Pre-Sales <u>F</u>requently <u>A</u>sked Questions

The following pages cover some of the **F**requently **A**sked **Q**uestions people have when looking for a software program to meet their organization's tracking needs. We trust that this will be a helpful resource for everyone involved.

☑ **How will a member of the H.E.A.R.T. *Family Software* benefit my organization?**
A member of the **H.E.A.R.T. *Family Software*** will help your organization accomplish many things. The two most valuable tools a **H.E.A.R.T. *Family Software*** member can supply are the ability to keep accurate records of the services you provide and organize your necessary client data.

The accurate recording of service records will help you manage your agency. In order to know exactly how your dollars are spent, you need to document how many people you served and what services were provided in any given time period. No matter the size of the agency, this type of necessary record keeping is tedious and time consuming. **H.E.A.R.T. *Family Software*** members will expedite this process so you can spend more time helping people rather than keeping records.

Organizing your client data into a usable format is no easy task. Any member of the **H.E.A.R.T. *Family Software*** will do that for you. You can then take this data and report to your funding sources and Boards. Federal, State, City, and private funding sources need to know hard data to justify any money that they distribute. When you can easily and quickly provide data on people groups, drug preferences, reasons for homelessness, or any other items, funding sources will know that you care about the people you serve and are trying to address the social problems of your area.

☑ **Am I too small for client tracking software?**
No! As a smaller agency you have even less time to be dealing with designing your own spreadsheets or databases. The time you spend defining column names or field parameters could be spent with your clients.

☑ **Could I develop my own program for less?**
Realistically, "No". Now you would expect a software company to answer this question with a "No". Before you skip this question completely, please consider some of the ramifications.

If you purchased a computer recently, most likely a database package was included in the pre-installed software. Since you already have the "free" database program, you may think you have all the tools available. Two things could happen at this juncture. One, you have a staff member learn the program and design your own system, or two; you have a friend who knows the database system and says they will volunteer to design "something" for you.

Let us consider the staff member situation first. This individual was hired to be a counselor, Chaplin, etc. They were not hired to be a programmer. You have now removed them from, or added to, their regular duties. In most cases these people feel an overwhelming responsibility to the people you are attempting to serve. You have just created a dilemma for the staff. Do they work on the program, which in the long run will help them, or do they take care of the immediate need of the person standing in front of them? Since the immediate need will win every time, this will delay the completion of your project.

If you completely relieve this individual of their regularly assigned duties, you are now short staffed. You have created a dilemma for yourself.

Is this program really "free"? If you think about it, the answer is "No" when you consider the amount of man-hours needed to design something for your organization, even if it's not as elaborate as any member of the **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software*. For example, if you are paying this staff person $24,000 per year, and you allow as little as three months time to design a small, basic program, this "free" program just cost you $6,000 in salary plus any benefits you may pay. Additional costs would include the employer's portion of income tax, worker's compensation insurance and the time lost from serving the guests. There will also be considerable time spent by all the staff working out the "bugs". So, "free" is sometimes costly.

The volunteer friend scenario is not much better. Remember they will not be able to dedicate all of their time to your project. They are volunteering, they have other jobs, responsibilities, etc. Even though they are very interested and have good intentions, they will just not be available all of the time. This will delay your project. There will also be the testing period, then modifications because the test did not work like you had in mind, or there was something that was overlooked. Now there is more time involved and another delay.

Even after the program is installed and running, there is bound to be a situation where service is needed. Your volunteer friend could take a few days to get to you to fix the problem. This would set back your entire procedure until the situation is resolved. Or worse yet, the volunteer moves out of town because his job relocates him.

Are we saying all of this to scare you? No-we have seen these very situations repeat themselves over and over again. In the long run agencies spend more money, lose more time, and decrease their level of service when they try to do it themselves.

After ordering a **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* member, you could have the program in your facility and using it within two weeks. The **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* has been tested and proven over the years. You really will not be able to do it yourself for less.

☑ **Why don't the H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* **members have an "xyz" field?**
The full versions of **H.E.A.R.T.**, along with **H.E.A.R.T.** *Online* & *EX*, have over 500 user customizable items. If a member of the **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* does not come by default with your special field, you can make one of the customizable items meet your need. Even if that is not possible, here are some questions to ask. If there is another product that you're considering that has an "xyz" field, is there something else missing that you really need? With all of the customizable items, about what percentage of your operation does the **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* member satisfy? Is it 90%, or 95%? How are you meeting all of your needs now?

An "out-of-the-box" program will not meet every need or situation of your unique facility. When using a **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* member you may have to develop some other procedure to handle 5%-10% of your situation. Most likely right now what you have is only dealing with half of your needs. Any member of the **H.E.A.R.T.** *Family Software* would increase your productivity 40%.

A final thought...
Increased productivity allows you to serve more people in less time and deal more effectively with the people you have. Better record keeping will also increase your opportunity to appeal to donors and funding sources with hard data and service records.