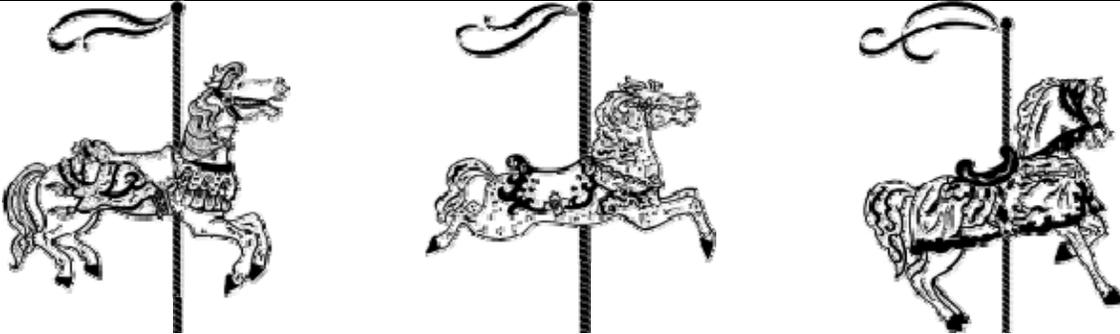


~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~
August 24 - 31, 2007



Build 18.9.1 "Info To Know"...

Deployment of Build 18.9.1...

As you are aware, Build 18.9.1 is scheduled to be deployed this evening, August 24th, from 6:00 PM – Midnight. Please note that the CONNECTIONS application will be unavailable for this six hour window while the Build is being deployed.

Build 18.9.1 Job Aids...

- ***CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.1 Job Aid – Functionality for All Users of CONNECTIONS***

This job aid is intended for all CONNECTIONS users. It provides a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system changes being introduced with the implementation of Build 18.9.1. Specifically, this job aid contains information about enhancements in the following functional areas: Approvals, Foster and Adoptive Home Development, FASP's: including Plan Amendments and Service Plan Reviews, FASP Reports, Health Services, Permanency, Person Search, Progress Notes and Security. For your reference, the job aid is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips page.

- ***CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.1 Job Aid – Health Services***
Functionality for Health Specialists, Caseworkers, Case Planners, Case Managers and CPS Workers/Monitors

System Build 18.9.1 Job Aid – Health Services provides a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system changes being introduced with Build 18.9.1 – specifically information about health services. This job aid is intended for all CONNECTIONS users who will be responsible for recording health information in CONNECTIONS. For your reference, the job aid is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips page.

The Build 18.9.1 Highlights Document...

The Build Highlights document, a document that describes the enhancements in more detail, was communicated on Monday, July 30th. For your reference, the

Highlights document is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home and Implementation pages. The detail of the Build enhancements provided in the Highlights gives the reader a “high level” view, organized by specific application module, of the system changes/modifications. The content of this Build is primarily comprised of fixes identified by system users, as well as those system enhancements that were identified by the members of the CONNECTIONS Functional Improvement Team. Many of the modifications in the Build are concentrated in the following areas: FASP windows and outputs, Progress Notes, the Permanency Hearing Report, Health, Approvals and Security.

It should be noted that CONNECTIONS Regional Office Implementation Field staff have been reviewing the enhancements of this Build during the Regional RIST meetings. If you would like more information about the Build we ask that you contact the CONNECTIONS staff person in your region.

The Build 18.9.1 Day 1 Checklist...

The checklist, a tool that districts and agencies can use to track whether they are prepared for the implementation of the Build, was communicated earlier this month and a copy of the checklist is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Implementation page. The areas of the application that the checklist specifies are: Progress Notes, FASP, the Permanency Hearing report Module, the Health Module, Security and Build Training tools.

The Build 18.9.1 Release Notes...

The Release Notes, describing the content of the Build’s modifications, enhancements, fixes and impacts, was communicated on Monday August 20th. This document provides the reader with a “SIR by SIR” detail of the enhancements that will be included in the Build. The detailed description includes: the user’s affected, the module of the application that is effected, an issue description, the fix, the SIR number, as well as an identification of the fixes that were requested by the CONNECTIONS Functional Improvement Team.

Access to CPS Investigation Stages by Voluntary/Contract Agencies Teleconference...

Teleconference Date: September 12, 2007 – 9:30 – 11:30AM

Provided by: NYS OCFS/Bureau of Training SUNY Training Strategies Group

Target Population:

Local DSS offices, Voluntary Agencies, and Contract Preventive and Protective Supervisory and Casework staff

Description of the Teleconference:

The OCFS is presenting a teleconference for Local Department of Social Services (LDSS), Voluntary Authorized Foster Care Agency and Contract Preventive Agency (Agency) supervisory and casework staff on the new functionality in CONNECTIONS that will support the ability for agency staff to access Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation Stage information. The teleconference will include: a presentation by OCFS Legal and Policy staff on the history and statutory authority to access information in CPS cases, confidentiality standards, appropriate case recording, roles and responsibilities of both LDSS and Agency staff during the investigation process, and benefits of sharing CPS information; a walkthrough by CONNECTIONS staff on how to navigate to, and access, CPS Investigation stages via Implied Role; and a panel discussion that will include LDSS, ACS and Voluntary Agency staff. Topics will include current practices on sharing information; maintaining the integrity of the investigation process; maintaining the therapeutic relationship with the client and the service provider; expectations; and training/orientation needs. For your reference, the training announcement is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home page.

SUNY CONNECTIONS Training Project Information...

As a result of federal funding cuts, the SUNY CONNECTIONS Training Project has absorbed commensurate budget cuts. Although some aspects the project will remain essentially the same, these cuts will result in important changes to what SUNY can provide. Here is a summary of the impacts on key project activities:

- **Training**—Lab training will continue to be offered, but on a somewhat reduced scale. Focus will be on the delivery of the two day basic case management training. Requests for onsite training and special offerings will be considered on a case by case basis, but the ability to respond to such requests will be significantly diminished.
- **Resource User Support**—Support for Resource Users will continue upstate at its current level.
- **Build Support/ Step by Step Guides**—SUNY will continue to provide job aids to support Builds and to update Online Help. However, Step by Step Guides and Tip Sheets will no longer be maintained or updated. **Online Help will become the sole source of up-to-date documentation for the functioning of the CONNECTIONS application.**
- **CBT's**—CBT's currently in process (ie, update to Introduction to CONNECTIONS, Supervisory Functions, FASP, Data Maintenance) will be completed during the early fall. Several other CBT's will be produced in the coming 6-8 months, with particular attention to those areas where training will be less available going forward.
- **Other Administrative Supports**—A number of other administrative supports will be greatly curtailed or eliminated, including:

- Distribution of printed materials
- No Advance notice of classes in danger of cancellation (cancellation decisions will occur on the Monday of the preceding week of the class)
- Elimination of toll-free access to the CONNECTIONS Training Project
- Requests to the CONNECTIONS Project for assistance with STARS, registration will be referred directly to the STARS staff
- Maintenance of the Training Data Base will continue, but on more limited basis.

If you have additional questions, please contact Gerry Magnes, CONNECTIONS Team Lead for Training, at 518.474.2351.

A Note About To-Do Removals For Staff Who Have Left Local District or Voluntary Agency Employment...

Please note that good Business Practice dictates that local districts and voluntary agencies should routinely check to see that any worker who is planning to leave a district or agency has addressed all To-Do's prior to the actual end date. As we know, however, this is not always possible, and Task To-do's that remain on a workers To-Do list after the worker **no longer** works at the district/agency require a data-fix to have them deleted before that the worker can be end-dated.

If a district or agency experiences any issues with these 'lingering' To-Do's, we ask that you send these issues directly to the mailbox titled: **ocfs.sm.Connections_APP_HELP**, versus calling the Enterprise Helpdesk for assistance on these matters. This mailbox is continuously monitored throughout the work day.

The information that needs to be included in any request for a To Do Data-Fix is:

- **Mail Subject Line:** To Do Data-Fix
- In the email include the request to perform a data-fix to remove To-Do's for: HSEN ID #, User's Name, Office, Unit and Zone

For Example: Ny5990, Joe Duffney, KBD, C, 236

WMS Error Code...

Recently we have been notified of an event that some users have experienced on an intermittent basis, when they performed one of three actions, identified below, in CONNECTIONS that would send a transaction to WMS. This event could result in the user receiving some variation of this message: 'ERROR 462 - The remote server machine does not exist or is unavailable.'

The three actions that a user might have received this message are identified below:

- when the user clicks the 'App Reg' button on the FSS window or,
- when the user clicks the 'Synch' or 'SAVE' button on the FSS window where demographics have been updated and need to be sent to WMS or,

- when approving the closure of an FSS stage that is linked to a WMS Services case.

It should be noted that we are analyzing this issue at present and believe that we have isolated the cause and expect to have further information to communicate next week. However, if users continue to receive this, or any other error message when working in WMS or CONNECTIONS, we ask that they call the OFT Enterprise Helpdesk at: 1.800.697.1323.

Enhancements to the State Central Register... SCR Business Continuity Application "BCA"

A new environment has been developed, to be implemented later in the fall, that will allow the SCR to record intake information in a stand alone application (the SCR Business Continuity Application "BCA") when CONNECTIONS and/or the supporting network is down for routine maintenance or unavailable due to system issues. When the network becomes again available, the information recorded in the stand alone system will be uploaded to CONNECTIONS, thus eliminating the need for the SCR to manually re-enter it. The BCA will also support auto faxing from the SCR Intake workstation to the currently designated fax numbers in the receiving districts. When the system/network becomes available, the SCR will complete the intake cross reference (Person Searches) and automated transmission (Save and Assign) processes in CONNECTIONS.

GIS (General Information System) Messages...

*****Please note that the information below is applicable to local districts only.***

For your reference, GIS messages are available in the Public Folders using the following path:

*All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/TSU/ ***Services systems Reference Documents/ GIS (system change notices)*

GIS 07-#007; Elimination of use of CCRS for non-foster care cases...

A new GIS message was communicated on Thursday August 16, 2007, to advise local social services districts that effective **September 1, 2007**, use of the Child Care Review Service (CCRS) is only required to register children in foster care and to record their movement, legal and adoption activities in that system. However, for all other types of child welfare cases, including those with a program choice of preventive (mandated or non-mandated), protective, non-DSS custody, or any combination of those program choices, registration and the recording of any legal activities that do not result in foster care placement, is at district option.

CONNECTIONS 'Tip of the Week'...

PIDs and Associating Names...

Please note that Adoption workers should **never** associate the child's post-adoptive name with their pre-adoptive PID. The post-adoptive name gets its own

PID. In addition, please don't use the post-adoptive name as an 'AKA' name in a pre-adoptive case.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

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

- Access to CPS Investigation Stages by Voluntary/Contract Agencies Teleconference Announcement
- Build 18.9.1 Release Notes
- The CONNECTIONS Weekly

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

*****Please note the additional application downtime for Friday evening, August 24th, for the deployment of Build 18.9.1.***

- *****Friday, 8/24/07*** from 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM (six hours)
- ***Wednesday, 8/29/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday, 8/31/07*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM