

Attachment 1 Portable Information Technology Demonstration Project

I. Background

The pilot phase of the Portable Information Technology project was conducted during April 2006 - March 2007. The State Legislature appropriated \$1 million in the OCFS budget to conduct the pilot and specified that the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Monroe County Department of Human Services and Westchester County Department of Social Services participate. OCFS engaged the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), University at Albany/SUNY to conduct an independent evaluation of the project. The evidence obtained from the evaluation suggested that portable technology, notably the use of laptop PCs in tandem with wireless access, augmented Child Protective Caseworkers' (CPS) effectiveness in accomplishing CPS investigation tasks and contributed to increased worker productivity. In its subsequent report to the Governor and State Legislature, OCFS noted that testing portable technology in additional organizational and geographic environments was needed to inform future, larger scale investments.

Based on the positive pilot results, OCFS and ACS used first year funding to conduct an expanded pilot. ACS procured and deployed 200 laptop PCs to CPS caseworkers, supervisors and managers in two ACS field offices. CTG evaluated the expanded pilot, and in its report on the expanded pilot, OCFS noted modest productivity gains and a positive impact on staff morale.

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2007-08, the State Legislature appropriated an additional \$1 million to enable OCFS to implement the demonstration phase of the project, authorizing OCFS to select the local districts that would participate. Twenty-three local districts were selected to participate in the demonstration.

Evaluating the demonstration phase, CTG concluded that portable technology provided a useful tool for CPS caseworkers and again cited evidence of improved productivity. CTG further reported that the participating caseworkers perceived that the use of the portable devices helped them to stay more on top of their work, which reduced job stress and increased job satisfaction.

The OCFS reports on the pilot, expanded pilot and demonstration phase of the project, including the CTG evaluations, are available on the OCFS Internet site:
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports>.

II. Desired Outcomes

The programmatic objectives OCFS hopes to achieve through the project include:

- Increased CPS worker time spent in fieldwork, including increased time spent working directly with children and their families, leading to better informed safety decisions and more responsive service delivery;
- Increased job satisfaction, increased job retention and a more experienced CPS workforce;
- Increased proportion of safety assessments and investigations completed within regulatory time limits; and
- Increased timeliness of, and detail in, progress notes of contacts with children, family members and collateral contacts.

Please note that the project focus on supporting the CPS workforce is a Legislative requirement and is not subject to change.

III. Program Approach

Project Scope

All local districts are invited to request participation in the project. If a local district previously participated, it may request support for that portion of its CPS workforce that was not covered in the previous year(s). OCFS anticipates that the amount of State funding for a district, including the cost of equipment that is centrally procured by OCFS, will not exceed \$75,000. For purposes of estimating project scope, local districts should assume a unit cost of \$1,200.00 for laptop PC, including all software and associated hardware. The local district is responsible for estimating the cost of any other technologies and for ongoing services costs, such as broadband access. OCFS expects that local districts will use local funds to match a portion of the OCFS funding in order to maximize the scope of the demonstration project. Broadband wireless cards and ongoing services are examples of expenditures that would qualify as match.

Focus on Laptop PCs

The pilot and demonstration projects have shown that laptop PCs that are configured for wireless access to the state child welfare database and other applications provide the greatest potential to assist CPS caseworkers achieve desired productivity gains. Accordingly, OCFS will continue to focus on this technology during the current project year. OCFS will centrally procure laptop PCs and distribute them to participating local districts, who will in turn distribute the laptops to their participating staff. Each laptop PC will be equipped with a mouse, keyboard, monitor and docking station. OCFS will configure the laptop PCs with encryption software to promote the security of the data at rest. **With the exception of devices that may be shared among groups of staff, it is expected that the laptop PCs that are deployed through this project will replace desktops.** OCFS will arrange with local district staff to pick up the desktops when the laptops are delivered.

OCFS is willing to consider other portable technologies solutions that augment the laptop PC/wireless access solution. Local districts that propose such augmentations will need to justify how the proposed technology will meet the objectives of the portable information technology legislation.

Wireless Access

Remote access to the state network will be achieved through a Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution that will also be installed on the laptops. The laptops will also contain built-in wireless cards that will enable connections to the state network wherever a Wireless LAN (WLAN or WiFi) is available. Participating local districts are expected to procure cellular broadband access (e.g., Verizon, AT&T or Sprint data networks) broadband wireless cards and services to enable wireless access where a WLAN is not available. Experience in the first two years of the project indicate that the potential for the laptops to assist caseworkers is significantly affected by whether broadband cellular service is available.

The cost for broadband access will be the responsibility of the local district. Since the laptops to be deployed through this project will be state-owned equipment, it will be necessary to arrange for OCFS/OFT to install a provider's broadband wireless software, unless the solution uses a broadband access card that does not require configuration (such as, but not limited to, the Verizon KPC650). Local districts should purchase solutions that use the PC Card slot. Local districts are required to demonstrate coordination with the counties' Director for Information Technology in their response to this letter. If applicable, local districts would alternatively (or additionally) need to demonstrate coordination with their respective Directors for Telecommunications in reference to the conduct of this project, including arrangements for broadband wireless services.

WLAN in the Courts

The state Office of Court Administration (OCA) is in the process of installing a WLAN in court facilities throughout New York State. OCFS is working with OCA to prioritize these facilities and install access points in spaces where local district staff wait for court appearances. Since CPS caseworkers may spend significant periods of time in court, it is expected that participating local districts will work with OCFS and OCS in this effort. There is no cost to the local district. These installations have been completed in the local districts that participated in the first two years of the project.

Implementation and Technical Support

OCFS has limited capacity to provide direct user support; the agency has allocated most of the project's resources to acquiring laptop PCs to support local district staff. OCFS will work collaboratively with participating local districts, to the extent possible, to provide train-the-trainer assistance to LAN Administrators; however, the local district is responsible for developing and implementing a strategy to assist staff to learn to use new equipment and wireless access methods.

CPS Attorneys

OCFS wishes to test whether the deployment of laptop PCs to CPS attorneys results in the more efficient and effective delivery of child protective services, including the timelier filing of court petitions, orders, and review by attorneys of CPS caseworker files. Two small scale pilots of this concept will be undertaken and evaluated as part of the larger demonstration effort.

Project Evaluation

The legislation that authorizes the Portable Information Technology Demonstration Project requires OCFS to report, **by district**, the impact of the demonstration project on caseworker efficiency and productivity, and the impact on caseworkers' caseload. OCFS plans to engage CTG to evaluate this phase of the project. Local districts that participate in the project must agree to fully participate in the evaluation and designate a contact person to coordinate with CTG. It is anticipated that all of the district's staff using portable technology will complete a baseline survey and follow-up survey, and may be asked to participate in one focus group to discuss their experience using portable technology. In addition, CTG will use data from the child welfare database prior to and during the demonstration period to measure the extent to which desired program outcomes were achieved. This data will be reported on at the district and statewide level - no individually identifiable caseworker or case level data will be reported.

IV. Required Contents of Letter Requesting Participation

Requests to participate in the Portable Information Technology Demonstration should take the form of a letter, signed by the local commissioner and addressed to:

William E. Travis, Jr., Deputy Commissioner,
OCFS Division of Information Technology
Ten Eyck Building
52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144

The letter must address each of the following subjects.

Problem Statement

The local district should describe the CPS business problem that the deployment of portable technology is intended to solve. To the extent possible, the local district should quantify the scope of the problem and the efforts taken to date to address it. In framing problem statements, local districts may wish to consider how portable technology could be applied to, for example: (i) reduce the number of CPS staff having in excess of 20 active CPS investigations; (ii) decrease the number of overdue safety assessments or overdue investigations; or, (iii) increase the timeliness of the completion of progress notes. Local districts that wish to participate in the CPS Attorney component of the demonstration should specify how the deployment of laptop PCs to attorneys will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of child protective services.

Proposed Approach and Program Plan

The local district should describe how the use of portable technology will address the business problem described in the previous section. The local district should specify:

- The number of laptop PCs it is requesting
- How those devices will be deployed (e.g., to individual staff, to groups of staff)
- The total number of CPS caseworkers the laptops will support
- Whether the district wishes to deploy laptops to CPS attorneys.

The local district should describe how it will secure broadband wireless services for use with the laptop PCs. The district should describe the options available for this service and the basis for selecting a provider. The district must also demonstrate in its application that it has taken concrete steps to arrange for the initiation of this service upon receipt of the laptops. Local districts are required to demonstrate in their response coordination with the county Director for Information Technology and/or Director of Telecommunications in reference to the conduct of this project, including arrangements for broadband wireless services.

If the local district proposes to use other technologies to augment the laptop PCs/wireless access, the district should:

- Specify the technology involved
- Explain how the proposed technology will meet the objectives of the portable information technology legislation and address the specific CPS business problem that the local district has defined
- Indicate the estimated cost of the technology in the proposed budget.

Administrative Support for the Project

The local district should describe/provide:

- The administrative and organizational resources it will devote to manage the project, including the name and title for the staff person who will be the single point of contact for OCFS and the project evaluator (CTG) during the demonstration project;
- How it will achieve buy-in from appropriate internal and external stakeholders, including county information technology administrators;
- The willingness of the local district to enable and support CPS staff's use of portable technology in non-office environments, including court and hospital facilities, other community-based facilities, caseworker's homes, etc, in order to provide the greatest opportunities for staff to productively use work time. A significant finding of the pilot and demonstration phases is that staff use the laptop PCs at home to a significant extent.

Implementation Strategy

The local district should describe how it will accomplish the following implementation tasks:

- Deploy the equipment and monitor its use
- Develop procedures for the appropriate use of the equipment, including secure storage, as well as instructions to staff not to retain personally identifying information on the device itself
- Orient and train staff in the use of the laptop PCs and wireless connectivity
- Provide ongoing technical support to staff using the technology, including the provision of support during non-traditional business hours for on-call staff, if appropriate.

Project Budget

The local district should estimate the amounts of State and local district funds that will be applied to the project.

- The value of laptop PCs should be included in this estimate as a State expense. Assume a unit cost of \$1,200.00 inclusive of software and hardware;
- The estimated cost of any ancillary equipment proposed may be included as a State or local district expense. Local districts will be responsible for procuring any such equipment, if approved as a project expense;
- The estimated cost of equipment or services to be procured with local district funds, including the acquisition of broadband cards and ongoing service.

Participation in the Project Evaluation

The local district must state its agreement to participate in the project evaluation.

V. Criteria OCFS will Use to Evaluate Portable Information Technology Demonstration Program Plans

Applications will be analyzed on whether:

1. The program plan contains all the required elements as described above.
2. The problem statement presents a clear, definable condition that affects the performance of CPS investigations and the ability of CPS caseworkers to protect children/service families. The scope of the problem is quantified.
3. The program approach is a reasonable response to the business problem stated above. The local district has specified the number of laptop PCs that it wishes to use, whether the devices will be deployed to individual or groups of staff and the total number of staff to use them.
4. If the local district has proposed deploying laptop PCs to CPS attorneys, it has described how such deployment will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of child protective services.
5. The local district has explained how it will arrange for broadband access and that it is coordinating with the appropriate county directors for information technology and telecommunications.

6. If the local district proposes to use a technology other than laptop PCs, it has thoroughly explained its rationale in accordance with the required contents described above.
7. The local district's response provides a clear indication of how the project will be administratively supported, including: the specification of an individual to be Project Manager/single point of contact with OCFS and the project evaluator; coordination with the county Director of Information Technology; and the district's willingness to explore the use of portable technology in non-traditional environments.
8. The implementation strategy will facilitate the successful introduction and appropriate use of laptop PCs and wireless connectivity. The resources that the local district will apply to the implementation are adequate to enable the CPS caseworkers to properly use the equipment and wireless services.
9. The local district has explained how it will procure wireless broadband services.
10. The project budget falls within the parameters specified. The local district has applied local funds to maximize the scope of the project.
11. The local district has stated its agreement to participate in the project evaluation.