

~The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY~
November 25 ~ December 2, 2005



System Issues Update...

The OCFS-IT Technical Team continues to work to resolve the recently identified system latency, session disconnect and logon issues. The team is working closely with staff from the Office for Technology (OFT) as well as experts in Citrix and Microsoft to thoroughly analyze and resolve these problems. OCFS has reached out to local districts and voluntary agencies to help test the impacts of technical solutions. OCFS understands the importance of system performance as it relates to the vital work of the State's child welfare staff, and has set this as a Priority 1 issue. As technical solutions are identified, they are being tested and implemented and we will continue to provide updates as the issues are resolved.

CONNECTIONS Build 18.6...

CONNECTIONS Build 18.6 is scheduled to be implemented the evening of Tuesday, November 29th. The timeframe for the Build implementation is expected to be from 6:00PM Tuesday, November 29th to 12:00AM, Wednesday, November 30th. We ask that users log off of the CONNECTIONS Application by 5:45PM on Tuesday, November 29th.

The Build Release Notes, a document that identifies the content of the Build, was communicated on earlier this morning (Monday, November 28rd) and will be posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Implementation and News For Users pages.

CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 ...

Permanency Bill

As you are aware, CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 is scheduled to be implemented the weekend of Friday, December 9th. The Build Highlights document, that

identifies the impact of this bill on the CONNECTIONS Application, were communicated to local district and voluntary agency CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators, Security and Back-up Security Coordinators, Directors of Service and Resource Users on Tuesday, November 22nd. The Build 18.7 Highlights are posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet site on the Implementation and News For Users pages.

Dragon Naturally Speaking Licenses Available to Voluntary Agencies...

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is making approximately 600 licenses of Dragon Naturally Speaking (Version 8.0) software available to voluntary agencies. This software is designed to assist staff in entering narrative data into computer applications such as CONNECTIONS. Dragon Naturally Speaking is a voice recognition software product that has been tested and determined to work effectively with these applications. On Tuesday, November 22nd a communication was forwarded to voluntary agency Implementation Coordinators, that included a question and answer document about the software, as well as a letter, addressed to voluntary agency Executive Directors, describing the software application.

The letter also included instructions related to the submission of a *letter of intent* to request copies the licenses. Please note that the letter of intent should include a description of the Agency's Business Plan to implement and support the deployment of this software. ***Agencies can request as many licenses as necessary, up to a ratio of one license per five casework staff.*** The letter of intent should identify:

- How many casework staff you have;
- How many licenses are being requested. (you can request 1 license per every 5 caseworkers);
- The role(s) of the staff person(s) that will use the software;
- The Agency's plan to install the software;
- The name and title of the person who will serve as a contact person and Implementation Coordinator ("local champion"). Please explain how that individual will train and support users; and
- A mailing address to which we can send the headsets and installation CD that includes the contact name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.

Please note that requests for licenses that do not contain an adequate business plan will not be honored. Letters of intent should be sent by the agency Executive Director by e-mail to Boris.Rabovsky@dfa.state.ny.us or sent by mail to: NYSOCFS, Attn: Boris Rabovsky, CONNECTIONS Project, Ten Eyck Bldg, 15th floor, 52 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144.

All requests must be received by Friday, December 9, 2005. In the event that the number of licenses requested exceeds the number available, OCFS will

distribute the licenses on a proportional basis. Any additional questions can be referred to: Boris.Rabovsky@dfa.state.ny.us

Adoption Discharge and Finalization Checklist ~ Revised Version...

The revised version of the checklist that identifies the steps users should follow in CONNECTIONS, WMS and CCRS, when performing an adoption discharge or, finalizing an adoption is posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Implementation, News For Users and Home pages.

CONNECTIONS Step-by-Step Guide: Training For FAD Caseworkers...

The CONNECTIONS Step by Step Guide: Training for FAD Workers, dated October 17, 2005, as well as the companion Revisions Guide, are posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Desk and Job Aid page.

Further Information on the STARS System...

****Please note that local districts and voluntary agencies should follow their agencies protocol/policy when registering for any training.**

As you are aware, training schedules for ongoing CONNECTIONS trainings are available in the STARS system. The following hyper-link, <http://stars.bsc-cdhs.org/TrainingCalendar/provider/search.aspx>, will forward individuals *directly* to the inquiry screen of the system so that they can immediately access the training schedule information. Following access to the screen, the user can then follow the instructions below.

- ➔ Under Provider, enter **SUNY TSG**
- ➔ Under Course Content, enter **Systems CONNECTIONS**
- ➔ Use the calendar to enter the dates you want to check for training.
- ➔ Click the check box for the Region where you want to attend
- ➔ Click the **Submit** Button

This will bring you to the list of the course offerings that fit your criteria. STARS is continuously updated as training courses are added or deleted. The course titles are in hypertext and link you to course descriptions. Again, please note that local districts and voluntary agencies should follow their agencies protocol/policy when registering for any training.

When CONNECTIONS Will Be Unavailable...

- Tuesday, 11/29/05, from 6:00PM – 12:00AM, Wednesday, November 30th to implement Build 18.6
- Wednesday, 11/30/05 from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- Friday, 12/2/05 from 5:00AM - 7:00AM