



Office of Children
and Family Services

CCWIS Bidirectional Data Exchanges

WRITE-UP FROM BUSINESS CASE

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CCWIS Bidirectional Data Exchanges

Executive Summary

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In 2018, OCFS opted to transition the statewide child welfare information system, CONNECTIONS, to meet federal Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) requirements over a 6-year period (now expanded to 7 years due to pandemic-related delays in 2020-21), 2019-2026. CCWIS requirements have a heavy focus on data quality, with a mandate to eliminate duplicate data entry to the degree possible. The requirements also mandate that all payment/claiming, case management, title IV-E eligibility, and federal reporting data reside in the CCWIS database (regardless of where it is originally collected).

Relevant excerpts from the CCWIS final rule:

1355.52 CCWIS Project Requirements

(d) Data quality requirements.

(2) The title IV–E agency must implement and maintain automated functions in CCWIS to:

(iv) **Prevent, to the extent practicable, the need to re-enter data already captured** or exchanged with the CCWIS

(e) **Bi-directional data exchanges.**

(1) **The CCWIS must support** efficient, economical, and effective bi-directional data exchanges to exchange relevant data with:

(i) Systems generating the financial payments and claims for titles IV–B and IV–E per paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section, if applicable;

(ii) Systems operated by child welfare contributing agencies that are collecting or using data described in paragraph (b) of this section, if applicable;

(iii) Each system used to calculate one or more components of title IV–E eligibility determinations per paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section, if applicable; and

(iv) Each system external to CCWIS used by title IV–E agency staff to collect CCWIS data, if applicable.

(2) **To the extent practicable**, the title IV–E agency’s CCWIS must support one bi-directional data exchange to exchange relevant data, including data that may benefit IV–E agencies and data exchange partners in serving clients and improving outcomes, with each of the following state or tribal systems:

(i) Child abuse and neglect system(s);

(ii) System(s) operated under title IV– A of the Act; [PA/TANF]

(iii) Systems operated under title XIX of the Act including:

(A) Systems to determine Medicaid eligibility described in 42 CFR 433.111(b)(2)(ii)(A); and

(B) Medicaid Management Information Systems as defined at 42 CFR 433.111(b)(2)(ii)(B);

CCWIS Bidirectional Data Exchanges

- (iv) Systems operated under title IV– D of the Act; [Child Support]
- (v) Systems operated by the court(s) of competent jurisdiction over title IV–E foster care, adoption, and guardianship programs;
- (vi) Systems operated by the state or tribal education agency, or school districts, or both.

(f) **Data exchange standard requirements.** The title IV–E agency must use a single data exchange standard that describes data, definitions, formats, and other specifications upon implementing a CCWIS:

- (1) For bi-directional data exchanges between CCWIS and each child welfare contributing agency; and
- (2) For data exchanges with systems described under paragraph (e)(1)(iv) of this section.

Note that per CCWIS definitions, “title IV-E agency” means OCFS and local departments of social services, and “child welfare contributing agency” (CWCA) means the voluntary agencies in New York’s child welfare structure.

Local districts and voluntary agencies often have their own systems, external to CONNECTIONS, to collect child welfare information to conduct functions not part of the statewide system. A survey was conducted in 2018-19 to collect information on these systems, with over 350 external systems identified, ranging from comprehensive electronic health record systems to MS Access databases and Excel tracking spreadsheets, with many variations in between. Many of these systems identified some duplicate data entry with CONNECTIONS.

There are also state systems that collect and manage child welfare information, both within OCFS (such as Adoption, ICPC/NEICE, KinGAP), and with other agencies (such as OTDA’s WMS and BICS for service and payment information, and DOH’s Medicaid systems for Medicaid eligibility and claims for foster care youth). OCFS is also planning to develop CONNECTIONS Mobile Application modules (such as Mobile Progress Notes) that will require interfaces to be built with the CONNECTIONS system. While these interfaces may not rely on the bidirectional data exchange standard used for local systems, the same development team is needed to work on these interfaces.

Bidirectional data exchanges are required with local districts and voluntary agencies to reduce duplicate data entry, and with state systems to bring required information into the CCWIS, in order to meet these requirements.

Over the past two CCWIS years, OCFS and the ITS business solutions team (CONNECTIONS), with input from ITS CTO, developed a data exchange standard, approach, and methodology/tooling to support these bi-directional data exchanges as required by CCWIS federal regulations.

This business case is for the development and implementation of bidirectional data exchanges.

Rationale for Investing

Business Need or Problem to Address:

- Child welfare information is collected in numerous local district and voluntary agency systems external to CONNECTIONS for various functions not included in CONNECTIONS. Many of these systems require collection of information that is also entered into CONNECTIONS. A bidirectional data exchange

CCWIS Bidirectional Data Exchanges

mechanism is mandated under CCWIS to eliminate duplicate data entry to the extent possible, with the goal of improving data quality (and improving the caseworker experience).

- Child welfare information is collected in different state systems external to CONNECTIONS. The first priority will be to bring payment and claims data for child welfare services into CONNECTIONS from OTDA's statewide payment and claiming systems (currently BICS and Automated Claiming System; BICS will be replaced by IES' Financial Management module). Other state systems for which a bidirectional interface would be beneficial include, but are not limited to, OCFS's Adoption system, ICPC/NEICE, and KinGAP; and DOH's Medicaid claims and eligibility systems.
- Mobile application modules are planned for certain CONNECTIONS functions that caseworkers need to use most in the field, starting with a mobile Progress Notes application. These modules will need bidirectional interfaces with CONNECTIONS.

Business Objectives:

- To reduce duplicate data entry, thereby improving CONNECTIONS data quality. When caseworkers have good quality data (timely, accurate, and consistent), it will ultimately result in improved case management, service delivery, and outcomes for youth.
- To bring relevant information for child welfare cases, including payment and claiming data, into one system for caseworkers to have a holistic view of children and families, with all the information they need readily available in one place.

Agency Programs Covered

- OCFS Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) – child welfare (IV-E and IV-B)
- Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS's) – child welfare (IV-E and IV-B)
- Voluntary Foster Care Agencies (VFCAs) – child welfare (IV-E and IV-B)
- Other NYS agencies/programs – Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Department of Health (DOH), Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), Integrated Eligibility System (IES)

Issues

- ITS resource needs have been identified. Development cannot move forward until more staff are onboarded.
 - 1 Architect/Developer – hired Oct 2020
 - 1 Developer – PERF submitted Jan 2021; with DOB
 - 1 BA – PERF submitted Jan 2021; with DOB
 - 1 Tester – PERF submitted in Feb 2021
- Scheduling will be a challenge as this team will need to work with the larger CONNECTIONS development, BA, and testing teams, which are all working already tight schedules for required CONNECTIONS functionality.

CCWIS Bidirectional Data Exchanges

Risks

- Not getting skilled resources as outlined above is a risk.
- Clear requirements to develop standard data sets for bidirectional exchanges with local district and voluntary agency systems will be needed; these groups will need to come together to agree on data elements and business rules.
- Project boundaries need to be defined, as once development becomes more routine, it is anticipated that new data sets will be developed and new data exchange partners will be onboarded on an ongoing basis.

Proposed Solution

- ITS will develop application programming interfaces (APIs) based on standard data sets, as defined by local district, voluntary agency, OCFS, and ITS workgroups.
- ITS will develop interfaces with other state systems as defined by system owners, OCFS, and ITS.
- This will be a multi-year effort.

Benefits

- Improved caseworker experience by reduction in duplicate data entry
- Improved caseworker experience by having CONNECTION data available/viewable in local systems
- Improved CONNECTIONS data quality, leading to improved case management and better outcomes for children and families
- Meets CCWIS requirements