HELP seeker

Is your organization working to address complex social issues using a systems approach?

Are you thinking about leveraging new technologies/social innovation to maximize your Collective Impact?

If so, you might be a great fit for the HelpSeeker systems mapping initiative funded through the Government of Canada. This is being rolled out in partnership with A Way Home Canada, the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and Turner Strategies.

What's HelpSeeker?

HelpSeeker is a systems mapping and analytics platform that supports efforts to enhance service integration and Collective Impact on social challenges.

The platform helps system leaders better understand what service duplication or gaps, user trends, feedback, and demand, and even sources of funding. With these analytics, a community has an agile, data-driven approach to integrated Systems Planning.

What's Systems Planning?

Systems Planning is the process of strategically mapping, coordinating and delivering services, supports, and programs with the rights, needs, desires of the client/user at the centre. Its aim is to create an integrated ecosystem of care, in which various actors and systems work together towards solutions to complex social problems. When applied to the issue of homelessness, the unifying high-level goal of Systems Planning work is to prevent and end homelessness.

Systems Planning It differs from Collective Impact only in its technical/operational focus. If Collective Impact guides your big picture thinking, then Systems Planning is about how you operationalize your ideas at a very practical day-to-day level.

What's Systems Mapping?

While there are lots of ways we can think about systems conceptually, when it comes to operationalizing them, we need to have the basics first: real, up-to-date information about who's doing what in the social safety net ecosystem.

In other words, to meaningfully transform systems, we need to have at minimum the most basic information about the services operating in a region:

- What services do they offer?
- Who are they serving?
- Who's funding them?
- What capacity/occupancy they have?
- What users say about them?
- How are users accessing them?

Systems mapping is all about making sense of your local complexity in a methodical fashion and giving you the information you need, that's real-time, to make better decisions at a policy, funding, and service design level.

How's HelpSeeker different than 211?

We get asked regularly about overlapping with 211, because we are able to turn the backend data in our platform into a resource directory app – which 211 also offers in parts of Canada.

Once communities understand systems mapping and the platform analytics, they realize HelpSeeker is complementary to local or provincial resource directories. In fact, in communities like Red Deer, we work in partnership with 211 to give those looking for help even more options to finding it – and to give local funders better data to enhance their impact and efficiency.

Another way HelpSeeker is different is that we work nationally versus provincially and that we are using AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Open Data to automate a lot of the grunt work involved in keeping the database updated and to optimize the user experience. Technology advancements give us lots of options to keep improving the platform and you can be sure to see continuous improvements in our future releases (stay tuned for Sep. 2019).
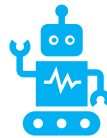
Why is HelpSeeker not a charity?

HelpSeeker has opted to register as a BCorp social enterprise. We appreciate the work of charities and we don't want to compete for limited donor dollars. We would rather develop value-add to generate income to keep us sustainable and constantly innovating.

We truly believe that the future is one where we can be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable simultaneously, and we commit to this by living these values.

The way we stay viable and offer the service free for all agencies and users is to licence the analytics to systems level decision-makers that see value in it. However, the front-end experience of the app for those in need and services is and will always be FREE.

How do I get HelpSeeker in my community?

The good news is that we do most of the work for you. We mine and map your local data, manage agency data input and any technical issues. What we need from you as a systems leader is to get the word out to services and get people excited about systems mapping by sending out emails, organizing a launch of the pilot, some social media, etc.

At the end of the mapping process, your community walks away with a complete systems map and analysis of your current gaps, duplications and financial investments in social issues. This is all FREE to the community; the only time you have to pay anything is if you want the real-time analytics through an optional Premium account calculated on a per capita basis.

How do I find out more?

Check out HelpSeeker.org or download the app (Android/iOS) - though, you'll only be able to see the front-end that service users experience.

If you're interested in the systems mapping and real-time analytics, get in touch with our VP Community Engagement, Jenny Cull (Jenny@HelpSeeker.org) and have a chat to see if what your needs are and if HelpSeeker is a good match for you.

We're looking for innovators/disruptors working on Systems Planning that are going to fully leverage the platform. This means there is a certain level of readiness in the community to fully adopt a new technology.
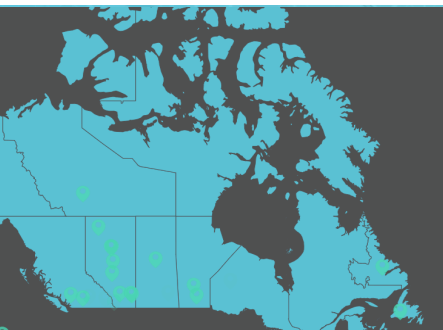
We want to make sure we're a good fit for you,
and that you're a good fit for us.