



# Request for Proposals

---

## Technology-Related Needs Assessment of Santa Clara County's Supportive Housing System

**Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2018, at 5:00pm PST**

Destination: Home is seeking to select an experienced consultant to conduct a technology needs assessment to help enhance the capacity of supportive housing system partners, make data more accessible and more efficiently managed, and support the overall system goal to reduce homelessness in Santa Clara County.

## Executive Summary

Destination: Home is a public-private partnership serving as the backbone organization for collective impact strategies to end homelessness in Santa Clara County. In this request for proposals, Destination: Home is seeking an experienced consultant to conduct an assessment of the technology-related needs of Santa Clara County's supportive housing system. The goals of the assessment are as follows:

- Assist the supportive housing system to enhance the capacity of service providers and housing developers to meet the community's needs from a technological standpoint,
- Make data more accessible and more efficiently managed so that the supportive housing system can demonstrate its impact, and
- Support the supportive housing system's goal to increase housing opportunities.

## Background

The 2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey found that 7,394 people were homeless on a given night, and 74% of those people were unsheltered. Destination: Home, the County of Santa Clara, and dozens of other stakeholders are collectively working to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the county, and to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring.

In 2014, we developed the Community Plan to End Homelessness (Community Plan), a five-year, community-wide roadmap to ending homelessness. This plan guides governmental actors, nonprofits, and other community members as they make decisions about funding, programs, priorities, and needs. The plan contains three overarching strategies:

1. *Disrupt Systems* - Develop disruptive strategies and innovative prototypes that transform the systems related to housing homeless people.
2. *Build the Solution* - Secure the right amount of funding needed to provide housing and services to those who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness.
3. *Serve the Person* - Adopt an approach that recognizes the need for client-centered strategies with different responses for different levels of need and different groups, targeting resources to the specific individual and household.

Consistent with the Community Plan's strategy to *Build the Solution*, in November 2016, Santa Clara County residents approved the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond (Housing Bond), a \$950 million general obligation bond that will create new affordable rental and homeowner housing opportunities. The Housing Bond builds on key policy shifts and communitywide partnerships and is part of our ongoing effort to: 1) increase affordable housing opportunities for our community's most vulnerable and poorest residents; and, 2) to prevent and reduce homelessness throughout Santa Clara County.

We anticipate that the proceeds from the Housing Bond will result in the production of 4,800 units of affordable housing units that will be used as supportive housing, in which supportive services are available to the tenants (this includes permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing units). The County of Santa Clara and various other partners are working to ensure that the services provided are sustainably funded and that the nonprofits carrying out the work have the capacity to do so now and into the future.

In 2018 Destination: Home is partnering with Cisco to create, support and enhance data collection, systems, software and capacity in order to streamline processes, facilitate data analysis and demonstrate impact.

## System Challenges

Though we are in the heart of Silicon Valley, in many ways the supportive housing system has not kept pace with advancements and opportunities in technology. Investments in organizations' technology infrastructure are often secondary to investments in additional programming for clients who need assistance simply meeting their most basic needs. Our system partners, to varying degrees, have not been able to take advantage of all that Silicon Valley has to offer. Sometimes that is a hardware or software challenge, but it is often a technology literacy challenge. The system and its workforce are experts in social work or building housing, but are not often experts in the technology that can enhance or ease their efforts.

Likewise, we are challenged in the use and management of data. Data are kept in multiple databases, from the Homeless Management Information System, to system-level databases for public benefits, healthcare, or involvement in the criminal justice system, to agency-level databases maintained by each organization. This data can include personal identifiable information (PII), as well as health records, criminal records, and social services and support accessed. Organizations are faced with demands from funders and system managers to enter data into multiple databases, so staff often have to duplicate data entry efforts. Each database is governed by different privacy regulations and data import/export policies, making integration efforts confusing and time consuming. All of these issues factor in to a data system that is complex in nature, requiring considerable effort to produce holistic information about the people served and the system's impact on them.

## Scope of Work

We are looking for a consultant to conduct a needs assessment to help us enhance the capacity of system partners as it relates to technology, make data more accessible and more efficiently managed, and support the supportive housing system's goal to reduce homelessness. The product of the consultant's work should be a report that includes a summary of findings and recommendations for changes that could be implemented in the system. The recommendations should describe the change to be made, the anticipated impact of that change, the stakeholders needed, the level of investment required of these stakeholders, and the estimated overall cost to implement the recommendation.

The consultant should take into account past and current efforts to assess technology systems and capacity – among communities and community based organizations – working in the homeless sector. This will ensure that the research is based on learnings already captured, and will also be an opportunity to articulate challenges specific to Santa Clara County that may not be reflected in other reports.

The consultant should carry out interviews with various stakeholders and deploy a human-centered design process to assess the current system, identify organizational gaps and barriers to adoption, and evaluate solutions. Interviews should include:

- CBOs currently using HMIS to understand their experience:
  - What is working, what is not, what additional information/functionality is needed to improve operational efficiency and program effectiveness.
  - Where are the pain points and how can they be addressed?

- What are the institutional barriers CBOs using HMIS have that may restrict them taking full advantage of the system? What are the specific challenges?
- CBOs not using HMIS to understand barriers to adoption.
- Santa Clara County HMIS administrator
- HMIS provider (Bit Focus): to understand current features, development roadmap, and identify gaps and opportunities to improve current offering to better meet user needs.
- Data privacy lawyers to understand barriers to data sharing.
- Homeless and formerly homeless individuals to understand their experiences and interaction with technology.

The above interviews and research should yield the following core deliverables:

- Specific user stories, personae and journey mapping as a result of employing a human-centered design process.
- An in-depth understanding of data needs and gaps – for CBOs, the county, the homeless, and HUD – and barriers to adoption or successful implementation.
- A comparison/evaluation of successful data sharing/integration models in other cities/countries and other sectors (e.g. EMR system). This should include models that did not work, and note recommendations from existing studies that have not been implemented.
- Understanding of legal barriers (and options) for data sharing
- Recommendations for technology solutions to include analysis of existing solutions (and identifying what may need to be developed/customized), costs to develop/implement, barriers to adoption, sustainability of systems, and potential for impact.
- Recommended technology solutions should also include analysis on the level (and type) of capacity building and training needed to successfully implement.
- An assessment (and recommendations) for partners to pilot new solutions, based on their capacity and readiness to implement new technologies.

Through their work, the consultant should be able to answer questions like:

- What are the resources currently available to and/or used by the supportive housing system?
- What support do nonprofit service providers and housing developers need to share data? What are their related technological needs? What are their staffing and training needs?
- What does the system need as it relates to technology in order to coordinate and support the efforts of the local government and nonprofit partners?

We are looking for a consultant who can think creatively and help us think in big yet tangible ways to create a supportive housing system where technology is not a barrier but an asset.

### Application Instruction

The proposal narrative should not exceed five (5) pages, excluding attachments, using 1" margins and 12-point font. Proposals should include:

- Proposed approach to carrying out research
- Work plan, including timeline and specific milestones and outputs
- Relevant experience of project partner(s)

- Budget

Please submit your application electronically as one document to [ray@destinationhomesv.org](mailto:ray@destinationhomesv.org). Proposals will only be accepted via e-mail. Applications are due on **May 4, 2018 by 5:00pm PST**.