



## CONNECTIONS Bulletin

### VDI Improvements; Data Quality Initiatives; and CONNECTIONS Website Resource

### September 10, 2021

Please read below for several updates for CONNECTIONS users:

#### VDI Environment Improvements

As most of you are aware, the CONNECTIONS cutover from Citrix to VDI was successfully completed mid-July. We appreciate everyone's patience as the ITS VDI team has worked through environment settings and troubleshooting both general and individual issues.

There were some general improvements implemented on September 2, 2021 that we are excited to share:

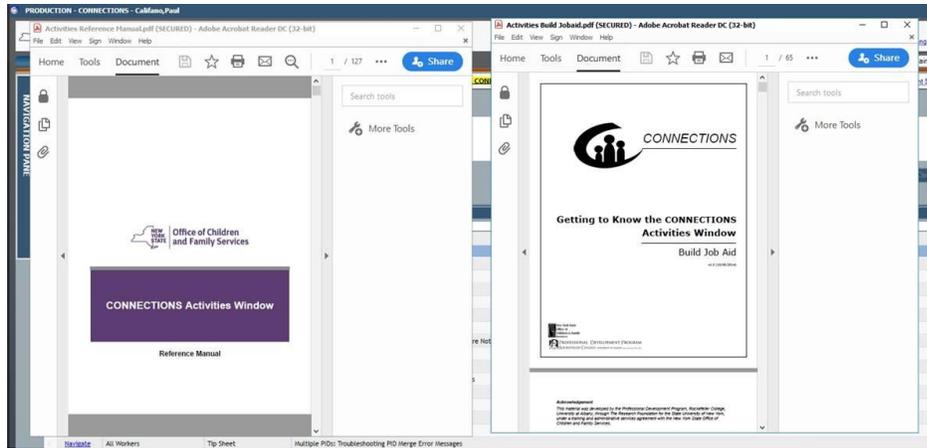
1) **There are 2 new icons on the CONNECTIONS VDI desktop:**

- Printers icon – when you open this, it will show you which printers you have mapped in your VDI session.
- Log Off icon – this will log you off the entire VDI session with one click.



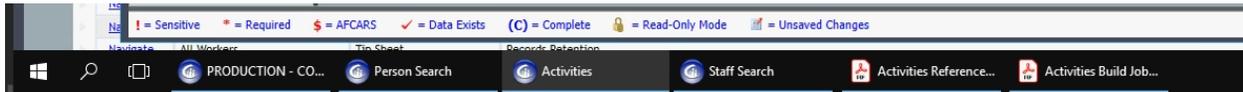
2) **Adobe PDF files:**

- When multiple Adobe PDF files are opened, they now open in separate windows, rather than in tabs in the same Adobe window.



### 3) Toolbar icons:

- Icons on the toolbar no longer pile on top of each other, but are listed out as they were on Citrix, making it easier to see what CONNECTIONS windows are open.



## Data Quality Improvement Initiatives

Data quality in CONNECTIONS is crucial for the health and safety of all those involved in the child welfare system. Not having timely and accurate data in our statewide system of record can result in incomplete histories for individuals and families that may impact a caseworker's decisions, inaccurate reports used for day-to-day operational purposes, and that further down the line, can impact financial claiming and reimbursement, and federal reporting that is not accurate, timely, or complete. Federal comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS) regulations require data quality analysis and improvement, and this area has been noted as needing improvement in our state's CFSR reviews and AFCARS file submissions.

In our continuous data quality improvement efforts, we rely heavily on reports to help us view data in CONNECTIONS in ways that allow us to see where data quality needs improvement and to take steps to get more accurate, timely, and complete data. We are focusing on several data quality priorities this year:

- Multiple PID reduction
- Timely entry of Movement codes in Activities (required by policy within 30 days of the admission/discharge/movement)
- Federal reporting (AFCARS), including completeness/accuracy/timeliness of demographics, location, and goals for placement of every child in foster care
- Pregnant/parenting data elements
- Termination of parental rights (TPR) Legal code entries in Activities
- Kinship placement indicator
- Direct placement of youth by the courts with family/relative caregivers (known as 1017)

- placements)
- Reports to law enforcement for AWOL youth

As a start, the following reports can help counties and agencies take steps to improve data quality related to Multiple PIDS, missing AFCARS data elements, and timeliness of movement codes.

### 1) New Multiple PID Report in DW

There is a new Cognos report in the OCFS Data Warehouse that shows, by county, numbers and percentages of multiple PIDs associated with open stages. The drill-down options will yield the details behind the total number of multiple PIDs and the open stages with multiple PIDs for the LDSS.

This report is currently only accessible by state and Regional Office staff and can be run for one or multiple counties at a time. Your CONNECTIONS implementation specialists or regional office staff may reach out to discuss your numbers and MPR processes with you.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES MULTIPLE PERSON REPORT					
MULTIPLE PID REPORT MATCH STATEWIDE					
REPORT DATE : 09/02/2021					
AS OF DATE : 08/22/2021					
COUNTY	COUNTY CODE	TOTAL MPIDS	OPEN STAGES MPID	TOTAL OPEN STAGE	% MPID
		50	25	608	8.22%

In order to help staff avoid making mistakes in CONNECTIONS that result in multiple PIDs, a recorded training will soon be made available that addresses how multiple PIDs are most often created, and directs users to other available MPID trainings.

### 2) AFCARS Missing Data Reports

There are two DW reports that focus on missing data required for federal AFCARS reporting: Missing AFCARS Information for Children in Foster Care, and Children Served with Missing Clinical Diagnosis Summary (LDSS/VA).

A) The report entitled Missing AFCARS Information for Children in Foster Care Summary Report can be located in the DW through the Team content > Global Reports > OCFS > OCFS Data Warehouse > AFCARS Reports path. This report is run based on the user-provided reporting period end date and child status, and includes a drill-down by distinct number of children or children with at least one missing element. This report includes the child's date of birth, gender, if the child has ever been adopted, manner of most recent removal from home, and most recent plan goal.

B) The report entitled Children Served with Missing Clinical Diagnosis Summary (LDSS/VA) can

also be located in the DW through Team content > Global Reports > OCFS > OCFS Data Warehouse > AFCARS Reports path. This report is run based on each district or VA with at least one missing clinical diagnosis, and includes a drill-down report listing each child with a missing clinical diagnosis. The drill-down report provides the child's name, stage start and end dates, and the Health Responsibility Agency.

### **3) Data Quality Report – Timeliness of All Activity Codes**

This DW report focuses on timeliness of all movement codes based on Activities data entry. Per OCFS ADM (15-OCFS-ADM-25), all foster care movements codes, including admissions, discharges, and other movements, must be entered into CONNECTIONS Activities within thirty (30) calendar days of the movement. This report shows the number and percentage of movement records entered into the system within 30 days, between 31 and 60 days, and beyond 60 days by year, quarter, and activity code. Because CONNECTIONS is a live system, statistics in this report will change; as additional data is entered late, the percentages of on-time entries decreases over time. This report can be located in the DW through Team Content > Global Reports > OCFS > OCFS Data Warehouse > Child Welfare Services Reports > Activity Reports (CONNECTIONS Data) > Timeliness Report for All Activities path.

## **CONNECTIONS Website**

The CONNECTIONS website is home to many valuable resources for all statewide child welfare staff, from newbies to our most experienced users.

- The website houses step-by-step guides, tips sheets/job-aids, and various other reference materials. (Please note that even though some of the manuals are old, they are still relevant! The windows might look slightly different, but the functionality will still be recognizable to users.)
- Data Warehouse (DW) and Operational Data Store (ODS) access and information can also be found here.
- For business continuity during system outages or inaccessibility, there are also forms/templates for Family Assessment & Services Plans (FASPs), Progress Notes, and other documentation.
- There is also information on the various trainings available and how to access them.
- The new Multiple PID and Person Maintenance section is available with tips and help on how to ensure the highest quality of historical data is available on our families.
- Information on the latest changes and upgrades to CONNECTIONS functionality is available on our newsletters & bulletins section.
- There is a VDI/MFA section with instructions, guidance, tips, and FAQs for various circumstances.
- The incredible work of improving CONNECTIONS and how we are moving forward with our CCWIS transition is available for users to review.

The URL for the CONNECTIONS website on the OCFS internet is <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/imp/>.

If you are looking for anything specific, please don't hesitate to reach out to the CONNECTIONS communications mailbox at [CONNECTIONSI@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:CONNECTIONSI@ocfs.ny.gov).

## **The CONNECTIONS Team is here to help!**

### *Questions, Comments or Suggestions*

- Email Us: [Connections@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Connections@ocfs.ny.gov)

### *Resources*

- As always, CONNECTIONS Implementation Staff will be available to offer on-site support as necessary. A contact list of each district and agency's assigned implementation specialists can be found on the CONNECTIONS Website - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/imp/>
- ITS Service Desk – 844-891-1786 or [fixit@its.ny.gov](mailto:fixit@its.ny.gov)