



**New Solutions for the Resource Referral Problem**

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# The Problem

It's hard to see the safety net.



# Community Resource Directory Data:

**WHICH** agencies?

**WHAT** services?

**WHERE** are they located?

**WHEN & HOW** are they accessed?

# Community Resource Directory Data:



## IT'S COMPLEX...

**Organizations:** multiple services, facilities

**Services:** elaborate eligibility requirements

**Language:** vocabularies vary widely

**Jurisdictions:** federal, state, local

**Public and private:** government vs charity

## & IT'S ALWAYS CHANGING

## Conventional Referral Providers



## Web-based startups



# A LANDSCAPE OF SILOS: CHAOTIC, WASTEFUL, INEFFECTIVE

## PEOPLE IN NEED



Poor families with children  
People with disabilities  
Veterans  
Elders  
Etc.

## REFERRAL PROVIDERS



Call Centers



Paper Directories



Resource Websites



Many others

## SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS



Shelters



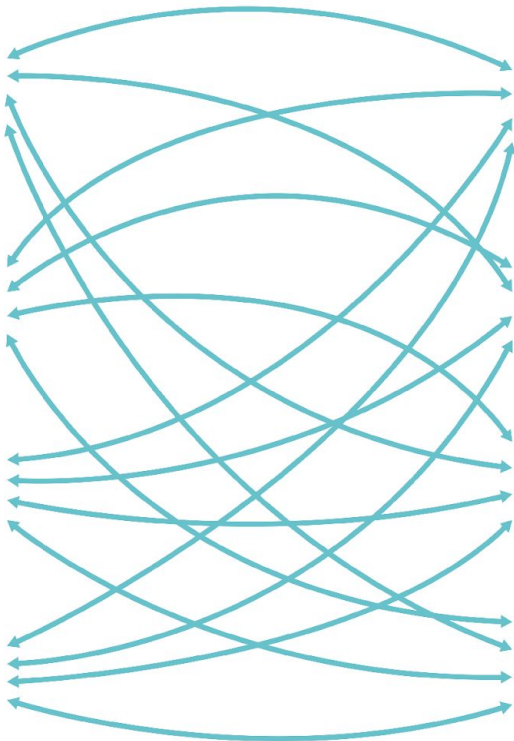
Food Pantries



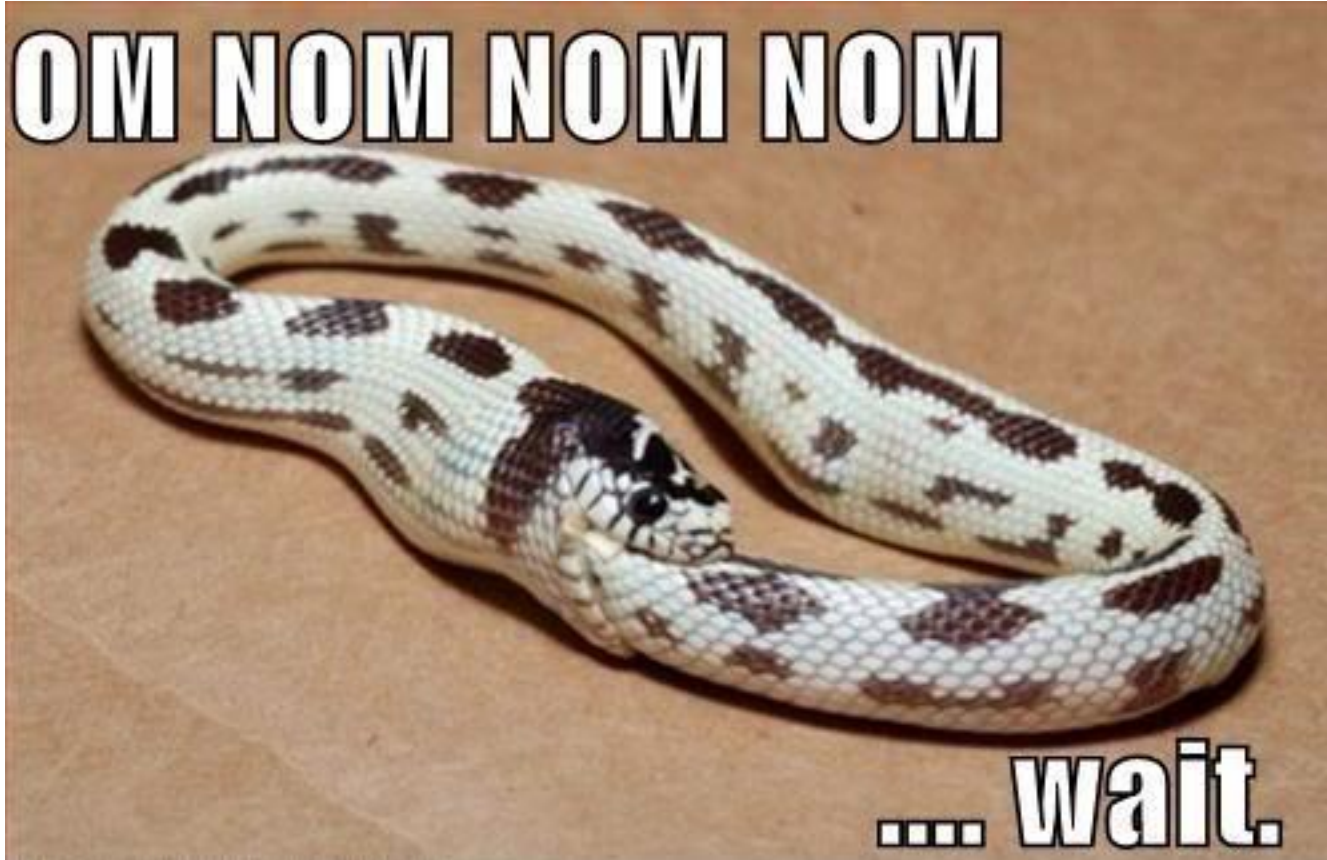
Medical Care



Counseling



**OM NOM NOM NOM**



**.... wait.**



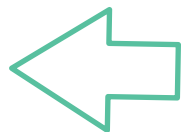
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# Vision

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A healthy information ecosystem  
in which **people can find what they need,**  
in **whatever way works best** for them.

# THE HUMAN SERVICES DATA SPECIFICATION: BRIDGING OLD AND NEW

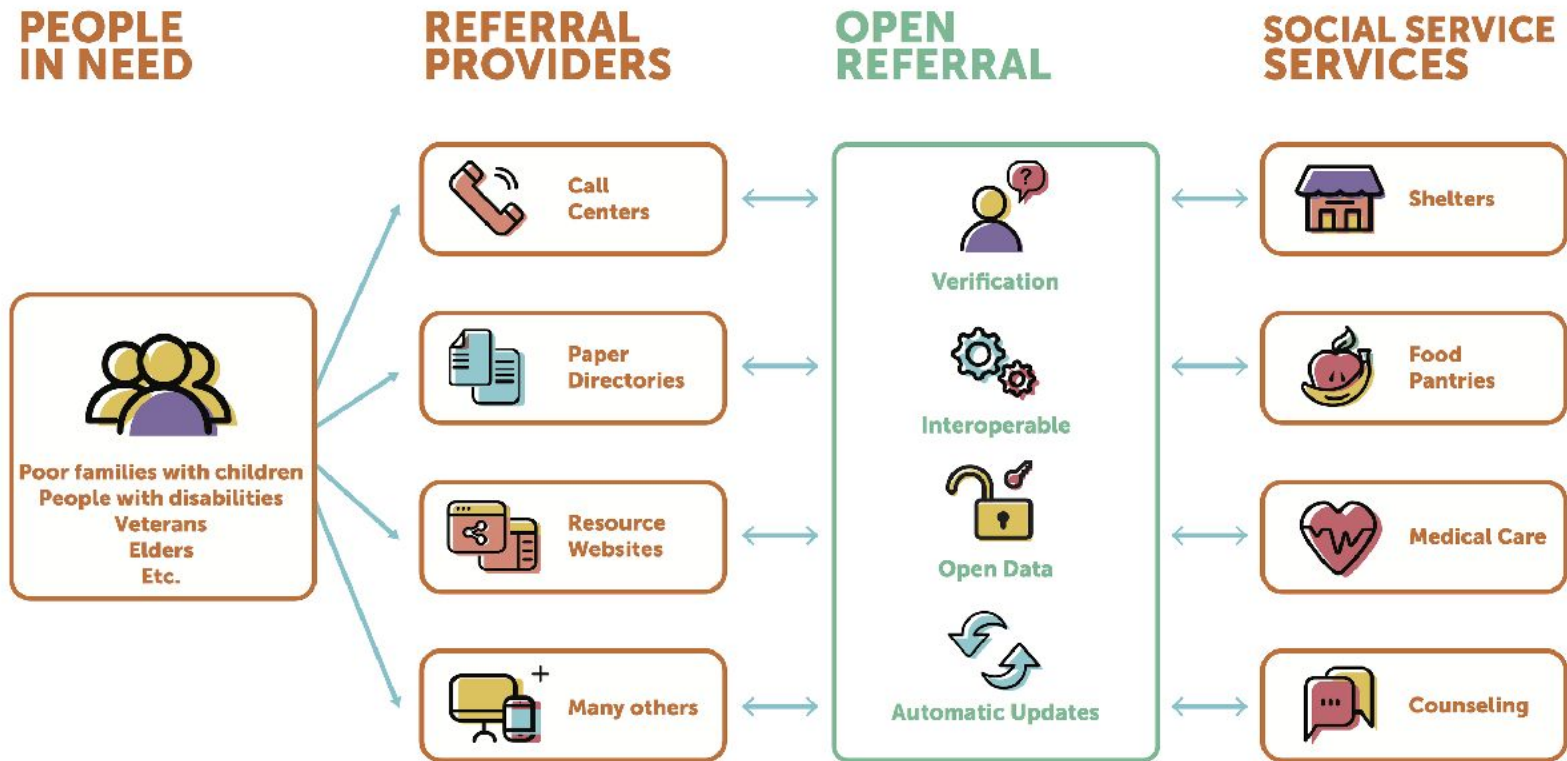


In November 2018, the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems “moved to promote the adoption of Open Referral’s Human Service Data Specification and API protocols.”

HSDS/A are now the industry standards.



# A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM IS INTEROPERABLE



Early adoption from key institutions



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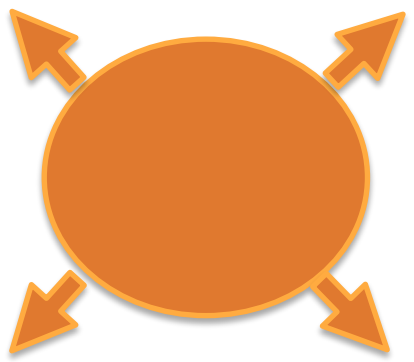
# The Big Question:

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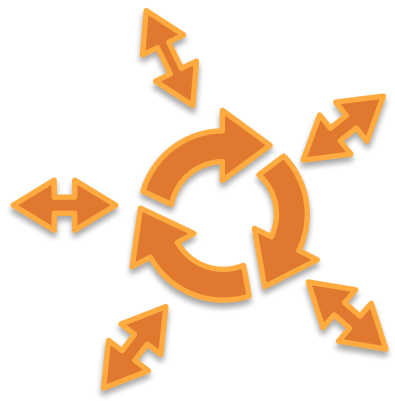
If resource data is **public information**,  
and should be **openly accessible**,  
how can we **sustain its maintenance**?

# THREE HYPOTHESIS: CENTRALIZED, FEDERATED, MANDATED REGISTRY

#1: Centralized Open Platform



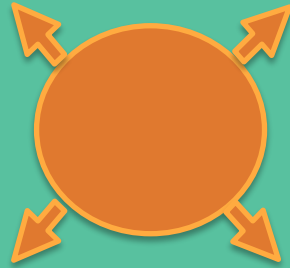
#2: Federated Network



#3: Funder-mandated service registry



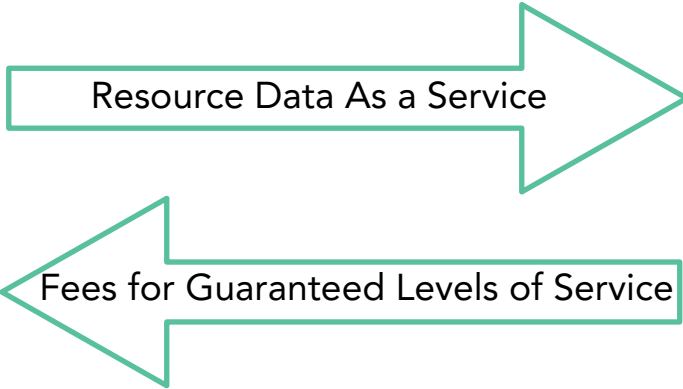
# Model #1: The Data Utility



A referral provider can **sustainably publish open data** as a public good by **generating revenue for services** associated with the data



# Example: the Data Utility



## Benefits:

- One single source of truth for a community.
- One organization is responsible.
- Monitor usage to produce valuable data analytics (in future iterations!)

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# Model #2: The Data Collaborative

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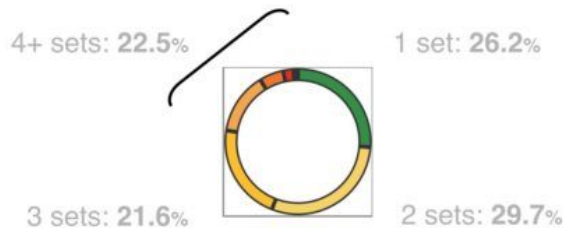
**A network of referral providers** can cooperatively maintain and share data, decreasing costs and increasing quality.

# Data Analysis Review

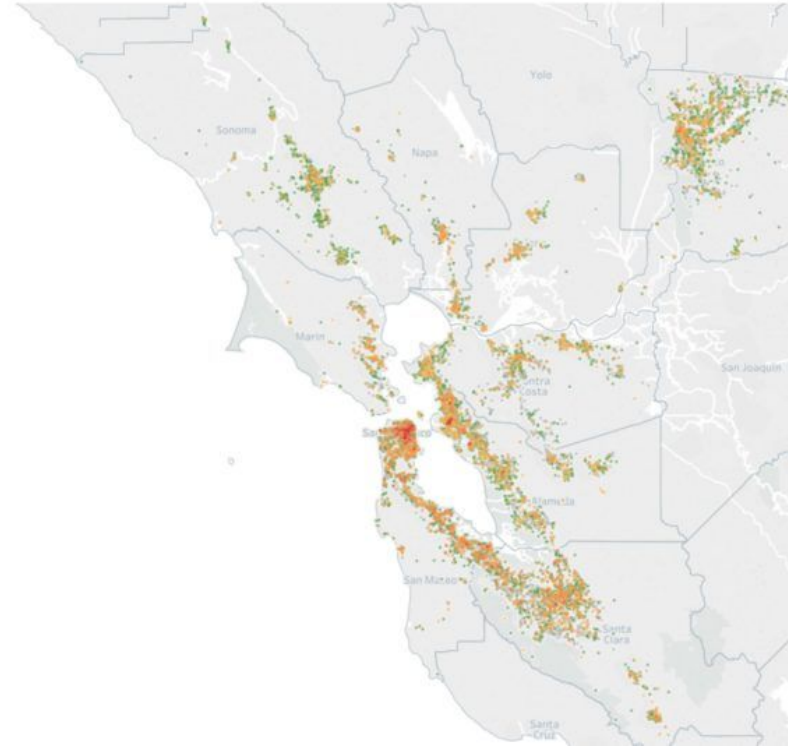


## Resource Directory Data Duplication

% Site Records appearing in:



73.8%  
duplication





# Model #3: The Register



A **funder** can ensure reliable open resource data by **requiring grantees and contractors** to update **their own information in a registry.**

# NYC Opportunity

Mayor's Office of New York City is publishing data on all municipally contracted service providers in the standardized Open Referral format on its open data portal.

### Benefits:

- Canonical public resource directory record
- Gov collects limited data (which is out of date)... and they might pay for enrichment / updating.
- Gov might pay for traffic / analytics data that are interoperable with its own records.

The screenshot shows the NYC Opportunity website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'About', 'Poverty in NYC', 'What We Do', 'Portfolio', 'Reports', and 'News'. Below this are buttons for 'Programs', 'Products', and 'Special Initiatives'. The main content area features a sidebar with categories like 'ACCESS NYC', 'Generation NYC', 'Growing Up NYC', 'Social Service Location Data', and 'Worker Connect'. The central focus is a map titled 'Social Service Site Location Data' showing a dense cluster of colored dots representing service sites in the New York City area. A legend on the left identifies agencies like DO-IMH, DVTd, ACS, HRA, and DFTA. Below the map, there are filters for 'Poverty Rate' (with a bar chart) and 'Agency' (with a table listing counts for various agencies).

**THE SOCIAL SERVICE LOCATION DATA PROJECT**  
 As part of the City's transparency efforts, the Social Service Site Location Data project is publicly releasing datasets and maps of verified locations for contracted social service delivery sites managed by a number of City agencies.



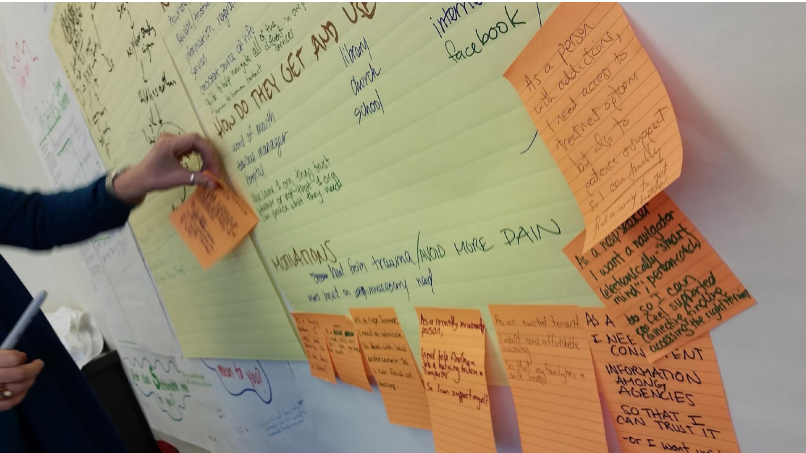
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# Goals

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Local pilots to move the world

# Multi-stakeholder participatory research and deliberation





*Thanks for listening. Let's talk!*



Sign up for email announcements: <https://openreferral.org>  
Join our discussion forum: [groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/openreferral](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/openreferral)

Discuss a pilot in your community:  
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