

~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~ October 6 ~ 13, 2006



The CONNECTIONS Program Improvement Plan Update...

The CONNECTIONS PIP (CPIP) team continues to monitor the system to track performance and asks that if users experience any issues with the application they report them to the NYS OFT Enterprise Help Desk at 1-800-NYS(697) -1323. The CPIP team thanks you for your continued assistance in this regard!

Activities for the month of August 2006

Four business cases as well as project plans were submitted and approved at the August meeting of the Governance Board. They were: CONNECTIONS SCR Standby Environment, CONNECTIONS Citrix and Windows Upgrades, CONNECTIONS Oracle Upgrade, and CONNECTIONS FCP Upgrade. The Bureau is currently focused on developing an integrated schedule for the latter three projects. In addition to this focus, the team is also involved in activities related to the forthcoming Build. Further information related to the CPIP team activities for the month of September will be included in the next Weekly.

Build 18.8.5...

As you know, the implementation date of Build 18.8.5 is scheduled for next Friday, October 13th, from 6:00 PM through 12:00 AM (midnight ~ a downtime window of six hours) and during this time the CONNECTIONS application will not be available. As a reminder, the Build includes the implementation of several fixes to CONNECTIONS application functionality, as well as changes to CONNECTIONS to support a new process for SCR Database Checks that will impact the State Central Register only. Among the fixes are: that new stages on the workload will no longer remain grey following access, pagination will be supported within the INV stage CPRS Progress Notes, the copy Progress Notes feature will be supported from an Initial INV to a subsequent INV when there is an FSS in the case, and from an FSS to an INV, and correction of the Address Validation functionality in the Resource Address detail. This Build will also add new security attributes to support the implementation of functionality that will be included in Build 18.9. The Build Release Notes, which identify detailed descriptions of each fix, are posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site. The path to the Release Notes is: CONNECTIONS intranet site (<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/>) > Implementation > Current Build Information CONNECTIONS Build 18 > Build Information > CONNECTIONS Build 18.8.5 Release Notes.

A Note About the Training and Preview Databases in Relation to the Implementation of Build 18.8.5...

Just a reminder, that both the Training and Preview databases will be unavailable on Friday, October 13th, in preparation for the implementation of Build 18.8.5. Both environments will be available, with the Build 18.8.5 functionality, on Monday, October 16th.

A Preview Update...

We just wanted to thank all of those districts and voluntary agencies who submitted names for access to the Preview application! We are in the process of assigning the Preview application functionality to those who requested it and will let you know when you have access to this environment. Just as a point of clarification, the functionality that users will view when they access this version of the Preview environment will be a snapshot of the current functionality of CONNECTIONS. User's views will *not* include the functionality that will be coming with Build 18.9, however, this version of the Preview environment *will* include the functionality available in Build 18.8.5.

Build 18.9 Info...

Build 18.9 Forums...

The first Build 18.9 forums were held in the Yonkers and Buffalo regions this past week. The forums are a venue in which Build functionality is presented in an environment that is interactive and allows for the exchange of questions from the participants. The forums will be held at various venues across the state. If you would like more information just contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Field staff contact.

Build 18.9 Tools Available for Users...

In preparation for the Build we are in the process of developing documents (Tools) that will be available for users that will specifically define the Build 18.9 functionality. The following are a listing of these.

- ***Impact Analyses***

Defining the following subject areas:

- Permanency Hearing Report
- Education Module
- Health Services Module
- FASP Changes
- CONNECTIONS/WMS Interface changes
- Foster/Adoptive Home changes
- Security Changes (Specifically for Security Coordinators)

Availability and location: *These documents will be posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet by October 23rd.*

- ***The Business Process Redesign Manual for Build 18.9***

This manual will provide a description of the new processes -- Permanency Hearing Report, Education, Health -- provide users with questions that need to

be answered for their organization prior to implementation, and diagram the new system supported processes.

Availability and location: The manual will be available on the CONNECTIONS intranet in early November.

- **Readiness Checklist**

This checklist will help organizations assess their readiness for implementation of the Build.

Availability and location: This checklist will be available in mid-November and will be communicated via e-mail to both local districts and voluntary agencies.

- **Guest Testing**

Guest Testing is an opportunity for selected users from each region to perform application functionality testing using Build 18.9 functionality.

Availability and location: Guest Testing is scheduled for late November in the Albany region.

- **The Prototype of Build 18.9 Functionality**

Each CONNECTIONS Regional Support team member has a copy of the Build 18.9 Prototype which demonstrates much of the new functionality that will be implemented with the roll-out of Build 18.9. CONNECTIONS Regional staff will use the prototype to demonstrate the functionality at RIST meetings, as well as on-request for other groups. Please note that the Prototype will not be posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet as it inherent in its design that it be viewed within the context of an interactive venue.

Availability and location: The Prototype is available now upon request for a demonstration through CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff.

- **Data Clean-Up Report (local districts only)**

The data that we are requesting be modified at the district level is the Office/Unit/Worker codes in CONNECTIONS that are duplicated among active staff in a district.

Availability and location: CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff will provide districts with this report, at the district's request, so that they can clean up these duplicates prior to the Build implementation.

CONNECTIONS State-wide Functional Review...

With the recent implementation of CONNECTIONS Case Management functionality in Build 18 the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is interested in assessing how well CONNECTIONS is meeting the needs of staff. To that end OCFS has contracted with an independent project team, MAXIMUS, to perform a statewide functional review of CONNECTIONS that will address the following points:

- Support of casework
- Ease of use
- Workflow
- Management reporting
- User support
- Data retrieval and accuracy

The information gleaned in the context of the review will be used to shape future CONNECTIONS development as well as enhance the user participation process.

In light of this review, a letter was sent to both Commissioners and Executive Directors, earlier this week, outlining the intent of the review, as well as the direction that participation in it will be. For your reference, a copy of the letter is posted to the CONNECTIONS website on the Home page. It should be noted that participants will be a representative sample of both local districts as well as voluntary agencies.

A Note About the NYS Office for Technology (OFT) Customer Relations Communication ~ CRC - 102...

A communication from the Office for Technology Customer Relations team, dated September 25, 2006, was forwarded to local district LAN Administrators last week. In summary, it is critical that, as soon as possible, all VPN-connected laptops and PCs, and all other laptops that interface with the HSEN network, connect to the HSEN customer network for at least 90 minutes to receive the latest antivirus patches. If there are any questions related to the content of this communication we ask that you contact the Office for Technology Customer Relations Team at 1.866.789.4OFT (4638).

Got Equipment... We Have Forms...

It appears that there has been a lot of activity recently related to CONNECTIONS equipment moves and we just wanted to remind you that there are forms that must be completed and returned to the "comctrup" mailbox when a district or agency needs to either return, or move, CONNECTIONS equipment. These forms are titled as the following:

- CONNECTIONS Moving Form ~ OCFS-4820
- CONNECTIONS Equipment Return Form ~ OCFS 4819
- Other Request Form ~ OCFS 4818

Please note that these three forms are posted to both the OCFS intranet at the following address: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/admin/forms/it>, as well as the CONNECTIONS intranet at the following address: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/sys.asp> (under the title Equipment Change Forms). These forms should be submitted to the comctrup@nysemail.state.ny.us mailbox when completed. We thank you for your cooperation!

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

The following documents were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly
- Letters regarding the functional review of CONNECTIONS

***Weekly System Maintenance...
CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...***

- ***Friday, 10/6/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
 - ***Wednesday, 10/11/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
 - ***Friday, 10/13/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
 - *****Friday 10/13/06*** from 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM (midnight), Saturday, 10/14/06
- ** Please note additional application downtime for the implementation of Build 18.8.5