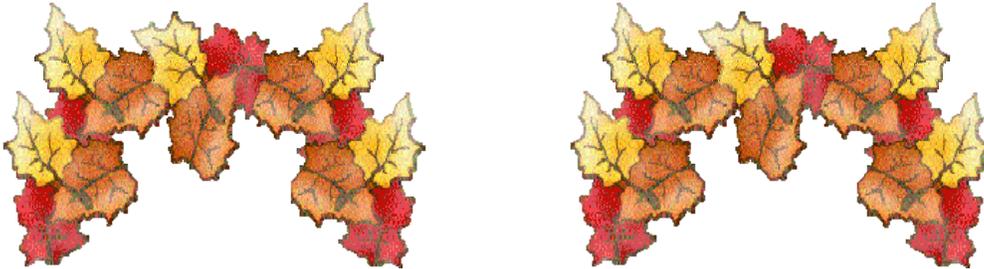


~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~
October 13 ~ 20, 2006



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!

A Summary of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Activities

Phase 1 of this initiative consisted of investigation, testing and analysis, culminating in the identification of seven key areas of performance improvement for the application. Following the New York State Project Management process, Phase 2 begins with the development of Business Cases for each initiative, review and approval of these documents by the CONNECTIONS Performance Improvement (CPIP) Governance Board, and from there moves into initiation into official projects for those cases that are approved (representing development of project charters, plans and implementation schedules, assignment of project teams, etc.).

During Phase 1 of the CONNECTIONS Performance Improvement Project OFT and OCFS worked together to identify how to improve performance and stability for the CONNECTIONS application. This project was initiated in order to develop a collaborative, high-priority action plan for short-term CONNECTIONS performance improvement, as well as to determine a future “to be” state and develop a plan to achieve this state. The goals of the project are to address the following identified areas of primary user concern:

- Application response time
- Application availability
- Sessions dropped

By keeping in mind these specific areas of concern and carefully measuring and documenting the end user experience, the CPIP team identified seven key areas of improvement, which were submitted to the CONNECTIONS Governance Board in the Discovery and Findings document, dated April 3, 2006. Based on the size and complexity of these identified areas, it was determined that each of them should be developed into complete projects, with potential implementation

of each to occur in Phase 2. Next week we will define each project and provide a status update of each.

Build 18.8.5...

As you know, the implementation date of *Build 18.8.5 is scheduled for this Friday, October 13th, from 6:00 PM through 12:30 AM* (a downtime window of six and one half hours) and during this time the CONNECTIONS application will not be available. For more information on what is in the Build please see the Build Release Notes 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 Reminder 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.

Records Retention...

*****Please note that this piece is for local districts only.***

As we had previously communicated to the individuals who have been identified by their local district as Records Retention report recipients, the September Records Retention run is significantly larger than the previous runs, as it is the first that contains unfounded reports that have been kept on file for 10 years since the report date, as directed by the 'Elisa' legislation. Due to the large volume of records being expunged, the program was scheduled to run over the several weeks. As such, we communicated that districts would see partial lists of the "Expungement" report, however, this may not be a complete list. We have continued to run these reports, and will be running the reports over the next few weeks. It is anticipated that the run will be completed by the beginning of November. Please note that we will notify you when the run has been completed. We thank you for your continued patience as we work toward the completion of this project! If you have any questions related to this issue you can contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation representative.

A New Implementation Tool...

In response to user request, we have developed a document titled, *A Compilation of Implementation Issues Related to Build 18*. The purpose of this document is to provide the user with one document that defines, as well as identifies, the status of all of the implementation issues previously identified in the *CONNECTIONS Case Management Implementation Issues documents (Versions 1 – 18)*. It should be noted that this document includes both the “fixed” issues as

well as the outstanding issues remaining post-Build 18 through Build 18.8.5. Look for this document on the CONNECTIONS intranet within the next week!

A Note About the Build 18.9 Forums...

Thanks for the positive feedback that we have received about the recently held Forums! Just to update you, Build 18.9 forums were held in the Albany and Rochester 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. If you would like more information about the Forums please contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Field staff representative.

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.

STARS...STARS...STARS...STARS...and Training

Availability...

A note to Staff Development/Training Coordinators at both local districts and voluntary agencies; as you are aware, the STARS system defines the training available to both district and agency staff related to CONNECTIONS program and functional application training. STARS also houses the registration process for all of the training available. It should be noted that when you are looking to register for a class, and the class is full, that class will not show up under the *registration* section of STARS, it will, however, still remain to be seen under the description of the training.

The Survey for the CONNECTIONS Statewide Functional Review...

As we communicated in the Weekly last week, with the implementation of CONNECTIONS case management functionality in Build 18 it is time to do an independent and objective assessment of how well CONNECTIONS is meeting the needs of caseworkers and supervisors statewide. The Statewide Functional Review is intended to be a broad review of system performance and support. To gather this information, the review team will conduct interviews, convene focus groups, and survey caseworkers and supervisors statewide. As part of the review, a confidential, on-line survey will be distributed to representatives of selected local district and voluntary agencies. We thank you, in advance for taking the time to complete the survey and ask that if you experience any problems accessing the survey that you contact your agency LAN Administrator or, the OFT Enterprise Help Desk. Please note that if you are an ACS employee, we ask that you contact Sue Horton at the ACS Help Desk. If participants are still unable to access the survey, after contacting the aforementioned individuals we ask that you contact Jennifer Benning at jenniferbenning@maximus.com and, thanks again for your time and feedback!

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

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

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

- ***Friday, 10/13/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- *****Friday 10/13/06*** from 6:00 PM – 12:30 AM, Saturday, 10/14/06
***** Please note additional application downtime for the implementation of Build 18.8.5***
- ***Wednesday, 10/11/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday 10/20/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM