

*~The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY~*  
*December 9 ~ 16, 2005*



***CONNECTIONS Performance Issues Update...***

In the Project's continuing effort to communicate with all partners, a letter, signed by William Travis, Deputy Commissioner of Information Technology, was forwarded, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, to local district Commissioners and voluntary agency Executive Directors reporting that the system issues have been resolved. The following is the text of the letter:

"We are pleased to report that the recent performance issues with the CONNECTIONS application have been resolved. A team comprised of technical staff from NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and NYS Office for Technology (OFT) collaboratively worked with technical staff from Citrix, Microsoft and Oracle, to successfully mitigate the problems.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to staff in both the local districts and voluntary agencies that partnered with us in resolving the issues. We appreciate the patience and understanding shown by everyone involved while we worked toward a secure solution.

We will continue to monitor the performance of the application to make certain that the system is operating in a consistent manner. In keeping with the issue resolution model previously established, we would ask that if any system issues develop, users report them to the NYSOFT Enterprise Helpdesk (1-800-697-1323).

As always, thank you for your continued partnership as we work collaboratively toward the full implementation of this initiative."

***An Update on the Templates for the Permanency Hearing Reports, Notice and Statement to the Court and "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report"...***

OCFS is pleased to announce that templates for the Permanency Hearing Reports, Notice and Statement to the Court are now available for use. In addition

to the templates, "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report" is also available. The templates and the Guide can be accessed from the **OCFS internet site**. The address of the site is: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us).

***The following are instructions for accessing the templates and "A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report" from the OCFS internet site.***

- Access the OCFS internet site at [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us);
- on the left under "Resources & Information" click on "Legislation and Regulatory Agenda";
- from that page, click on "Permanency Bill - Chapter 3 of 2005";
- from that page, on the left click on "Guide for Caseworkers/ Templates"

***The following are instructions for accessing the templates and A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report from the OCFS intranet site Home page.***

- click on OCFS;
- from that page click on OCFS Internet at the top right;
- on the left under "Resources & Information" click on "Legislation and Regulatory Agenda";
- from that page, click on "Permanency Bill - Chapter 3 of 2005";
- from that page, on the left click on "Guide for Caseworkers/ Templates"

***The following are instructions for directly accessing the templates and A Guide for Caseworkers: Completion of the Permanency Hearing Report.***

- The following is the direct address for access to both the templates and the Guide:  
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/legal/legislation/permanency/caseworker/guide.asp>

We ask that you download and review the Guide first, as it contains complete instructions about downloading, saving and using the templates.

If you have any questions about working with the templates, please call the NYSOFT Enterprise HELP Desk at 1.800.697.1323.

***An Instructional Note Related to the Templates:***

We suggest that if you are mailing the templates so that other workers can add information to them, and need to add rows for additional children (more than two children), that the first person completing the work create the additional rows (child name, additional adults, PPG, etc.) and then mail the templates to the person that needs to work on them. Once the template has been saved and mailed it is in the form of a document, not a template and the "add a row" functionality may not be enabled for the recipient of the mailing.

## ***Additional Information About The Permanency Bill...***

Please be advised of the following:

- that another important item on the OCFS internet website is the newly posted “Permanency Bill Frequently Asked Questions and Answers document”
- that the Build 18.7 Highlights and the Build 18.7 Release Notes documents are available on the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Implementation page under the sub-heading Build 18.7 Information. The documents describe the changes to the CONNECTIONS application to implement relevant portions of Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005 (the Permanency Bill). It is important that staff begin to familiarize themselves with these changes.
- OCFS has developed, and will soon be sharing, two new Surrender Agreements (Judicial and Extra-judicial) and a new model Voluntary Placement Agreement (all available in both English and Spanish) to make these documents compliant with Chapter 3;
- OCFS is developing new regulations to further implement Chapter 3 to be filed on an emergency basis; and
- OCFS is revising the Model Contract.

## ***CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 ... Permanency Bill***

As you are aware, CONNECTIONS Build 18.7 was tentatively scheduled to be implemented this weekend on Friday, December 9th. The implementation of this Build has been *postponed* however, there will be downtime for all users of the CONNECTIONS Application from 6:00PM, Friday, December 9th through 12:00 AM, Saturday, December 10th (a window of six hours of downtime) as other planned system enhancements will be implemented. These enhancements however, will only impact the functionality of the New York State Central Register (SCR). The target date for implementation of Build 18.7 has been re-scheduled to Friday, December 16th.

For informational purposes, the Build 18.7 Highlights and the Build 18.7 Release Notes, documents that define the impact of the Permanency Bill on the CONNECTIONS Application, are posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet site on the Implementation and News For Users pages.

## ***CID Dates and the WMS Case Opening Document...***

A document that explains the creation of the Case Initiation Date (CID) within CONNECTIONS and the relationship between the CID and the WMS opening date was created based on an identified user need. The document was developed through the joint efforts of the CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Field Support staff. The CONNECTIONS User Acceptance Testing team also reviewed the document. We would like to thank those individuals on both of the teams who developed and reviewed this document!

## ***OFT Screen Saver Policy...***

***Please note that the following information pertains to voluntary agencies only.***

The Office for Technology pushed a screensaver policy to all state workstations the evening of *Wednesday, November 28, 2005*. This policy will cause a password-protected screensaver to be launched after 20 minutes of keyboard inactivity. This will further enhance security of the HSEN network.

If you have any questions related to this information we ask that you phone your OFT Customer Relations Manager, or the phone the Customer Relations main telephone number at 1.866.789.4638.

## ***When CONNECTIONS Will Be Unavailable...***

- ***Friday, 12/9/05*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 12/9/05*** from 6:00PM – 12:00AM, ***Saturday 12/10/05***  
(a projected six hour downtime)
- ***Wednesday, 12/14/05*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 12/16/05*** from 5:00AM - 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 12/16/05*** from 6:00PM - 12:00AM, ***Saturday, 12/17/05*** (a projected six hour downtime)