

CONNECTIONS WEEKLY SYSTEM UPDATE



Memo

To: Implementation Coordinators
From: CONNECTIONS Communications
CC: LAN Administrators, Keyusers, OCFS -Directors of Services,
CONNECTIONS Project Team
Date: April 25, 2002
Re: Weekly System Update--04/26/2002 Week's Activities

1. **CONNECTIONS Build 15:**

On Tuesday April 9th, 2002, Build 15 Overview and Training Support Information was sent to CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators, District Directors of Services and Staff Development Coordinators. CONNECTIONS Build 15 is scheduled for release on the weekend of May 18, 2002.

The above referenced documents provide an overview of Build 15 and a description of training and implementation supports available for district and agency staff. This Build includes a number of enhancements and modifications in both CPS and FAD, as well as in CONNECTIONS common functions. Significant among them is Phonetic Address Search, improved data maintenance capabilities, as well as the new FAD Record Summary (FRS). The training and implementation plan includes regional implementation sessions, lab based training, training videos, preview application, and detailed job aids. We encourage you to make use of these supports to prepare for changes in the Application. Additional materials regarding Build 15 (Release Notes and Schedule) will be sent one week prior to the planned implementation date for Build 15.

If you have any questions about the Build 15 items referenced in these documents, please feel free to contact the CONNECTIONS Communication Team by phone or e-mail.

2. CONNECTIONS Training Will Resume April 30th:

Beginning Tuesday morning, April 30th, the Build 15 enhanced training database will be enabled for Build 15 training activities.

****Instructor-Led Training in Computer Labs for FAD Workers**:** Full-day training sessions will be offered in the CONNECTIONS computer labs from Tuesday, April 30th through Wednesday, May 22nd from 9 am to 4 pm. Due to the volume and significance of FAD changes, training classes will be for FAD workers only. Training for CPS workers will be provided prior to Build 15.1 in July and is described later in this section.

We encourage districts and voluntary agencies to enroll as many FAD supervisors and key workers as possible. Virtually all of the material in the FAD Job Aids will be reviewed during the lab-based classes, with particular focus on the new FAD Record Summary and its resulting changes in FAD processes. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice using CONNECTIONS in the Build 15 enhanced training database using simulated data.

The schedule for lab-based classes is available in the Public Folders: Statewide>CONNECTIONS>Build 15 Implementation>Schedule, and on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website (<http://sdssnet5/ocfs/connect>) on the Training Information and Schedule page. Registration is required for all training. NYC ACS staff registration will be handled centrally through Fred Rosenberg's office in the Office of Direct Foster Care at (212) 676-6917. All other districts and voluntary agencies should contact the SUNY Training Strategies Group at (877) 451-4835.

Build 15 Job Aids: The Build 15 Job Aids are currently posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website (<http://sdssnet5/ocfs/connect>) on the Desk/Job Aids page and in the Public Folders > All Public Folders > Statewide > CONNECTIONS > Build 15 Implementation > Job Aids. Three Job Aids have been developed, each focusing on a different aspect of the Build's features:

- System Build 15 FAD: The Foster and Adoptive Home Record Summary (FRS)
- System Build 15 FAD: Changes Affecting FAD and Related Common Functions
- System Build 15 CPS: Changes Affecting CPS and Related Common Functions

A hard copy of each Job Aid was mailed to every Implementation Coordinator, Staff Development Coordinator, and Director of Services during the week of April 22 and April 29. Voluntary Agency

Implementation Coordinators will receive only the Job Aids that affect FAD workers.

3. Preview Application:

As referenced in last week's update, additional details regarding the CONNECTIONS Build 15 Preview Application were sent earlier this week (Tuesday, April 23) to CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators and LAN Administrators. The "Preview Application will be available in all local districts and voluntary agencies effective April 30, 2002. The Preview Application will remain available until the Build 15 "live" date over the weekend of May 18th. The Preview Application provides local district and voluntary agency staff an opportunity to review the Build 15 version of CONNECTIONS in advance of the Build, and the ability to practice using the Application in the context of their own case data. Please take some time to review the April 23rd memo that provides important information regarding "how to access" the Preview Application.

4. Build 15 District/Agency Cleanup Reports:

*****Important***** In early March (03/06/02) and early April (4/4/02) two cleanup reports (medical dates/fingerprint information & foster homes with no individuals entered in the home) were sent to applicable LDSS, ACS and Voluntary Agency Implementation Coordinators. These two reports were produced to assist districts and agencies in preparing for Build 15 of CONNECTIONS. Build 15 includes system edits that will require the above-mentioned information in the CONNECTIONS system in order to complete the certification/approval or re-certification/re-approval processes for foster/adoptive homes. After Build 15, if these fields are not updated you will not be able to certify or approve the homes which will result in closure of the home. **Please Note:** If your agency did not appear on the "Fingerprint/Medical Date Report" or your district or agency was not sent the "Foster Home with No Individuals Entered in the Home Report", then your district/agency does not need to participate in this cleanup effort.

As referenced in the Build 15 section above, Build 15 is scheduled for implementation on the weekend of May 18, 2002. In order to ensure that foster/adoptive home certification or approval or re-certification/re-approval can take place, this cleanup effort must be completed prior to the implementation of Build 15. Please remember to enter all necessary information into CONNECTIONS.

If you have any questions regarding the above referenced cleanup reports, please contact your CONNECTIONS Implementation Staff in your region or the CONNECTIONS Communication Team.

5. OCFS Data Warehouse:

As of Monday, April 15th, 2002 access to the OCFS Data Warehouse moved from a client based environment to a Citrix Server environment. This affects only current Data Warehouse users. As a result, Data Warehouse users no longer need the Cognos software on their individual pc, or need to wait for the software to be pushed to their machine in order to access the OCFS Data Warehouse. The Cognos software now resides on four Citrix servers that have been designated for use with the OCFS Data Warehouse. Users will only need the current version of the ICA client that is already loaded on their pcs, a web browser that is also pre-loaded on the pcs, and a Cognos logon and password to access the OCFS Data Warehouse.

On April 9, 2002, current Data Warehouse participants were sent instructions that detailed the changes that have occurred as a result of this move to Citrix. The above referenced instructions included information on how to set up your computer for this new procedure.

Additional districts/agencies that are interested in participating in the Data Warehouse can find further information about the Data Warehouse through the Data Warehouse manual that is located in the Public Folders (Public Folders > All Public Folders > Statewide > CONNECTIONS > Committees and Workgroups > Management Reporting Workgroup > Data Warehouse > Manuals > Data Warehouse Presentation Handout). Districts/agencies requesting to participate in the Data Warehouse should contact Joe Delucia via exchange email Joe.Delucia@dfa.state.ny.us or by telephone at 518-473-8209

If any current Data Warehouse users have questions regarding the move to a Citrix environment, please contact Peter Whitford 518-473-1578 or by Exchange e-mail Peter.Whitford@dfa.state.ny.us. All questions regarding the OCFS Data Warehouse application itself should be sent to the Enterprise Help Desk at 1-800-NYS-1323 (1-800-697-1323).

6. CONNECTIONS Desktop PC Project (Update):

The schedule for installation of the new PCs in the remaining regions is as follows:

- Albany Region (Region IV) **Completed**
- Syracuse Region (Region III) **Completed**
- Rochester Region (Region II) **Completed**
- Buffalo Region (Region I) **Completed**
- Yonkers (Region V) **March 25 – April 30, 2002**
- NYC (Region VI) **Ongoing**
- NYC Voluntary Agencies **April 15 – June 30, 2002**

Important: The CONNECTIONS Intranet Website has “best practice” guidelines that provide instructions and procedures for copying your current files and migrating data to help you prepare for your new CONNECTIONS personal computers. If you need to take action on any of these preparatory activities, we urge you to do so as soon as possible. Old computers will be removed and the files purged on the day of installation, before the new pcs are installed.

The Office for Technology Command Center will contact districts/agencies involved in the desktop pc rollout approximately two weeks prior to your scheduled implementation date. At that time, the OFT Command Center will send a follow-up letter to site contacts. This letter will contain instructions and stickers that will need to be placed on the computers that have been targeted for replacement. The stickers should be placed on the upper left hand corner of the monitor connected to the device being replaced.

Note: the computers that are being replaced should match up with the information contained on your district/agency Desktop PC completed spreadsheets that you sent to David Kislowski. **Additionally, if there have been changes to your site contact persons since you submitted your site spreadsheets, it is important that you call the OFT Command Center (1-800-603-0877) to provide them with the new names and telephone numbers.**

From the pilot experience, we recommend that staff review the PC Quick Start Guide prior to installation of the new pc, in order to insure a smooth installation and transition. The Quick Start Guide and several other preparatory reference materials are available both on the CONNECTIONS Intranet site (on the Desk/Job Aid Page) (<http://sdssnet5/ocfs/connect/>) and within the Public Folders (Public Folders>All Public Folders>Statewide>CONNECTIONS>Desktop PC Replacement). Note: Due to the size of the Quick Start Guide, you may have difficulty opening the file from the Public Folders. We recommend saving the file to a local drive or C: drive and then opening it from there or open it from the Intranet Site.

If you have any questions related to the schedule of the rollout you may contact the **Office for Technology Command Center at 1-800-603-0877.**

7. CONNECTIONS System Down Time:

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance CONNECTIONS will be unavailable on:

Friday, 04/26/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

Friday, 05/03/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

8. Microsoft Exchange Servers:

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance on MS Exchange E-mail 5.0 servers, all Exchange E-mail 5.0 servers will be unavailable on:

Sunday, 04/28/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am

Sunday, 05/05/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am