



# Paving a Path to Economic Self-Sufficiency

*U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development*

**Executive champion:** Dr. Benjamin Carson, Secretary of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Challenge:** Create digital collaboration platforms that enable low income families to holistically assess their needs and connect with the best federal, state and local programs to equip and empower them toward self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

**Problem:** Approximately 30 departments and agencies across the federal government offer over 200 federal programs that could assist low income families in their journeys towards self-sufficiency. There are also innumerable private programs intended to achieve the same end. However, the sheer number of programs and the lack of integration and accessibility create unnecessary barriers for families to find, connect with, and utilize the services that best suit their particular needs. Heads of households also lack a way to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, to set goals, create a roadmap, and engage with community partners to accelerate their journey into economic mobility. Through its [EnVision Center initiative](#), HUD designated brick and mortar facilities to serve as centralized hubs to support low-income households seeking to achieve self-sufficiency. While the centers are effective, their reach is limited to their local areas.

**Why this problem matters:** Solving this issue and delivering user-friendly solutions that integrate services aligned to individualized roadmaps will help countless low-income families move towards self-sufficiency and achieve their life goals. It will also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the broad array of individual uncoordinated programs intended to help the poor by integrating and creating synergy between them and aligning them with each client's needs. Despite the best efforts of policy and program experts, the hard work of program managers and case workers, and the expenditure of over \$1 trillion per year over decades, the current system has not been successful in removing the barriers that hinder families from moving up and out of government dependency and eliminating generational poverty. This is a "systems" problem requiring an innovative approach that leverages modern technology and crowdsourcing within local communities across the country.

**Vision for sprint outcomes:** To align with the structure and objectives of the EnVision Center initiative and its operating concept of integrated service delivery, sprint products could:

- Help families to assess their needs and available personal resources
- Curate resources from government and community-based programs that align with the unique needs of a particular family
- Match families/individuals with qualified community-based service providers or government programs to meet specific needs for workforce readiness, financial and digital literacy, educational assistance and job training
- Match private or philanthropic funding to support a family or individual's journey toward self-sufficiency



counselors; life coaches; community and ministry leaders; service providers; philanthropic organizations; federal, state and local government service program managers, policy makers, legislators.

**Related open data sets:**

- Picture of Subsidized Households ([link](#))
- HUD Data Portal ([link](#))
- American Housing Survey ([link](#))
- Benefits.gov ([link](#))
- Poverty Data, HHS ([link](#))
- Bureau of Labor Statistics ([link](#))
- Department of Commerce ([link](#))
- HHS Data Initiative ([link](#))
- HHS Social Services Programs ([link](#))
- HHS Wellness Programs ([link](#))
- UC Berkeley Social Welfare Data ([link](#))

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