

A Quick Overview

In Time of Need (IToN) is an Oregon Public Service Corporation (a nonprofit) formed and managed by six volunteers with first-hand experience in doing care-full work: delivering food to the poor, working with sexual abuse survivors, supporting the disabled and elderly, mentoring single mothers with substance abuse issues, assisting prison inmates post-release, fostering children, and advocating in court cases for the well-being of abused children.

Given our experience, it's abundantly clear that life can suddenly turn fragile for anyone. Images abound of our fellow citizens suffering as a result of economic and natural disaster, physiological and mental trauma, violence, or any of the myriad ways a person must shoulder the stigma of an accident of birth.

Both those in need (whom we are calling **Seekers**) and those who can provide what is needed (we call them **Providers**) exist in great numbers. The problem lies in creating a **connection** in every case, where a distraught Seeker is able to find the ideal Provider.

All information about the availability of goods and services for those in need is in the cloud in some form. Our challenge is threefold:

- (1) How do we gather and store that Provider information and ensure its integrity?
- (2) How do we deliver it to any Seeker in a friendly, timely, accurate and easily accessible form?
- (3) How do we make our application free and universally available and accessible while maintaining the anonymity and dignity of every Seeker?

One member of our team, Payton, is highly proficient at information technology, key to automating this process of meeting these three challenges. He is leading a team of computer science

students at Oregon State University to build AI agents that will both speed the acquisition of Provider information and provide an intelligent interaction with each Seeker.

Our goal is to eliminate any tedious, unnecessary and error-prone human interaction between Seeker and Provider by employing artificial intelligence (thus avoiding, for instance, 211info's \$7 million payroll to serve Seekers only in Oregon and SW Washington, and United Way's 211 human phone-answering network).

Our design automates the Seeker's search; it reduces to a minimum those questions the Seeker must answer for our service to respond—with precision—to the Seeker's need.

This resource will also be useful for what we are calling **Guides**: resources like librarians, law enforcement and probation officers, therapists, counselors, family members, etc.—actually, anyone with a smartphone or desktop computer who wants to be helpful.

The intended outcome of this project is the humane steering of any and all Seekers to a state of wellness and security and achievement.

You can read the details of our Business Plan at https://needtime.org/IToN_Bus_Plan.pdf.