

CONNECTIONS WEEKLY SYSTEM UPDATE



Memo

To: Implementation Coordinators
From: CONNECTIONS Communications
CC: LAN Administrators, Keyusers, OCFS -Directors of Services,
CONNECTIONS Project Team
Date: August 29, 2002
Re: Weekly System Update--08/30/2002 Week's Activities

1. Case Management Staffing and Equipment Survey Update

As reported last week, 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 Communications Team.

We would like to extend a "thank you" from the CONNECTIONS Project to all those districts and agencies that have 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.

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. **Region 4 reconciliation spreadsheets are due September 13, 2002**.

All completed reconciliation spreadsheets must be in Excel format. When completing district/agency spreadsheets, please **do not** send the entire regional spreadsheet to Dave Kislowski. Please copy and paste your District/Agency information into a new Excel spreadsheet and then send this to Dave Kislowski. **Reconciliation spreadsheets in any other format will not be accepted.**

Instructions for copying/pasting your district/agency information in a new Excel spreadsheet are as follows:

- Highlight all sections that relate to your district/agency.
- Select "Copy" from the Edit Menu Item.
- Click the "Start" button and select "Programs" and then select Microsoft Excel.
- After the new Excel spreadsheet opens, place your cursor into the first open field on the spreadsheet.
- Select "Paste" from the Edit Menu Item.
- Complete a "File, Save As" to your local C Drive.
- Save it to Data, Word.
- Name the file and Save as Type "Microsoft Excel Workbook".
- Click the Save button.
- Click the "File" menu item and select "Send To" Mail Recipient as Attachment.
- Send to Dave Kislowski at the following address:
Mailto: Dave.Kislowski@dfa.state.ny.us

For reference information, the CONNECTIONS 25% Desktop PC Replacement communication materials that were sent on Thursday 8/15/02 are posted in Public Folders. The path to these materials is as follows:

Statewide>CONNECTIONS>Desktop PC Replacement>25%

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

CONNECTIONS Build 15.1 is scheduled for Friday September 6 between the hours of 6:00 PM and 11:30 PM. We anticipate that CONNECTIONS application will become available after 11:30 PM on September 6, 2002. Staff will not be able to access the CONNECTIONS application during this time. CONNECTIONS Downtime Procedures will be implemented for the transmission of CPS Reports between the SCR, ECS, and Local Districts during this timeframe. Network Exchange Email will be available during this time period. 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 September 10, 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.

Note for Security Coordinators: If staff had been given the new Business Functions for LDM or Vacancy Control prior to the 8/12/02 snapshot of the database, the new business functions would carry over to

Preview. If staff were not given the new business functions prior to 8/12/02, they will not be able to access LDM or Vacancy Control in Preview until Security Coordinators give them the new business functions in the Preview Application. For reference, we have attached the Business Function Guidelines for LDM and Vacancy Control.

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

Friday, 09/06/2002 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

Please make note of the additional downtime (referenced above in Item 3 scheduled for Friday, 09/06/02 for CONNECTIONS Build 15.1.

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

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