



Office of Children and Family Services

Impact Analysis

2017 Vacancy Control Build in CONNECTIONS

Functional Areas

Foster Care and Foster and Adoptive Home Development

Overview

The modernization of the CONNECTIONS application will continue in 2017 with enhancements made to the Vacancy Control module. Vacancy Control is used by OCFS Central and Regional Offices, NYC's Administration for Children's Services (ACS), and the Voluntary Agencies who serve NYC's foster care population.

With this Build, the Vacancy Control windows and functionality will become more uniform to all other areas in CONNECTIONS. Workers who view and/or modify information recorded in the Vacancy Control module will experience a more streamlined path to content, as information will be consolidated onto fewer screens.

These changes may require some adjustment on the part of staff who maintain, view, and/or print Vacancy Control information in CONNECTIONS.

What's Staying the Same?

Security and access rules for who can view and modify information in all Vacancy Control windows are staying the same. With few exceptions, most fields and how they work will also remain the same.

What's Changing?

Throughout the Vacancy Control module, information that is related to the same function but is currently found on multiple tabs or windows will be combined and displayed on one window. For example, the Vacancy Control Search, Vacancy Control – Facility Search Results, and Bed Detail windows will be combined and will display on one window instead of three. Likewise, the information on the Search and Bed Characteristics tabs will display on the new Vacancy Control Search window.

Vacancy Control Bed Maintenance will undergo similar changes, with the Bed Detail, Bed Maintenance, and Bed Characteristics windows combined on one window. This window will be a combination window that includes both the Bed List and Bed Detail on the same window.

Currently, workers are required to enter both the Borough/County (of Primary Address) and Community District (of Primary Address) fields when conducting a Vacancy Control Search,

limiting the search to only those areas. In order for the worker to remove these filters and expand the search, they must “deselect” one or two checkboxes located at the bottom of the window. With the Build, these Borough/County and Community District fields will be optional. These changes should simplify the search process by both reducing data entry and expanding the pool of results.

Other changes include a new Action drop-down field that will take the place of the Reserve, Unreserve, and Occupy buttons seen when Searching for a bed. When accessed from a Workload or Resource path, the Action drop-down will include Occupied, Reserved, Temporarily Unavailable and Vacant. Reports such as Placement Tracking and Bed Detail will be available from links in the Outputs Section on the left navigation pane.

Training/Documentation and Preparation Tools

- A Quick Start Guide that describes the new functionality, screenshots, and step-by-step instructions will be available electronically.
- The existing Vacancy Control classroom training will be updated to incorporate the new functionality. Although this half-day course is primarily intended for new staff, experienced staff could benefit from instruction on the new navigation and overall best practice instruction it provides.
- CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff will provide support for this build, both onsite and by email.

Recommendations

- Administrators from OCFS Central and Regional Offices, ACS, and the Voluntary Agencies who serve NYC’s foster care population should be alert to all communications and announcements from the CONNECTIONS team concerning this build. This information should be shared with all staff who work with Vacancy Control in CONNECTIONS.
- These same administrators should work with CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff to arrange pre-implementation previews of the changes as well as onsite support for their staff in the weeks that follow the release of the new windows.