**Answers from Panelists following Webinar** [**The Community Connector**](http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/community-connector.html)

**General questions (all panelists):**

1. I find that the reference transaction is fairly straightforward if the patron actually asks for a social service referral. However, what is tricky is the more common scenario when a patron seems to need a certain social service but is not asking for it…..it is tricky to give someone a referral when they are not asking for it. I’m wondering if anyone has diplomatic talking points or other ways to navigate this fuzzy area.
   1. Diane: I think you do have to tread carefully, but remember our role is to provide information, we can’t ‘make’ anyone take the referral, all we can do is offer it.
2. At my urban library system, we're having a Masters of Social Work student doing a pilot project meeting 1:1 with library patrons to provide information/referral. One thing that has been interesting is that before the pilot project started, we surveyed the staff to see what they identified as the most common issues. Most commonly, our library staff identified job search support as the biggest need. However, now that our intern has been meeting 1:1 with folks, she has found housing/homelessness to be the biggest need. I'm wondering if this indicates that patrons are hesitant to talk to library staff about housing needs
   1. Diane: I mentioned in my talk that we don’t have much of a ‘homeless’ problem as much as a couch hopping problem due to our weather. Yes, people are hesitant to talk about it, but again we tread carefully and provide information
3. Are librarians willing to ask personal questions?  Income? Health information? Often times these questions are critical to deciding if someone is or is not eligible for a service?  How do they ask these questions privately?
   1. Diane: I don’t usually ask the personal questions as we can’t qualify people for service, they have to meet with the official agency/person providing the service so I just provide the referral or information about getting the service and let the patron take the next step.
4. Can you mention a few of the biggest, your favorite online communities for libraries that offer social services to the public, like facebook and linkedin groups?
   1. Diane: the only online community I use is a Facebook group we created locally called “Community Resources for International Falls and Koochiching County.”

**Social Service Providers Meeting (Diane)**

1. How do the organizations know of your group? Do you invite them?
   1. Word of mouth, fliers that we have up around town. If anyone involved hears of another organization, they are invited on the spot, we have the attitude that for the group to work everyone needs to invite others, etc.
2. Do you compile information/contacts in a brochure to give to patrons when they come in?
   1. The library doesn’t compile a separate brochure to give patrons, if copies of information is available we make multiple copies available on our wall of ‘public information’, otherwise we have a binder of ‘local services’ at the main desk with brochures, contact information etc.
3. I really like the library's role in connecting with local hotels and providing a room for the homeless.  However, this is such a sensitive topic and the homeless aren't willing to talk, how do you give a person information about this service?
   1. A flier providing who to contact to receive the service is available on our locked display cases and a flier is in our binder of local services at the main desk
4. My question for Diane was if the library has produced a brochure to include all the agencies servicing her county so patrons can’t take it with them?
   1. This brochure would have the names, addresses, phone numbers, hours, etc.  The patron can just take it with them (if they don't feel comfortable asking the library staff). The library didn’t produce a brochure like that. When we held a resource fair following massive layoffs two years ago, the group put together a brochure with contact information of agencies, what they did and how to contact them. We have copies of that available.
5. I really like the International Falls Public Library's role in connecting with local hotels and providing a room for the homeless.  However, this is such a sensitive topic and the homeless aren't willing to talk, how do you give a person information about this service?
   1. A flier providing who to contact to receive the service is available on our locked display cases and a flier is in our binder of local services at the main desk

**Coffee & Conversation (Jasmine)**

1. "Coffee and Conversation" sounds like a terrific program!  Just wondering, do you have a business that donates the coffee?
   1. Not at this time. We purchase the coffee through funds from our Friends of the Dallas Public Library group. If we had a local coffee shop, I think they would donate coffee though.
2. How do you evaluate impact of this program?
   1. We use Coffee & Conversation for the goals provided in the presentation. We also use it to develop other program and services. Those additional programs include our one-on-one assistance at our HELP (Homeless Engagement and Leadership Program) desk. Customers complete surveys after each session.
3. Will you please talk about the Street Views podcast?
   1. We started the podcast in March 2014 in order to give a voice to the issue of homelessness and document our conversations to share locally and nationally. The podcast is hosted by a homeless individual and joins social service providers with other homeless guests to talk about issues related to homelessness. We are currently wrapping up season two and expect to continue the show next year. You can visit [www.streetviewpodcast.com](http://www.streetviewpodcast.com) for more information or contact me directly.
4. Were other agencies and organizations providing programming?  Was there cross-collaboration?  Did the library provide program on wellness outside of its building?
   1. We work with other social service providers to provide referral or agency highlights during our program.