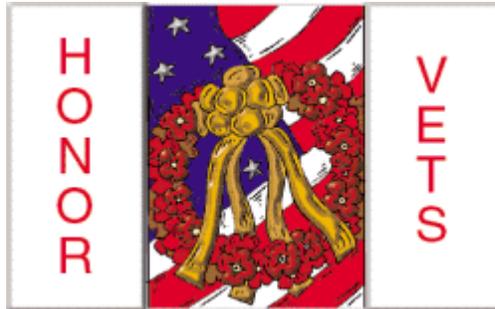


~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~
November 9 -16, 2007



Veteran's Day

11/11/07

UPDATE on the Remote Access Services (or RAS)...

On Thursday, November 1st, a communication about the decommissioning of the RAS, or Remote Access Services was sent to individual users at the local districts (241 users) and voluntary agencies (73 users), who have used the dial up service to access the HSEN. The communication was also sent to the agency and district Implementation Coordinator and Directors of Service, and included a letter, explaining some alternate methods of dial in, as well as a survey questionnaire to be completed by the RAS user and returned by Wednesday, November 7th, to ocfs.dl.it.ras@ocfs.state.ny.us. The point of the survey questionnaire is to help OCFS IT identify alternative methods for current RAS users to access email or other OCFS HSEN application(s).

It should be noted that the phase out of the RAS service will begin on December 1, 2007.

The information below was included in the recent communication.

The following are a listing of alternate access methods that require that you have your own internet service provider (ISP). In some cases public Internet access may be used.

1. For general **Email** access, including Outlook Calendar and Global Address Book - anyone with a HSEN account and Internet access can use Outlook Web Access (OWA). Instructions can be found at <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/remote%20access.asp>
2. If you require **access to a specific application, such as Connections or Webstar, you may be able to use SSLVPN from a non state imaged device.** Details may be found here: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/vpn/sslvpn/>, including the link to form OCFS-4827 to request SSLVPN access. This request must be submitted by your agency security administrator to comctrup@dfa.state.ny.us

3. If you require access to **an application NOT available through SSLVPN**, you may be able to use CISCO VPN. To use CISCO VPN you will need a state-imaged laptop or desktop with the VPN software installed, and you will need special access granted. More information may be found here: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/vpn/>. This request must be submitted by your agency security administrator to comctrup@dfa.state.ny.us
4. If none of these solutions support your need for this access, please fill out the attached questionnaire and mail it to ocfs.dl.it.ras@ocfs.state.ny.us by close of business, Wednesday, November 7th.
5. If one of these solutions **does** meet your needs, please send an email to ocfs.dl.it.ras@ocfs.state.ny.us by close of business Wednesday, November 7th, specifying which one(s) it is. Please include the Serial Number of the PC or laptop that you use. (It should be on the underside of the laptop, and will be after either "S/N" or "Service Tag." On a desktop, it will be on a tag on top of the tower that houses the hard drive.)
6. If your district or agency no longer needs the PC or laptop that you have been using to RAS in, please send an email to comctrup@dfa.state.ny.us to request pickup of the device.
7. If you need more information, please contact the RAS issues mailbox <mailto:ocfs.dl.it.ras@ocfs.state.ny.us>. Please include: your contact information **and what you use the RAS server for**, as well as your questions or concerns.

****Please note: If you use RAS, but have not received your survey, or if you have any questions regarding the decommission of RAS, please send e-mail to ocfs.dl.it.ras@ocfs.state.ny.us. Please include: your contact information, your use of the RAS server (if any), as well as your questions or concerns.**

The Impact of Internet Explorer 7.0 on HSEN Applications...

The following information was previously communicated in an OFT Bulletin (07-CHS-04) on January 22, 2007.

As we shared with you in a previous Weekly, this bulletin informed local DSS LAN Administrators of problems discovered when HSEN browser applications are run on equipment housing the Microsoft Internet Explorer version 7.0. In the communication, OFT asked that users refrain from upgrading local equipment, or purchasing local equipment with Internet Explorer version 7.0, if that equipment will access State HSEN browser applications; and they cautioned

that **no state equipment should be upgraded by county LAN Administrators.**

The bulletin directed that counties using WSUS, SUS or Windows Update to apply Microsoft patches must take action through those applications to make sure that Internet Explorer 7.0 is not applied. If local LAN Administrators download IE 7.0 and start using it, they may have issues running *any* OCFS Web based applications. In essence, you should not begin using IE 7.0 until you receive direction from OFT and OCFS.

We thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

A 'Gentle' Reminder About Changing Passwords...

This is just a reminder that all users need to change their passwords every 90 days. There are system prompts to gently 'remind' all users to change their passwords when the time is getting near, we just wanted to reinforce and 'gently' remind you as well!

Info About Out of State Foster Homes in CONNECTIONS...

Background Information

CONNECTIONS Build 18.9.1 blocked the ability to generate Foster and Adoptive Home Certificates and Approval Letters for foster homes located outside of New York State. This change was made because of a finding made during the federal 2006 Title IV-E Eligibility Review. OCFS found that social services districts were using CONNECTIONS generated Certificates and Approval Letters issued by social services districts or New York State voluntary authorized agencies as verification of a home's certification or approval. However, the documentation required to support Title IV-E claiming for out-of-state foster home payments is a copy of the license (certificate or approval) issued by the agency which actually licensed the home in the state in which the home is physically located, in accordance with that state's licensing requirements.

Required Action

Please note that opening an out-of-state foster home in CONNECTIONS in Accepted-Active status denotes that the home is eligible for IV-E reimbursement. As a result, when social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies have received all pertinent documentation from the actual licensing agency that the home has been licensed (certified or approved) in accordance with the requirements of that state, they can then complete the process, within the CONNECTIONS application, relative to opening or reauthorizing an out-of-state foster home for the period of time specified in CONNECTIONS. Again, the necessary documentation is a copy of the license, certificate or approval issued in the other state.

It should be noted that OCFS will be issuing further information on this topic to social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies in the near future.

OCFS Data Warehouse News ...

OCFS Data Warehouse Training for Cognos 8...

The "OCFS Data Warehouse Basic Training for Cognos 8" is an online computer-based training (CBT) accessible via the Intranet. It provides an interactive simulation of the Cognos 8 environment. Users learn how to access Cognos 8, navigate Cognos, run predefined reports, and manage report output. The CBT also demonstrates how to copy reports from the My Folders area to the Technical Assistance folder. Finally, users are shown the User Tools folder, which contains valuable Data Warehouse resources. The training takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. A link to the online training is located at <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwtrain.asp>. The link also brings you to a downloadable PowerPoint slideshow for those who cannot run the online version. This training is a simulation of the Cognos 8 environment. Anything that takes place during the simulation does not carry over into the "real" Cognos 8 environment.

More Info About Cognos 8...

The **Cognos 8** environment is now open to all OCFS Data Warehouse users! Cognos 8 is the new OCFS Data Warehouse environment that brings reports and data from the Cognos PowerPlay/Impromptu and Cognos ReportNet environment into one location. The end result is one point of access for all your Data Warehouse needs.

If you have access to PowerPlay/Impromptu and/or ReportNet – you are already set-up for Cognos 8. For information on accessing Cognos 8 and setting-up the OCFS Data Warehouse tab, view the **Quick Reference Guide** for Cognos 8 on the DW Access page of the CONNECTIONS intranet site: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwaccess.asp>.

For more information on Cognos 8, view the October newsletter at: <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwnews.asp>.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

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

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

- **Wednesday, 11/14/07** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 11/16/07** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Wednesday, 11/21/07** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM