PRESS RELEASE - HIGGLE - SOCIAL SERVICES SOLUTION

This document is an artifact of the work performed by NACRN at the ASU Smart City Cloud Innovation Center (CIC). The ASU CIC uses the Amazon working backwards product development process to identify a solution to a public sector challenge. This process includes a series of workshops to deeply understand the customer, the customer problem, and define a solution. One of the artifacts generated during these workshops is a fictitious Press Release that describes the problem and solution as if it were a new product being released. The Press Release is used by the development team as a guide to build a proof of concept or minimally viable product and helps to determine the most important features to build. Below is the mock press release developed by NACRN and the ASU CIC which was used by the developers to build a proof of concept on AWS.

NACRN LAUNCHES NEW HIGGLE TOOL TO MOVE WORKFORCE SERVICES INTO THE FUTURE

Application Improves Access to Benefits and Services for People Experiencing Poverty.

(Show Low, Arizona - December 15, 2019) Northern Arizonans in fiscal crisis can now easily discover and apply for benefits to assist them in recovery. The Northeastern Arizona Community Resources Network (NACRN), a partnership of community organizations announced the launch of a new tool, the HIGGLE social service management platform to connect citizens in need to services with the overall goal of reducing the impact of poverty on Navajo County. The platform was developed in partnership with the ASU Smart City Cloud Innovation Center.

"One of our top priorities is to eliminate poverty for all Arizonans. While we've done a great job in getting the overall state poverty rate down below 14%, that's largely driven by the robust economic activity in urban areas like Phoenix and Tucson. In our rural areas there is more to be done to connect people to jobs, education and training. Here in Navajo County over 28% of residents remain in poverty and we need more tools like HIGGLE to help get people the help they need," said County Commissioner Mary Jones. "I am confident the HIGGLE application will be a powerful resource for connecting people in need to available services to make Arizona a model in reducing poverty."

Navajo County is a large, rural area with few jobs and extreme poverty. While there are a number of local government and non-profit social services agencies dedicated to helping people in fiscal crisis, the case managers at these agencies lacked the ability to generate a complete profile of their clients, understand what services they were already accessing and what services they were eligible to receive. Success or failure was often based on the case manager's knowledge of programs and experience working with people in poverty and people often had to travel from agency to agency to get the help they needed. All of this was frustrating for both case managers and clients, led to an inefficient and ineffective use of resources and prevented the development of comprehensive programs to help people end their cycle of poverty and reduce Navajo County's poverty rate.

"I used to get frustrated when I couldn't find the information I needed to help my clients. I often knew there was a program or service, but couldn't remember the name. Or I only had part of a client's case history and didn't know what other agencies they were working with and I didn't have the tools to put all the pieces together," said Mary Bates, NACRN Success Coach. "Now I am able to get a complete picture of a client's situation and connect them to the help they need to end their poverty. I finally have resources at my fingertips to offer comprehensive case management in less time than it used to take to research just one program. I'm able to help more people in more significant ways."

HIGGLE is a cloud based system that is simple for case managers to access and use on any device, whether in the office or in the field. HIGGLE provides case managers with both accurate information on the universe of benefits and services and how to apply for them as well as complete client profiles. Case managers log-in, find an existing client profile or build a new one and enter qualifying information. HIGGLE takes the guesswork out of service coordination through a simplified universal intake process and referral management program thus ensuring individuals receive all qualified services. The HIGGLE application compares the client information provided to benefit eligibility criteria and identifies all matches and provides the application and instructions to apply. With HIGGLE clients receive complete and accurate information and case managers are better able to help more people end their poverty with comprehensive services.

To learn more about the HIGGLE and how you can use it as an open-source, social service solution go to www.navajocountyaz.gov/higgle (*not a live site*).

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