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CONNECTIONS  
INTRANET:

<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect>

CONNECTIONS  
INTERNET:

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/connect>

## Electronic PHR Process at Onondaga DSS

With the combined efforts of Syracuse Regional CONNECTIONS Implementation staff and Onondaga district employees, Onondaga Department of Social Services has successfully executed a fully online Permanency Hearing Report (PHR) process. **Approving, submitting, and finalizing a PHR online is more efficient and requires less personnel.**

PHR transformation functionality has allowed for an entirely electronic process to monitor, approve, submit, and finalize each PHR. Onondaga has effectively implemented a completely paperless procedure, as only the Final PHR to be submitted to the court need be printed, signed, and notarized by the Case Worker and Legal Staff—all other stages can conveniently be completed online.

In adopting a fully electronic PHR process, Syracuse Regional CONNECTIONS Implementation staff worked to reassure the Onondaga DSS Management team that the Legal Department would only have access to the Draft PHR via CONNECTIONS. Additionally, staff worked closely with the legal department to demonstrate the efficiency of the paperless process as well as to provide an introductory understanding of CONNECTIONS. To accomplish this task, a bookmarked URL was used to access CONNECTIONS from county-issued computers, making the integration of the application into the legal department's business process of fairly straightforward.

### The Efficiency of an Electronic PHR Process:

- ◆ Eliminates the need for Case Workers to print and pass the hardcopy PHR to Supervisors for approval.
- ◆ Eliminates the need for Case Workers to transport the PHR to and from the Legal Department
- ◆ Drastically reduces PHR approval time. **Onondaga now averages one business day or less**
- ◆ Eliminates the need for a single Clerk to produce, mail, and validate all Notices and Statements. **At Onondaga, one clerk mails the Notices and notes the mail date in CONNECTIONS. This only takes a fraction of the work day to accomplish and frees the clerk for other tasks**
- ◆ PHR's are completed faster by using the *Finalized PHR's* and *New Using Function*. **In Onondaga, Finalizing the PHR is a mandatory part of the electronic process.**

*"The changes in the approval of the PHR process have been a drastic improvement from the manual process we had in place. It is more efficient and the caseworkers are able to submit the report electronically to the supervisor where it in turn is submitted to our legal department. The responses are automatic and the turnaround time has been shortened, which in turn means reports are processed and filed in court sooner."*

Mary Woodfork  
Onondaga DSS Supervisor



## May Security Awareness Message: *Protect Yourself from Email Phishing*

### **“Gone Phishing”**

When using email, it is difficult to know, with certainty, with whom you are communicating. Scammers will pose as legitimate businesses, organizations, or individuals, to gain the trust of users. If a scammer is able to gain the trust of victims, they can leverage this trust to convince victims to willingly give up information or click on malicious links or attachments. To gain users trust, scammers will appear like legitimate businesses or organizations, by spoofing the email address, creating a fake website with legitimate logos and even providing phone numbers to an illegitimate customer service center operated by the scammers. Being mindful and observant can help you defend against scammers' deceptions.

### **Two Common Types of Phishing Attacks**

*Phishing scams* are perhaps one of the best-known forms of email scams. This type of scam involves a scammer pretending to have a fortune that he or she is incapable of accessing without the help of someone trustworthy, which happens to be you! The scammers will try to obtain the user's financial information using an empty promise of sharing the wealth in exchange for their help.

*Spear-phishing* is a targeted and personalized attack against a specific organization or individual. These attacks will utilize information about the user email addresses to entice the users to either divulge sensitive information or download a malicious file. This often requires extensive information gathering about the target and has become prevalent in cyber espionage.

### **Be Mindful**

If you are mindful of potential phishing traps and observant of the telltale signs of a scam, you can better defend against a phishing attack. Here are some easy tips to protect yourself:

- Be cautious of all communications you receive, including those purported to be from "trusted entities," and be careful when clicking links contained within any message. *If in doubt, do not click.*
- Don't respond to any spam e-mails.

- Don't send your personal information via email. Legitimate businesses will not ask users to send their sensitive personal information this way.
- Don't input your information in a pop-up; if you are interested in an offer that you see advertised in a pop-up ad, contact the retailer directly through its homepage or retail outlet.

### **Be Observant**

Phishing scams can be very realistic and difficult to identify. The following are some telltale signs that may indicate a phishing scam:

- The email has poor spelling or grammar.
- The use of threats or incredible offers is a common tactic that tries to elicit an emotional response to cloud the user's judgment.
- The URL does not match that of the legitimate site. Scammers cannot use the same URL associated with the legitimate websites, so they will tweak the address of their spoofed website so that at a quick glance it looks legitimate.

### **Be Aware of Attachments**

Don't trust a file based on its extension. There are a variety of tricks to hide the nature of the file. The simplest solution is not to download a file from an unknown user.

### **For More Information:**

For additional information about email phishing scams, please visit:

[FTC's Identity Theft Website](#)

[AntiPhishing Work Group](#)

[Microsoft—Recognize Phishing](#)

[Sophos—Dealing with Spear Phishing Campaigns](#)





## New Tip Sheet: AFCARS, Recording Removal Information in CONNECTIONS

A new Tip Sheet, **AFCARS, Recording Removal Information in CONNECTIONS**, is now available on the CONNECTIONS [Intranet](#) and [Internet](#) pages.

The federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) requires states to collect data elements on children in out-of-home care, including the date of physical removal, the type of legal event associated with the removal and the condition(s) associated with that removal.

This tip sheet addresses the process of recording removal information in CONNECTIONS on the Removal Information tab on the Tracked Children Detail window. The tip sheet also presents several scenarios that illustrate the correct date to use in different case situations.

## May Computer Training Courses

New computer training classes are now available throughout the month of May, in both instructor-led computer labs and via distance-learning options like Training Space and iLinc.

Classes include:

- Excel 2010
- Word 2010
- Access 2010
- Outlook 2010
- PowerPoint 2010
- OneNote Basics

These and additional courses will assist staff in transitioning to Microsoft Office 2010 and Windows 7.

More extensive listings of the classroom and distance-learning courses are available on the CONNECTIONS websites at the following links:

[May Classroom Training](#) (Intranet)

[May Classroom Training](#) (Internet)

[May Online Training](#) (Intranet)

[May Online Training](#) (Internet)



# CONNECTIONS Clue

**“You do not have security to see your case To-Dos” message.**

When I highlight a stage on my workload, the message, “You do not have security to see your case To-Dos.” appears in red letters under the Case To-Do tab .....How can that be?

This security message displays on the Case To-Do tab whenever there is an open stage that you don’t have the security rights to see. When an ARI stage is open, CONNECTIONS blocks the view of all To-Dos for the case.

The workaround? Click on the “My To-Dos” tab next to your “My Workload” tab. If there are any To-Dos for the stage in which you have a role, they will display on your To-Do list.

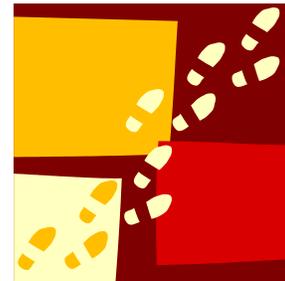


## Don't Forget Past CONNECTIONS Clues!

Past CONNECTIONS Clues are available on the CONNECTIONS Website at:

[CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Intranet)

[CONNECTIONS Clues](#) (Internet)



## Coming Next...



**In Our Next Issue:**

⇒ New CONNECTIONS Clue: *Help! I need to print a FAD home license but it's showing the prior agency as the Authorizing Agency!*

