

ARIZONA

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
TECHNOLOGY

*NASCIO 2021 State IT Recognition Awards
Digital Services: Government to Citizen*



CHILDS Case Management System Replacement - **AZ Dept. of Child Safety**

Title: CHILDS Case Management System
Replacement

Category: Digital Services: Government to Citizen

State: Arizona

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situation

The Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS), in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), needed to work together on a replacement project for the outdated DCS case management system known as CHILDS.

CHILDS (Children's Information Library and Data Source) was implemented by DCS in 1997 as an efficient, effective and economical method to exchange child welfare information between various State and Federal Systems.

Problems

Over time, the mainframe system for CHILDS became large, complex, and inefficient. Common issues included:

- Lack of a user-friendly design
- Limited reporting capabilities
- Lack of a mobile platform
- Deficient searching and matching functionality
- Poor data quality (lack of data integrity, duplications, and data errors)
- Lack of collaboration with other agencies and system interfaces
- Incomplete service and provider management

Due to the age, complexity, and inefficiencies of CHILDS, DCS was limited in its abilities to enhance the system fast enough to provide important processing functions identified as crucial.

Solution

From a customer service perspective, citizens expect responsive and efficient service from their local governments. This applies especially to DCS and its key responsibility to protect society's most valuable and precious resource - its children. Therefore, DCS is dedicated to managing projects and initiatives to improve existing solutions with best-of-breed technologies for greater accessibility and service delivery for residents of the Grand Canyon State. This, in turn, produces positive results that reflect innovation, ingenuity, and accessibility.

The solution to the many issues rooted in the outdated CHILDS system was to replace it with a new system that offers greater efficiency and security while maintaining compliance with the latest federal rules and regulations.



CONCEPT

The replacement system for CHILDS is Guardian, a cloud-based solution that is both compliant with new regulations and employs mobile equipment and software that increases the time workers can be in the field working directly with families, children, providers, and other parties (police, medical, etc.).

The Guardian Program is a child-centered, user-friendly technological solution which provides quality data and improved processes to support all DCS work for the safety of Arizona Children. Key performance indicators include:

- Data Quality: Increased data collection and quality
- Cost Reduction: Easier system development and maintenance
- Increased Collaboration: Data exchanges with external systems
- Modular Design: More flexible and adaptive to allow for future changes
- Follows IT Standard: Promotes efficient, economical, and effective development
- Shareable: Capable of being shared and reused by other states, tribes, and agencies

In order to successfully adopt the Guardian Program, DCS worked closely with business stakeholders to understand their needs. Subsequently, they engaged vendor-partners to bring forward innovative approaches and technologies to drive time-to-value and measurable improvements in case-load, employee retention, and positive outcomes for children. This required leading technology transformation and business process transformation efforts.

To bring immediate efficiencies to the DCS caseworkers faced with a backlog of cases, the department deployed a solution that provided a mobile interface over the previous mainframe back-end.

SIGNIFICANCE

The CHILDS case management system was under federal rules and regulations called SACWIS (Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System).

In 2015, new rules and regulations, called CCWIS (Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System), were introduced. Subsequently, DCS took action to ensure compliance with these regulations when adopting Guardian.



CCWIS benefits over the previous DCS SACWIS system include:

- Accommodation of changes in practice and technology
- Enablement of flexibility to “right-size” systems
- Promotion of program and system interoperability
- Requirement of data quality processes
- Reduction of costs for development and maintenance

IMPACT

The CHILDS case management system replacement and subsequent launch of the new Guardian system was completed in February 2021.

The adoption of Guardian has resulted in web-based, mobile technologies that offer the following benefits:

- Enablement of greater access for foster care providers, schools, police, courts, and other stakeholders to capture case information in a timely manner
- Increased caseworker productivity and data security by eliminating paper-based processes, re-keying of paper reports, and enabling data capture at the point of service
- Driving down the case backlog
- Replacement of the back-end system and enhancements to meet the federal CCWIS requirements and the needs of Arizona's most vulnerable
- Incorporation of secure virtual meeting technologies to facilitate case monitoring and make meetings more convenient for everyone involved

Through the efforts of DCS, the Guardian Program has resulted in increased data collection and quality; easier systems development and maintenance for cost reduction; data exchanges with external systems for increased collaboration; the promotion of efficient, economical, and effective development that follows IT standards; and the capability of sharing with other states, tribes, and agencies.



Program Future State

