

~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~

January 12 ~ 19, 2007

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

~ Monday, January 15, 2007 ~

“Be Our Guest”, “Be Our Guest” “Be Our Guest”...

In preparation for the implementation of Build 18.9, we have begun to organize Guest Testing of the new functionality that will be introduced in the Build. The testing is scheduled to be conducted in the lab in Albany, at 40 North Pearl Street, and the tentative dates that we have thus far are:

- **Monday, February 5th** for Albany and Syracuse region testers
- **Tuesday, February 6th** for Yonkers and Buffalo region testers
- **Wednesday, February 7th** for Yonkers and Buffalo region testers
(Please note a correction to the regions that are testing on Thursday, February 8th)
- **Thursday, February 8th** for Yonkers and Rochester region testers
- **Friday, February 9th** for Albany, Syracuse and Rochester region testers
- **Monday, February 12th – Thursday, February 15th** for NYC region testers

If you would like to participate in this endeavour, please contact your CONNECTIONS Regional representative. We appreciate your time and look forward to working with you as our “Guest”!

National (FBI) Fingerprint Checks for Foster & Adoptive Parents...

Local District Commissioners and Directors of Services were e-mailed Interim Procedures on January 11, 2007 to implement national criminal history record checks. These procedures are being mailed to Voluntary foster care agencies with foster boarding home programs and adoption agencies.

Also, OCFS filed regulations on an emergency basis effective January 11, 2007 amending the criminal history record check standards for the approval of adoptive parents (18 NYCRR Part 421) and for the certification or approval of foster parents (18 NYCRR Part 443).

A National criminal history record check through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), along with a State criminal history record check through the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), must be performed for all applicants and other persons over the age of 18 who reside in the home of the applicants where the foster or adoptive home was not finally and fully certified or approved before January 11, 2007. Also, effective January 11, 2007, an FBI criminal history record check, along with a State DCJS criminal history record check, must be completed at the point of recertification or re-approval of foster homes where a new person over the age of 18 resides in the home or a person

who had been in the home turns 18 since the prior certification or approval of the home. Unless fully and finally certified or approved prior to January 11, 2007, no foster or adoptive home can be finally certified or approved until both the State and FBI reviews have been completed.

It is important to note that the use of the “Notice Regarding Fingerprinting Requirements” English and Spanish versions, which are still available in CONNECTIONS (FAD), must be discontinued. Likewise the “Denial / Revocation Letter / Notice of Results of Fingerprinting / Criminal Record Found” English and Spanish versions which are still available in CONNECTIONS (FAD), must be discontinued. New versions of the Notice and the Denial/Revocation Letter were attached to the January 11, 2007 letter referenced above. You will be advised when the system is updated.

A Report on the Portable Information Technology Pilot Program...

For your reference, OCFS recently released a report titled Portable Information Technology Pilot Program – Report to the Governor and Legislature. This report describes the results of a pilot program that was conducted in New York City and Westchester and Monroe counties, to test best practices in portable information technology for child protective services (CPS) caseworkers, as well as address the issue of cyber security. It should be noted that the State Legislature directed OCFS to conduct this pilot and produce a report as part of the 2006-07 State Budget process.

An independent evaluation of the piloted technologies, which included laptop PCs, tablet PCs, and digital pens was conducted by the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), University at Albany/SUNY. The results of the evaluation suggested that portable technology assists CPS caseworkers to more effectively perform investigation tasks. It should be noted that, CTG recommended additional testing to validate these preliminary results.

Report Recommendations

In its report, OCFS recommends the continuation and expansion of the portable information technology pilot program. Testing portable technology in additional organizational and geographic environments will provide OCFS with a greater opportunity to determine the best investments to pursue in future years. The report further outlines the actions that OCFS is currently taking to support the use of portable information technology in the field, as well as how it is addressing cyber security. For your review, the OCFS report on portable technology is posted to the CONNECTIONS website on both the Home and System/Network pages.

Completion of the FASP...

An alert was sent on January 3rd, to notify Directors of Services, local district and voluntary agency Implementation Coordinators and Resource Users about a technical fix that went into production on January 3rd related to completion of the FASP. The content of the alert follows:

For the past few months users have reported that, in some instances, they have been unable to complete the Family Assessment Service Plan (FASP). In researching this issue, it was found that when a user clicked on the Service Plan node the first time after launching a FASP, when they were retrieving the services needed from the previously approved FASP or Plan Amendment, the transaction had been timing out, thus not allowing the user to complete this activity, and instead receive an error message. We have reviewed the circumstances in which these situations occur, as well as the issues that have been reported, and have isolated the event and remedied this issue with a fix that was implemented on January 3rd, during the maintenance window. We are pleased to report that the fix has been tested and performed successfully, so that users should no longer receive an error when trying to complete, or update, the Service Plan in the in-process FASP. Therefore, FASPs that were 'stuck' in process should now be able to be completed.

The Business Process Redesign Manual...

Just a note that an updated copy of the Business Redesign Manual will be available for use and posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site early next week!

CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9 Job Aid ~ Health Services...

Just to let you know...a DRAFT copy of the Health Services Job Aid has been posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site. The Job Aid details the CONNECTIONS system changes being introduced with the implementation of Build 18.9 as they relate to health services. A few of the topics that the Job Aid highlights are ~ the security and confidentiality of health information, viewing, recording and modifying health information and generating forms and reports. Check out the rest of the Job Aid for a more detail!

CCRS & CONNECTIONS ~ A Crossing Point...

Assessment & Service Plans Relief

Please note that this enhancement is scheduled to be available to users on Monday, February 5th.

In an effort to provide mandate relief to users who are currently entering duplicative information into both CCRS as well as the CONNECTIONS application, we have developed a "crossing point" that will eliminate the need for duplicative entry. Districts will **no** longer enter Assessment and Service Plans directly into CCRS as data will be fed from CONNECTIONS. Most CCRS edits will be suspended for plans, and the system of record for the CID and Assessment and Service Plans will be CONNECTIONS. It should be noted that the goal is to replace the CCRS Assessment and Service Plan function, not keep it in sync. Please note that you must continue to register the case in CCRS, as CCRS remains the system of record for placement/movement, legal and adoption activities and CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record for Service Plans.

The following is an explanation of the way that the cross-over will operate. Each night approved FASP data from the last five days will be sent from the OCFS Data Warehouse (taken from CONNECTIONS) to CCRS. Information from the Data Warehouse will also be sent over if there are changes in the PPG, Anticipated Completion Date and/or Program Choices. If there is an open CCRS case the system will compare the FASP approval date to what it sees in CCRS (dates and type plan). If what is coming from the Warehouse is newer, it will add a new Assessment Service Plan to CCRS. If the CCRS Plan Type and Date match what is coming from the Data Warehouse and there are changes in the PPG, Anticipated Completion date and/or the Program Choices, the current CCRS Assessment Service Plan will be modified with that new information. If the CCRS case is NOT open, it will try for 5 days. After that it will stop trying until a newer plan or additional changes to PPG, Anticipated Completion Date and/or the Program Choices comes from CONNECTIONS to the Warehouse to CCRS. So, if WMS and CCRS opening lags and your initial (comprehensive...) FASP is done and approved prior to your opening the CCRS case, those FASPs will just not be reflected in CCRS. Once the CCRS case is open whatever FASP is next approved or when there is a PPG, Anticipated Completion Date and/or Program Choice change made and there is an existing approved FASP, that current information will go over and in CCRS the appropriate plan will be stored. Plans will NOT cue up to be entered in the right order in CCRS if CCRS is not open to receive them. This is okay. Remember that the goal here is **NOT** to keep CCRS and CONNECTIONS in synch. The system of record for plans and the CID date is/will be CONNECTIONS. The data feed, of planning data, to CCRS is to feed downstream systems that get data from CCRS; primarily AMS which needs the PPG and some other information. CCRS plan information will become the conduit to keep those systems up to date.

It should be noted, however, that users will still see the message that informs them to update CCRS upon modification or ending of a Program Choice or PPG, as this message will not be suppressed at this time; however, the deletion of this message from user view will be a technical fix that has been included in Build 18.9.

An Update on the CIN/PID Interface Application...

We have completed an inventory of the users that access the CIN/PID application and have determined that the application is currently accessed on a very limited basis, therefore we are going to archive it and remove the Icon from the CITRIX logon page within the next month.

A Bit of OCFS Data Warehouse News...

Newly Revised "Cognos 8 Migration FAQ" Document...

If you are a Data Warehouse user and want the most up-to-date info on the Cognos 8 migration, we ask that you take a look at the newly revised "Cognos 8 Migration Frequently Asked Questions" document that was just posted to the Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS Intranet. The document contains important **NEW** information about the upcoming move to Cognos 8!

NYS OFT HSEN nyseWebstar...or...How Do I Get My Mail Through My Internet Address as a Custom Recipient? and other Informational Tid Bits...

For your convenience we have now placed a link to the nyseWebstar manual on the CONNECTIONS intranet site. The manual details information about how to reset your password, make your internet address your prime mailing address (Custom Recipient ~ page 39 of the manual), create a distribution list and much, much more.

Quick Tip...

The Use of The Ampersand (or the '&' symbol)...

Setting up a new agency in either FAD or the Resource Directory? If you are, we caution you in the use of the ampersand symbol (&) at the end of the agency name in the resource name field. At present, if an agency/facility enters the ampersand symbol (&) at the end of resource name field in the Resource Directory, a system error occurs on our end, and we are not able to generate correspondence to the intended agency. This issue is scheduled to be fixed in a future Build, however, until we have implemented the fix, we ask agencies/facilities not to use this symbol at the end of the resource name field in the Resource Directory.

In The Next Few Weeks Keep Your Eye Out For...

The Build 18.9 training schedule and updated versions of the Build 18.9 Job Aids.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly
- Cognos 8 Migration Frequently Asked Questions document
- Report on Portable technology
- Draft Health Services Job aid
- Link to the nyseWebstar manual

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

- ***Friday, 1/12/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 1/17/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday 1/19/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM