



# Helping Communities Thrive:

## CTA Fights Poverty and Homelessness with Timely, Trusted Data



*"Behind every statistic is a human story. We're using Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to merge systems and help people faster."*

Bob Russell  
CEO  
Community Technology Alliance

### Goals

Collect and integrate data from multiple government and nonprofit agencies to match people in need with available housing and human services

Empower housing providers and human services agencies to coordinate and exchange data so their clients don't have to contact multiple providers

Help communities comply with the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 to retain HUD grant funding

### Solution

Use Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services iPaaS to connect silos of data, enabling agencies to access and enter data via the HOME mobile app

Feed information about clients, housing, and services into a data lake hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS), where it can be used for analytics and reporting

Provide trusted data to serve as the basis for coordinated, centralized assessment and placement systems to prioritize access to housing and services

### Results

Helps communities reduce return to homelessness rates up to 75 percent and offer services to people who may otherwise slip through cracks

Expedites access to housing and human services through coordinated entry while pre-screening clients for eligibility

Simplifies HEARTH compliance, helping communities qualify for homeless assistance grants and promote commitment to the goal of ending homelessness

## Business Requirements:

- Integrate agency and government data from cloud and on-premises sources in real time
- Bring in data from partners such as food pantries and workforce development agencies
- Export data to Tableau for visualization and analysis of housing and human services needs

### About Community Technology Alliance

Based in San Jose, California, Community Technology Alliance (CTA) was founded in 1991 to design and construct the technical infrastructure necessary to support the work to end homelessness in Santa Clara County. CTA has since evolved into a nonprofit focused on integrating and exchanging data for reporting and visualization purposes.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there are more than [half a million homeless people on the streets in the United States](#) on any given night. For individuals and families currently homeless or in poverty, or at risk of becoming homeless, time is of the essence. Every minute that goes by, they are at increased risk of health problems, malnutrition, or being the victim of a crime. Solving these pervasive social issues requires more than just good intentions or sporadic outreach: It takes hard data and an analytics-driven approach.

As the most populous state in the U.S., California has more homeless people than any other state. However, its counties are actively working with organizations to produce some of the most innovative solutions to the growing national problem. Community Technology Alliance (CTA) has been at the forefront of the homelessness crisis since 1991, having worked with Santa Clara County and its cities to collect data on who is homeless in the community, and then match them to available housing and services. CTA is currently working with multiple other counties and communities, aiding them in their efforts to end homelessness. By collecting and analyzing data, CTA has made it easier for thousands of people to find housing and services to improve their situation.

As CTA's mission evolved over the years, the nonprofit needed a way to allow housing providers and human services agencies to exchange data so their clients wouldn't have to contact multiple organizations or provide their information multiple times. Through communitywide data collection, CTA hoped to give government and nonprofit agencies a more complete picture of homelessness and poverty in their communities while making it easier for their clients to access housing and services.

CTA also wanted to help communities comply with the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, which requires a coordinated or centralized assessment and placement system to prioritize access to housing and services. Compliance is demonstrated using an Annual Performance Review (APR) that community agencies submit to HUD. The APR details the number of homeless individuals and families served, and how many were successfully housed. Each community also completes an annual Longitudinal Systems Analysis describing how people experiencing homelessness use the community's system of care, as well as performance measures that gauge the effectiveness of homeless programs. Communities that don't comply risk losing their homeless assistance grants.

"Because there are so many different agencies with their own unique data systems, we needed to come up with a common interface," says Bob Russell, CEO, Community Technology Alliance. "We decided to develop a mobile app where communities can get all the data they need in one place."



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Javier Celedon  
Operations Director  
Community Technology Alliance

## There's no place like HOME

CTA began building the Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME) app, which gives human services workers access to demographic data while allowing them to record contacts with vulnerable clients in need of housing and stabilization services. However, it needed a way to integrate data from HOME and other systems to establish a single source of truth.

“We use Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to take disparate data sets and load them into our data lake, because not every system is going to have the tools, or the APIs, or an export function to make it easy,” says Javier Celedon, Operations Director at Community Technology Alliance. “Informatica helps us make that happen.”

Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services feeds a data lake on AWS to give communities and agencies a trusted, always accessible source for analytics and reporting, using Amazon EC2 to run web applications, Amazon S3 for document storage, and Amazon RDS as a PostgreSQL database to store critical application data. The Informatica solution also integrates directly with Tableau for easy visualizations.

“Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services allows us to easily gather data from multiple different agency data silos using a simple iPaaS solution,” says Celedon. “It allows us to take flat files or CSV files and load them into our data lake on AWS. In addition, it helps us manage all the different APIs that are used by those systems that do have APIs, and set up listeners and monitoring so that we can keep all the data in sync, all the time.”

## Empowering communities with data-driven solutions

With seamless data and application integration, CTA is giving communities a platform to develop data-driven solutions to address poverty and homelessness, allowing them to offer social services to people who might otherwise slip through cracks in the system. Through coordinated entry, a way of organizing how people in need access emergency shelter to ensure they receive the best assistance as quickly as possible, communities can offer faster client access to housing and services while making sure that each client is properly screened for eligibility.

“We want to see an end to homelessness and poverty,” says Russell. “Behind every statistic is a human story. We’re using Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to merge systems and help people faster.”

CTA is helping communities reduce their returned to homelessness metric, which measures if people are cycling in and out of homelessness. In Monterey County, California, the returned to homelessness rate has decreased by 75 percent in the past three years by using the HOME app to quickly assess for need, then refer individuals or families to the appropriate agency for assistance.





### Inside The Solution:

- Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services
- Informatica Cloud Data Integration
- Informatica Cloud Application Integration

In Nashville, Tennessee, CTA helps support a Family Empowerment Program using Informatica Cloud Application Integration to establish a real-time API connection with the United Way's Salesforce instance. The program helps homeless students and their families find and secure stable housing.

CTA also uses the Informatica Cloud Connector for flat files to help the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department (HSD) boost the impact of its Bringing Families Home program. By quickly comparing clients in the county's database who identified as homeless to clients in the Homeless Management Information System, HSD can better identify who needs assistance and connect those families with state services. HSD also hopes to rapidly rehouse those who are homeless and to prevent families on the edge from falling into homelessness.

In Georgia, CTA helps Goodwill work with the state's Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to integrate its SNAP Works (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) data from five different case management systems to refer SNAP clients to services and to measure the effectiveness of these services. The API connections leverage Informatica Cloud Application Integration to integrate data from Salesforce, CaseWorthy case management software, and flat files.

### Helping communities qualify for homeless assistance

The Informatica solution also simplifies HEARTH compliance, helping communities qualify for HUD homeless assistance grants through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, which is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. Having trusted and timely data pulled from a variety of sources can mean the difference between a family getting assistance and potentially falling through the cracks.

"Informatica helped us solve the very challenging issue of being able to take data from many different systems and integrate it into a single source of truth about the social problems communities face," says Russell. "Using Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services, we were able to provide a robust reporting platform for communities to actually see their data to understand what's working and what's not working to reduce homelessness and poverty."

