost we would start with settlement/shelter workers.

Agreed - we need to maximise the budget and make sure the document clearly states intentions both now and into the future.

NS: What about data management? Who will keep this current? There are users in both phases, but who manages the information? Are there criteria in the requirement document to describe this?

AD: Important point – we really need the technical specialist to help us.

Let's make a list of requirements to provide to technical specialist:

- Clear user profiles
- Who manages data? Anything else?

DC: Usually work with a business analyst who could then take the requirements to technical specialist. Could Marzieh do this?

AD: Marzieh will be working with the communities and markets to hear their opinions/needs too.

DC: but we need to get our requirements clear before we look at different models.

RB: Looked back at his marketing experience for 2 learnings: –

- there's benefit to look at what technical systems exist to generate ideas that we might want to consider.
- We didn't use a tech consultant and regret as it was very hard to do without that technical input.

Marzieh to be business manager and works with a tech specialist to maximize the benefits.

AD: Working hard to identify a tech consultant – and what needs to go into the process. Marzieh can get this done then take all the learning to our group at a special meeting with those most interested in user requirements.

At same time Marzieh is preparing surveys and interviews for the consultations with remote and other groups.

JR: good idea – nice to have a timeline

AD: let's aim for end of month – Sept 30th – AD to send out an invitation to all to see who is interested.

Iris: Can we forward suggestions about personnel or requirements to MOSAIC?

AD/Sherman: yes, please let MOSAIC know, then once Saleem has an idea of the job requirements they will make a formal posting to secure someone.

Thanks to Marzieh for all her hard work on this over such a short-time period.

4. Stakeholder Engagement:

Sherman: do you have a stakeholder contact list that you can share with the Advisory Committee?

AD: We have pulled a preliminary list together from the 2019 Housing Report, but also adding agencies from more remote areas on the island and elsewhere. We will circulate it with the Committee for your feedback.

2:50 PM Next Meeting Date and Wrap-Up:

- Alexandra will advise of meeting dates
- Minutes will go out from August and September meetings together.

ADJOURNED