



The Computerworld Honors Program

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Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization:
Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Organization URL:
<http://okdhs.org/>

Project Name:
WebFOCUS Management Software Performance Measures Project

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

Oklahoma Child Support Services (OCSS) acts as an economic advocate for the children of Oklahoma, ensuring that parents financially support their children. OCSS helps families become self-sufficient, and for those who are not receiving public assistance to remain self-sufficient. When a child does not receive financial support from one or both parents, OCSS: locates the parents' addresses and employers; establishes legal paternity; establishes child support and medical support orders; enforces support for married, separated or divorced parents; modifies child support orders. The Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requires every state in the U.S. to establish and operate a Child Support Services program. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) has established performance guidelines for Paternity Establishment, Order Establishment, Current Collections, Arrearage Collections, and Cost-Effectiveness. All states are required to submit an annual report to OCSE, which is followed by an on-site data reliability audit to ensure the annual performance reports are accurate. Once the reports are validated, OCSE uses a formula to establish incentive payments to states based on how well they have performed in each of the categories. Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) is addressing these federal reporting requirements with its Child Support Services reporting system. State workers, local office managers, and staff now have the ability to view data statewide, regionally, by office, and by worker. The reports help caseworkers maintain a running history on each child and enable staff to access data within each of the performance measures. As revealed in the Appendixes, caseworkers have numerous views of the data,

enabling staff members to adjust their activities to focus on cases that have the greatest need. The system also helps OKDHS enforce child support payments more effectively.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

Up until the mid-1990s, OKDHS relied on a COBOL application and the data was stored in a mainframe IMS database. Back then, the department had skeletal information indicating what the next action might be for a case, but very little was available to staff that allowed them to track cases or provide case management services like they can do now. They provided data to users in a variety of ways, but primarily through fixed hard-copy reports. If users wanted to sort or filter the data in a different way, they had to ask a programmer to manually produce a special report. This process was very time consuming and costly. It was a difficult way for managers to view their performance and to analyze the information to make strategic resource decisions at the state level or within each of the individual offices. OCSS decided they needed a business intelligence tool that would offer a robust resource for management to make strategic decisions. OKDHS hired Northrup Grumman to help develop the initial Performance Measures Reports. The purpose was to provide caseworkers with accurate information about cases within the system while also supplying compliance information for federally mandated regulations. State office staff and local office managers now have the ability to view data at four levels -- statewide, regional, office, and worker -- and to access data within each of the performance measures using these levels (see Appendixes). Data can be viewed annually, rolling 12 months, quarterly and monthly. Data can also be viewed by a select period of time to create trend reports from five years of historical data. These performance measure reports also have the federal benchmark for each category so that staff can adjust their casework activities to work in the area with the greatest need.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

With thousands of Oklahoma children requiring economic assistance, Oklahoma Department of Human Services uses the WebFOCUS system to help caseworkers provide better family services. Thanks to the dedication and insight of this agency, caseworkers have timely access to accurate information to help them manage their cases and address all compliance issues, so paperwork doesn't hold up the urgent needs of these children. More effective enforcement of child support payments also yields direct benefits. The BI and reporting system for caseworkers helps them manage child support cases more efficiently. That translates directly into getting more child support dollars into the hands of needy families to help them pay their bills, put better meals on the table, and get better health care. OKDHS recently obtained a federal OCSE grant to build a data model for a data warehouse that the federal office can maintain and share with other Child Support programs around the nation. That model will be based upon the current OCSS system. The federal OCSE has not yet committed to a tool of choice for their level. Many other Child Support programs are still using an outdated extracting process as Oklahoma has done in the past and do not have a business intelligence tool like WebFOCUS. The hope is that all states will begin using a process and product similar to the one profiled here. This would provide both the federal office and other states with better analysis and decision-making capabilities.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

OCSS workers can now monitor their own performance to see how they are doing and where they are falling behind. They can drill down to their case level and print a list of cases that need to be worked on. OCSS managers and staff have a tool that will allow them to monitor themselves

and make adjustments to their resources and daily tasks to improve their performance activities. This is a vast improvement over the few previous static reports that only conveyed high-level metrics and offered very little to support case management. The real benefits go to the children and families who have cases in the system. Because workers now have greater visibility into their cases, they can prioritize their efforts so people who need the most assistance get it first.