

CONNECTIONS WEEKLY SYSTEM UPDATE



Memo

To: Implementation Coordinators
From: CONNECTIONS Communications
CC: LAN Administrators, Keyusers, OCFS -Directors of Services,
CONNECTIONS Project Team
Date: May 02, 2002
Re: Weekly System Update--05/03/2002 Week's Activities

1. CONNECTIONS Build 15

A). Schedule - CONNECTIONS Build 15 is scheduled for release on the weekend of May 18, 2002. Additional materials regarding Build 15 (Release Notes and Schedule) will be sent one week prior to the planned implementation date for Build 15.

B). CONNECTIONS Training - The Build 15 enhanced training database was enabled for Build 15 training activities on Tuesday, April 30th.

****Instructor-Led Training in Computer Labs for FAD Workers**:**

Full-day training sessions are being offered in the CONNECTIONS computer labs 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.

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 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.

CPS Training: Training is planned for CPS workers prior to Build 15.1 in July. It will include new functionality related to data maintenance, some of which is being introduced in Build 15 and some in Build 15.1. This training will be primarily for the staff who perform merges, splits, and other specialized data maintenance functions that will be introduced in these builds. All of the data maintenance items that are part of Build 15 are covered in the Build 15 Job Aid for CPS workers.

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.

- C). Preview Application -** CONNECTIONS Build 15 "Preview Application" is now available in all local districts and voluntary agencies. 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.

The Preview Application will remain available until the Build 15 “live” date, scheduled for the weekend of May 18, 2002. We encourage local districts and voluntary agencies to use the “Preview Application”. Please take some time to review the April 23rd Preview Memo that provides important information regarding “how to access” the Preview Application. If you have any problems accessing the “Preview Application”, please contact the New York State OFT Enterprise Help Desk at 1-800-NYS-1323.

- D). Build 15 District/Agency Cleanup Reports - ***Important***** In early March (03/06/02) and early April (04/04/02) 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 system edits. The cleanup reports were produced to assist you in identifying the homes that will need this information entered in CONNECTIONS prior to an upcoming certification/approval and re-certification/re-approval. If these fields are not updated on time, you will not be able to certify or approve the homes, which will result in closure of the home.

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. **Please Note:** In the course of conducting your cleanup effort, if you are addressing Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes, please refer to **Item E** (below).

As referenced above, Build 15 is scheduled for implementation on the weekend of May 18, 2002. We urge you to address these reports 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.

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.

- E). ICPC Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes/Build 15 Edits –** Included in Build 15 are system edits that will bring the CONNECTIONS Application in-line with existing regulatory requirements for foster/adoptive homes. The requirements are for

fingerprint dates to be recorded for all foster parents and others in a foster home age 18 and over; and, for completed medical forms for all foster parents.

In response to inquiries from local districts and voluntary agencies regarding situations involving children from New York State being placed in ICPC Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes and the relationship of these homes to Build 15 edits (requiring fingerprint and medical dates), please review the following information:

Out of State Foster/Adoptive Homes are not subject to New York State certification requirements i.e. fingerprints and medical exams; however with CONNECTIONS Build 15, a date in these fields is required for Out of State Homes even though the information is not applicable. Since the code to exclude Out of State Homes from Build 15 edits for fingerprints and medicals was not incorporated, the code will be fixed with CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 in July, 2002. When a fingerprint or medical date field is required to re-certify an Out of State F/A Home, the interim workaround will be for the user to enter 01/01/01 in the date fields. The date fields will then be cleared for Out of State Homes via the data fix to be implemented with Build 15.1.

If a New York child is placed in a home in another state, that home must meet the requirements of the receiving state. The home may be a foster home, an adoptive home, or a relative home for which the plan for the child is discharge from a foster home. If the home meets the requirements of the receiving state then it is deemed to meet the requirements of New York State. The receiving state would notify the New York Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) with the submission of the ICPC form 100A. On this form is a check box that states, "placement may be made". If checked this will indicate that the receiving state has approved the home based on their state's requirements.

If you have questions about the above referenced workaround please contact the New York State Office for Technology Enterprise Help Desk 1-800-NYS-1323. Any questions about Interstate Compact for Placement of Children should be directed to OCFS Family Placement Unit Staff per regular procedures.

2. 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) **Completed**
- 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.**

3. CONNECTIONS System Down Time

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance CONNECTIONS will be unavailable on:

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

Friday, 05/10/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

Friday, 05/17/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

4. 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, 05/05/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am

Sunday, 05/12/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am

Sunday, 05/19/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am