



BC Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Data Management Project

Minutes of the CHARMS Advisory Meeting #13

Wednesday August 17, 2022 - 1:15 pm (Zoom)

Present: Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Sherman Chan (MOSAIC), Floorance Faqiri (MOSAIC), Joni Rose (MUNI), Demetrius Schwab (Union Gospel Mission), Julia Wu (BC211), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Jennifer York (ISSofBC), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Mohsen Eslami (SOS-ISSofBC), Thanh Lam (MAP Co-Chair/MPNH), Jenny Moss (MAP BC Executive)

Meeting Chair: Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC)

- Marzieh welcomed everyone and acknowledged that she was speaking from the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples and that our work must acknowledge and affirm the reconciliation process.
- Marzieh also acknowledged the generous financial support of Ministry of Municipal Affairs
- Introductions of everyone present
- Agenda for 12th Advisory Committee meeting was reviewed.

Project Updates

BC CHARMS Coordinator

Liam has left MOSAIC – MOSAIC started interviewing immediately and has identified a successful replacement. She will start Aug 29 – and has lots of experience working with the government and also with UNHCR. In addition, she is passionate about refugee claimants. She will take on all responsibilities concerned with BC CHARMS.

BC CHARMS Launch

The launch took place on May 16. 24 Directors and Executives attended – the launch covered: database, sub-projects, and next steps of CHARMS.

(Marzieh shared a video from the event)

She received great feedback about the event

- Since then, CHARMS has been onboarding agencies with an introductory session and reaching out to more agencies.
- All new users have signed Participation & User Agreements and BC CHARMS Privacy Documents before training
- 13 agencies onboarded, including the sector's 3 transitional houses: Kinbrace, Inasmuch, JHC. ISSofBC, MOSAIC, Options, DIVERSEcity, Rainbow Refugee, PICS, Archway, VIRCS (Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre), CVIMS (Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society) and KCRIS.

- They are all using the system and referring to MOSAIC for any assistance needed.
- BC CHARMS has met with **bc211** to onboard BC CHARMS into the bc211 system – bc211 are currently taking on new staff and will join BC CHARMS and get trained shortly. For now, they are using their own system as previously.
- The system has already placed 2 families and they are working to place a third.
- At this early-stage MOSAIC is providing lots of support to those agencies using the system **via weekly one hour check in sessions** with Marzieh, Floorance and new coordinator – it's on a drop-in basis. Held the first one last week which went well – will continue until January 2023.
- **A PDF of the intake form** has been created for staff to use at work, other cheat sheets and a Q&A guide.
- **Training videos** are also being created that will be available through BC CHARMS YouTube channel.

INITIAL PHASE NOTES TO REMEMBER:

- Still working with the Vendor to **implement changes – it's 99% there** but there will always be opportunities to improve – at this point no major changes are required but features can still be added if helpful.
- At this point **vacancies are only viewable at *transitional houses** (not many) but soon they will open up other options at non-profit and private housing providers. To have non-profit and private sector housing opportunities on the database CHARMS needs to develop strong foundations and consistent guidelines for screening housing before they are invited to join.
***JHC, Kinbrace, Inasmuch** – for refugee claimants only
They will reach out to other transition housing e.g., for women who have experienced violence – but there won't be that many included since their systems are often different. (e.g., period of housing offered is longer.) Plus, **JHC Meanwhile Spaces project** will be included once they are established.
- It is a tool to provide housing, but also a place for **data gathering**. So, each user is encouraged to create an Intake form for each claimant, so we know how much housing is needed, even though there is not enough housing for them all right now. We do need the data to provide this evidence and find more vacancies.
- **Reports: There are 2 types of reports allowed:**
 - Native (Users) Reports** – users are trained and know how to pull these from their accessible data.
 - Reports for MAP & Govt.** – respecting confidentiality aggregate data reports will be shared with the Government, CHARMS Advisory Committee and at MAP Meetings where they will be reflected in the Minutes. Aggregate reports are not finalized yet (Vendor still working on this feature) but Marzieh shared an example of what an aggregate report would look like.
Parameters provided:
 - number of weeks searching for housing
 - number of individuals vs number of families searching
 - number of individuals vs number of families searching by city
 - applications searching vs placed by month
 - total families vs total individuals placed by month (average # weeks)
 - vacancies available and their occupant capacity
 - vacancies broken down by type
 - units available
 - persons placed by age
 - persons placed by gender
 - vulnerabilities by family
Reports will be in pie graph form with useful and easily readable information.

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

Demetrius (UGM) – asked how CHARMS can support the integration of non-traditional settlement agencies like shelter staff?

Response: remember the conversation about whether to include shelters as users in the system? Ultimately we decided not to add shelter space as turnover is rapid and real time data is therefore difficult to reflect.

But shelter workers could use **external referral forms** to post refugee claimants looking for housing. These clients will enter the Waiting Area and Settlement Workers who are BC CHARMS users will be informed.

Same as the process offered to bc211 to help connect claimants to a refugee claimant settlement agency.

Follow up question: can we include persons who have not yet made a claim but are thinking about it?

Response: they need to have the intention to make a claim but maybe have not submitted their BOC yet.

Vanessa (JHC) – JHC is a housing provider in BC CHARMS – we are struggling as we can only provide vacancies and receive referrals for housing – but nowadays we have families walking off the street to our house/office looking for general assistance. We need to sort this out so we don't end up at CHARMS being a settlement agency as well.

Response: this is why it's so important to fill in a form each time. AND CHARMS is arranging a procedure that will be available for housing providers who need to input new client(s)

Joni (MUNI): asked why the housing provider would not refer a client to a settlement agency?

Vanessa – yes, we will do that, though we have not done this in the past – also the numbers have increased so much and it is often difficult to know which agency to send them to for immediate help in time.

How are the clients sent to JHC/via whom?

The referrals come via members of JHC own community and via word of mouth.

Mohsen (SOS): based on discussion with housing search worker the system is working well, and they have placed some families via BC CHARMS already.

It is great that MOSAIC can help with user questions. Thank you!

Response: Thank you! All the agencies have been working very well together and with CHARMS.

Refugee Claimant Navigation Website Launch

Marzieh demonstrated the newly launched website that uses the simplest language possible.

- SEO is finalized thanks to the skills of the web designer
- Purchased both a .com and .ca domain as .com is useful for those coming from other countries. So, both work
- Site analytics are providing reports on visits to the site: e.g., number of visits, location and type of browser, pages visited etc. These reports can be shared with MAP members if needed.

Marzieh toured the website for all – main tab is the GET HELP to refer claimants to a settlement agency.

The website includes a video to help users which Marzieh played – there are subtitles available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Spanish, Kurdish, Ukrainian on the video.

- On the main site when using Google Chrome clients can turn on translation by right-clicking
- Access is via QR code on a card that will be distributed widely, including CBSA ports of arrival and IRCC offices so that they are handed to refugee claimants. Plus, outreach via MAP to the sector, externally to libraries, shelters etc.

Designed for claimants not settlement workers.

QUESTIONS:

Vanessa - what is the QR code on the card for? Does that go straight to the link to BC CHARMS?

Response: No, it's just to enable claimants to access the Navigation website.

There will be a QR code for access to the database for the External Referral Form to refer to BC CHARMS database soon.

Vanessa – can claimants self-refer to database?

Response: Not yet – this will come later, right now referrals need to come from settlement worker, lawyer, church, etc., but not claimants directly – yet.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:

BC CHARMS is being promoted on social media, in brochures, and via other items – that have been shared to launch attendees, users, other agencies.

It will be added to MAP website soon.

Marzieh shared a promotional video that promotes use of BC CHARMS Referral System (thanks to Loren, Iris and MOSAIC staff)

Sustainability Plan

MOSAIC has been working on this and discussing with MAP Executive for a few months and received great feedback from Thanh and the Technical Consultant. With their input MOSAIC has created a sustainability plan that has been approved and Marzieh will circulate after the meeting.

Plan topics are:

Operational Resourcing Model

***Financial Estimates and Funding Sources**

System Upgrades and integrations

Other considerations

End of Term Planning

***Financial estimates and Funding sources**

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

- BC CHARMS is funded by the government until end of March 2023 but the contract (with Bonterra (formerly Social Solutions/Apricot) continues. BC CHARMS has a 5-year contract with Bonterra to take advantage of discounts they offered.
- Bonterra must be advised before March 31, 2023, if the contract is to be discontinued or renewed.

Fiscal Years 2023/24 – 2027/28

New funding will be required

BC CHARMS Project Costs:

- Staffing: all or some of the following roles: Manager, Coordinator, and part time assistant
 - Apricot Fees including 60 licenses, basic training, Tier 1 support and 10 additional licenses for 23/24
 - Navigation website hosting and Squarespace subscription
 - Promotional costs
 - **MAP costs** – Coordinator and expenses
- MAP has decided to stand alone after March 2023 for reasons of independence and impartiality - so funding will

be found by MAP.

Therefore, MOSAIC will not include MAP costs.

Thanh (MAP BC) – felt it would be better to separate BC CHARMS from MAP so that one and other would not be an impediment.

Joni – thought MAP was included with BC CHARMS because it was not a legal entity – has it become incorporated?

Response: Thanh – not as yet, but it is on the cards. This will be part of the new Strategic Plan starting in September.

Jenny (MAP) – just to add to encourage everyone to consider being part of the new MAP structure.

QUESTIONS:

Derek (Kinbrace) : **a)** what is the annual cost of BC CHARMS? **b)** Is there a new funder identified? **c)** Who is responsible for applying for funding?

Response:

a & b) Marzieh will send everyone the Sustainability Plan with different scenarios – what type of funder:, from within the sector or outside, will staff be hired or contracted. There is one recommended scenario, and everyone will be able to see the options.

There are some fixed costs: licenses, hosting, membership, and promotional costs – but the final costs vary according to the type of staffing.

c) MOSAIC is responsible for finding a funder for BC CHARMS under the contract with the government. – we are in the process and have made some applications so that this will be achieved before March '23

Demetrius: with relationship with MAP changing does that mean Advisory Cttee will change/cease? Will BC CHARMS be in a different relationship with MAP and ourselves?

(SEE BELOW)

Next Steps with BC CHARMS

Recruiting & Training

CHARMS will recruit more settlement agencies, adding more housing as well as non-profit and private landlords. Latter will be linked to the system through agencies who are already users - we have good models from existing transitional houses and a robust system.

Ongoing Implementation

Working with Bonterra to solve any wrinkles and improve the system.

No major shifts at this point – Bonterra is making sure the system works smoother.

Sustainability

- Looking for a new funder for BC CHARMS
- MAP sustainability – MAP has decided to look for a new funder
- New Lead Agency – MOSAIC has discussed third phase and MAP Executive, MOSAIC and funder agreed to approve MOSAIC continuing to be lead agency until March 2024.

The reason is that the system is new, and MOSAIC has lots of experience, implementation is new, so continuity is essential. Smooth transition to a new lead agency possibly in 2024 is really desired.

Thanh – MAP thanks MOSAIC for continuing for another year as they have so much experience and know-how.

MAP will help with elections of a new lead agency in March 2024 as MOSAIC has decided it may not remain as lead agency on this project.

QUESTIONS:

Derek – so if another agency takes on the lead it will be their responsibility to find more funding?

Response: depends on how long the funding is for that MOSAIC acquires. E.g., Funding could be for any number of years – if it is just for one year then yes, the new lead agency will have to find funding; but if it is for 2,3 or even 5 years then the new Lead Agency can just take that over.

Auditing

Ongoing auditing looking at audit logs for unusual behavior patterns in usage e.g., many ‘access denied’ messages, logging on after hours, sharing of users etc.

Proactive auditing may also include looking at all, or random, users.

- Monthly audits run by BC CHARMS Administrators (Coordinator or Marzieh)
- Reports generated will cover access to the system over 2 randomly selected 3-day periods in the month.
- Provided to MOSAIC Privacy Officer and any user agency ED active during the audit period.
- Agency ED’s will then sign off on the report that all access was legitimate and must also contact MOSAIC in any instance of inappropriate use of the system.
- These procedures are part of the Participation Agreement each User Agency has signed off on.
- Audit reports can also be provided to the Advisory Committee to keep the Committee well informed.

Advisory Committee

BC CHARMS Advisory Committee will continue separate from MAP’s new structure – the project will keep the same structure (with Thanh as point person for MAP).

Thanh – MAP will continue to work with BC CHARMS because of contractual obligations – Advisory Committee will continue to provide consistency until March 2023. However, at this point we have no idea what the MAP structure will look like in the future, but for now MAP will respect the existing BC CHARMS structure.

Marzieh: So, we will meet as needed up until March 31, 2023. After that it would be good to continue if funding allows – open to suggestions from the committee members to see how it could continue/commitment/ideas after March 2023. Do you still think you would like to be involved with BC CHARMS Advisory Committee beyond March ‘23?

Alexandra (MOSAIC): it’s still a MAP BC project – so do you want to continue as a MAP BC Advisory Committee?

Thanh – it is a good question because although MAP intends obviously to continue the relationship with MOSAIC and BC CHARMS the new funders (for MOSAIC) may see things differently and not want to be encumbered with MAP details; likewise MAP needs to be able to apply for funds without BC CHARMS as a responsibility. So, given this we cannot insist that the Advisory Committee continue beyond March 2023.

Vanessa – had thought the Committee was designed to aid with set up and launch, rather than ongoing implementation. Perhaps a different committee could form – **users** could meet regularly that would be helpful. But also, the Advisory Committee might be needed in the future while MOSAIC goes through funding changes.

Joni – the Advisory Cttee was a proposal from MAP (not an obligation under the contract) – it is a useful tool to be a sounding board. So really its existence depends on:

- if new funder requires it
- or BC CHARMS and the users find it useful.

It would probably be advantageous to change the TOR and call it something else.
Joni could continue as a member but just as a government observer.
The core question is what do you see is needed post 2023?

Marzieh – yes we need to think about it and take in your thoughts as to what is useful for MOSAIC now and into the future.

Jennifer York (ISSofBC): What is the purpose of the Advisory Group? If it's for the users then senior management don't need to be present.

Marzieh – yes, at the start it was a committee to help with vendor decisions, database design – but it has now changed, and we need both functions: users and decision makers.
Shall we have 2 committees?

Kelly Rader (Inasmuch) – yes we can keep meeting with a strong purpose – but it would be very useful to document the challenges/reasons for Advisory Cttee/ something to demo to a funder and to next lead agency. Document the journey. Better to send out questionnaires to users or ask for a report, rather than invite people to more meetings unless the new committee has representatives from all the different user groups.

Marzieh – agreed that the successes and challenges from the past would be most useful for next lead agency.

ACTION NEEDED What is the purpose of the Advisory Cttee past March 2023? And change the TOR.

Sherman Chan (MOSAIC) – It's important to have a smooth and concrete process to hand on – it's a sectoral responsibility.

Thanh – it definitely is a collaborative project – although run by MOSAIC all members of the sector have a stake in the project, so it needs to be carried by the whole sector.

Mindful of how decisions are made so they are open and sectoral.

DECISION: Committee will continue until March 23 and during that time a meeting will be called if needed.

After that MOSAIC will work with MAP to define new Advisory Committee and TOR.

Final Remarks:

Kelly – thanks for keeping the project going especially with Liam leaving.

Jenny – took the opportunity to tell everyone that the new Advisory at MAP will be called an **Advisory Council** (not committee) – to keep it clear.

Many will be called to see if they are interested in joining the Advisory Council – please speak up as you are very valued!

ALSO - **MAP meetings will start 'in person' in September**. Details will be announced soon.

HWG meetings will also be in person, at same location, after lunch from 1pm – 2:30pm.

Adjourned 3:00 pm