

Business Plan

Business name: Oasis

OWNER

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Executive Summary

We are Team Oasis, consisting of four Software Engineers who have spent months learning about and putting into practice web development and app development in React and user-centered design practices to create a mobile application that provides accurate information regarding social welfare services in the user's nearby area. Our first survey revealed that about 90% of the women we asked did not know of any nearby social welfare services that offer help to women facing homelessness and/or domestic violence or how to get more information regarding any.

Our product, Oasis, is an app that enables users to easily search for nearby shelters based on specific amenities that they provide, such as if the facility provides medical assistance, relieving the strong informational restraint that impacts women who are victims of domestic violence and homelessness. This is a software solution that will facilitate individual assistance to each woman to ensure they are ready to retake control of their lives and put an end to the vicious cycle they are caught in.

With the informational restraint lifted, these women will find a program that will assist them in getting their lives back on track, such as New Jersey Re-Entry and Women Rising. Upon completing these programs, these women may re-enter the job market, and become self-sufficient once again.

There already exist many services out there that claim to provide accurate information regarding nearby shelters. However, many of these services, like the 211 hotline, are not properly maintained or updated. This means that many of them provide incorrect and outdated information, if they provide information at all. Many government websites simply do not work when you attempt to use their service. There are services hosted by private companies, but they often try to make their services very flashy and elaborate. Since a majority of homeless women have some kind of mental health condition, it can be very difficult for them to navigate complex services, meaning that those services cannot be used by much of their target audience.

Oasis utilizes Google Maps to quickly update the views that our users can see while also providing real-time and accurate information regarding nearby social welfare services. Since

Google regularly updates its maps, there is no worry of the information on our map being outdated.

Much of the costs associated with the app will come from paying for Google's services. There should also be at least one developer either active or on standby to maintain the system's health. With our app providing a social service, any local government that chooses to purchase the application will be able to apply for federal grants to pay for maintenance and fees while helping their citizens. As a return on investment, these governments can see their homeless community shrink, reducing the tax dollars needed to support them, and when they re-enter the job market, the revitalized citizens will generate more tax dollars.

It does not seem apt to refer to homeless shelter finders as an industry, but rather as a service that is offered by organizations or individuals. As such, and since they ought to be free to use, there is no definitive way to define what the future holds. The hope of Team Oasis is that all cities will be able to find a way to inform their homeless population of ways in which they may be able to find a place to stay for the night in the short term, and programs that will help their reintegration into society in the long term.

General Company Description

Women who are victims of homelessness and domestic violence do not have adequate access to facilities and services largely due to information restraints. Additionally, non-profit and federal organizations attempt to solve this problem, but their resources are either hard to navigate or are dysfunctional, and these organizations offer little to no navigational assistance to facilities or services. The motivation behind Oasis is to remove this informational restraint by providing accurate information on facilities and helpful programs and a map with accurate geo-locations of facilities or services that suit a person's needs. This will result in more women being able to return to the workforce and independently provide for themselves and their family.

Oasis is for women who are the victims of domestic violence and homelessness and provides a simple and accessible interface that contains information about shelters and services near the user.

We are in the social welfare business. Oasis enables homeless women and women facing domestic issues to have access to knowledge of shelters and other services of facilities around them.

Oasis will be targeting the homeless and domestic violence shelter market, in order to spread the word about the application. Local governments will also be targeted to maintain and personalize the service in their respective communities.

Oasis seeks to enter the social welfare industry. Heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the homeless rates in major cities like New York have skyrocketed. This growth of homelessness during 2020 and 2021 made needs of desperate help visible in many cities in the

United States. We foresee that it will continue to grow due to government's short term relief and unstable economic conditions, and expect the market growth along with this increase.

The team seeks to sell various local governments the rights to host and distribute the application in their jurisdiction. As such, the app can be bought and owned by these governments, but the team retains ownership of the distribution of the app.

The company was formed at the beginning of this school year. There were no financial backers for the company, meaning that all funds that have been sunk into the company so far have come from the pockets of each of the founders. There was no parent company prior to Oasis, and the company has been working on development since September 2021.

Oasis provides an accessible platform that efficiently provides information through a minimalistic interface. Other resources in the industry are too comprehensive to provide for multiple sectors of the targeted end-users, such as women who are elderly or afflicted with mental illness. Our easy-to-use interface will allow all individuals to attain the basic information they need as quickly as possible, without a learning curve. We also provide quick and easy access to additional resources for those seeking more than what the foundation of the app can provide.

The biggest challenge Oasis faces is keeping the shelter information accurate and updated. It is up to our customers, the local governments, to maintain communication with their shelters. The foundation of Oasis is access to updated information, which cannot be possible without communication to the shelters that provide said services on our application.

At present the team does not have any plans to grow this business after graduation.

If sales with city governments within the New York metropolitan area are a success, we will expand to other city governments across the nation. We will look towards selling to one city at a time, one state at a time, after the metropolitan area has been exhausted. The application is meant to be a foundation in which each local government can personalize the app to the needs of their communities. If the application is offered to all city governments across the nation, we will look towards selling the business.

Products and Services

Oasis is a mobile and web application that enables the user to look up homeless shelters, women's shelters, and domestic violence shelters in their nearby area. There is also a Resources page that has listed many important resources for homeless women in the Hoboken area that may help with reintegration into the workforce or for women who were formerly incarcerated.

Oasis offers a map that allows 80 results to be given, instead of the limitation of 20 results through the Google Maps API nearby search function. This is done by taking the original search position, and splitting it into 4 calls instead of 1. The center of each new query is displaced to the north, south, east, and west of the original search query by half of the radius of the original query. Using half of the original radius in the query for each of the 4 new calls, up to 80 results can be returned within the same radius of the original query, instead of 20. This is depicted in Figure 1.

A disadvantage Oasis has in regards to our competition is the limited options of the shelter types and amenities. Although easy to use, users are limited to what is on the screen, and aren't given the freedom to generate their own search term for more specific services.

The main screen presents the user with an accessible interface that offers searching functionality, without the need of a search bar. This allows users with shaky hands or limited knowledge of technology to effectively use the application to its fullest potential.

All the programs and helpful information displayed on the Resource Page are directly collected from the shelters and services without loss of information. The accuracy of the contact and details are guaranteed and this will assist the users with practical help and guidance.

Oasis will be aiming to sell the base application for a one-time fee of \$10,000. This will be offered to each city government. Once the application is purchased, the city has the freedom to personalize the application using their own resources.

Marketing Plan

Market Research

- **Facts about the industry**

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 3 women experience domestic violence. The National Alliance to End Homelessness found that 29% of women experience homelessness, and according to one of our sources from the Hoboken Homeless Shelter, it is more likely for a woman experiencing homelessness to need mental health support, and so clean, accessible website/app design is important for this group, as well as the need to find supportive services easily.

- **Total size of the market**

All homeless and women's shelters in the Hoboken/Jersey City area, and any woman experiencing domestic violence or homelessness.

- **Current demand in target market**

According to a survey we conducted, over 90% of women (16 respondents of diverse age groups and experiences) don't immediately know which resources to go to for shelters/services related to homelessness/domestic violence, and do not trust the safety of existing shelters due to informational restraint and lack of opinions from women directly who have used the services/shelters.

- **Growth history**

From 2016 to 2020, there has been an increase of 17% individual women experiencing homelessness, 35% increase of unsheltered women in general, and rates exceeding 80% of transgender people. Our goal is to see these rates go down over time.

- **Trends in target market**

There is a need for clean, accessible design.

There is a need for accurate, reliable information.

- **Growth potential**

We will be one of the main sources of accurate, trustworthy information, creating reliability on our product.

We will be employing accessible design for all demographics of women.

- **Entry barriers for competitors**

- Requires good communication with lots of shelters
- Consumer acceptance/brand recognition
- Software development experience in web and mobile applications is required
- Unique technology/patents such as Google Maps API

- **How could the following affect your company?**

- Change in technology
We would need to adapt our platform to the new technology, incurring costs in our business.
- Government regulations

We will need to keep up with privacy standards to ensure our user base is protected according to government regulations. Because we aim on pitching our product towards local governments, any government regulations at those levels would need to be adhered to as well.

- Changing economy
Our pricing model may change. We may also see differences in user count if the economy causes more women to become homeless or not.
- Change in your industry
If numbers of domestic violence/homelessness in women decrease, we would be less relevant, but if they increase we would be more relevant.

Oasis is capable of showing up to 80 nearby women's shelters, homeless shelters, or domestic violence therapy shelters within a 30 mile radius of the user. This can be done simply by clicking a button to specify what service the user is looking for and adjusting the slider to determine how far away the user is willing to look. This enables anyone using the app to see what options are available to them and decide on a shelter to go to based on reviews people have left.

People using Oasis are able to filter their searches based on specific amenities they are looking for in a shelter, such as if the shelter is able to provide care to children or pets or if the service offers medical assistance. This allows each user to find exactly what they need in a shelter and make sure that they end up at a place properly equipped to take care of them.

If a user were to look into the Resources tab on Oasis, they would find many different welfare services listed, and they can click on any of them to be redirected to those services' websites. This enables users to clearly see laid out before them specific resources that were determined to be incredibly important for homeless women in the Hoboken area to know about and fully utilize by someone who runs a homeless shelter.

Representatives of Team Oasis will always be available to help answer questions or provide technical assistance to anyone who purchases the app and chooses to host it in their own local cities or towns.

Our ideal customer is city governments. Ideally located in New Jersey, New York, or Pennsylvania, these city governments are small enough such that they can disperse the application to any towns that may be within the city, and will see a return on investment quicker than bigger governments. We will target city governments that have a larger population of homeless women or women who are victims of domestic violence, and either have no similar service, or a dysfunctional service, compared to Oasis.

Competition

Table 1: Competitive Analysis

FACTOR	Oasis	Strength	Weakness	Homeless Shelters Directory	Find Shelter	Importance to customer
Products	Women's, homeless, and domestic violence shelter finder	Helps users find the services they are looking for in their area	If the user does not have service or access to the Internet they cannot use the product	Homeless shelter finder	Homeless shelter, food pantry, health clinic, and clothing finder	1
Price	Free	Highly accessible	Service Maintenance would not benefit from it f	Free	Free	1
Quality	Simple, responsive map showing nearby shelters based on user location	No need to input the location, everything is done for the user	Shelter results are restricted to a 30 mile radius of the user	Contains a lot of quality information about the shelters listed	Shows shelters on a map given a location	1
Selection	Medium	Result amount is not overwhelming, so the user can better analyze each shelter	User may not be satisfied with resulting shelters	Large	Large	2
Service	New York Metropolitan Area	More specific resources	Userbase is limited until expansion towards other cities	Country-wide	Country-wide	2
Reliability	Dependant on Google Maps API, otherwise reliability is guaranteed	Information is directly collected from shelters and programs	Manual work is needed	Can find a homeless shelter in any state in any city or town. Over 14,000 shelters on the website	Can find locations in any state or city. Sometimes the website is down for maintenance	1

Stability	MongoDB guarantees the flexibility, performance and privacy of database operation	MongoDB is a highly reliable external resource	Stability depends on the external resource	Fast load times, did not crash while being used	Map first displays the entire country before zooming in on locations. Otherwise consistent service	2
Expertise	Resources contributed to websites are by experts in the field.	Resources displayed on the website is guaranteed to be accurate and supported by each shelters and programs	It might require other verification steps to value the resources provided by experts.	Very knowledgeable on shelters throughout the country	Many different types of locations beyond shelters can be found	2
Company reputation	Backed by the city government for regulations and maintenance	Oasis and governmental offices can synergize for better effect.	Reputation of city government and regulations might negatively affect Oasis	Only a website, the individuals associated with the website have not made themselves public	Service provided by the US Government	3
Location	Accessible from anywhere with an internet connection, can locate shelters within 30 miles from shelters provided to each city's website.	Maintenance and collecting resources at local shelters	Constrained by internet availability	https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/	https://www.hud.gov/findshelter	1
Appearance	User-friendly interface for straightforward directions for use	Very low learning curve	Lacks comprehensive services due to minimalist design	Confusing to navigate	Core service surrounded by lots of text	2
Sales method	Free service after sold to city government for the operation	Effectively provides for the target audience who has barely any money at all	Vulnerable to higher than average costs	Free service with ads	Free service	4

Credit policies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Advertising	Directed towards city governments to appeal to community growth	Allows this service to be under a local government instead of a private of a private organization	Governments may lack the commitment to maintain the app	Never seen an advertisement for this service before	Provides a section where a user can download a poster or cards advertising the service	3
Image	Contain images of services and shelters from users' reviews	Posted by users to display reliable images	Need to verify the images under certain rules of regulations	Home page image acts as location selector, not clearly indicated	Images are the resulting map and various logos	2

Oasis enables women in dire need of assistance to find nearby shelters with incredible ease. While there are other services that may be more comprehensive, ours is very simplistic. Since many homeless women have some kind of a mental health condition, and since it is also possible for elderly women to end up homeless, it is incredibly important for there to be a service available that is easy to comprehend and use.

The team is looking to market our product directly to local governments, like city governments, through setting up meetings with local leaders and pitching to them our idea. Afterwards, we would advise the leaders, should they choose to purchase our product, to contact all shelters in the area to notify them of the new technology that will be implemented and spread the word among the women at those shelters that there is a new service available for them to use. In addition, the local governments could start advertising the app themselves on billboards, through flyers, or even through radio or TV advertisements.

The team will likely not have to spend any money on advertising, since it will be the responsibility of each local government that will use Oasis to ensure that their population of homeless women know about the app and the services it offers.

Team Oasis is currently looking at charging local governments a flat price of \$10,000 for rights to use the application in their cities. This allows the governments to personalize the resources and search options to better fit their environment. Specializing the app in this way will better help the target audience

Oasis was originally developed with the Hoboken and New York City Metropolitan areas in mind, but has expanded to allow for anyone to use the app anywhere. As such, the company would be based in the original target area, with representatives moving around the country in

order to meet with local governments as they see fit. It would also be possible for us to meet with local leaders remotely.

We do not think that location is a prevalent issue in regards to sales, since we are attempting to sell an app and the software's main functionality is not region-locked.

Appendices

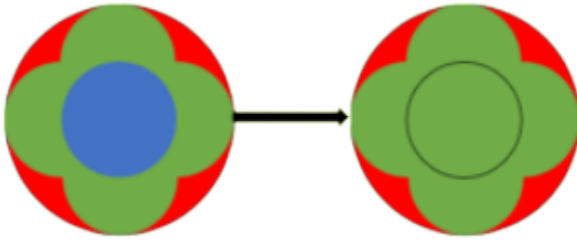


Fig 1: Illustration of propagation method to increase nearby search results to 80 instead of 20. The blue circle shows the original search radius cut in half, and the green area shows the area in which 80 results can be given. The red area shows the areas within the original search radius that cannot be generated with this method. However, these regions could not be reached anyway if the 20 result limit is reached, which then restricts the resulting radius to the blue circle.