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#AHW2017

# How Civic Tech Makes Finding Affordable Housing Easier

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This site is in **BETA**. We're offering even more! We'd love to get [your feedback](#).



**DAHLIA**  
SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL

[BROWSE PROPERTIES](#)

[MY FAVORITES](#)

[GET ASSISTANCE](#)

[SIGN IN](#)



## Browse Affordable Housing Opportunities

[SEE LISTINGS](#)

We encourage you to browse other resources, as there may be more rental and ownership opportunities.

[ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES](#)



DAHLIA

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)

City and County of San Francisco

# INTRODUCTION

**Jay Nath**

Chief Innovation Officer

City and County of San Francisco



**DAHLLIA**

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



**Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)**

City and County of San Francisco

# OVERVIEW

**Maria Benjamin**

Dir., Homeownership &  
BMR Programs

**Michael Solomon**

DAHLLIA Core Team



# 10,000 new permanently affordable units!



## San Francisco Housing Meter

### 2020 Goals

30,000 Housing Units  
30% Permanently Affordable  
50% Middle Income

57%

### February 2017

17,128 Units Completed  
6,103 Units Affordable  
36% Permanently Affordable

Jan 2014



# But finding them?



What is A  
Types of  
Openhou  
Current H  
Applying  
Further T

Looking  
If you cr  
need assi  
weekly h  
our affor  
new wait

What I  
Affordab  
rate. The  
profit hou  
affordabl  
monthly

Types  
There are several types of affordable  
SROs, or single room occupancies, ar  
shared kitchen and bathroom facilitie

BMR, or "below market rate," units ha  
government and/or non-profit organ  
entire building or be part of a complex  
housing.

Public housing is housing stock adm  
Francisco Housing Authority and desi

Section 8 is a rental subsidy program  
that you can use to rent from any lan  
(and) minimum and maximum  
Does program accept self-referrals?  
The Wait List is currently CLOSED  
How do I find out more?  
To find out more about the current status of the v  
Click to check on a past applicant's wait list sta



Stay Updated  

About Housing & Programs News & Events Support Us Contact Us

### Apply for Housing

**Apply for Housing**  
Housing Portfolio  
Support Services

**How to Obtain Housing with Community Housing Partnership**  
There are several different ways to obtain housing with Community Housing Partnership. Please contact the Community Housing Partnership Occupancy and Compliance staff at 415.563.3205 x123 with questions.

**Donate**

Sfgov Sfgov | Residents | Business | Government | Visitors | Online Services

## Human Services Agency of San Francisco

Department of Aging & Adult Services • Department of Human Services  
HSA Home > Housing & Homeless Services

Print this page | Text size: small - large

### Housing & Homeless Services

#### Emergency Shelter for Single Adults in San Francisco

To get a reservation for an available shelter bed in the Adult Emergency Shelter System, go to a shelter Reservation Station to enroll in CHANGES, the online shelter reservation system, or phone 3-1-1. (Click the link for further information.)

#### Help for Homeless Families (with dependent child under 18 years of age)

Is your family facing a housing crisis? We can help with referrals to services and even child care.

#### Project Homeless Connect

Project Homeless Connect can connect you with many free services and programs all in the same day.

#### A Bus Ticket Home

If you'd like to return home but don't have the money for a ticket, the Homebound Program can help.

#### Help Getting into Housing

- Transitional Housing
- Rental Assistance
- Housing for Low-Income Adults and Families

#### If You Face Eviction

We provide eviction prevention services that include funds to pay back rent to prevent eviction, one-time rental assistance, security deposit funds to move into permanent housing, legal services, counseling, and other support services. Call the San Francisco

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Search

Frequently Asked Questions Where do I go for treatment?

Need quality health care? Join the SF Health Network

About DPH Our Services Our Programs Healthy Living Records, Permits & Licensing Knowledge Sharing & Collaboration Diseases & Conditions Tools

Environmental Health CDC & Prevention OHSU Health Education Community Task Forces Community Programs Other

## Our Programs

### Housing and Urban Health

#### Direct Access to Housing (DAH)

##### What is the Direct Access to Housing Program?

Established by the San Francisco Department of Public Health - Housing and Urban Health Section (SFDPH-HUH) in 1998, the Direct Access to Housing (DAH) is a permanent supportive housing program targeting low-income San Francisco residents who are homeless and have special needs. A "low threshold" program that accepts adults into permanent housing directly from the streets, shelters, hostels and long-term care facilities, DAH strives to help tenants stabilize and improve their health outcomes despite co-occurring mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse problems, and/or complex medical conditions. In addition to being an effective way to end homelessness, this supportive housing model is also fiscally prudent as it leads to cost savings by reducing overutilization of emergency services.

Unique in its on-site provision of wrap-around support services, DAH currently houses over 1,700 formerly homeless people across 36 sites. DAH housing takes many forms including:

- Master leased single room occupancy (SRO) hotels. Master leasing allows SFDPH-HUH to engage in long-term leases with building owners who retain responsibility only for large capital improvements after lease-signing; building owners often renovate residential and common areas prior to lease signing as well. Master leasing has allowed SFDPH-HUH to bring large numbers of housing units online rapidly.
- Units in new capital developments. An increasing number of DAH units fit this model. Most new capital units take the form of private apartments that afford tenants access to private bathrooms and cooking facilities. Depending on the site, the DAH program refers clients to some or all units in the buildings.
- Self-essie DAH units in larger residential buildings owned by nonprofit providers. These units may be in renovated single room occupancy (SRO) buildings or newly developed sites.
- Units in a licensed residential care facility. Only one DAH site fits into this category, and tenants share space at this facility.

#### HELPFUL LINKS

Housing and Urban Health  
Direct Access to Housing (DAH)

- Program Eligibility
- Access and Referral
- Support Services
- Tenant Outcomes
- Funding

Medical Respite and Sobering Center  
Resources  
Contact Us

# No clear place to start your search

- How did you find housing opportunities?
- No central listings
- Limited information







# Long paper applications, different for each building

- Plus required attachments
- Long lines to drop off on due date
- Just to get in a lottery or on a waitlist!



# And then what?



Food Inventory Sheet - Microsoft Excel

Item #	Description	Vendor	Category	Size	Unit	Starting Qty
492229	TURKEY SLICED .5 OZ	Ben E Keith	2- FROZEN FOOD	0	0	0.00
662371	DRESSING CAESAR CREAMY	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
779243	MARGARINE LIQUID OLEO	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
815306	LD PLUS SOUFFLE CLEAR	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
868055	LD PLUS 18LS SLOTTED	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
860060	CLIP FOAM 18OZ 18136	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
774704	PAPRIKA	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
664005	Mustard Prepared	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	512 fl oz	0	0.00
750100	CHEESE PARMESAN SHRED	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
250025	EGG FRESH SHELL MED USDA AA	Ben E Keith	1- PRODUCE	0	0	0.00
686034	VINEGAR APPL. CIDER 40GRAIN	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00
29078	LIME 12 CT	Ben E Keith	1- PRODUCE	12 ct	0	0.00
650547	TOMATO DICED W/GREEN CHILES	Ben E Keith	4- GROCERY	0	0	0.00



# Tedious, opaque processes

- Red lottery tickets and a carnival drum
- Leasing agents overloaded with paper & data entry
- Issues with applications being misplaced



**Contrast that with the  
private-sector:**

# Helping you find home

We search hundreds of websites so you don't have to.

 Search

# How we're improving it

- Our goal is a one-stop resource
- Make it easier to find and apply for affordable housing

# Listings all in one place

With complete, current, and reliable information

TELL US YOUR HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME AND WE'LL HIGHLIGHT LISTINGS THAT MIGHT BE A FIT.

[ESTIMATE YOUR ELIGIBILITY](#)



## AVAILABLE UNITS

UNIT TYPE	MINIMUM INCOME	RENT
1 BR	\$3,173/month	\$1,269/month



Favorite

[SEE DETAILS](#)

# One common application that works for all affordable rentals

10 minutes on a phone or computer  
(or a short paper option)

*Additional info needed only if selected in lottery*

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a rental application. At the top, a blue header contains the text 'POTRERO1010 UNIT 236 APPLICATION'. Below the header is a progress bar with five steps: 'YOU' (active), 'HOUSEHOLD', 'PREFERENCES', 'INCOME', and 'REVIEW'. The main content area is white and contains the following elements:

- A heading: 'First, what's your name?'
- A section header: 'YOUR NAME'
- Three text input fields: 'First Name', 'Middle Name (optional)', and 'Last Name'.
- A section header: 'YOUR DATE OF BIRTH'
- Three date input fields: 'MM', 'DD', and 'YYYY'.
- A blue 'NEXT' button.
- A blue link: 'Save and finish later'.

**Get your lottery number with application and by email**

Thanks. We have received your application for  
280 Fell Street Apartments



HERE'S YOUR LOTTERY TICKET NUMBER

**#00039303**

Please write down your lottery number and keep it in a safe place. We have also emailed this number to you if you provided an email address.

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

The lottery will be held on March 22, 2017. You do not need to attend the housing lottery. Results will be posted [on the listing](#). Please refer to the listing for the lottery results date.

# Electronic lottery results posted instantly

Standardized, transparent processes

Lottery Results ×

NEMA UNIT 738 AND 1208

00040928 >

### YOUR PREFERENCE RANKING

Ranking in these lists is considered in the order shown here.

ⓘ Please note, there are other preferences that will be considered for units first.

<b>RANK</b> <b>1</b>	<b>LIVE/WORK PREFERENCE</b> Up to 2 units 953 applicants are on this list.
-------------------------	--

What happens next? ▾

# The results



“I applied in the past on paper, but it worked better online.”

“I don’t have a printer and couldn’t get to the office. It’s the easiest thing, to do the online.”

**William L.**  
**Housing Applicant**

“It was very convenient. I applied on my phone without help.”

“In my old house, my rent was really expensive. It was a big problem for my family because it cost almost two people’s full salaries.”

**Jiawen S.**  
**Housing Applicant**

“The new online application is very convenient, simple, and easy to use.

“It’s better than the paper one, which took longer. I had to go to the mailbox; I had to buy an envelope and stamps.

“Now I get the lottery number via website and email, which I couldn’t get before.”

**Chanming C.  
Housing Applicant**

“We would always choose online if you have the choice – lottery number right away, and you don’t have to mail it or go in person.”

**Laura D.  
Housing Counselor**

# 17,775

Online applications  
since feature released

# 85%

Apply online  
when available

# 192,986

People have used DAHLIA  
since its launch in February 2016



DAHLLIA

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)

City and County of San Francisco

## OUR APPROACH

**Lauren Jong**

**UX Designer, Google**

**Ashley Meyers (DT)  
& Barry Roeder**

**DAHLLIA Core Team**

# Key factors

## 1. Collaborative Process

Engaging with stakeholders to change policy and processes collaboratively (no ivory tower)

## 2. Pro-Bono Expertise

Leveraged partnerships to get us started

## 3. User-Centered Design

Putting the housing applicant front and center, over and over again

## 4. Modern, Agile Development

Using software development best practices to cut risk and get results fast

1

# Collaborative Process

Engaging with stakeholders



A community effort

# Productive ongoing conversation

## Carrot, not Stick

1. **Housing Counselors and Advocates**  
Not a user proxy - a valuable perspective
2. **Developers, Leasing Agents**  
From “that won’t work” to “we’d like it, too”

### Through DAHLIA Task Force

- **Radical short-form application**
  - (HUD approved)
- **Standard supplemental application**
- **Application decisioning and lease up**



2

# Pro-Bono Expertise

## Leveraging Partnerships

# Learn from the experts

Google partnership got us started  
on the right foot.

- Fortunate to have a great resource
  - [Civic Bridge](#) recruits volunteer private sector professionals for City issues
  - 16 week projects

# Google Civic Bridge Team

Lauren - UX Design

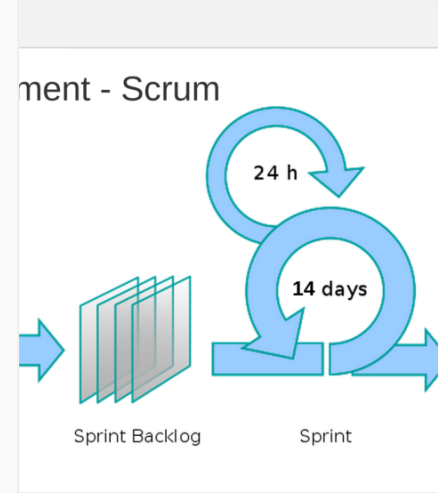
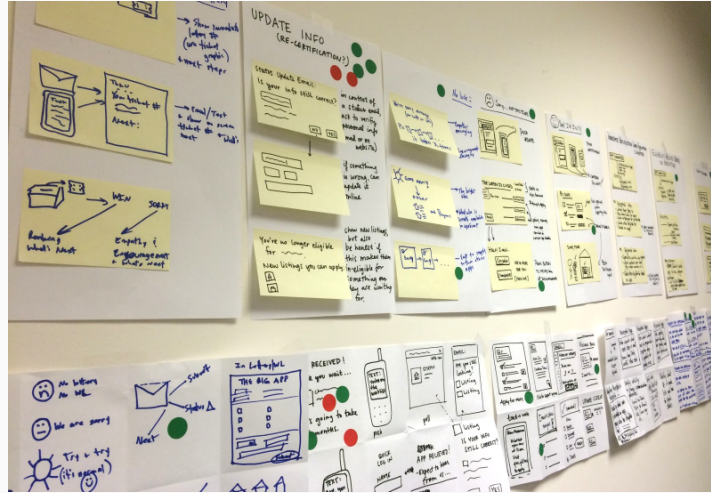
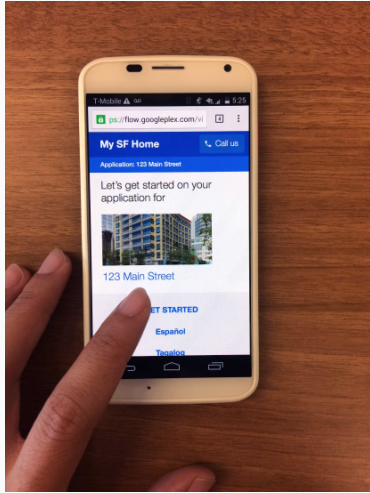
Mark - Software Engineering

Diana - People Operations

Skills:

Product design, business strategy, program management,  
user research, agile development

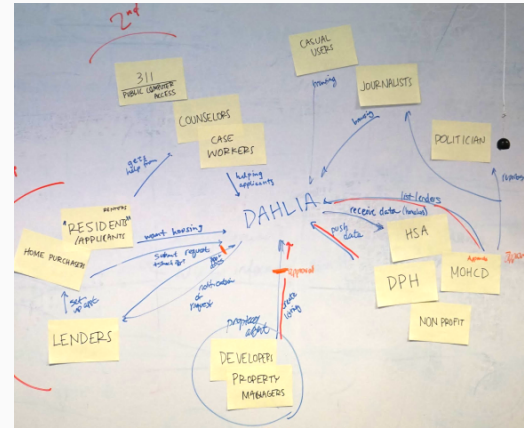
- 1. Understand before solving.**
- 2. Design for your users.**
- 3. Test! Get your ideas in the hands of users.**



**PART ONE**  
The Problems  
Goals and Objectives

**PART TWO**  
Background, Research, and Analysis

**PART THREE**  
Use Cases and Scope  
Description of Features  
Expected Side Effects



Google



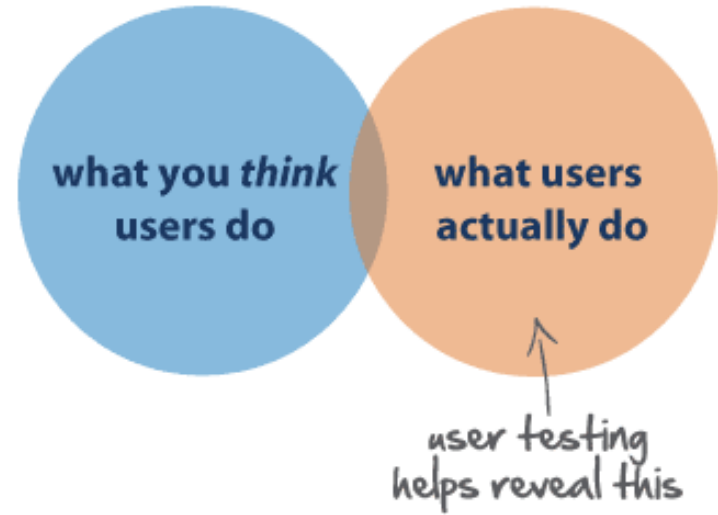
# 3

## User-Centered Design

Putting the user first

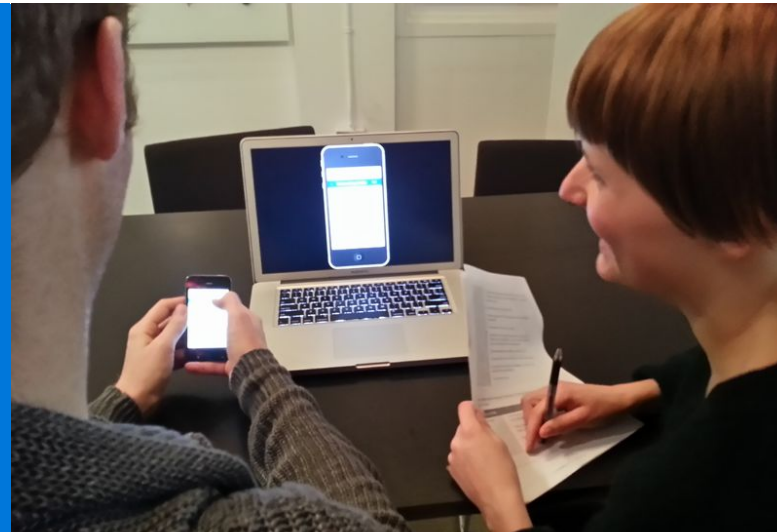
# User-centered design

1. Understand your users and support their goals
2. Make the interface easy to learn and fun to use



## How?

- Early and continual focus on users and their tasks
- Empirical measurement of user behavior
- Iterative design





# Learning what information people need, and when

“Once people are familiar with listings and what their family qualifies for, they don’t need to be told the occupancy every time.”

“You have the eligibility stuff upfront, which is good. Is my household the right size, does my income meet the minimum, and what is the rent?”

The screenshot shows the SF Dahlia Housing app interface. At the top, there's a header with "SF Dahlia Housing" and "My Favorites" (with a heart icon). Below the header are two tabs: "Sort by" and "Map View". The main content area features a listing for "Stevenson Lofts". The listing includes a colorful illustration of a multi-story building with a red bridge in the background. Below the illustration, there's a table with columns for "Bedrooms", "Occupancy", "Min Income", and "Rent". The first row of the table shows "Studio", "1-2", "\$2,975/mo.", and "\$941". Below the table, the listing title "Stevenson Lofts" is displayed in blue, followed by the address "529 Stevenson St, San Francisco CA, 94134" and the leasing agency "Relisto Leasing Agency". A "Public Lottery: Dec 12th" is mentioned, and there's a heart icon on the right. The bottom of the screenshot shows a second row of the table with "2BR", "2-4", "\$3,450/mo.", and "\$659 - 1099".

SF Dahlia Housing My Favorites

Sort by Map View

Availability for Seniors

Bedrooms	Occupancy	Min Income	Rent
Studio	1-2	\$2,975/mo.	\$941
2BR	2-4	\$3,450/mo.	\$659 - 1099

**Stevenson Lofts**  
529 Stevenson St, San Francisco CA, 94134  
Relisto Leasing Agency

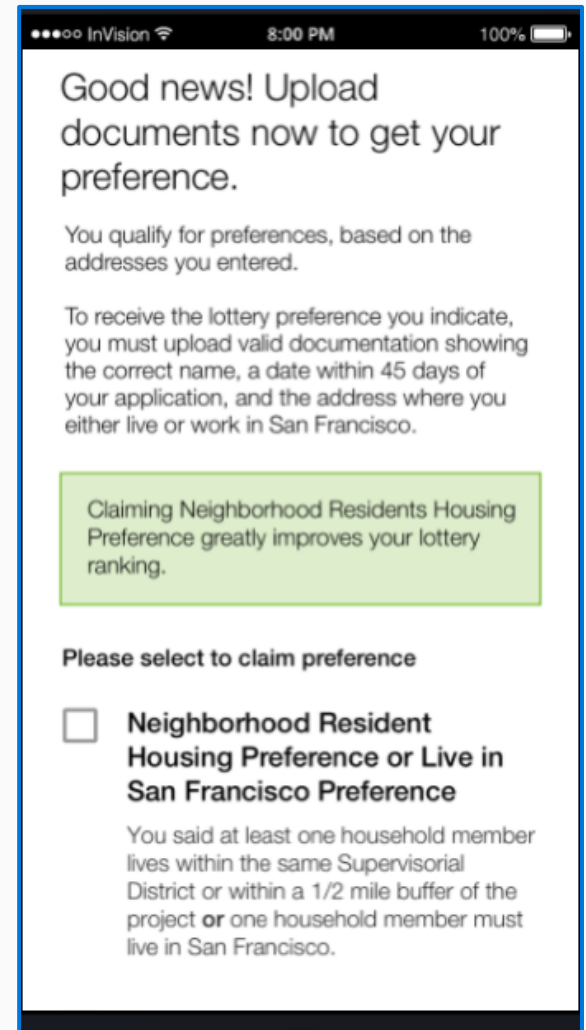
Public Lottery: Dec 12th Heart icon

# We don't always get it right the first time

- Only 40% of eligible people were taking a valuable opportunity
- Didn't understand the benefit, name or description

“What’s the benefit of a preference?”

“How will this help me?”



Good news! Upload documents now to get your preference.

You qualify for preferences, based on the addresses you entered.

To receive the lottery preference you indicate, you must upload valid documentation showing the correct name, a date within 45 days of your application, and the address where you either live or work in San Francisco.

Claiming Neighborhood Residents Housing Preference greatly improves your lottery ranking.

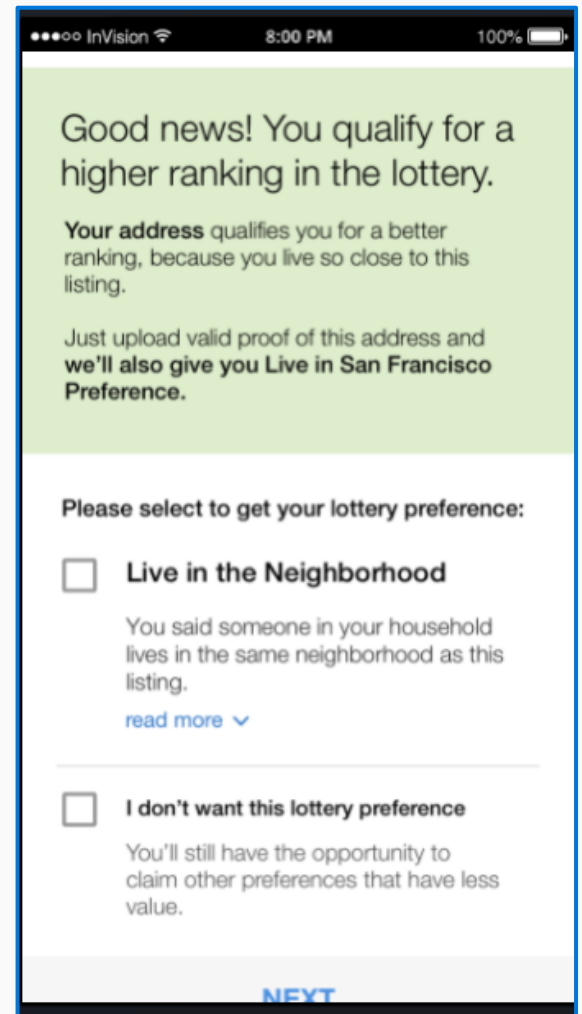
Please select to claim preference

**Neighborhood Resident Housing Preference or Live in San Francisco Preference**

You said at least one household member lives within the same Supervisorial District or within a 1/2 mile buffer of the project or one household member must live in San Francisco.

## Version two: 88% claimed!

- Stronger positive message
- Simplify preference name and description
- Add required opt-out



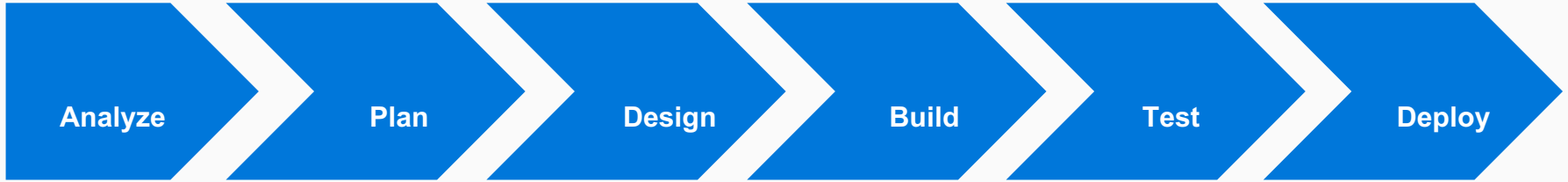
4

# Modern, Agile Development

## Using Software Best Practices

# How software development has changed

## Waterfall

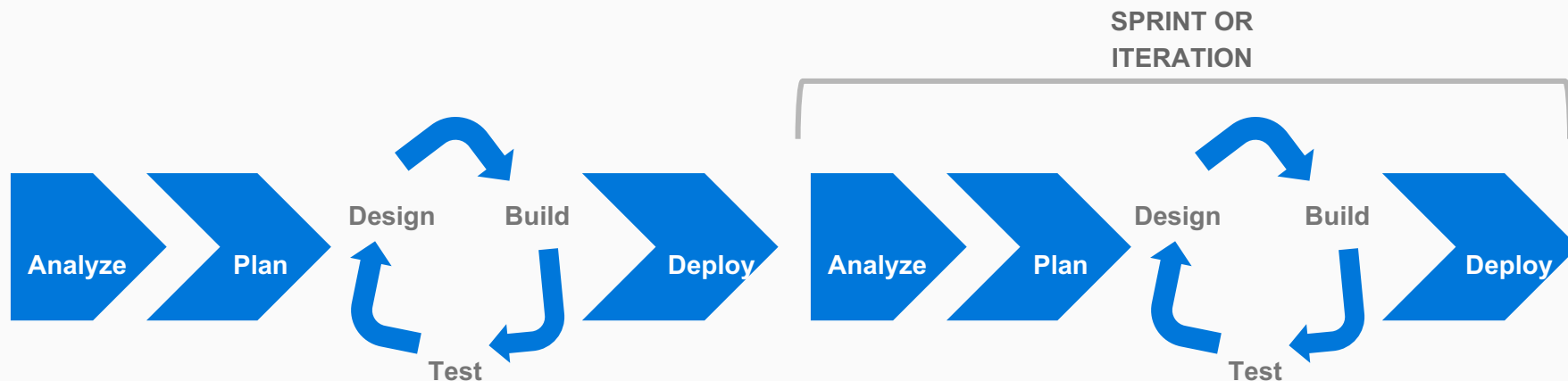


Development of successful software isn't a perfect science -- it's a creative art.

When you start, you don't know how long it will take, or exactly what features users will need.

# Agile (iterative) development

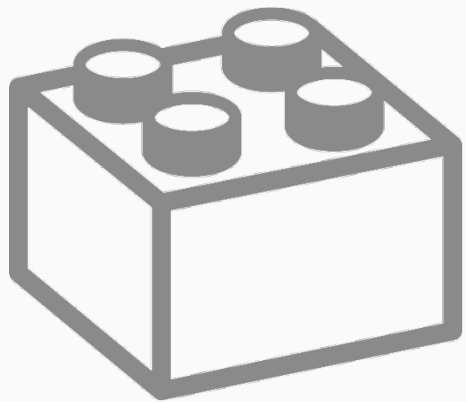
Agile development allows for flexibility in product scope and timeline, without wasting time and money.



## Big benefits

- Reduce risks and adjust course by identifying issues earlier
- You control priorities so you get what you need more quickly
- Save money by tightly prioritizing development based on user feedback
- Faster delivery of working product

## Modern tooling



**Pattern Library**



**Open Source**



**Cloud Hosted**





DAHLIA

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)

City and County of San Francisco

# INVITATION

**Barry Roeder** Mayor's Office of Housing  
and Community Development

# The Invitation

## Calling all counties!

Partner to help the larger Bay Area with housing challenges

- Open source sharing & joint development
- Housing data sharing

## Calling technologists!

Use your skills for good to make real change. The SF Digital Services Team is currently hiring a designer, and DAHLIA will be hiring soon!



DAHLIA

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



**Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)**

City and County of San Francisco

# Q&A PANEL





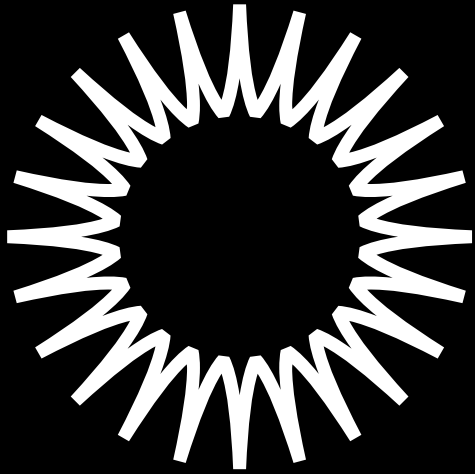
DAHLIA

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING PORTAL



**Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)**  
City and County of San Francisco

Thanks for coming!



# SPUR

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**#AHW2017**