

State of Arizona**Agency:** Department of Child Safety (DCS)**Award Category:** Digital Experience – Enterprise Solutions**Project Title:** *Guardian Insight: Modular Enhancements for Safer, Smarter Child Welfare Services***Project Dates:** January 2024 – May 2025**Contact:** Steven Hintze, Chief Data Officer, DCSSteven.Hintze@azdcs.gov

IDEA (25%)

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

Under the guidance from the CIO, Steven Hintze, Chief Data & Product Officer initiated *Guardian Insight*, a comprehensive initiative to evolve the state's federally-mandated CCWIS platform, *Guardian*. This project addressed high-impact issues across assessment closures, provider payments, federal data sharing, and compliance workflows. Many of these areas were still burdened by manual workarounds, outdated logic, and fragmented user experiences, posing risks to data quality, worker productivity, and ultimately, child safety.

Why does it matter?

This effort tackled specific operational pain points that directly affect frontline service delivery:

- Over 2,000 child safety assessments per year depended on static business logic, slowing closures and introducing risk.
- SSA data exchange gaps delayed benefit eligibility and created funding inaccuracies.
- Provider invoicing inefficiencies created unnecessary backlogs and friction with care providers.
- Manual data entry in case and person records led to hours of rework and errors monthly.

By addressing these issues, DCS strengthened the quality, timeliness, and reliability of services to children and families.

What makes it different?

Unlike traditional IT modernization programs that rely on massive, infrequent releases, *Guardian Insight* is built around agile, modular improvements, with each feature release tied to measurable operational value. Steven Hintze led this evolution with an emphasis on business-driven development, informed by legal mandates, data compliance, and user pain points.

What makes it universal?

The initiative aligns with NASCIO's Top Priorities, particularly:

- #1: Cybersecurity and Risk Management
- #2: Digital Services
- #4: Data Management and Analytics
- #5: Legacy Modernization
- #10: Cloud Services

Other states using CCWIS systems can replicate DCS's feature-level strategy, especially when modernizing legacy functionality without full system replacement.

IMPLEMENTATION (25%)

What was the roadmap?

DCS followed a structured rollout in three strategic phases:

- Phase 1 (Q1 2024):
 - Assessment Rule Engine Replacement
 - SSA Integration
 - Auto-Generated Provider Invoices
- Phase 2 (Q2 2024):
 - Near Fatality/Fatality Detail Enhancements
 - Best Interest Determinations (BID) Form Automation
 - User Role and Security Controls
- Phase 3 (Q3 2024 – Q2 2025):
 - Unborn Concern Intake Enhancements
 - Central Registry Portal Integration
 - Disclosure Application Wave 3
 - Guardian Regression Suite Maintenance

Each functionality was scoped, developed, and validated through UAT cycles, stakeholder review, and regression testing in Guardian.

Who was involved?

Steven Hintze led the multi-disciplinary effort with:

- Business Product Owners from Intake, CRCU, and Finance
- DCS Legal, Policy, and Compliance Teams
- Intake Specialists, Caseworkers, and Regional Field Leads
- Technical SMEs, QA teams, and external system integrators

How did you do it?

The team utilized:

- Biweekly agile sprints, quarterly reviews, and production release cycles
- ~12 FTEs across business analysts, developers, and QA
- Azure-hosted architecture with secure API frameworks
- Informatica MDM setup for FFPSA integration with AWS/Azure compatibility

Architecture was future-proofed to enable additional federal data partner integrations.

IMPACT (50%)

What did the project make better?

The enhancements yielded measurable improvements:

- Rule Engine Replacement: Reduced average assessment closure time by 22%
- SSA Integration: Decreased benefit allocation errors by 67%, ensuring funding accuracy
- Autogenerated Invoices: Cut invoice processing time by 40%, saving over 2,000 hours annually
- BID Form Integration: Saved nearly 5,000 hours/year in manual entry for frontline teams
- Person Identifier Automation: Reduced entry errors, improving record accuracy and searchability
- Security Role Enhancements: Empowered business admins to better manage records and system load

How do you know?

- Estimated \$650K in annual staff time savings
- Audit compliance scores increased 18% year-over-year
- User satisfaction (via post-release surveys) jumped from 3.1 to 4.6 out of 5
- Reduction in Sev 1 production issues related to AWOL/Missing Person workflows

Testimonial:

“The Best Interest Determination process used to be a major time sink. Now it’s streamlined and fast. These changes free us to focus more on the families, not the forms.”
— Child Safety Specialist, Southern Arizona Region

What now?

Current and future efforts include:

- Completing Disclosure Application usability and logic upgrades
 - Integrating additional federal partners (e.g., Medicaid and Behavioral Health)
 - Continuing regression coverage for all future Guardian enhancements
 - Expanding AI-driven data quality monitoring for audit preparation and trend analysis
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