

# ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

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## Community knowledge report



Produced by  
**CARAVAN**  
studios  
CaravanStudios.org

a division of **techsoup**

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Kintone for providing in-kind and financial support to encourage community-generated technology development that benefits from the knowledge and expertise of the social sector and the desires and needs of vulnerable populations. We appreciate your ideas, your involvement in the community, and your kinship of spirit.

Produced February, 2020

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## Executive summary

On July 9, 2019, Caravan Studios, with financial and in-kind support from Kintone, engaged the community in Caravan Studios' Generate+Design+Select process to identify and design technology interventions that address food insecurity. (More on Caravan Studios' methodology in the Appendix.) Subject matter experts from Bay Area organizations that focus on youth services, food insecurity, policy, government, and social services worked together to consider how technology might help solve problems related to youth food insecurity.

At the day-long, in-person Generate+Design event at TechSoup's headquarters in San Francisco, 13 participants designed four distinct concepts addressing the impacts and solutions to address food insecurity. Benefiting from the vast and diverse expertise of the participants, each solution focused on a distinct problem and a unique solution. In addition to designing concepts, the food security experts assembled in San Francisco generated interest in each other's work and expertise. A side note metric to all Generate+Design events is the extent to which participants engage with each other. These events are not designed to bring long-time collaborators together; the opposite is true. These events are a catalyst of sorts, where participants meet and work with each other in an intense and intentional format that often breeds collaborations after the event concludes.

To encourage feedback, the concepts were introduced during in-person Kintone events in three cities as well as online. In addition to the San Francisco-generated concepts, three concepts from a recent event addressing the same issue area were added to the Select feedback phase to provide ample opportunities for thought and insight. The concepts shared in-person were designed into large posters displayed at each Kintone-sponsored event with accompanying paper feedback cards, and in digital format hosted on the Caravan Studios web site to support online voting.

In total, community members provided 193 pieces of feedback that offered community knowledge selected the most impactful concepts.

Overall, the top three concepts were:

Rank	Concept	Votes
1	Food Compass	46
2	Ready Reasonable Recipes	37
3	Food Connect	31

In general, commenters praised the direct help provided by these tools, the focus on highlighting available local resources, and the tools to make nutritious meals using low cost food sources. Many commenters indicated that Food Compass and Food Connect could be combined as one service, and also recommended including maps with public transit information along with the cost of transportation to nearby locations.

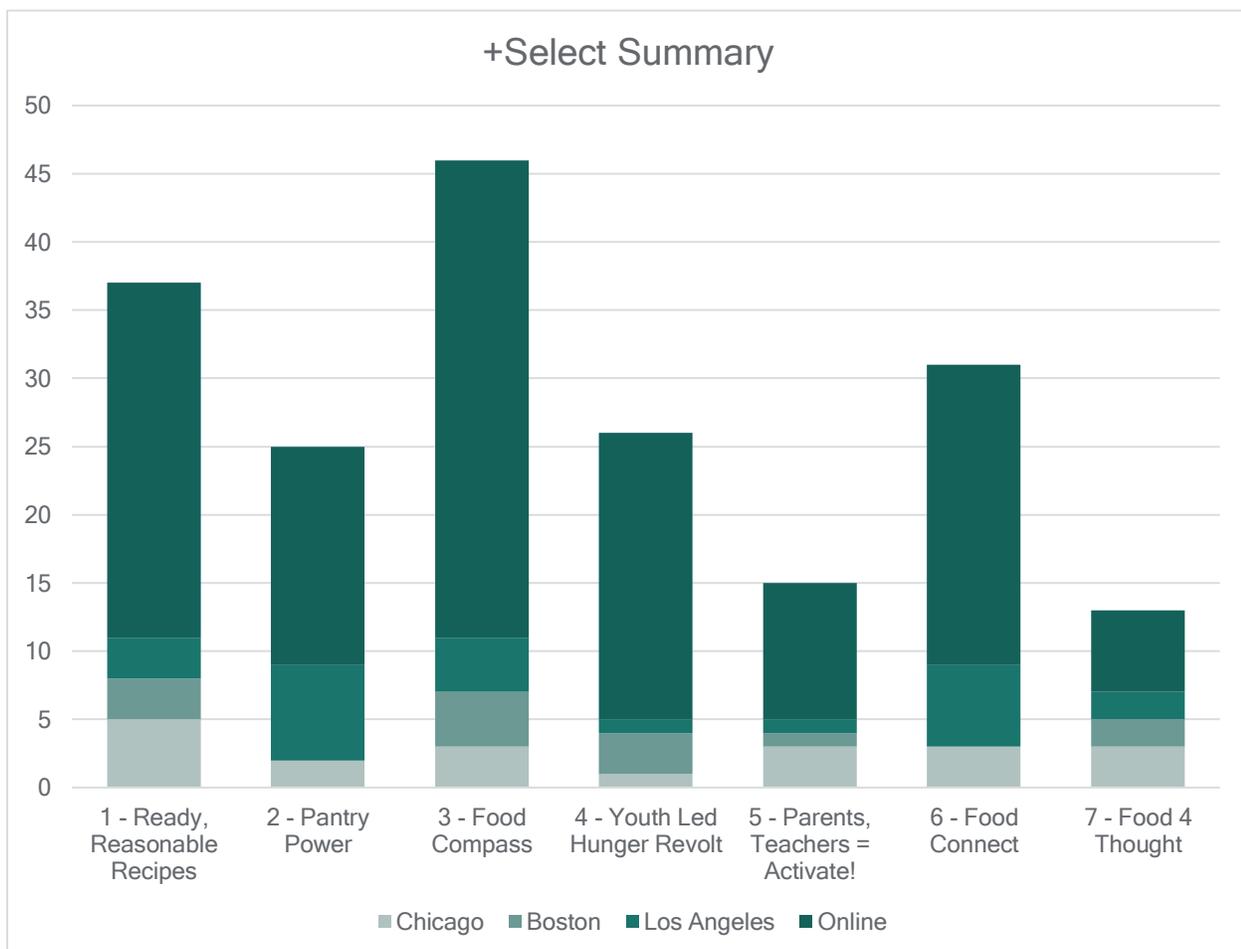
Other comments included an interest in direct community engagement and the ability to promote events related to food security, cooking, and community activities. While these comments were not addressing the top three concepts, we recommend considering how events might be incorporated into the design or promotion of any resulting product.

## Community Learnings

A key part of the Select phase of the Caravan Studios methodology is generating feedback from a diversity of community members to validate, critique, and provide additional insight. Along with community partners, we identify key outlets for in-person and online engagement.

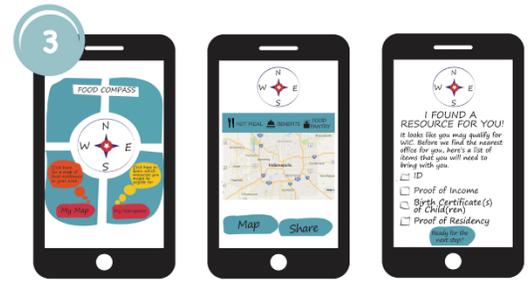
For this project, feedback was collected at in-person Kintone events in Los Angeles, Boston, and Chicago, in addition to a social media campaign led by Caravan Studios that drove engagement and interest in the six concepts.

In total, 193 pieces of feedback were gathered from both online and in-person engagements. The overall vote distribution is illustrated below. Additional data can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 8 of this report.



# Food Compass

Commenters praised this concept as useful for families while simplifying the complex process of finding local resources. The practical nature of a checklist, contact information, geography, and direct relevance to the person seeking information were shared as assets.



## Food Compass

Helping you find food assistance

Ever felt frustrated or intimidated when searching for help on your own? Adults 16 and over can search our map or answer a few questions to find food and nutrition assistance that might be available to you and your family.

Enter your information to personalize your resources and find out what you need to provide in order to benefit from resources in your area.

**Designed by:** Dorothy Hoffman, Shaamora Harden, Kate Howe, Marianne McKenzie, Shellye Suttles

Feedback included the following comments:

*“Made for the truly food insecure. Can help in a crunch. Could be used by the person looking for food or someone who could help them find food.”*

*“Geared toward people in need. Seems to take a comprehensive approach—i.e. connects to both federal/state benefits, as well as food assistance.”*

*“It could be used by an individual in need and also by case workers to see what resources are available.”*

*“[I wish this included] comparison and/or partnership with other platforms doing similar work. Los Angeles has a similar site called Food Oasis LA. It would be cool if this app worked along-side these local/regional platforms or had an accessible API for other platforms to access.”*

*“‘Where is it and how can I get it.’ That seems like the most straightforward way of providing a useful service to the hungry. Some of the others require a lot more user input/behavior and who be harder to manage.”*

# Ready Reasonable Recipes

Commenters liked the focus on healthy food, the support for cooking, the simplicity, and the practicality of saving money while educating users how to cook nutritious meals. Many lauded these features because they achieve the goals of a large user base.

Feedback included the following comments:

*“People need ideas on quick, easy ways to cook within their budget. Often the money isn't as much the issue as knowing how to shop and cook on a budget. This app will help with this.”*

*“[I wish this had] something to address the stigma barrier. Maybe messaging that acknowledges it's ok to ‘put good food to good use’ or stretch their budget with free food resources.”*

*“I would like to see the recipe provide a step-by-step process with images of each step so users can see if they are putting the recipe together accurately.”*

*“I wish the design had a wheel where you can spin to find a recipe!”*



## Reasonable Ready Recipes

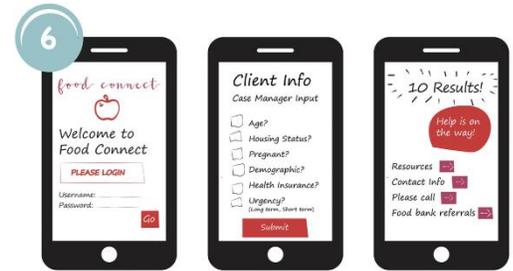
Looking to supplement your food allowance or live within a budget? Want to cook nutritious, simple, and delicious meals in five ingredients or less?

This innovative app allows you to search for meals you love, find ingredients you can afford, and teaches you how to bring it all together. Generate a grocery list, find your food on sale, and learn from fun videos how to prep and cook healthy and highly nutritious recipes that don't break your budget.

Designed by: Julie Fidler, Ron Guidotti, Charlotte Holt, Troy Tinsley

# Food Connect

Similar in nature to Food Compass, commenters praised Food Connect for its design, the fact that it helped people access existing resources based on a variety of needs and demographics, and the straightforward nature of the product.



## Food Connect

**Bridging the gap of food resources.**

Resources exist, but sometimes finding the right ones quickly can be difficult. Food Connect is a web-based platform that collects basic demographic and need-based data to generate the top most accessible food resources, tailored for your client. Find the food resources your clients need, quickly.

**Designed by:** Vanessa Huynh, Jennifer Tong

Feedback included the following comments:

*“Straight to the point, easy to use and serves a broad range of people without wasting their time.”*

*“[I like that it] doesn't ask for difficult documentation i.e. birth certificate, proof of income etc. Provides an actionable resource for those in need. When you're hungry you don't care about the fluff, you just want a meal. This design is direct and to the point and seems it could provide help the fastest.”*

*“I like that it is straightforward while also being tailored to each person who needs help. Its simplicity makes user experience a lot more efficient but also provides various types of resources that each person can access.”*

*“[I recommend] maybe bring[ing] in some of the ideas from the food compass concept.”*

*“I think it should accumulate the data so that (1) we all know where the hunger/need is greatest, and (2) the hungry know where to go to get food.”*

## Appendix 1: Online Voting

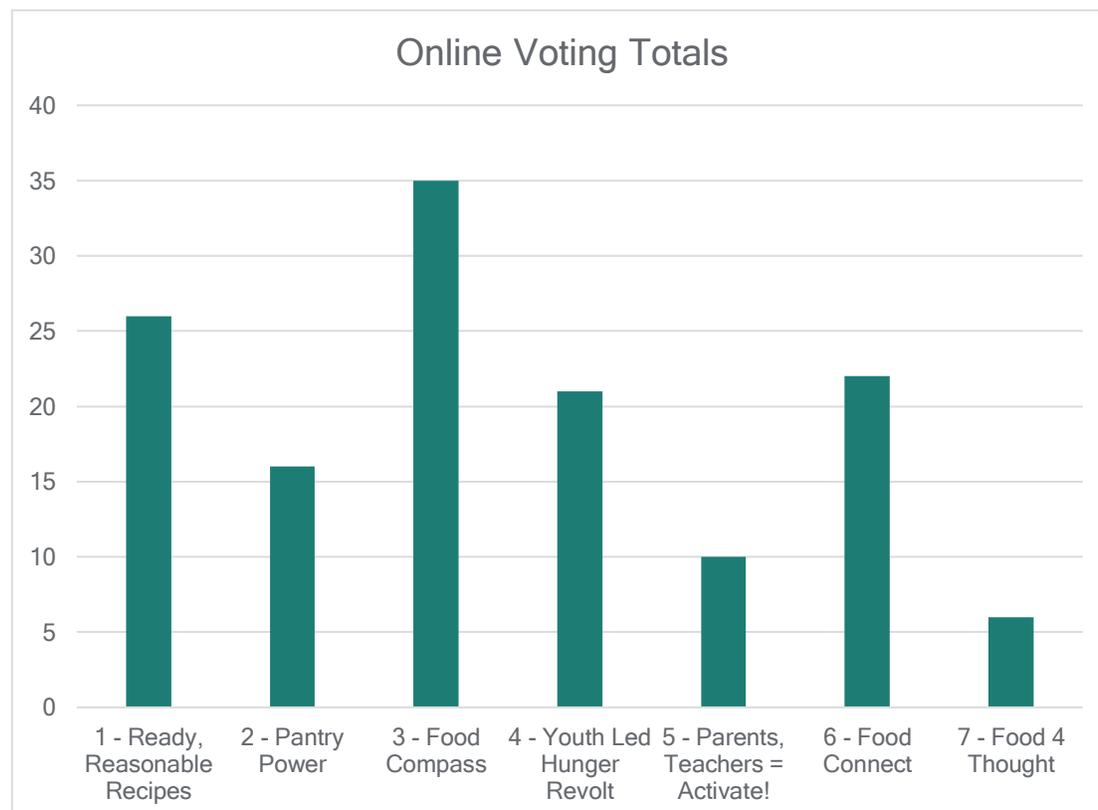
Votes were collected in two ways: via an online website and at in-person events hosted by Kintone.

### Online votes

Community members submitted 136 pieces of feedback during the online +Select phase, hosted on Caravan Studios' web site.

#### Questions asked during online voting

1. Which design do you want to see built?
2. What do you like the most about that design?
3. What would change about that design?
4. What do you wish the design included?
5. If you want to learn more about this project, please tell us more about you. [contact information]

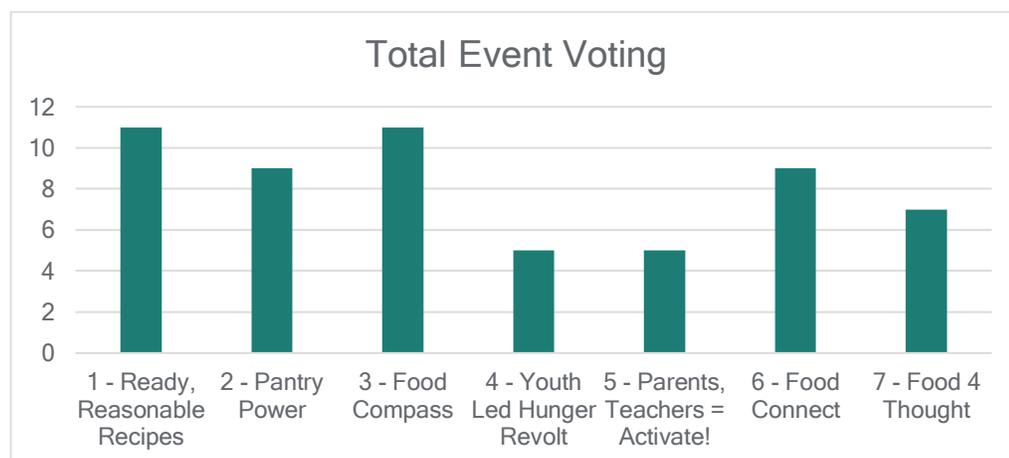


In total there were 83 pieces of feedback for the top three concepts that received the most votes online, representing 61% of the total feedback received.

Rank	Concept	Votes
1	Food Compass	35
2	Ready Reasonable Recipes	26
3	Food Connect	22

## Kintone-hosted event votes

Votes were collected on paper ballots at three Kintone Connect events: Los Angeles, Boston, and Chicago. Participants were invited to provide feedback on individual concepts as well as any concept they chose, whether it was the top concept for them or not. A total of 57 votes were cast.



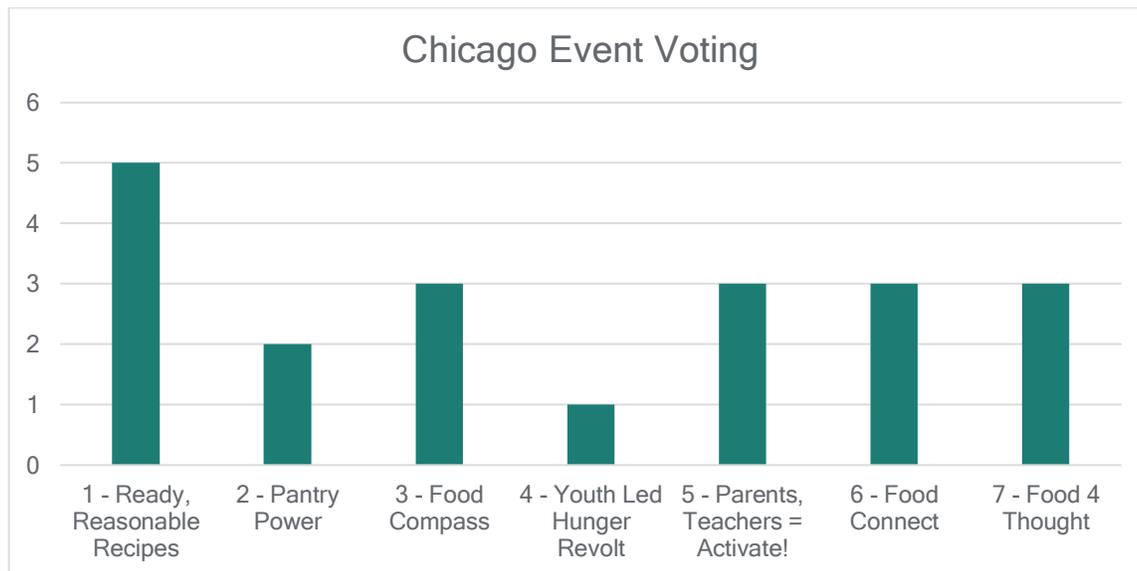
Due to the small number of votes cast, we see a cluster of votes for the top four vote getters:

Rank	App	Votes
1 (tie)	Ready Reasonable Recipes	11
1 (tie)	Food Compass	11
3 (tie)	Pantry Power	9
3 (tie)	Food Connect	9

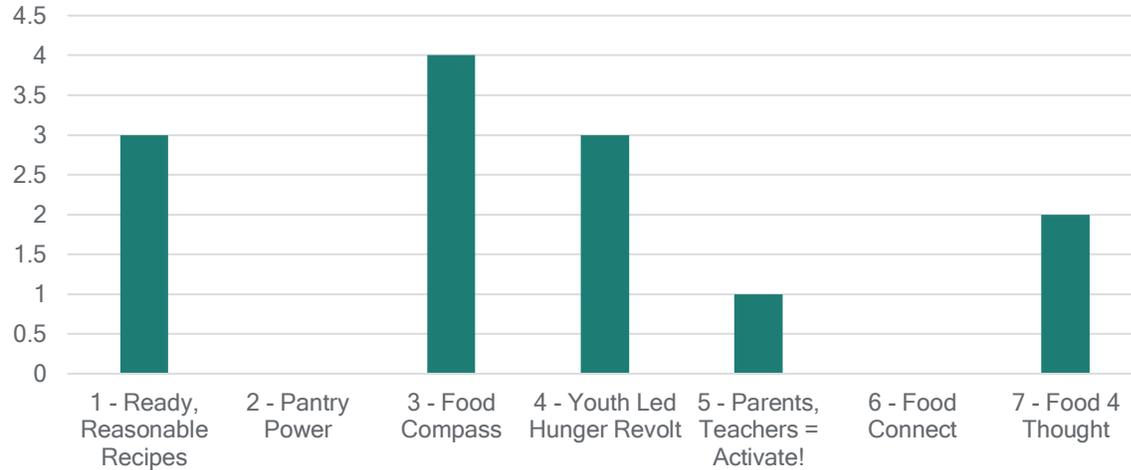
The four concepts represent 70% of the feedback received.

When tallied individually, the three events had different leader boards. However, the overall top vote getters were represented in the top apps at each event.

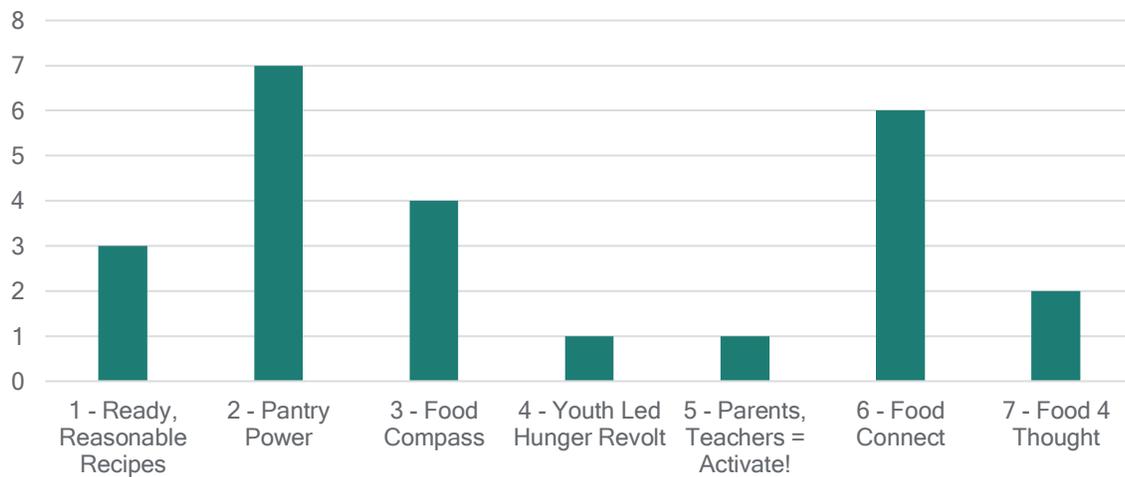
#### Individual location voting results



### Boston Event Voting



### Los Angeles Event Voting



## Appendix 2: Methodology

At Caravan Studios, we believe that communities are best suited to identify and design solutions for their own challenges. Generate+Design+Select are the first three steps in a larger community-driven process that elicits and refines community input, resulting in technology interventions that directly increase the public good at a community level.

### In more detail: Generate+Design

These two steps were completed in a day long in-person event that brings together experts in a specific community issue. Through focused group work, the assembled team:

- Specified the aspects of an issue of most concern to them.
- Generated design questions.
- Assigned an impact rating to each of the design questions.
- Designed technology responses to the design questions that motivate them most as individuals and as a team.

Using analog tools, participants designed their ideal solution and shared with each other, pitch-style, to close out their time together.

The process is engineered to elicit the subject matter knowledge, motivations, and creativity of the participants. And, while being comfortable with technology is helpful, it is not necessary. In fact, the facilitation method levels the playing field between all participants, from on-the-ground community activists, to community residents, to experienced technology developers. This approach allows all input to be valued and assessed by other participants from a position of confidence. The group makes decisions based on desired community impact, not individual tech or subject expertise.

## In more detail: +Select

In the +Select step, the design work is shared with the broader community to collect widespread feedback so that, ultimately, many people have a voice in selecting what gets built.

To complete this we prepared:

- Posters based on the community-developed designs.
- Comment cards to provide respondents multiple ways to offer their opinions.

The posters and comment cards were made these available at Kintone-hosted in-person events held in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston.

In addition, we designed a web page to engage a broad base of users to share their opinions. That content was shared with users via email, social media, and online advertising. Direct outreach reached municipal food security task forces, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

When the comment period ended, data was analyzed and summarized into this Community Knowledge Report.

## Appendix 3: About Caravan Studios

Caravan Studios is a division of TechSoup, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, CA. For more than 30 years, TechSoup has helped NGOs around the world access and optimize technology so that they can better achieve their missions. At Caravan Studios, we work with those same communities to develop specific public good solutions. You can learn more about us and the tools we have built at [www.CaravanStudios.org](http://www.CaravanStudios.org)