

# CONNECTIONS WEEKLY SYSTEM UPDATE



## Memo

To: Implementation Coordinators  
From: CONNECTIONS Communications  
CC: LAN Administrators, Keyusers, OCFS -Directors of Services,  
CONNECTIONS Project Team  
Date: August 22, 2002  
Re: Weekly System Update--08/23/2002 Week's Activities

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### 1. Case Management Staffing and Equipment Survey Update

On Wednesday 7/24/02, the CONNECTIONS Case Management Staffing and Equipment Survey and related reference materials were forwarded to all local districts and voluntary agencies. All completed surveys were due by COB on Wednesday, 08/21/02.

A query of the Case Management Survey database on 8/21/02 (COB) revealed that most local districts and some voluntary agencies had submitted completed surveys. We would like to extend a "thank you" from the CONNECTIONS Project to all those districts and agencies that submitted completed surveys. For any districts and voluntary agencies that have not yet submitted completed surveys, we again would like to stress the importance of completing this survey. The survey results will be used by the CONNECTIONS Project to assist in planning for the future.

In order to allow remaining districts and voluntary agencies additional time to complete the survey, the time frame for submitting completed surveys has been extended to September 6, 2002. Also previously submitted surveys can be retrieved and updated until September 6, 2002. If additional changes regarding the completed survey become necessary after September 6, 2002, please contact the CONNECTIONS Communication Team.

Please keep in mind that since the original memo/survey was distributed to local districts and voluntary agencies, some districts/agencies reported difficulties accessing the survey. To address these difficulties, a **new URL address** was provided. The address is as follows:

<http://172.28.22.37/onlinesurvey/survey.asp>

If you need assistance completing the survey please contact either the CONNECTIONS Communications Team, or your Regional Office CONNECTIONS Coordinator.

- In New York City ACS, Management Information Systems is coordinating the completion/submission of the survey. Any questions should be directed to Dan Sedlis or Henry Wells.
- CIAB sites will need to dial in and launch the Internet Explorer (found in Program Manager) in order to access the survey. After launching the Internet Explorer, the URL address can then be entered (or copied and pasted) in the URL address area on the Web browser.

## **2. Phase II CONNECTIONS Desktop PC Replacement Project**

Rollout of the new personal computers is expected to begin in the Albany Region (Region 4) October 1, 2002.

On Thursday 8/15/02, communication materials regarding Phase II of the Desktop PC Replacement Project were sent to Commissioners, CONNECTIONS Local District and Voluntary Agency Implementation Coordinators, Directors of Services, LAN Administrators and a limited number of Voluntary Agency Executive Directors (where email addresses and Executive Directors names were known). The materials referenced above included the following:

- Letter from Zack Zambri, CONNECTIONS Project Director, dated 8/15/02
- Regional desktop pc reconciliation spreadsheets
- Instructions for completing spreadsheets
- New PC specs

Please keep in mind that the reconciliation spreadsheets are time sensitive and require targeted response dates. In addition, please notify Dave Kislowski at OCFS regarding any discrepancies regarding pc information contained on the reconciliation spreadsheets. His telephone number is 518-473-4770.

**Please Note: The above referenced desktop pc replacement project does not include supplemental equipment, CIABs, laptops, printers or servers.**

### **3. CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 Update**

We anticipate that CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 will become available on the weekend of September 6, 2002. Additional materials regarding Build 15.1 (Release Notes and Final Schedule) will be sent one week prior to the planned implementation date for Build 15.1.

#### **A). Preview Application**

CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 Preview Application became available in all local districts and voluntary agencies beginning Monday, August 19, 2002. The Preview Application provides local district and voluntary agency staff an opportunity to review the Build 15.1 version of CONNECTIONS in advance of the Build, and the ability to practice using the Application in the context of your own case data. The Preview Application can be accessed locally to supplement Build 15.1 lab based training.

The Preview Application will remain available until the Build 15.1 “live” date, scheduled for the weekend of September 6, 2002. We encourage local districts and voluntary agencies to use the Preview Application. Please take some time to review the August 13 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.

#### **B). Training**

Beginning Monday morning, 8/19/02, the Build 15.1 enhanced training database was enabled for Build 15.1 lab based training activities. Access is also available from individual workstations for those with the appropriate training ID’s and password.

Lab based training is being offered in two areas: Vacancy Control and Local Data Maintenance. Training is being offered from August 19 – September 6, 2002. To register for training please pay attention to the following information:

- Upstate Districts, please register for the Build 15.1 training using the Announcement/Schedule that was included last week with the above referenced CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 Highlights and Training Supports Information. The registration and schedule information is posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website and

in the Public Folders>Statewide>CONNECTIONS>Training Schedules.

- For NYC, ACS staff should contact Sandra Neville (212) 341-2665 to register for training.
- For Vacancy Control Training DFCS staff should contact Sydney McSweeney at 212-676-6942. OPA staff should contact Jose Banez at 646-935-1736.

In addition to the Lab based training, three Job Aids were distributed in hard copy during the weeks of 8/5 and 8/12. We encourage you to make use of these supports to prepare for changes in the Application.

#### **4. Data Warehouse Page/CONNECTIONS Intranet Website**

The OCFS Data Warehouse page is now available on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Web Site. The OCFS Data Warehouse page has been designed to provide information to current Data Warehouse users, as well as to districts and agencies looking for general information regarding Data Warehouse developments. Updates on enhancements to the Data Warehouse and new development efforts will be available on the site, including activities supporting the NYS Program Performance Plan.

To find out more about the Data Warehouse, please visit the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website at <http://sdssnet5/ocfs/connect/>. Note: in order to access the CONNECTIONS Intranet Site, users do not need to have access to the Internet. From the NYS Human Services Intranet Site, click on OCFS and CONNECTIONS.

#### **5. Voluntary Agency NIS Projects**

Network Integration Services (NIS) is an ongoing project coordinated with the NYS Office for Technology's Network Architecture Bureau intended to assist local districts, voluntary agencies and state agencies with the integration of state and local networks. The main objective of the Voluntary Agency NIS initiative is to allow voluntary agency staff access to the CONNECTIONS application from voluntary agency PCs.

For information regarding NIS, please visit the DFA-IT Customer Support Command Center Website at <http://sdssnet5/hsasc/lisc/>. To view NIS procedures and Online NIS Form and Survey, click on the NIS Form and Information Box. All completed NIS requests/surveys must be submitted electronically to COMCTRUP.

**6. CONNECTIONS System Down Time**

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance CONNECTIONS will be unavailable on:

Friday, 08/23/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

Friday, 08/30/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

**7. 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, 08/25/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am

Sunday, 09/02/2002 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am