

Connecticut Department of Social Services

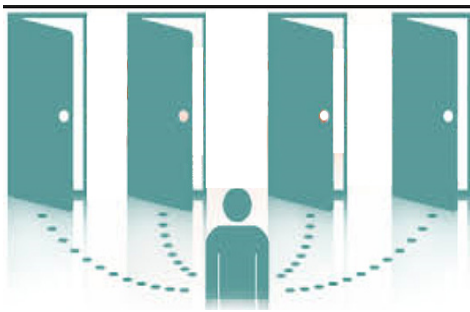
Making a Difference

Connecticut makes an **ImpaCT** in Human Services Infrastructure

Category: **Business Process Innovations**
State: **Connecticut**
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Executive Summary



The approach to Business Process redesign of the ImpaCT project focused on integration and “no wrong door” entry to human services benefits.

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) conducted a phased implementation of ImpaCT, a new Integrated Eligibility System, between October 2016 and August 2017. ImpaCT replaced DSS’s outdated system which determined eligibility for and administered benefits for Medicaid, Cash, SNAP, and other essential programs and services to the citizens of Connecticut. Prior to ImpaCT DSS had been doing multiple business processes outside of the system, and had separate supporting systems for partner agencies. ImpaCT integrates these external processes and subsystems, uses web-service platforms between partners, and utilizes B2B interfaces to expedite benefit processing for staff and benefit accessibility for the consumer. The improvements in Business Process achieved by ImpaCT have cut down on processing time for some functions, paper and mailing costs for the agency, and required paperwork for the consumer. The approach to Business Process redesign of the ImpaCT project focused on integration and “no wrong door” entry to human services benefits. Business Process redesign avoided taking the narrow view of how DSS does its business and instead focused on how Human Services can best be administered across state agencies and how DSS’s process can integrate with this larger goal. The project took advantage of the state’s recently created Enterprise Master Person Index (EMPI) to maximize the potential of sharing client data among agencies on a single Shared Services platform. The expandable architecture of the new system is allowing for the ongoing design of new to-be integrated Child Support and Child Care systems. Initial integration of the state health insurance exchange has been successful and further integration will occur. ImpaCT has solidified the platform for future Shared Services in our approach to Human Service Infrastructure here in Connecticut. This advancement further aligns DSS with the public policy set forth by the State.

Concept

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) has made it part of their mission and vision to improve and stabilize the state's human services infrastructure. Connecticut was looking to bolster coordination between human service organizations and outcomes for the citizens of the state that need our assistance. The goal is for people to be able to get help when they need it and access concrete resources to support their efforts towards self-sufficiency. [Connecticut's Human Services Infrastructure Approach](#)

Towards this end, the state chose to take on a few key initiatives. Connecticut decided to create the state health insurance exchange Access Health Connecticut (ahCT), and Connecticut decided to initiate work on a common front end client assessment tool used for Long Term Services and Supports. This new tool would be universally applicable between state agencies and for a multitude of services the consumers may seek. Planning also began on a replacement of the Child Care Services and the Child Support Services platforms. These initiatives will be implemented to bring the state and DSS in line with their vision of a coordinated and interconnected human services infrastructure.

There were internal barriers to achieving this goal. DSS had been operating with a 1980s era Eligibility Management System (EMS). EMS utilized a COBOL programming language while DSS had a diminishing number of employees who still knew how to use COBOL. The system, which was implemented in 1989, was designed to house a client base of a few hundred thousand but was being pushed to its limits with a client base of over 1 million. EMS had little ability to integrate with other systems including ahCT and the common assessment tool, utilize web services, or form B2B interfaces. Workers were doing multiple processes and performing certain eligibility determining factors outside of their main system and transposing results into EMS. This was not meeting the goal of a coordinated effort in offering Human Services in the state.

... now being pushed to its limits with a client base of over 1 million....

In early 2011 with the announcement from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of [Federal Waiver A-87](#) and a 90% Federal reimbursement rate for upgrading current Medicaid Eligibility systems into an integrated platform with State or Federal Health Insurance

Exchanges, Connecticut jumped at the opportunity. This was the time to create a new integrated and expandable eligibility determination system for all benefits that DSS and its partner agencies offer and make strides to close the gap on our vision of human services delivery.

DSS procured an Eligibility Systems Integrator who had experience implementing these solutions in multiple other states. However, a large emphasis was given to involvement of DSS staff on the business side. DSS staff brought crucial knowledge about the actual workflow, programmatic policy, and business processes being utilized at the time. The creation of DSS's new system, ImpaCT, kicked off in September 2013. A waterfall project management approach allowed for thorough documentation and milestones to be referenced and provided to Federal entities to secure continual reimbursement of costs. Design utilized business experts from DSS and occasional consulting from partner agencies where integration could occur. Over the next years ImpaCT was designed to integrate the various external processes, integrate programmatic policy, utilize web-services and interfaces, expand online client access, cut down on processing time, reduce correspondence and mailing costs, improve timeliness of benefits, and reduce error rates.

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ImpaCT was rolled out over the state's DSS offices over a period of 1 year, utilizing a Pilot and 6 different implementation waves. Extensive change management efforts were utilized during the phased rollout of the system to ensure user adoption and acceptance. The total current cost of the project through October 2017 came in at approximately \$258 million, of which the states portion after Federal Reimbursement was only around 10% of that total. The final go-live wave concluded in August 2017 and Connecticut now has ImpaCT operating in 13 DSS offices and further design continues to integrate the Child Care, Child Support, and aspects of the insurance exchange systems.

Significance

The number of citizens being served by the Connecticut Department of Social Services is very close to 1 million. These citizens who receive benefits and services from DSS also receive referrals to partner agencies, community organizations, and volunteer groups. Many times DSS acts as the hub for our citizen's services. Until ImpaCT, DSS technology had not kept pace or allowed the organization to succeed in its role as the central hub in our human service infrastructure. With the implementation of our new integrated eligibility system we are able to act effectively in transferring consumer information and data between organizations, integrating functionality between them, cutting down on duplicative efforts of both staff and consumer, and creating a "no wrong door" entry into available Human Services. Aside from the benefits to the clients DSS serves, this is an equally great benefit to the approximately 1600 staff employed at DSS.



The system was designed with an extensive "Help" library and functionality that has increased worker competency. Expedited and automated workflows, programmatic policy, and processes, now all integrated within one system, has allowed work to be completed timely and efficiently. All client data and the full electronic case record is available within the system allowing for an electronic task based workflow. Task based work flows allow for a rapid refocus of resources when deemed necessary for Field Operations concerns. The resource pool becomes fluid and adaptable. Combined with advancements in the integration of business rules, ImpaCT design aims to maximize benefit accuracy and timeliness. An ever important concern as the consumer base continues to grow year after year.

With the implementation of ImpaCT comes 86 total system interfaces. These interfaces lead to less time requesting verification from the client. Timely, accurate results are available to staff when they are needed.

ImpaCT has supported advanced compliance with Federal and State data security requirements, implemented robust ad-hoc reporting capability and functionality for data analysis, mandated reporting, and business case decision making.

ImpaCT has found cost savings for DSS by consolidating notices and verification requests and offering electronic noticing to the client. Adding

barcoding on documents and automated recognition through scanning processes of returned mail has cut down on manual intervention in mail handling.

Returned documents immediately go to task queues. ImpaCT has automated the document and case record process to ensure there is the correct document, correct person, and correct time. Barcoding, in conjunction with optical recognition, has also allowed for passive automation of information returned in documents. ImpaCT is able to identify these documents are received, suppress any reminder notices, and continue to leave benefits active.

The system has already integrated many outside processes but there are currently more in the design phase. Partner agencies who administer some of Connecticut's services now have the ability to interface with ImpaCT or integrate with ImpaCT to share client data across these platforms. DSS now has the technology to move forward with the states human services infrastructure vision.

Impact

From the initial go-live implementation in the Middletown, CT office through April 2018 DSS staff have completed over 930,000 tasks in the ImpaCT system.

These tasks represent critical services delivered to the citizens of Connecticut. The revamped task based workflow, the 86 active interfaces, expedited and automated data entry, and the automation in the scanning process have all contributed to saving countless hours for staff and clients. The timeliness of benefit delivery to clients has sharply risen as a result of the re-engineering of business processes. For FY2013 Connecticut ranked dead last (53rd) for Application Processing Timeliness at 57.36%. As of the period covering April 2017 – September 2017, the latest six month period that Food and Nutrition Services has reported out on, we now rank 5th overall with a timeliness average of 97.30%.



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Along with the completion of these 933k tasks came the generation and mailing of related correspondences. The new correspondence consolidation logic built into ImpaCT cuts down on the number of notices sent to consumers by combining all generated correspondence within a day and consolidating them into a single issued notice. Consumers now also have the ability to elect to receive electronic notices. The combination of notice consolidation and electronic notices has realized cost savings for DSS.

Since implementing the improved online self-service there have been over 132k instances of clients either reporting changes or renewing benefits online. These 132k transactions represent time savings to staff and reduced calls to the Benefits Call Centers. New automated processing of several returned forms including passive renewals, and periodic report forms has led to an additional 122k tasks completed without manual intervention.

Even with these improvements, the most valuable benefit obtained from the implementation of the ImpaCT system is the expandability of the new platform. There are currently two new systems in design and slated to come into ImpaCT within the next few years. The state health exchange, ahCT, is now able to continue design in conjunction with DSS for further integration of the exchange and ImpaCT. This new Shared Services platform created by ImpaCT's Implementation is the future of Connecticut's Human Services Infrastructure and will re-engineer the business processes of all the human service entities to strive towards meeting the Mission and Vision of Connecticut.