



NASCIO 2018 State IT Recognition Awards



Title: Georgia Gateway

Category: Cross-boundary Collaboration
and Partnerships

State: Georgia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Going into the second decade of the new century, the state of Georgia faced a growing list of issues relating to SUCCESS, its aging system for determining eligibility for a limited number of public assistance programs. A great deal had changed since SUCCESS was first launched in 1998, not the least of which were advances in technology. Customer expectations for higher levels of service delivery and even an aging workforce were adding to pressures for a new, expanded and better integrated eligibility system encompassing a greater number of public assistance programs. Budget cuts in the wake of the economic recession meant agencies had no choice but to do more through innovative technologies.

But replacing and expanding SUCCESS wouldn't be easy. The state's vision called for a single application for workers and a single web-based portal for customers to enter their information once and determine their eligibility for numerous public assistance programs administered by numerous state agencies. This vision also required the ability to somehow make it possible for disparate applications and databases at different agencies to "talk to each other." The solution would need to incorporate rigorous security and fraud-prevention measures.

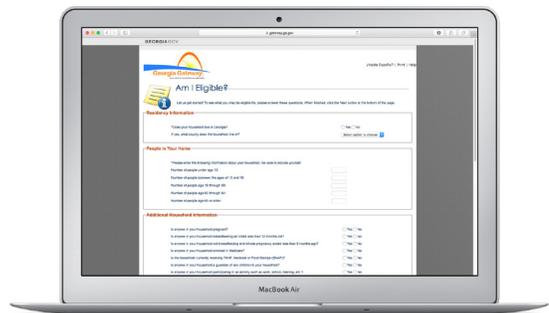


Equally as challenging would be finding a way for business and technology leaders across state government to work together effectively on a sprawling project – a project with enormous implications for government's ability to successfully deliver a complex project affecting hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars.

**With Georgia Gateway,
<https://gateway.ga.gov>,
the state achieved its vision.**

Georgia Gateway increased the number of assistance programs covered by the state's centralized eligibility application from three to 10. It delivered new options for customer self-service and new tools to greatly enhance worker efficiency while ensuring state compliance with federal legislative and regulatory requirements. It also established a new model for how state agencies can work together, relying on several governance boards to ensure effective project oversight and sound decision making.

Georgia Gateway is well positioned to serve Georgians and workers for years to come while bringing more accountability and transparency in the administration of public assistance programs.



PROJECT NARRATIVE: CONCEPT

The state of Georgia implemented SUCCESS, its first automated system for determining eligibility for certain assistance programs, in 1998. SUCCESS was limited to Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).



Several factors influenced the way in which the state designed SUCCESS. At the time, use of the internet as a portal for applying for assistance was in its initial stages. In addition, the frequency of customer relocations across county lines was relatively low and to provide easy access to services, the state chose to serve customers in the same county in which they resided. Because of the volume of information processed daily, SUCCESS was developed to run on mainframe computers.



Over the years, the state observed several changes in customer behavior, including increases in the movement of customers across county lines and in requests for services requiring changes to business processes. At the time, it took considerable effort and money to enhance SUCCESS.

However, advances in technology were leading to shortened development timelines, lower costs and improved end-user functionality such as alerts and real-time updates. These advances promised to deliver greater customer self-service options and improve the efficiency of state workers.

Meanwhile, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), enacted in March 2010, required changes to the eligibility application for public assistance. Ensuring ACA compliance while maximizing federal funding finally pushed the state to replace its aging eligibility system with an expanded system called Georgia Gateway.



PROJECT NARRATIVE: SIGNIFICANCE



Georgia Gateway resulted in greatly enhanced business processes through the implementation of an integrated, automated, real-time eligibility system for an expanded number of assistance programs administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Community Health (DCH), the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and the Department of Public Health (DPH). With the development and implementation of Georgia Gateway, the state addressed a myriad of issues.



- Older technologies and manual processes required state workers to spend more time on documentation than on serving customers.
- Older technologies were limited in how they could be enhanced to provide better end-user functionality, both to workers and customers.



- As older workers retired, it was becoming more difficult to find other workers who were skilled in aging technologies. The workforce in general was becoming younger and more technology-savvy and attracting and retaining those workers meant technology needed to be upgraded.

- Budget cuts were forcing state agencies to improve operational efficiency using technology.
- Numerous disparate applications facilitated service delivery to the same customers, but they did not share data. This created duplicate work across and within agencies and increased operational costs for backup and recovery services, storage, software licenses and hardware.
- All applications supporting service delivery for assistance programs required significant enhancements to continue meeting federal requirements.

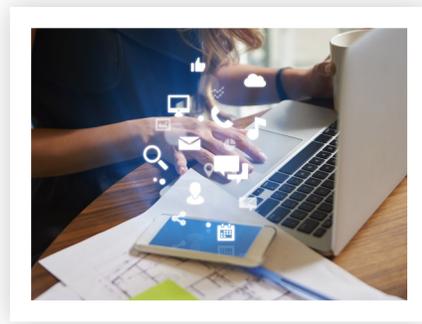


Georgia Gateway involved three primary areas of innovation.

- 1** **FIRST**, Georgia Gateway consolidated customer demographics from disparate application databases into the Enterprise Master Person Index (EMPI). The work involved deleting duplicate records pulled from various assistance programs.
- 2** **SECOND**, Georgia Gateway consolidated eligibility determination for 10 assistance programs into a single web-based application and a centralized customer self-service, web-based portal. The application shares data across programs, except for data from the Internal Revenue Service and other sources prohibited by the state's federal partners. While SUCCESS encompassed three assistance programs, Georgia Gateway covers Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, PeachCare for Kids, the Peach State Health Plan®, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Refugee Medicaid, Refugee SNAP, Child Care and Parent Services, and the Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program.
- 3** **THIRD**, Georgia Gateway reused existing technology components, including the state's webMethods Enterprise Service Bus, document imaging system and data warehouse.

The resulting operational efficiencies and customer service enhancements are numerous.

- Information is automatically uploaded from the customer portal to the worker portal.
- Georgia Gateway is seamlessly integrated into the customer portal, the kiosks in county offices and scanners connected to the state's document imaging system.



- Workers receive real-time notifications when verifications are scanned in by customers.
- Worker alerts and tasks are automatically generated.
- Georgia Gateway includes fraud-prevention measures. For example, workers are automatically alerted when customers may be associated with another active case.
- Enhanced security allows the state to assign worker access at the screen level.
- All assistance programs use the same client registration system and central repository for customer information, thereby expanding the number of assistance programs for which customers can apply simultaneously while reducing the need for customers to submit the same information multiple times.



- Georgia Gateway allows for automated decisions in some Medicaid categories, but customers must first successfully complete an identity-verification process and provide information that matches what is already known about them in Georgia Gateway.
- Decisions on referrals from the federal health insurance marketplace are automated, eliminating what was previously a time-consuming manual process.
- Some eligibility functions are automated, such as closing or denying cases for failure to submit verifications on time or for missed appointments.



- Georgia Gateway is available all day, every day with no downtime for month-end batch processes.
- Customers can reset passwords themselves.

PROJECT NARRATIVE: IMPACT

DHS launched Georgia Gateway in a limited geographic region of the state beginning in February 2017 and then rolled out the new system statewide on September 4, 2017.

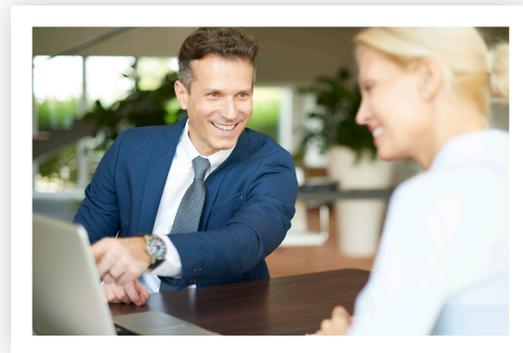


Through April 30, 2018, clients have logged into Georgia Gateway more than four million times, and benefits totaling \$1.9 billion have been issued. In the eight-month period ending April 30, Georgia Gateway processed 37.3 million transactions. Eighty-four percent of applications for public assistance (660,963) have been initiated through Georgia Gateway's customer portal.

The system has automatically assigned 1.4 million tasks to workers and sent 7,767,465 notices to clients.

Eighty-five staff from 13 state agencies and their divisions and private-sector vendors collaborated to create the EMPI, a master data management solution. A total of 11,665,471 clients have been converted to the EMPI, which makes it possible to establish a common identity for an individual and to identify the individual across multiple state systems. The EMPI has reduced the need to create new clients by 40 percent. The average response time for the EMPI is less than 500 microseconds.

The financial savings and cost avoidance resulting from Georgia Gateway are associated with the state's ability to maximize federal funding through the ACA and OMB Circular No. A-87 and the consolidation of multiple applications. The ACA increased the federal match for Medicaid from 50 percent to 90 percent, and Circular No. A-87 allowed the state to receive 90 percent federal funding for hardware, software, vendor development and staff support.



The large number of state agencies and private-sector vendors who collaborated on Georgia Gateway's successful implementation also help make the project unique. In addition to DHS, DCH, DECAL and DPH, the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) was involved for infrastructure and telecommunications support as well as for connecting middleware components for more than 200 Georgia Gateway interfaces with the webMethods Enterprise Service Bus.

Several governance boards were established to oversee Georgia Gateway, with two of them considered especially critical to the project's success.

The Project Governance Board was chaired by the DHS commissioner, and its voting members included commissioners from DCH, DECAL and DPH; the State CIO; a representative of the Governor's Office; and the executive director of the Office of Planning and Budget. The board met monthly to review project status, issues and risks and to clear any obstacles so the project could move forward.

In addition, the Data Governance Group provided a holistic view of customers across departments and programs. The group was comprised of data stewards and business and technology leaders from all four agencies who met regularly and developed data rules to ensure the successful implementation of the EMPI.

Georgia Gateway established a new model for how state agencies can work together to ensure effective oversight and sound decision making on large technology projects with significant impact on Georgians.

