



Housing Resources and the People Who Need Them

Whether an aging parent, a young adult seeking independence, or a person with a disability, everyone deserves an affordable home that meets their needs regardless of their individual situation.

Below are three problem statements that hackathon participants are encouraged to focus on, although we are seeking any innovative solutions that will help to link residents to opportunities for affordable, accessible, and fair housing. Data sources and other information will be provided to hackathon registrants later.

The hackathon will be held on Jan. 24-25, 2019. [Register online](#), and contact Eta Nahapetian at eta.nahapetian@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4320, TTY 711, for more information or questions.

Problem Statement #1.A:

Many individuals with disabilities are in need of affordable, accessible, and integrated housing. Fairfax County housing providers, whether public, nonprofit, or private organizations, own units that have been modified to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. For example, units may be modified with lower countertops, have grab-bars in the bathroom, or have lighting features for persons with visual impairments. However, property owners who own modified units often have difficulty finding applicants in need of these features, and may rent them to people without the applicable disabilities. As a result, there is often a mismatch between connecting these critically-needed units with the people who require those features. How can we use technology to better connect the supply of accessible housing with those in need of such accommodations?

Problem Statement #1.B:

Many individuals with disabilities struggle to find accessible housing. Oftentimes their only option is to modify an existing unit. For a renter, this means adapting a home that is essentially not theirs. The process whereby a tenant asks a landlord for permission to modify their rental is called a reasonable modification request, which often can be a lengthy and complex process. While there are several resources available, individuals often must search through multiple websites or seek help of various organizations before they have all the information they need to make an informed decision. How can we consolidate all available resources into a workable tool to help connect individuals to information needed to make a reasonable modification request and, ultimately, a modification to their unit?

Problem Statement #2:

Home sharing is an idea catching on throughout the nation which supports older adults by helping them remain in their home as they age. The concept is relatively straightforward: match an older adult who owns their home with a younger person who either pays rent or offers in-kind support in exchange for rent, such as assistance with household chores. This type of living arrangement can benefit both parties – older adults receive the help necessary to safely remain in their home and younger adults have reduced housing expenses. With the high cost of living in our area, coupled with an aging population, home sharing is one solution to help more residents live and work in the county. The challenge lies in turning this concept into action. How can we harness data to help connect residents in ways that are faster, efficient, and accurate to foster better matches and success?

Background Information

<http://www.novahss.org/search-housing> → The NOVA Housing Resource Guide is a web-based guide to housing including rental housing search sites and shared housing search sites. There is also a webpage which provides housing resources.

<http://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=76dfda1d5c0c41da8eae3d3923684146> → The mapping application is a tool used to assess the relationship between where adults 65+ or households with at least one person with a disability reside and where services for these populations are located.

General information about Reasonable Modifications:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities/home-modifications-resources>

https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/reasonable_modifications_mar08.pdf → HUD/DOJ Joint Statement on Reasonable Modifications under the Fair Housing Act

Home Modification Grant Programs:

<https://www.vhda.com/Renters/Pages/AccessibleRentalHousing.aspx#.W-w8BBuWy70> → VHDA

<https://commonwealthcommunitytrust.org/> → Charitable Fund Award, Commonwealth Community Trust

<https://www.ericfund.org/> → Eric Fund

<https://rebuildingtogether-aff.org/> → Rebuilding Together Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/home-repair-elderly-program> → Home Repair for the Elderly Program for Elderly and Disabled Adults

Home Sharing:

<https://nesterly.io> → This is an example of an existing homesharing platform.

<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/property/2018/01/02/nesterly-boston/> → News story about Nesterly.