

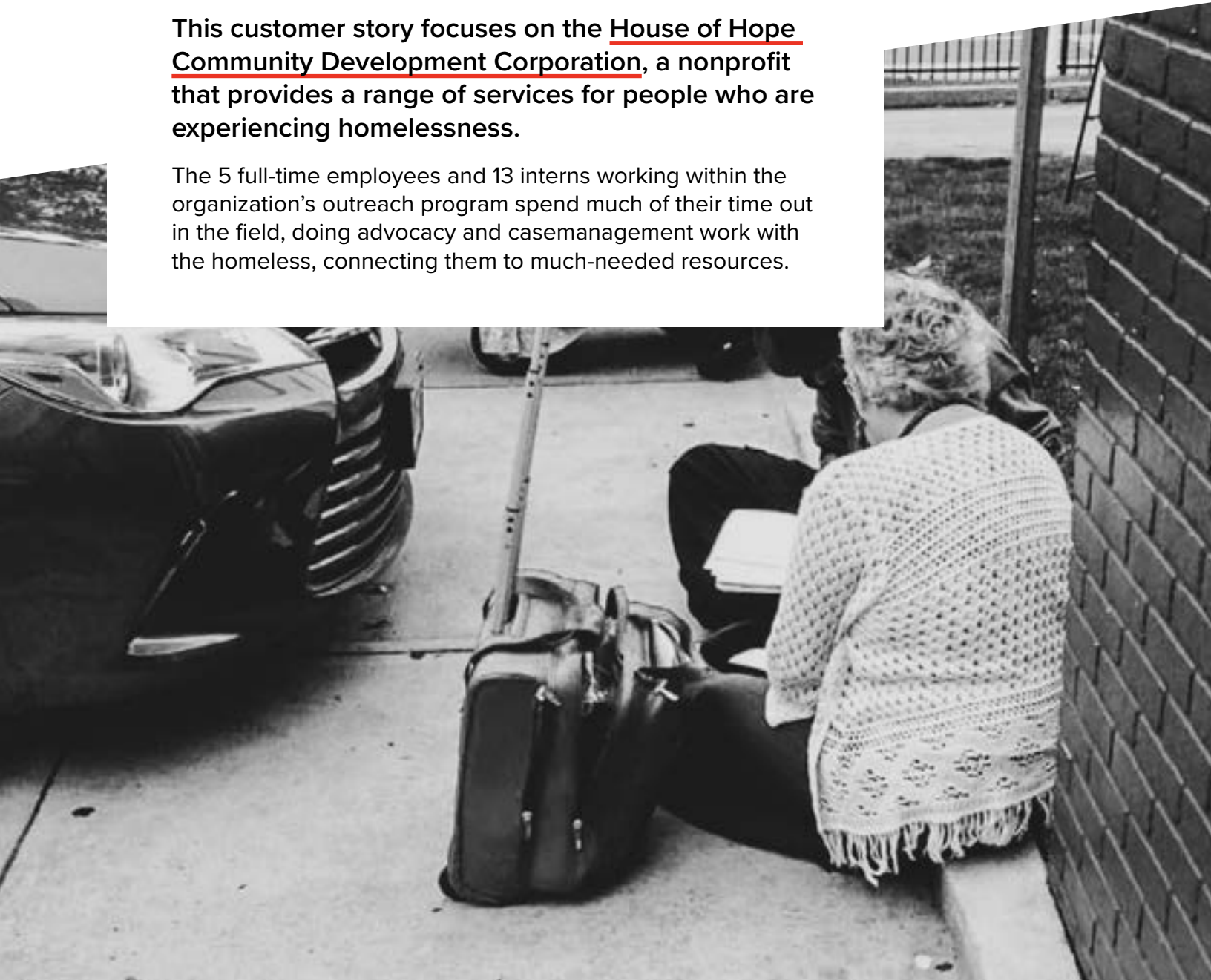


CASE STUDY

Social Services

This customer story focuses on the House of Hope Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit that provides a range of services for people who are experiencing homelessness.

The 5 full-time employees and 13 interns working within the organization's outreach program spend much of their time out in the field, doing advocacy and casemanagement work with the homeless, connecting them to much-needed resources.



Problem

Before Fulcrum, House of Hope outreach workers would spend a few hours on the streets, talking with clients and taking notes on paper, then come home and write down who they spoke to and what the conversations were about — as best they could remember, anyway.

“We talked to an average of 20 to 40 people within a two-hour block,” said Megan Smith, Outreach Program Manager. “It was hard because I didn’t always remember everybody and sometimes the details got lost.”

Once they had their notes together, workers would manually transfer the data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database mandated by their funders. In addition to being neither mobile- nor user-friendly, HMIS is prohibitively expensive for a nonprofit organization, so House of Hope’s software licenses were limited to full-time employees — which meant interns were not able to access critical data.

How they use Fulcrum

Being able to share information in a timely manner is a huge concern for coordination of care. “It’s easy to share information when you’re in the same office,” Megan said, but when you’re in different parts of the community at different times, it’s a much more difficult task.

After years of doing outreach and taking notes on paper, Megan learned about Fulcrum. One of the undergraduate collaborators who had previously used Fulcrum for voter canvassing thought it could also help solve the outreach program’s data-collection problem, so she showed Megan the app.

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What immediately attracted me to it was the ease of it and the user friendliness of it,” Megan said. “Now we do our data collection on the spot. So after I talk with a client, I step aside for a couple of seconds and I write a quick note in Fulcrum, and when I sync it, everyone else who is doing outreach with me can immediately see that note and I don’t have a chance to forget it.”

She also appreciates the ability to edit the app in real time as her co-workers suggest new questions to ask their clients or fields to add to the form.

Results & Benefits

Among the many benefits of using Fulcrum, Megan is confident that being able to enter data in the field has allowed House of Hope to more accurately capture the number of clients they serve.

“The geo-pinning feature is also super useful,” Megan said. “If I’m looking for Jane Doe, I can see that she’s usually on Broad Street in the morning. So if I have an urgent piece of mail for Jane Doe, I should go to Broad Street in the morning, because that’s my best chance of finding her. The date and time stamp are also really valuable because none of that stuff was getting captured under the old data entry system.”

Data collected in the Fulcrum app also serves as a record of homelessness that gives House of Hope’s clients access to resources they would otherwise be ineligible for, since data proving their homeless status doesn’t otherwise exist.

On a broader scale, the outreach workers hope the data they collect in the app will help inform future city planning decisions regarding resources for the homeless. They are using overlays of Fulcrum maps to document the need for a day center by illustrating where services providers and public bathrooms are as opposed to where their clients are being pushed by gentrification and policing.

For Megan, one of the best things about Fulcrum is that it's easy to train people how to use it. "It takes less than half an hour, then all of our interns are also able to enter their own data," she said. "Before, none of our intern data was getting captured."

Using Fulcrum in the field, the employees and interns at House of Hope are able to work together seamlessly and keep more accurate records. This ultimately allows them to help more of Rhode Island's homeless population access resources that would otherwise be out of reach.

Megan shared her experience using [**Fulcrum as a Tool for Street Outreach**](#) at our Fulcrum Live event in Boston on 8/15/2017. Read the recap on the Fulcrum blog.