

Selection of an HMIS Implementation Facilitator

In December the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) published a call for proposals for a facilitator with significant successful experience in developing a community-based HMIS.

Agency stakeholders assisted the CHF in the review of proposals and recommended a direction. Thank you to the members of the advisory committee who took time out of their schedules to help:

- **Lisa Garrison**, The Alex Community Health Center
- **Carol Oliver**, Distress Centre
- **Marlow Ramsay**, The Mustard Seed Street Ministry
- **John Rook**, Salvation Army
- **Stacey Petersen**, FreshStart

Following the recommendation of the advisory committee the CHF awarded the consultant contract to **Canavan Associates**. Canavan will provide project management and subject matter expertise in the development and implementation of Calgary's HMIS. For more on the company's background and accomplishments, read the letter from Canavan Associates on the second page.

What's Next?

For the duration of the project CHF and Canavan will be reaching out to the homeless-serving community for its thoughts, ideas and expertise to ensure the creation of a system that is responsive its needs.

Over the next nine to 10 months, the project will occur in several steps:

1. Develop an **advisory body** that will represent the wide range of stakeholders in our community including agency directors, case managers, funders, and homeless-serving participants.
2. Analyze stakeholder **needs and agency readiness** to implement HMIS. This will occur in two parts. The first step will be an assessment of all the agencies that wish to participate in the HMIS. This will provide a detailed picture of the way in which services are delivered and administered in Calgary. The second step will be a simple sequencing of agencies into a two year implementation schedule based on multiple factors.
3. Develop appropriate **policies and procedures** and agreements to operate and maintain the HMIS. The policies and procedures will include roles and responsibilities, privacy policies, data usage and disclosure agreements, data collection and reporting procedures, and data quality standards.
4. The combination of CHF's analysis with the expertise of the advisory body will produce the focus for:
 - a formal RFP process for the HMIS **software**;
 - several local HMIS software **demonstrations**;
 - and finally, the HMIS **vendor selection**.
5. Identify and recruit skilled **HMIS staff** to locally manage both the implementation and operation of HMIS once our involvement is concluded.
6. Once the HMIS software is selected agencies will begin the process of **transitioning** onto the HMIS. The transition will include service level agreements between the agencies and the CHF, the implementation of HMIS policies and procedures, and staff training.

The CHF will host a series of workshops, community conversations/focus groups throughout this process to increase awareness of HMIS in the community. Please consider participating in this engagement process and encouraging others to do so as well.

Please contact Alina Tanasescu at alina@calgaryhomeless.com for more information.

About Canavan Associates

Canavan Associates (CA) is incredibly excited to have this opportunity to learn from the Calgary community how homeless services have been delivered locally. We hope that our knowledgebase, developed over the past 10 years working with communities across North America will add to the existing strengths of your community.

CA has successfully designed and implemented management information systems across North America. In addition to a long track record of community-based technical assistance, CA has participated in the US on the National HMIS Technical Assistance Initiative providing hundreds of hours of direct assistance to communities working on HMIS. As part of the National HMIS TA team, CA conducted, assisted in the development of the HMIS Data and Technical Standards and training curriculum. Canavan Associates currently provides both remote and on-site technical assistance to over 100 communities in 12 states and facilitates two HMIS focused collaboratives spanning large geographic portions of the United States.

In addition to these efforts, David Canavan, the managing director of CA has published and reviewed multiple papers and articles on the subject of homelessness and presented nationally and internationally on the role of information security in social service data collection and disaster planning. Mr. Canavan recently completed work on the establishment of the Association of Infocomm Security Professionals (AINSEP) in Singapore. While onsite for three weeks, CA was required to design a national survey tool, a group interview guide, interview several high ranking government officials, and create a conceptual organization design to increase the status and recognition of the information security profession.

Fran Ledger, a Senior Associate with CA and primary consultant on this project has her Masters in Social Work. She worked for five years as a HMIS System Administrator implementing the Orleans/ Jefferson, LA Parish HMIS. Her professional experience spans both direct service delivery to the domestic violence community and the criminal justice system and to information technology support to local government, for-profit and non-profit communities. These projects crossed the spectrum from hardware purchasing to software functional design, along with experience facilitating complex groups to arrive at the right solutions.

Working with Canavan Associates as additional subject matter experts are our partner technical assistance providers **Abt Associates** and **The Cloudburst Group**. Abt Associates' **Brooke Spellman** was one of the primary authors of the HMIS Data and Technical Standards privacy section and has delivered hundreds of hours of technical assistance in a variety of subjects including community governance, uses and disclosures of personal information, and capacity building in local communities.