



Successful Food Stamp Innovations

June 2006

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ARIZONA

Case Accuracy Tracking System (CATS)

This project is a web-based case read system to conduct the full Case Read Process, which reviews every error element for the Food Stamp program. This system replaced the manual “paper” case reading and reporting process.

Project Overview

The case read process is a quality assurance method for evaluating the accuracy of an eligibility decision. For several years this had existed as a manual and paper-intensive process. Through a partnership between Family Assistance Administration (FAA) and Division of Technology Services (DTS) staff, the Case Accuracy Tracking System (CATS) was developed and implemented in October 2002. CATS is a web-enabled application that provides an electronic solution for completing case reads, managing quality data and reports, and evaluating accuracy. CATS eliminated considerable manual effort in preparing hard copy documents and reports, thus providing a more efficient tool to allow staff to examine prior data, review eligibility factors, analyze collected data and determine the cause of the error, and provide relevant training.

Procedures

Prior to implementing the CATS automated case read process, case readers were required to manually complete numerous forms, keep a manual log for each case read, and to manually complete monthly reports, extracting data from their forms. This had proven to be a very time consuming, paper-intensive process.

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Project Outcomes

This is a process whereby eligibility staff learn from their mistakes. Since the emphasis is on continual improvement, this leads to preventive action, thereby eliminating error trends and increasing accuracy.

Agency management understood that the Case Read process was heavily affecting the workload of the Local Offices. Management determined that it would not be feasible to eliminate the process but it could dramatically influence its effect to the Local Office by automating the process. If this process was automated, Management anticipated that the positive results would be felt at all levels within FAA. Although Case Reading would still be done, the tedious and complex manual monthly, quarterly, and annual “Case Read Roll Up” reports would now be eliminated. The accuracy and integrity of the data could also be significantly increased as well as eliminating the need for District and Central Office staff to manually compile and roll up these reports.

Unlike the prior manual paper process, the automated case read tool allows the agency to have the flexibility to quickly and easily change “quality questions” based on error trends, policy changes, and Quality Control (QC) or Management Evaluation (ME) evaluation data.

Also, the data from the case reads and the reports that are generated using this data are available to administrative staff on a ‘real-time’ basis and may be obtained at anytime during the month as opposed to the ‘end of month’ reporting that was available in the prior manual paper process. The real-time data and reports may be customized at state, regional, local office, and eligibility worker levels.

In the manual process, it was calculated that the agency utilized an average of 25,776 staff hours annually for all aspects of the case read process (based on actual funded positions at the time). The CATS automated process reduces staff hours to an average of 3,468 annually, thereby yielding an average annual savings of 22,308 hours.

By applying the above analysis to staff average hourly salary, it was calculated that the agency realized an average annual cost in salary of \$449,739 in the manual process. After implementing the automated process this cost is reduced to \$60,396.

Implemented: October 2002	Status:	Location:	Partnerships:
Target Population:	Processes Affected:	Programs Affected:	Contact: Christopher Sisson Department of Economic Security Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility 1789 West Jefferson Phoenix, AZ 85007 Phone (602) 542-0352 Fax (602) 542-6982 Email CSisson@azdes.gov www.de.state.az.us

ARIZONA

Document Management Systems

A pilot project to eliminate paper case records by creating electronically scanned images of all relevant case record documents.

Project Overview

This project intends to eliminate paper case records by creating an electronic image of all relevant documents. Currently this project is in the pilot stage and is limited solely to the east district within Arizona’s most populous county (Maricopa County).

This project is designed to address multiple issues. With paper case records, misplaced files are often an issue; with a scanned record that can be accessed by appropriate staff, this issue is eliminated. This project will also decrease the amount of person-hours currently spent to locate the actual physical case record. There are also no longer instances of losing case records or information that has been provided by the participant.

No additional funding has been provided. This project was implemented with existing budgeting constraints.

The existing Local Office staff has been utilized to implement this project. Special training has been provided to them on procedures to follow.

Prior procedures required obtaining a copy of every actual document that was to be entered in the case record. The copies that were obtained had to be correctly routed through the local office mail distribution process. Many times document copies were misplaced prior to reaching the intended recipient. Often times it was difficult if not impossible to find the needed case record or information.

Project Outcomes

This project has had an excellent impact on customer service. More efficient use of available staffing resources has been realized. Uniform consistency and documentation for each case record can now be obtained as all authorized staff have access to the exact same information.

Implemented: Summer 2004	Status:	Location:	Partnerships:
Target Population:	Processes Affected:	Programs Affected:	Contact: Loren Buckner Policy Specialist Department of Economic Security Family Assistance Administration 1789 West Jefferson Site Code 960A/ 3rd Floor NE Phoenix AZ 85007 Ph: (602) 542-0440 Fax: (602) 542-6982 LBuckner@azdes.gov. http://www.de.state.az.us

ARIZONA

Arizona 2-1-1 Online

Project Overview

Internet site that provides the public with information about health and human services. as well as detailed information in the event of an emergency. This web site provides integrated information on all areas of public services. This web site allows any individual to type in a keyword and their zip code area and then provides them with search results on what resources are available and where they are located.

The project is designed to present a systematic, integrated resource for any individual in the state to identify all potential resources that are available to assist with their needs. Agency staff may also utilize this as a tool when asked by participants what additional resources may also be available.

Multiple agencies were involved in preparation of this site including Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Public Safety, Arizona Department of Transportation, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Arizona Office of Homeland Security, Arizona State Land Department, Government Information Technology Agency and Governor's Office of Children Youth and Families.

This program received a federal grant administered through the Arizona Department of Health Services.

The above listed agencies provided personnel, technical expertise and oversight in the development of this web site.

Prior to the development of this web site there was no systematic guidance available to the general public on existing human services resources. Information was gathered in a piece meal, non-integrated fashion. Human Service agency staff often times missed potential referrals because there was no readily available tool to identify all resources.

Project Outcomes

The project has assisted the public immensely by providing a single tool where multiple resources can be identified within a matter of a few minutes. This has streamlined the process for state agency staff who no longer need to access multiple guides and brochures as in the past, often times to find out that the information was no longer current.

Implemented: June 29, 2005	Status:	Location:	Partnerships:
Target Population:	Processes Affected:	Programs Affected:	Contact: Patricia Carroll Policy Specialist Department of Economic Security Family Assistance Administration 1789 West Jefferson Site Code 960A/ 3rd Floor NE Phoenix, AZ 85007 Ph: (602) 542-0463 Fax: (602) 542-6982 PCarroll@azdes.gov. http://www.de.state.az.us

ARKANSAS

Arkansas' Network for Welfare Eligibility (ANSWER)

Project Overview

In Arkansas, applicants use a *Request for Assistance*, a simple three-page form, to apply for one or more of the following programs: the FSP, Medicaid, or the Arkansas Temporary Emergency Assistance Program (TEA). The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) needed a system that would work well with all three programs to reduce the size and number of applications required to receive public benefits. In addition, the system would need to help reduce confusion and complications on applications, improve client access, and provide web-based access to policy and forms. In response to this need, DHS created Arkansas' Network for Welfare Eligibility (ANSWER).

Procedures

Through web-based technology, the ANSWER system can determine income eligibility for the FSP, Medicaid, and TEA utilizing information entered by into the system by caseworkers. During the interview, the caseworker captures the information needed through the condensed three-page, three-program application. The ANSWER system allows caseworkers to access spreadsheets outlining information which will help determine a household's medical deduction and self-employment income along with other useful information. A *Client Declaration* is printed for the applicant to review and sign. The worker then runs budgets to determine eligibility for one or more of the programs. Approval or denial notices are issued automatically. The policies of all three programs were aligned to make this system possible. Workers were cross-trained in all three programs so that one worker will be able to receive a combined form and process the required case actions on one or more of the programs.

Project Outcomes

This project not only provided an integrated, interactive computer system, but also allowed the state to make important system changes. The state now uses one application for all three programs, which allows a client to receive interviews for one or more of the programs without submitting additional applications or information. The review and recertification for each program is also streamlined using information entered into the system for one program can reduce or eliminated the need for additional information for another program.

The new system allowed the State to simplify its recertification process using a recertification form that is complementary to the ANSWER system and telephone interviews rather than face-to-face interviews.

The ANSWER system has made improvements in client services by streamlining the application and administrative process for applying for public benefits. Since January 2003 the FSP caseload has risen from 122,760 cases to 152,093 cases in January 2005, a 24 percent increase.

Implemented: August 2003	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: AR Department of Health and Human Services (DHS)
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Policy Simplification Simplified Administration Streamlined Application Web-based Technology	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Medicaid Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: Georgia Gilkey Department of Health and Human Services - Division of County Operations PO Box 1437 Slot S335 Little Rock, AR 72203 Ph: (501) 682-8276 Fax: (501) 682-1469 Georgia.Gilkey@mail.state.ar.us Georgia.gilkey@arkansas.gov

CALIFORNIA

California Association of Food Banks Food Stamp Outreach Program

Project Overview

In 2003, a two-year plan to improve access to the Food Stamp Program was drafted by state and federal officials, together with public and private sector food stamp and food security advocates and organizations. The plan was intended to increase food stamp participation throughout California and in particular in six priority counties—Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, and Tulare counties—selected on the basis of their high rates of poverty and food insecurity and low food stamp participation among other things.

As a result of this plan, the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) partnered with the California Department of Social Services, and the California Department of Health Services Nutrition Network to apply for food stamp outreach funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA's Western Regional Office approved the use of food stamp outreach activities by nonprofit organizations in California as an in-kind funding source that would trigger a match through USDA's food stamp outreach program. Additional funding was contributed by the California Wellness Foundation and MAZON.

Year three of this project started in October 2005, and CAFB expects the project to include 20 partners in 22 of California's 58 counties, over twice as many partners than participated in year one and two of the project.

Procedures

Food Bank staff, volunteers and partners work to increase food stamp awareness and utilization through a variety of activities including prescreening, application assistance and workshops, public education, coalition building, training for community partners serving low-income families and media. Work plans are developed by local organizations in a way that best fit their abilities and the needs of their community.

Project Outcomes

Participation in the Food Stamp Program in California is on the rise, relative to other states. From December 2001-2003, California ranked 2nd from bottom in percent change in food stamp participation, yet the state ranked 9th from the top for December 2003-2004 (Food Research and Action Center). The majority of counties participating in CAFB's outreach project experienced higher rates of increases in participation in the Food Stamp Program than the state average. According to a case study yet to be released by the California Nutrition Network, information on the status of assisted applicants from a sample of participating counties indicate eligible households, and their communities, received an estimated \$880,000 per year in food stamp benefits.

A stronger relationship has been built between partnering organizations to address the under enrollment of Californians in the Food Stamp Program.

Implemented: October 2003	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: CA Association of Food Banks CA Department of Health, Cancer Prevention & Nutrition CA Department of Social Services (DSS) CA Food Policy Advocates CA Nutrition Network CA Wellness Foundation MAZON Foundation USDA Western Regional Office
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Low-Income Individuals & Families	Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Outreach Simplified Administration	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: Jessica Bartholow Statewide Program Manager CA Association of Food Banks Ph: (916) 321-4435 Fax: (916) 444-8095 Jessica@cafoodbanks.org www.cafoodbanks.org

CONNECTICUT

NEON Food Stamp Outreach

Project Overview

In 2003, the Department of Social Services (DSS) office in Norwalk closed, forcing many clients to travel to Bridgeport or Stamford, a trip that many clients and potential clients had neither the time nor the money to do and many had no means of transportation. In the absence of a local office, the Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON) has a new partnership with DSS, the Human Services Infrastructure, a service delivery system that builds capacity to connect vulnerable populations more effectively to needed services. As an outcome of this partnership, NEON began training members of its staff and volunteers to assist in completing applications for the FSP, and functions as an intermediary between the FSP offices in Bridgeport and Stamford and clients seeking food stamp benefits. NEON also is contracted by DSS to offer Food Stamp Employment & Training services to the FSP population.

Procedures

NEON's partnership with Connecticut's Department of Social Services, the Human Services Infrastructure system (HSI) provides the framework for both outreach on behalf of services like the FSP and other social service programs, as well as a way to assist clients in assessing their needs and accessing the application process with all their needed documentation. DSS provided training to NEON

outreach, intake, and case management staff on eligibility requirements and the application process. The HSI system process moves a client through a universal intake and pre-screening questionnaire to determine levels of need, barriers to self-sufficiency, and the potential services of which they might be eligible. The potential FSP client is given pre-application assistance and, if a face-to-face appointment is waived or not necessarily, the paper work is faxed or mailed to the Department of Social Services in Bridgeport for determination.

Project Outcome

Nearly 120 people are now assisted each month at NEON. Clients receive assistance with reading, filling out, and submitting food stamp applications. Additionally, clients with disabilities who are not able to go to the food stamp office or even make it in to NEON can either complete an application over the phone or have a staff member from NEON visit their home and assist with the application.

Secondary Results

Many times clients are eligible and in need of multiple services. NEON staff have been trained to identify other needs of their clients and either assist them with applying for additional services or put them in contact with someone who can help them. The HSI system provides a framework to identify multiple client needs and assets so that appropriate referrals can be made internally to NEON services (e.g., FSE&T, resume assistance, food bank, AmeriCares Free Health Clinic, etc) and externally to DSS or other local area human service entities, city, or state agencies.

<p>Implemented: 2003</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>Location: Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport, Wilton</p>	<p>Partnerships: CT Department of Social Services (DSS) Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON)</p>
<p>Target Population: Disabled Elderly Food Stamp Applicants Low-Income Individuals & Families</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Outreach</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSE&T) Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF) Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p>	<p>Contact: Chip Anderson NEON 98 South Main Street South Norwalk, CT 06854 Ph: (203) 899-2424 Fax: (203) 899-2430 canderson@neon-norwalk.org</p>

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Commitment to Service

Project Overview

The Commitment to Service Project was the adoption of customer-friendly policies to better accommodate working recipients by partnering with community organizations. The partnerships were designed to conduct outreach, provide assistance to customers with limited English speaking and writing abilities, and to further solicit feedback on service from recipients. A reduction of bureaucratic impediments to program participation and the adoption of customer-friendly policies to better accommodate working recipients helped to ensure that low-income families, especially the elderly and working families, were not overburdened with paperwork and administrative requirements that would serve as disincentives participation.

Procedures



The Commitment to Service Project partnered with the Capital Area Food Bank to conduct focus groups that identified barriers to participation for the elderly. Information from the focus groups was used to modify staff training in several areas. The Commitment to Service Project also partnered with the Food Research and Action Center to develop cultural sensitivity training for staff to raise awareness of the issues affecting undocumented and qualified aliens in the community as they attempt to access benefits for their family and selves. In addition, the project employed testers to call staff to determine their understanding and willingness to use the language line. Training modules were developed for volunteers provided by the food bank. Community partners such as the Food Bank and the Food Research and Action Center were responsible for providing outreach to citizens and representatives of other local organizations.

Project Outcomes

Team work and collaboration were the key components of this effort. During each step, different units and offices in Income Maintenance Administration were strategically involved. With respect to simplified reporting policy, memoranda and training were the essential components. Each activity was consciously linked to the Commitment to Service Project goal. While improvement in error rates was expected, the commitment to enhance customer service focus was a guiding principle.

The District of Columbia received recognition for having the most improved negative error rate and for having the highest participant access rate.

Implemented: 2002	Status: Ongoing	Location: District Wide	Partnerships: Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) DC Department of Human Services (DHS) Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
Target Population: Disabled Elderly Low-Income Individuals & Families	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: Ellen M Wells Department of Human Services - Income Maintenance Administration 645 H Street, NE Washington, DC 20002 Phone: (202) 698-3946 Fax: (202) 724-2041 ellenm.wells@dc.gov

DELAWARE

Expanded Categorical Eligibility

Project Overview

Delaware expanded categorical eligibility to all food stamp applicants by authorizing the individuals to get information about pregnancy prevention, which is the third purpose of the TANF program (reduction of out-of-wedlock pregnancies). Resource limits were eliminated for all food stamp applicants except those households with a member disqualified for an intentional program violation. The Division of Social Services for the Department of Health and Human Services did not have to track clients who were using a TANF service that made them categorically eligible which would change when they no longer received those services because the authorization for pregnancy information covered the whole certification period.

Procedures

The following authorization statement was put on all applications.



AUTHORIZATION FOR RECEIPT OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION INFORMATION

You are authorized to receive pregnancy prevention information. If you wish to receive this information you can call Planned Parenthood at 1-800-230-PLAN (7526). If you wish to get teen pregnancy prevention information, you may also call the Alliance for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention at 1-800-499-WAIT (9248). You can also call the Delaware Helpline at 1-800-464-4357 for the Public Health Family Planning clinic in your area.

The automated eligibility system was programmed to not count the resources of those individuals who were deemed categorically eligible.

Project Outcomes

Applicants were able to receive benefits without verifying resources. OMB capped the income limit at 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, for those non-cash assistance individuals who were deemed categorically eligible. Administratively, the workload for case workers was reduced through the elimination of the resource test. As a result of this project, the resource limit payment errors were reduced and participation in the program increased.

The application process was simplified by reducing the number of verifications clients have to provide in order to get benefits.

<p>Implemented: February 2, 2000</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: Alliance for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention DE Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Planned Parenthood Public Health Family Planning Clinics</p>
<p>Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Low-Income Individuals & Families</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Simplified Administration Streamlined Application</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</p>	<p>Contact: Linda Crusco Department of Health & Human Services - Division of Social Services PO Box 906, Lewis Bldg. New Castle, DE 19720 Ph: (302) 255-9606 Fax: (302) 255-4425 linda.crusco@state.de.us www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/</p>

DELAWARE

Partnership with the Food Bank of Delaware

Project Overview

Through a partnership between the Food Bank of Delaware and the University of Delaware, the Delaware Department of Health and Human Services created a food stamp outreach, education, and pre-screening project for non-food stamp participants who currently relied on emergency food assistance from local food pantries and soup kitchens. Funded by a two-year, \$349,592 Food Stamp Outreach Grant from the Food and Nutrition Service, the project helped to reach individuals who were in need of a more secure food assistance program than just emergency pantries and kitchens.

Procedures



The Food Bank of Delaware hired a Project Director and an Outreach Specialist with grant funds. The University of Delaware was contracted to develop a monitoring and tracking system to evaluate the results of the outreach project. Educational materials were developed and disseminated to individuals who rely on emergency food assistance. The food bank also partnered with its member agencies (which received 60 pounds of emergency food for each successful food stamp application) and agencies that serve the immigrant communities, the Department of Labor's Unemployment & Insurance clients, WIC recipients, and State Service Center clients to pre-screen individuals. The Department of Social Services provided screening tools and training on the use of the Delaware Client Identification System (DCIS), which is Delaware's automated eligibility system for assistance programs. The member agencies supplied the food bank with the names of everyone they pre-screened.

Project Outcomes

It took some time before the food bank's member agencies actually performed any pre-screening of individuals for the Food Stamp Program, despite the 60 lbs. emergency food incentive. This hindered the Food Bank's ability to reach its goals for this grant. Even with this minor setback the outreach project was able to pre-screen and refer individuals to the Food Stamp Program who may not have applied on their own.

The food bank encountered a number of individuals with felony drug convictions, which prohibited them from participating in the Food Stamp Program. The food bank worked with a state senator who proposed and passed a bill that allows certain drug felons to participate in the Food Stamp Program after treatment.

<p>Implemented: October 1, 2002</p>	<p>Status: Ended September 30, 2004</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: DE Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Food Bank of Delaware (FBD) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) University of Delaware</p>
<p>Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Outreach Policy Simplification</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Department of Labor's Unemployment & Insurance Office (DLO) Food Stamp Program (FSP) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)</p>	<p>Contact: Linda Crusco Department of Health & Human Services - Division of Social Services PO Box 906, Lewis Bldg. New Castle, DE 19720 Ph: (302) 255-9606 Fax: (302) 255-4425 linda.crusco@state.de.us www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/</p>

FLORIDA

Florida Combined Application Project (SUNCAP)

Project Overview

Florida's Combined Application Project (SUNCAP) allows SSA staff to gather information regarding food stamp eligibility from clients during an SSI interview. The SUNCAP approval requires that all SUNCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income. They may have up to three consecutive months of earned income after starting SUNCAP.

Through SUNCAP, clients:



- Receive a monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and actual SSI income;
- Are certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe SUNCAP;
- Provide a SUNCAP brochure;
- Collect shelter and utility expenses;
- Indicate the shelter parameters.

The information is then transferred to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) via the SDX where:

- DCF notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$700 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$50 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DCF office.

Project Outcomes

SUNCAP has no standardized benefit amounts. Benefits are determined using actual income from SDX, current standard deduction, standardized shelter amount, and the SUA.

Clients already receiving food stamps who become eligible for SSI will be automatically converted to SUNCAP. The client has the option to opt out of SUNCAP if the FSP benefit would decrease as a result of SUNCAP

Implemented: February 2005	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: FL Department of Children and Families (DCF) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Jennifer Lange Department of Children & Families - Economic Self-Sufficiency Services 1317 Winewood Boulevard Tallahassee, FL 32399 Ph: (850) 487-8448 Fax: (850) 488-2589 Jennifer.Lange@dcf.state.fl.us www.dcf.state.fl.us/ess/

FLORIDA

ACCESS Florida Initiative

Project Overview

ACCESS Florida is the newly retooled and modernized public assistance service delivery system that is the Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency. This model is based on streamlined workflows, policy simplification and technology innovations. ACCESS Florida provides enhanced access to public assistance services including Food Stamps through a combination of state staff and a community partnership network. Through this initiative, program access is significantly expanded as community

agencies, both public and private, agree to serve as additional portals for Food Stamp and public assistance services for customers mutually served by the partner agency and the Department of Children and Families. Partners offer a continuum of access services with the range of service provided by each partner varying based on their willingness and ability to serve in this capacity. Examples include, access to personal computers for clients to apply through the Department's web application, access to phone services so customers can report changes or receive general program information through an automated phone system, access to a copiers and fax machines so customers can return documentation in a more convenient and expeditious manner. Some partners offer paper applications as well as serving as drop off points for customer information or applications.

Procedures

This modernized system offers self-directed opportunities and 24/7 service through a web application and an automated telephone response system. This new model reduces the investment of time required by customers to apply for or continue receiving public assistance, many of whom are employed or under-employed and often cannot afford to take time off their job to participate in the eligibility process. By streamlining the state's public assistance program, providing expanded access points and implementing technology supports, customers have increased opportunities to achieve new levels of self sufficiency.

Project Outcomes

ACCESS Florida seeks to create a more effective and efficient public assistance service delivery system; one that is more responsive to the current customer base through streamlined and simplified policy and procedures. The community partnership initiative is a critical component of the new service delivery model. With the development of this network, access points for customers have increased from about 150 traditional department sites to nearly 1,500 locations with a "front door" to Food Stamps, Medicaid, and TANF benefits.

Cumulative projected savings for this modernization initiative include a 33% reduction in budget and 52% reduction in state funded positions through the period of SFY 2002/2003 through SFY 2006/2007.

<p>Implemented: Phase I August 2003</p>	<p>Status: Phase II of IV</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: Community-Based Organizations (CBO) FL Department of Children & Families (DCF)</p>
<p>Target Population: Public Assistance Applicants</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application Web-Based Technology</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Medicaid</p>	<p>Contact: Jennifer Lange Department of Children & Families - Economic Self-Sufficiency Services 1317 Winewood Boulevard Tallahassee, FL 32399 Ph: (850) 487-8448 Fax: (850) 488-2589 Jennifer_Lange@dcf.state.fl.us www.dcf.state.fl.us/ess/</p>

ILLINOIS

WebStamps - Illinois Department of Human Services

Web Applications and Phone Recertifications

Project Overview

Illinois is developing and deploying a web-based application (WebStamps) that enables families living in Illinois to apply for Food Stamps and other programs on-line rather than in-line. The project will enable the customer to complete, sign and submit the application electronically, and transfer the application data to our system for casework action and processing. An abbreviated web-based food stamp



application (Express Stamps) will be piloted in four counties, which will allow persons visiting food pantries to apply and receive a real time determination of food stamp eligibility. An automated telephone interview (Phone Stamps) will be provided as an option for eligible customers in lieu of a Food Stamp recertification. The application will be accessible through an 800 number. A telephone script will walk the customer through required questions and will capture their responses in a data file. This data will be uploaded to our system for further processing. A Food Stamp benefit calculator will be added to the existing Illinois Help Line 800 number and will allow callers to enter basic income/expense data to determine if they might be eligible for food stamps.

Procedures

The centerpiece of the system is the Data Bridge that will permit the information collected through web-filed applications and from automated telephone interviews to be transmitted directly into DHS databases and processing systems. For Web Stamps applications, the data will be deposited into the DHS application system; an application will automatically be registered with the correct application data; and the data elements will appear in the system as a filed application that will be automatically screened for expedited eligibility and the appropriate alerts will be triggered to staff for the scheduling of interviews. For Express Stamps, after application data is entered and the application is submitted, a real time determination of eligibility will be processed and returned to the pantry. Those determined eligible will receive a one or two month benefit based on the date of application. The pantry worker will issue an EBT card in addition to an emergency food box to meet their immediate food needs. The customer will be mailed a Personal Identification Number with which to access their food stamp benefits. For Phone Stamp interviews, the information collected will directly update the appropriate client record and alert the worker and client to additional information or action needed to complete the recertification.

Project Outcomes

The primary outcome is to improve administrative infrastructure and facilitate timely handling of applications and recertifications. We will improve methods for both enrolling new households and re-enrolling existing eligible households. With active promotion of electronic application filing, we believe we can add persons who would not otherwise participate. The possibility of direct data transmission holds a genuine advantage over current methods that largely involve mailing or faxing of paper applications. It will enable DHS to possibly work with a number of new community partners in doing food stamp outreach.

<p>Implemented: Not yet implemented.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>Location: Statewide Cook Collar Counties</p>	<p>Partnerships: Illinois Department of Human Services USDA Food and Nutrition Services America's Second Harvest Northern Illinois Food Banks</p>
<p>Target Population: Working Applicants Elderly Applicants Legal Immigrant Applicants Current Recipients</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Web-based Application Web-based Technology Telephone Technology</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Medicaid TANF</p>	<p>Contact: Jan Freeman IL Department of Human Services 100 South Grand Avenue East Springfield, IL 62762 Ph: (217) 782-1239 Fax: (217) 557-5850 DHSD4013@dhs.state.il.us</p>

KANSAS

Service Delivery Redesign Initiative

Project Overview

SRS has implemented its phased service delivery redesign process: improve customer service by creating better access to services, creating efficiencies by consolidating staff into strategically located service centers, developing service delivery models which focus on customer service and community capacity building, and creating regional administrative structures that more closely align with updated service delivery models.



Procedures

The Department's goal was to increase access to services in all counties, not just in counties where offices have closed. SRS has developed over 900 Access Points statewide. Access Points are agreements with community partners to provide information about SRS services. Access Points range from a brochure and application rack in the local grocery store to private meeting space in a community library or mental health center. An Access Point may also be a community partner who provides access to a phone, fax or the internet. A community capacity-building base has been established through the collaborations that have occurred as Access Points are developed. These partnerships have been invaluable.

Project Outcomes

SRS has further improved customer access to services by establishing a statewide toll-free phone and fax numbers, implementing "universal access" which allows customers to apply and receive services in a county other than their county of residence, and developing a web based application and assessment tool. Over 91,000 calls have been received on the toll free line since its June 2003 inception. Approximately 300-400 applications are received using the web based application each month.

Through February 2006, SRS has closed 62 local offices and created SRS Service Centers in the remaining counties. To identify offices for closure, SRS completed a geo-mapping process for each county. This process identified, at the zip code level, where customers lived and the type and intensity of services they received. The data was used to determine the number, location and types of services needed in each county. Availability of community resources, established partnerships and natural trade patterns were also considered in identifying offices to be closed. This methodology allowed the Department to make data driven decisions defensible to stakeholders, communities and legislators. As the agency gains experience in providing access through technology and a redesigned service delivery model, additional offices may be closed. Opportunities have already been identified through collaborative efforts in communities.

An initial review of office closures and its impact on customer access has been completed. The outcome of the review is an acknowledgment that it is too soon to draw any definitive conclusions. The early analysis reflected some promising data. Temporary Assistance to Families (TAF), Food Stamp, and Child Care caseloads were compared in counties where offices closed and in a sample of counties where offices remained open. The following data emerged:

- 75% of counties in which the SRS office closed, had an increase in TAF cases. 50% of counties in which the SRS office remained open, had an increase in TAF cases.
- 80% of counties in which the SRS office closed, had an increase in Food Stamp cases. 87% of counties in which the SRS office remained open, had an increase in Food Stamp cases.
- 95% of counties in which the SRS office closed, had an increase in Child Care cases. 87% of counties in which the SRS office remained open, had an increase in Child Care cases.

Again, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions based on this data, but office closures do not appear to be negatively impacting access to SRS services. The Department has contracted with the Docking Institute of Public Affairs (affiliated with Fort Hays State University) to evaluate service delivery redesign. SRS can confirm:

- X Customers no longer have to pay for a long-distance call or fax.
- X Customers can apply for and receive services in the community in which they live, work or trade.
- X Customers are no longer required to drive to the SRS office to obtain information, applications or to apply for services.
- X Customers are receiving more immediate access to SRS services. Prior to closure, many local offices were only open 1 day a week. Customer contact in that county usually occurred on that day. The toll free number provides access to services 5 days a week.
- X Customer concerns regarding office closure have been minimal.
- X Communities have strongly supported Access Points.

The Department is pleased with the progress made to increase customer access to SRS services. Much of that progress is due to the tremendous support of community partners and the hard work of local staff. As mentioned earlier, the SRS service delivery redesign initiative includes updating regional administrative structures. Effective July 1, 2004 SRS reduced the number of management areas from 11 areas to 6 regions. An internal realignment team developed the updated administrative structure based on ideas generated by regional planning teams and central office staff.

Realignment of management areas is a significant change in the way SRS operates. The agency is not just reducing the number of management regions, but changing the way we provide services. Realignment includes rethinking our service delivery models, assuring customer access in their communities and streamlining operations to target some staff resources to work with communities to identify needs and build capacity.

Each region has developed a service delivery model for their region, but with key commonalities. Regional leadership teams have worked to refine their models and implementation of the new model is complete.

Implemented: 2003-2006. The agency continues to add Access Points each month.	Status: Fully implemented	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Each Access Point is a partnership. See the link below for a list of Access Points in Kansas. http://www.srskansas.org/locations.htm
Target Population: All applicants and recipients of SRS benefits and services.	Processes Affected: Face-to-face interviews, issuance of EBT cards (now also use a mail process for the Vision Card.), application for benefits, toll-free number.	Programs Affected: All benefits and services that SRS offers	Contact: Pam Jacob Phone: 785-296-5416. Fax: 785-296-0146. pjj@srskansas.org

LOUISIANA

Case Review Team

Project Overview

The number of cases reviewed by each parish at one time was too small to allow an accurate determination of error trends. The Case Review Team Project allows a large number of cases to be reviewed, which enables the identification of error trends in a specific office. Supervisors working within their individual offices did not have the opportunity to learn other methods of case review. They indicated a need for case reading training, but there was no formal training available.

Procedures

The Case Review Team reviews approximately 75 cases each month from one local office. Cases reviewed include Food Stamps, Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP), Strategies to Empower People (STEP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Cases are reviewed to ensure consistent information for all programs. Supervisors participate on a rotating basis, but do not participate when cases from their parish are being read. The team serves as a training tool for the supervisors. Two regional Program Specialists are permanent team members to ensure accurate policy interpretation. The parish being reviewed receives the case review forms and a summary explaining the problem areas identified and recommendations for improvement.

Project Outcomes

The project allows supervisors to learn from one another as well as from the Regional Program Specialists. They learn “best practices” and get the chance to discuss new methods. This ensures objectivity on the part of the reviewers.

This project has revealed the importance of good case documentation since the supervisors reviewing the cases have no prior knowledge of case circumstances. Supervisors were concerned that staff in the local offices whose cases were reviewed might be

offended by negative findings. As a result, the reviewers do not sign their names on the actual review forms. They are assigned reviewer numbers, which provides for anonymity.

Implemented: August 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Monroe Region	Partnerships: LA Department of Social Services
Target Population: Case Reviewers	Processes Affected: Program Review & Evaluation Simplified Administration	Programs Affected: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Food Stamp Program (FSP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: Nan Poston Department of Social Services - Office of Family Support 438 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA 70801 Ph: (225) 342-4061 Fax: (225) 342-9481 nposton@dss.state.la.us www.dss.state.la.us

LOUISIANA

Louisiana Combined Application Project (LaCAP)

Project Overview

Louisiana's proposed Combined Application Project (LaCAP) will offer a simplified application and certification process for Louisiana residents who are age 60 or older and are certified for SSI. The Louisiana SDX will be used to identify SSI recipients who are age 60 or older and not currently receiving FSP benefits. The LaCAP approval requires that all LaCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through LaCAP, clients will:

- Receive a standard monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost;
- Be certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

LaCAP applications are not taken by SSA.

- A simplified application is mailed to individuals who meet the selection criteria.
- Applications must be returned to the local Department of Social Services (DSS).
- A second application is mailed automatically if the initial application is not returned within 30 days.
- DSS evaluates returned applications and determines eligibility.
- DSS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients with high monthly shelter expenses or monthly medical may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP. They can apply at a local DSS office.

Project Features

Benefit levels are pending approval from FNS, however, LaCAP will have four different benefit levels when finalized.

Louisiana's anticipated result of the LaCAP Demonstration is increased enrollment in the FSP among the target population.

Implemented: Not Yet Implemented	Status: N/A	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) LA Department Social Services (DSS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Nan Poston Department of Social Services - Office of Family Support 438 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA 70801 Ph: (225) 342-4061 Fax: (225) 342-9481 nposton@dss.state.la.us www.dss.state.la.us

LOUISIANA

No Wrong Door Initiative

Project Overview

The No Wrong Door Initiative of the Department of Social Services (DSS) will deliver Louisiana's human services in a way that produces the best results through the most efficient process. It will improve business processes to improve delivery of services, change processes, if needed, free up time for clients, and utilize new technology. The project is designed to provide holistic services to our clients.

Procedures

A new web-based computer technology system is being created, which is called A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System (ACCESS). ACCESS will assist in screening and creating referrals so that each client's needs and potential eligibility for services may be determined at the office of any DSS program, a community partner, or a personal computer. Through ACCESS, the client will provide basic information one time. This will end the duplication of the collection of demographic information. DSS clients will receive more coordinated, expeditious, and efficient services. The project is designed to assist all DSS clients. The Department provides social services through three agencies: Office of Family Support (OFS), Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), and Office of Community Services (OCS). OFS administers the Food Stamp Program, TANF programs, Child Care Assistance Program, Support Enforcement Services, and Disability Determinations Services. LRS assists persons with disabilities to obtain or maintain employment and achieve independence in their communities by providing rehabilitation services and working cooperatively with business and other community resources. OCS provides for the public child welfare functions of the state, such as adoption services, child protection, and foster care services. OCS also administers the refugee social services program.

Project Outcomes

The No Wrong Door Initiative is still in the development stage. The Project Management Team has been tasked with leading the project by determining an appropriate time line for piloting and implementation, addressing staffing issues, developing general policies, addressing legal and cost allocation issues, and developing communications strategies to inform and educate staff and the public.

The project is designed to provide holistic services to our clients. Through ACCESS, the client will provide basic information one time. This will end the duplication of the collection of demographic information. DSS clients will receive more coordinated, expeditious, and efficient services.

Implemented: Not Yet Implemented	Status: Spring 2006	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: LA Department of Social Services (DSS) LA Rehabilitation Services (LRS) Office of Community Services (OCS) Office of Family Support (OFS)
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application Web-Based Technology	Programs Affected: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Food Stamp Program (FSP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: Sammy Guillory Department of Social Services - Office of Family Support 438 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA 708011 Ph: (225) 342-2530 Fax: (225) 342-9481 squillor@dss.state.la.us www.dss.state.la.us

LOUISIANA

Policy Simplification Committee

Project Overview

Field-staff often have the impression that the "State Office" does not really know what is going on in the local offices. The utilization of a committee comprised of their peers from all over the state has bridged the perceived gap between the field and state office. Implementation of changes as a result of suggestions from local office staff is an encouragement to staff. They see that their opinions matter and they have seen results. The committee was developed to involve more staff, particularly front-line staff, in the evaluation of policy and procedures for changes needed to simplify and streamline work processes with a goal of enabling the agency to provide more effective and efficient service to our clients.

Procedures

The committee, comprised of representatives from local, regional, and state office staff, reviews suggestions and develops recommendations for simplification of program policies and procedures. Members of the committee receive suggestions from local office staff as well as submit their own suggestions to the group at quarterly meetings. The committee evaluates the feasibility of suggestions and offers recommendations to the Family Assistance Program Policy Section. Policy staff analyze recommendations to determine if the changes are allowable within Federal and State regulations. Local office representatives of the committee solicit input from their colleagues in their regions. Ideas are brought to the quarterly meeting and discussed. The committee formulates recommendations for change that are provided to the Program Policy Section for review and action. Each member is responsible for gathering input from the staff in their region. This information is brought directly to the committee, which includes state office representation. This provides a direct line of communication between field staff and state office. No concern or suggestion is considered unimportant. Every suggestion is given consideration by the committee. A response is always provided to the person who offered the suggestion.

Project Outcomes

When policy or procedures are revised as a result of recommendations from the committee, the publication of the change includes recognition of the Policy Simplification Committee for the recommendation. This communicates to staff that their ideas are valued and serves to encourage staff to continue providing recommendations and comments.

The state has requested and received approval of a waiver to average hours worked when determining student eligibility for food stamps. This will enable more working students to be eligible for food stamps. In June 2005, the agency implemented a universal transfer process to handle cases when clients move. The process will help clients since they will be able to receive uninterrupted benefits without the requirement of reapplying and appearing for a face-to-face interview when they move.

Implemented: April 2002	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: LA Department of Social Services (DSS)
Target Population: Policy Reviewers	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Policy Simplification	Programs Affected: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Family Assistance Program Policy Section (FAPPS) Food Stamp Program (FSP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: Contact: Nan Poston Department of Social Services – Office of Family Support 438 Main Street Baton Rouge, LA 70801 Ph: (225) 342-4061 Fax: (225) 342-9481 nposton@dss.state.la.us www.dss.state.la.us

MAINE

The \$5 HEAP Program

Project Overview

In 1995, with drastic cuts to Maine's allotment for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) no longer provided LIHEAP to households that did not pay heating costs separate from their rent. Many elderly and disabled recipients lost their food stamp benefits or had their food stamp benefits decrease significantly. The Maine State Legislature mandated that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) work closely with the MSHA to resolve this issue and any others that may arise between the two programs. The MSHA adopted rules allowing residents in subsidized housing, with heat included in their rent, a \$5.00 LIHEAP payment within a set five-year period. This minimal amount of LIHEAP allowed DHHS to budget the full utility standard when determining eligibility for food stamps.

Procedures

The MSHA took all LIHEAP applications as it had done previously. Applicants in subsidized housing whose monthly rent included their heating costs automatically became eligible for the \$5 LIHEAP benefit. The MSHA provides DHHS with a master list of all recipients of regular LIHEAP as well as the \$5 payment for easy verification at the DHHS level. DHHS can then use this master list to budget the full utility standard for all LIHEAP benefit recipients.

Project Outcomes

The \$5 Heap Program has allowed many elderly and disabled residents to remain on the Food Stamp Program and many receive a much larger allotment when the full utility standard can be budgeted. There were less administrative costs for the \$5.00 LIHEAP recipient cases than those eligible for regular LIHEAP benefits and there were less calculations to do.

Verification procedures have improved since the inception of the program. The DHHS offices used to receive the LIHEAP lists of recipients in paper form, it is now on a disk. The DHHS Central Office receives one master disk and distributes individual disks to each regional office with their particular community action agencies' clients specific to their office.

Implemented: 1996	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: ME Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) ME State Housing Authority (MSHA)
Target Population: Elderly Disabled	Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Policy Simplification Simplified Administration	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	Contact: Rick Morrow Department of Health and Human Services - BFI 11 SHS, 268 Whitten Rd Augusta, ME 04333 Ph: (207) 287-5093 Fax: (207) 287-5096 rick.morrow@maine.gov

MARYLAND

Outreach with all Municipalities Eligibility for Individuals Convicted of Drug-related Felonies

Project Overview

Recent State legislation expanded food stamp eligibility for individuals who have been convicted of a drug-related felony. The legislation allows the Department of Human Resources to provide food stamps to Maryland residents who were convicted of a felony involving the possession, use or distribution of a controlled dangerous substance and who are otherwise qualified for the assistance. The legislation allows Maryland to completely opt out of the restriction placed on food stamps for convicted drug felons by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Note: Prior State legislation permitted eligibility for custodial parents only.

Procedures

Individuals who have been convicted of a drug-related felony offence committed after August 22, 1996, can receive food stamps if they participate in drug testing and, if appropriate, drug treatment. If a recipient is convicted of manufacture or distribution of a controlled or dangerous substance or possession with the intent to distribute a controlled or dangerous substance on or after July 2000, the individual is ineligible for one year. The individual is subject to substance abuse testing and treatment after resuming eligibility.

Project Outcomes

Increased food stamp participation to ex-offenders. The increase in food stamp participation could bring as much as \$2.3 million a year in federal funds into Maryland. The project substance abuse treatment requirement gives ex-offenders who abuse substances a treatment opportunity they might not otherwise have, as well as the possibility of a drug-free life.

May reduce recidivism among ex-offenders by providing monetary support that can help prevent homelessness while ex-offender is seeking employment. The promise of monetary benefit may bring more ex-offenders into the departments of social services, where other kinds of help are available – such as job search assistance and medical assistance. The project reduces restrictions on those with drug history and criminal history.

Implemented: October 1, 2005	Status: Pending effective date of legislation	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: MD Department of Health & Mental Hygiene MD Department of Human Resources (DHR)
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Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants	Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Policy Simplification	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: Kay Finegan Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration 311 W. Saratoga St Baltimore, MD 21201 Ph: 410-767-7939 Fax: 410-333-6581 kfinegan@dhr.state.md.us www.dhr.state.md.us
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MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Combined Application Project (Bay State CAP)

Project Overview

Massachusetts' Combined Application Project (Bay State CAP) allows SSA staff to gather information regarding FSP eligibility from clients during an SSI interview. All Bay State CAP cases must:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "AA" or "AB" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income. They may have up to three consecutive months of earned income after starting Bay State CAP.

Through Bay State CAP, clients:

- Receive a monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and actual SSI income;
- Are certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe the Bay State CAP;
- Provide a Bay State CAP brochure;
- Ask three food assistance questions;
- Indicate the shelter parameters;
- Give the applicant the Bay State CAP statement.

The information is then transferred to the Benefit Eligibility and Control On-Line Network (BEACON) via the SDX where:

- The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$700 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DTA office.

Benefits

Bay State CAP has no standardized benefit amounts. Benefits are determined using actual income from SDX, current standard deduction, standardized shelter amount, and the SUA.

Project Features

To date, there are approximately 70,000 SSI cases not receiving food stamps that appear to be eligible for Bay State CAP. Bay State CAP will implement an auto flip that will target these SSI clients by automatically creating a food stamp case and sending an EBT card and PIN in the mail. The client will then have 50 days to use the first month's benefits.

Implemented: October 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
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			MA Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Lauren Arms Department of Transitional Assistance Ph: (617) 348-5452 Lauren.arms@state.ma.us

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Combined Application Project (MSCAP)

Project Overview

Mississippi's Combined Application Project (MSCAP) is designed to simplify the application process for the SSI recipient or SSI applicant who chooses to also apply for FSP benefits. The project's goal is to increase FSP enrollment among eligible SSI recipients and promote participant satisfaction through enhanced eligibility services and standardized benefits that are greater than those received through the regular FSP. The MSCAP approval requires that all MSCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through MSCAP clients:

- Receive a standard monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and SSA income;
- Are certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe MSCAP;
- Collect shelter and utility expenses;
- Indicate the shelter parameters.

The information is then transferred to the Department of Human Services (DHS) via the SDX where:

- DHS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$330 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DHS office.

Benefits

SSI Low Shelter Cost = \$15

SSI/SSA Low Shelter Cost = \$10

SSI High Shelter Cost = \$43

SSI/SSA High Shelter Cost = \$34

Project Features

Applicants can also apply for MSCAP directly at DHS. Applications taken by SSA represent only 40 percent of the total monthly applications for MSCAP. In 2002, extensive outreach added nearly 9,000 cases to MSCAP.

Implemented: October 2001	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food and Nutrition Service
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			(FNS) MS Department of Human Services (DHS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: J. David Noble Department of Human Services Ph: (601) 359-4821 dnoble@mdhs.state.ms.us

NEBRASKA

Nebraska Statewide Food Stamp Outreach Project

Project Overview

Nebraska Legal Services (NLS) will utilize its AccessLine (over 15,000 annual calls) to provide food stamp eligibility, application locations and nutrition benefits and debunk common myths regarding Food Stamps. NLS will conduct a direct marketing campaign utilizing print media targeting communities whose primary language is NOT English. NLS is adding questions regarding food stamps to all callers who call their hotline requesting legal services.

Procedures

The goal of the project is to increase participation in the Food Stamp Program. NLS will be mailing applications, brochures and a cover letter to clients along with the local HHSS office address. The project will identify and address additional barriers to food stamp participation. NLS anticipates the number of food stamp participants will be increased by 5,000 individuals per year for two years. NLS will provide food stamp eligibility information, application locations, nutritional value, and debunk common myths to 10,000 individuals who are likely to be income-qualified for the services each year for two years.

Implemented: October 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Community Agencies Food and Nutrition Service
Target Population: Elderly Immigrants Low-income Individuals & Families	Processes Affected: Outreach	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Trish Bergman HHSS PO Box 95044 Lincoln, NE 68509 Ph: (402) 471-2738 Fax: (402) 471-9597 Trish.bergman@hhss.ne.gov

NEBRASKA

Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

Project Overview

The state provides a Nutrition Education program statewide utilizing funds and staffing provided by community partners. In addition, a fulltime nutritionist directs the program on behalf of the state. Programs are conducted at food banks, Indian reservations, health departments, schools, etc., throughout Nevada.

Procedures

Provide nutrition education to minority populations in conjunction with food banks to the clientele they serve. Additionally, classes and presentations are conducted at Senior Centers, Indian Reservations and Colonies, elementary schools and with members of Hispanic Advocacy agencies.

The non-federal portion of the funding to operate the program is from community partners. This includes food banks, cooperative extensions and the University of Nevada. There are no state general fund monies expended in this program.

The full-time licensed Nutritionist developed the program and directs its efforts. She trains the volunteers and employees of the various agencies providing Nutrition Education in addition to her own provision of services.

Program Outcomes

Nevada has a large population of working poor lacking Nutritional Education and the program was needed to assist these participants. However, there are no state general fund dollars to fund this program. Working with community partners to fund the non-federal share of the program has contributed to the implementation and continued success.

The program has been underway approximately two years and participants look forward to the Nutrition Education classes and continue to return. FNS completed an audit of the program last year and also seemed pleased with the outcomes achieved.

Implemented: 2004	Status:	Location:	Partnerships:
Target Population:	Processes Affected:	Programs Affected:	Contact: Darlene Dougherty Division of Welfare and Supportive Services 1470 College Parkway Carson City, NV 89506 (775) 684-0605 (775) 684-0617 ddougherty@welfare.state.nv.us

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Error Prone Profiling

Project Overview

Error Prone Profiling is an automated process incorporated into our existing computer system, New HEIGHTS. Recognizing that different workers have different strengths and weaknesses, the profiling tool is designed to assist supervisors identify error prone areas for specific workers. Examples include, Shelter Costs, Trusts, etc. Once a specific error has been identified, a worker profile is created and whenever that error appears, the system flags the case and sends notification to the supervisor. Cases that are flagged must be reviewed before they can be confirmed. Once a worker becomes proficient in the identified area, another area may be chosen. One of the main error causes in New Hampshire is incorrect implementation of policy. Applicants and individuals who are being recertified, very often present complex issues during these processes. Policies are not built around exceptions, but rather around what is the case for most clients in most instances. Additionally, often-complimentary policies apply. When workers are presented with these complex issues in an environment in which the average caseload is 443 (February 2005), policy can be misapplied, causing an error in the case. Workers all have specific strengths and weaknesses in particular areas. With time at a premium, supervisors need to focus on those areas, rather than use time for training that workers may not need.

Procedures

The system is automated and has been incorporated into our current eligibility system. The alert that an error area has appeared is automatically sent to the supervisor and the case is frozen for confirmation until the supervisor has an opportunity to review the case. Once the supervisor determines that the case is correct, it is confirmed. Access to activity in the system is restricted to supervisors. They not only review and release the cases, the set the profile for specific workers. The supervisor can target another error prone area when it appears that the worker understands and applies policy correctly.

Project Outcomes

This project expands the use for our existing automated system. Prior to the implementation of Error Prone Profiling, the system was used exclusively for running case eligibility, initiating sanctions and gathering data. Error Prone Profiling also helps the State focus on specific training issues for specific workers, thus saving time for group trainings on subjects that may not be difficult for all workers. Although group trainings are held, and workers benefit, it can be difficult to have people out of the office to participate in them because of the high caseloads.

Although the system is primarily designed to help eligibility workers, clients also benefit. When cases are confirmed correctly, there is less chance of an overpayment, which we will have to recover, or an underpayment, which gives the client less money with which to buy nutritious food.

Implemented: October 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: N/A
Target Population: Caseworkers and Reviewers	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Web-based Technology	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Laurie Snow New HEIGHTS Project 7 Eagle Square, Suite 100 Concord, NH 03301 Ph: (603) 277-0300 Fax: (603) 226-2154 lsnow@dhhs.state.nh.gov www.dhhs.nh.gov/dhhs/foodstamps

NEW JERSEY

Simplified Nutritional Application for Seniors (SNAS)

Project Overview

New Jersey's proposed Simplified Nutritional Application for Seniors (SNAS) will offer a simplified application and certification process for New Jersey residents who are age 65 and over. The county welfare agency (CWA) will receive information from the SDX each quarter, which will be used to identify SSI recipients who are age 65 or older and not currently receiving food stamps. The SNAS approval requires that all SNAS cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through SNAS clients will:

- Receive a standard monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost;
- Be certified for two years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

SNAS applications are not taken by SSA.

- A simplified application is mailed to individuals who meet the selection criteria.
- Applications must be returned to the local CWA.
- A second application is mailed automatically if the initial application is not returned within 30 days.
- CWA evaluates returned applications and determines eligibility.
- CWA notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 24 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$350 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local CWA office.

Project Outcomes

SNAS has a shorter certification period than most of the other CAP demonstrations and has a larger gap between the low benefit and the high benefit.

Benefits:

Low Shelter Cost = \$25

High Shelter Cost = \$115

Implemented: Not Yet Implemented	Status: October 2005	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Department of Human Services (DHS) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Marybeth Schaedel DHS Ph: (609) 588-2197 Mary.schaedel@dhs.state.nj.us

NEW YORK

Earned Income Tax Credit / Tax Preparation Project

Project Overview

The federal and state EITCs were an underutilized resource in New York State prior to the implementation of this program. Low-income New Yorkers, such as Food Stamp recipients had limited options for tax preparation, and for many the only option was a paid preparer. The purpose of this program is to train local social services district volunteer staff so that they will be able to prepare a basic income tax return for their employed Temporary Assistance clients and e-file it for them. Not only does this initiative assure that each client receives all the tax credits (EITC, Child Tax Credit) to which they are entitled, the service is provided at no cost to the client, thereby increasing the value of the client's income tax refund and credits.

Procedures

The IRS provided training at no cost. Likewise, the TAXWISE software was provided to districts at no cost. The software was compatible with the computers currently used by district staff, so there was no expense here either. The primary expense incurred by OTDA was paying for the costs associated with providing training in an off-site location.

Project Outcomes

Assuming that clients would receive the tax refunds and credits to which they are entitled if they went to a paid preparer, the benefit to clients would be the money each client would save by having their tax return prepared at no cost (conservatively, a \$130 saving), by having their tax return e-filed at no cost (approximately a \$20 saving), and the money saved by not having the option of selecting a "refund anticipation loan" (average cost \$130 in interest).

Another innovation in this project is that by providing free tax preparation services, low-income wage earners benefit by receiving their entire income tax refund and EITC credits; their benefit is not eroded by paying a for-profit tax preparer and it is not further eroded by electing to take their refund in the form of a high-interest "refund anticipation loan." Low-income wage earners are able to meet or exceed the federal poverty level at little or no cost to the counties in which they reside by accessing these credits. Although this was not envisioned during the pilot, the use of college student volunteers and the developing relationship between local DSS offices with universities that are located within their respective districts has been a benefit to the schools, DSS agencies, and the students.

Implemented: January 2002	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Colleges and Universities Internal Revenue Service Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
Target Population: Low-income Individuals and Families	Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Web-based Technology	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Contact: Mark Schaffer NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance 40 North Pearl Street 9 th Floor, Section C Albany, NY 12243 Ph: (518) 474-9346 Fax: (518) 473-6207 Mark.schaffer@otda.state.ny.us www.otda.state.ny.us

NEW YORK

Food Stamp Outreach Project

Project Overview

The New York State Food Stamp Outreach Project is intended to inform potentially eligible households of the availability and benefits of this federally funded benefit. Many households that might be eligible for this program are unaware of its availability or how to apply. While the project targets all low-income households, specific efforts in the form of targeted media and print campaigns to low-income working families, seniors, and non-English speaking households have been implemented. This includes targeted audio ads, Spanish language media efforts, and multiple language translation of outreach information.

Procedures

Past efforts to inform potentially eligible households of the availability and benefits of this federally funded benefit consisted primarily of contracting with an advertising agency to place TV ads in primetime or local news programming. While perhaps a good idea in theory, this method was not particularly effective. We were not necessarily reaching the target audience. To re-energize and restructure the outreach component, OTDA contracted with a new provider, the AdVantage Agency. Working with this contractor, we determined that our potentially Food Stamp eligible households did not necessarily tune into the programming that previously carried our Food Stamp messages. Market and audience research was conducted to target potential Food Stamp applicants. Utilizing existing video commercials (extremely well done featuring nationally known Chef Curtis Atkin), ads were placed on programming that had more appeal to our customers (i.e. Judge Judy, Gerry Springer, The Weather Channel, Black Entertainment Television, Oprah, and others). In addition, cable stations were extensively used for better exposure and much more "bang for the buck." OTDA staff was used to create and record radio spots, aimed at working families and senior citizens. Spanish-speaking staff created Spanish language spots. These ads were placed statewide and gave the Food Stamp Program tremendous additional exposure.

Project Outcomes

Results of New York State's outreach efforts have been very encouraging. In December 2002, prior to our outreach campaign, our Statewide Temporary Assistance toll-free hotline registered 1,795 Food Stamp inquiries. In January 2003, the number increased to 3,184 and in January 2004, calls numbered 5,527. Throughout 2004 and into 2005, Food Stamp inquiries continue to register high numbers, over 3,000 calls received in February 2005.

We have been interacting with local districts to encourage the packaging of benefits, not only Food Stamps, but Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Energy Assistance (HEAP), etc. to create a path for low-income families to achieve self-sufficiency.

Implemented:	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Local Districts NYS Department of Labor Nutrition Consortium of NYS United Way of NYC
Target Population: Disabled Elderly Immigrants Low-income Individuals and Families	Processes Affected: Outreach	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Contact: Tim Ryan NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance 40 North Pearl Street 9th Floor, Section C Albany, NY 12243 Ph: (518) 474-8905 Fax: (518) 473-6207 tim.ryan@otda.state.ny.us www.otda.state.ny.us

NEW YORK



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Staff contact: Larry Goolsby, lgoolsby@aphsa.org, (202) 682-0100. 7-7-06

FSP Standardized Benefit Project for Group Home Residents

Project Overview

New York State seeks to increase program participation, simplify program administration and improve payment accuracy by standardizing the benefit amounts paid to congregate care residents. The past process involved much on and off line budgeting complexity resulting in inordinate amount of staff time resources on state and local levels, as well as error-prone variations in the application of shelter calculation this group of participants. This pilot process decreases administrative burden on this State and the local districts charged with administering the program and removes the potential for payment error caused by the complex budget methodology used for this population.

Procedures

This project decreases administrative burden on this State and the local districts charged with administering the program and removes the potential for payment error caused by the complex budget methodology used for this population. This is a computer driven program giving standard benefits based on income, shelter type and location. Standard benefit amounts will be adjusted both to reflect changes in the Thrifty Food Plan as well as mass changes in the amounts of SSI/SSD COLAS, state or federal PA grant changes and other income fluctuations (in this last instance, those exceeding 130% of federal poverty) within the certification period. Income increases/decreases would be adjusted against benefit calculations at a rate of 30%. That is to say that every \$3 increase/decrease in income will change the standard benefit by \$1 when re-budgeted.

Project Outcomes

This project was mentioned at the New York State Public Welfare Association meeting as a very effective workload reduction tool for local districts.

Special attention to complaints regarding any pilot projects always requires prompt attention. The USDA required that this pilot project be cost neutral. This pilot project analyzed the statewide Food Stamp group home recipient benefit and determined the average benefit received by a group home recipient. There were instances of "reductions" of residents by group home representatives. Once the background, methodology, and purpose of the project were explained to the representative, objections to the program disappeared.

Implemented: January 2005 - Upstate March 2005 - New York City	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Target Population: Disabled SSI Recipients	Processes Affected:	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Medicaid Medicare Supplemental Security Income	Contact: Steve Ptak NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance 40 North Pearl Street 9 th Floor, Section C Albany, NY 12243 Ph: (518) 474-1469 Fax: (518) 473-6207 steve.ptak@otda.state.ny.us www.otda.state.ny.us

NEW YORK

Job Center / Non-Public Assistance Food Stamp Office



Project Overview

The FIA Model Center Steering Committee developed a plan for a Job Center/Non-Public Assistance (NPA) Food Stamp Office in which wait times were shortened, technology was utilized, and clients were served efficiently and effectively. It was decided to pilot this project in one collocated Job Center and NPA Food Stamp Office in each borough. At these sites, operational, technical and physical enhancements were made to improve customer service, crowding, and wait time. The project sought to create a Job Center/NPA Food Stamp Office atmosphere in which customer service, case management, employment and self-sufficiency could be emphasized.

Procedures

The project created both a Main Reception counter where all clients are “triaged” and sent to the appropriate service area, and the CSIC, the Customer Service and Information Center. “FRED,” the system that routes applicants or recipients from the Main Reception desk, and “MONIQ,” the system that tracks their progress through the center and records wait and activity times were also created. At Main Reception, a colored ticket is printed that matches the waiting area to which the client is to report. Once arriving in the proper area clients are called by their ticket number flashing on a LED display screen; this negates the practice of standing on line. Electronic information kiosks were developed as a further resource to our clients and provide information about food stamp calculations, jobs, benefits, and are able to print the food stamp short application for clients who choose not to see a worker that day.

Project Outcomes

Since the project began, recurring customer satisfaction surveys have indicated an upward trend in the opinions of clients regarding their experience at the center. Compared to survey data taken before the implementation of the Model Center concept, opinions have improved regarding staff, services and center environment. With the Model Center shift toward efficient client routing and up-front customer service for more routine tasks, it was hoped that workers would make fewer application processing errors as they would have more time to spend on their interviews rather than be distracted by unscheduled tasks. One year after opening the first two Model Centers, there has been a sustained downward trend in application transmission errors that exceeds the rate of improvement for their respective geographic regions as well as the citywide rate.

Due to the depth and the breadth of the systemic applications, additional training was sometimes required on the proper utilization of the systems applications. Several systems changes were implemented and had to be re-learned by staff, and additional technological changes will require training in the future. The changes in workflows were carefully articulated by training but also had a learning curve among the staff.

Implemented: January 2004 (Manhattan) February 2004 (Brooklyn) December 2004 (Staten Island) January 2005 (Bronx and Queens)	Status: Ongoing	Location: New York City	Partnerships:
Target Population: Public Assistance Applicants Food Stamp Applicants	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application Web-based Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Seth Diamond HRA Family Independence Administration 180 Water St. New York, NY 10038 Ph: (212) 331-6180 Fax: (212) 331-6156 diamonds@hra.nyc.gov www.nyc.gov/html/hra/home.html

NEW YORK

New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP)



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Staff contact: Larry Goolsby, lgoolsby@aphsa.org, (202) 682-0100. 7-7-06

Project Overview

The New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) is a federally approved demonstration project with the goal to increase Food Stamp Program (FSP) participation among single SSI recipients who “live alone” in the community. The target population of this initiative is a vulnerable one of disabled and aged individuals who, traditionally, have had a low participation rate in the Food Stamp Program. Upon determination of SSI eligibility, NYSNIP will use information collected by the Social Security Administration and transmitted to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (NYS OTDA) via the State Data Exchange (SDX) to automatically create and open food stamp cases.

Procedures

After data is received from the SDX, food stamp benefit amounts are determined. The food stamp benefit amounts received by households participating in NYSNIP are standardized, as are the budgets associated with project cases. Three factors are considered in determining the benefit amount: shelter costs (at or above, or below a state standard), eligibility for the Heating/Air Conditioning Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), and the presence of other income in addition to SSI. New NYSNIP food stamp cases are also being evaluated for automated eligibility for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). OTDA is working in collaboration with the New York State Office for the Aging (OFA) and with their respective local district agencies to conduct informational campaigns to increase awareness in this vulnerable population.

Project Outcomes

NYSNIP’s innovative approach to assisting to increase the food security of this eligible population is predicated on a number of critical steps within the process. Program outreach is a key component. The project worked with a number of agencies in the advocate community to publicize the availability of the food stamps. OTDA has also significantly increased the benefit levels for this population. Many SSI recipients have complained in the past of the administrative obstacles of the FSP to access for what was essentially a \$10 monthly benefit. Monthly benefits for this population now peak at \$149 monthly. This can make a significant impact on the recipient’s food security and nutrition. By fully automating the process and institutionalizing a 48-month recertification requirement, OTDA has removed these administrative obstacles and diminished any perceived stigma to participating in the Food Stamp Program for this population.

Automatic enrollments have allowed the project to increase program participation without burdening our local county offices with an increase workload. The notion of a 48-month certification period further enhances the program’s effectiveness without severely taxing local resources.

<p>Implemented: July 2003</p>	<p>Status: 6-year Demonstration Project</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: Social Security Administration (SSA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) New York State Office for the Aging (OFA)</p>
<p>Target Population: SSI Recipients</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)</p>	<p>Contact: Steve Ptak NYS OTDA 40 North Pearl St. Albany, NY 12206 Ph: (518) 473-1469 Fax: (518) 474-5281 steve.ptak@otda.state.ny.us www.otda.state.ny.us</p>

NORTH CAROLINA



Simplified Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Project Overview

North Carolina's proposed Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) simplifies the way food assistance is delivered to elderly individuals receiving SSI. SNAP is a simplified version of the FSP eligibility determination process. Many FSP rules do not apply to SNAP. The SNAP approval requires that all SNAP cases:

- Age 65 or older and receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and purchase and prepare food separately from other household members.

Through SNAP clients will:

- Receive a standard monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost;
- Be certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

SNAP applications are not taken by SSA.

- A simplified application is mailed to individuals who meet the selection criteria.
- Applications must be returned to the local Department of Social Services (DSS).
- A second application is mailed automatically if the initial application is not returned within 30 days.
- DSS evaluates returned applications and determines eligibility.
- DSS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$250 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DSS office.

Project Outcomes

North Carolina's anticipated results of the SNAP demonstration project are:

- Increase enrollment in the FSP among the target population.
- Increased enrollment at no additional cost to the current FSP through cost-neutrality.

Benefits:

Low Shelter Cost = \$38

High Shelter Cost = \$62

Implemented: Implemented August 2005	Status: August 2005	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Department of Social Services (DSS) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients age 65 or older	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Jane Schwartz, DSS Ph: (919) 733-7831 Fax: (919) 733-0645 Jane.Schwartz@ncmail.net

NORTH DAKOTA

Community Social Services Satellite Offices

Project Overview

In North Dakota, nine county social service offices staff and provide services at a satellite office each month. The offices are staffed from one day per month to five days per week, depending on the location and utilization of the satellite office. In these nine counties the majority of the population live where the satellite office is located or within a few miles of it. Because of the rural nature of our state and limited public transportation, the location of the satellite offices is imperative to providing access to our customers. Many of them are elderly and disabled individuals or individuals who live on an Indian reservation with little or no transportation and low income working poor. The satellite offices offer one-stop service for all economic assistance programs including EBT training and issuance.

Procedures

All satellite offices are staffed by county eligibility and support staff from the county social service office. Workers in larger county offices are scheduled to staff the satellite office on a rotation basis. The location of schedule of satellite office hours is well publicized within the community and county social service office. The satellite offices provide access to other economic assistance programs including Medicaid, Child Care Assistance, TANF, and LIHEAP. Satellite offices in several locations share space with the WIC program, the public health nurse or a local food pantry. This allows for convenient referrals and access to many services for the clients. Satellite offices provide easier access for the residents of rural North Dakota. Lack of transportation is an issue for many clients especially the elderly/disabled and those living on a reservation. Clients can access services much more easily using the satellite offices. These offices remove barriers to participation.

Project Outcomes

Prior to the establishment of these satellite offices clients were in many instances having to arrange and pay for transportation to go to the county social service office. Depending on the client's situation, this could involve multiple trips. This created a real and severe hardship for many of our customers who are elderly, disabled or living on a reservation. Clients now have ready access to all services available at a county social service office without having to pay for rides.

Satellite offices in several locations share space with the WIC program, the public health nurse or a local food pantry. This allows for convenient referrals and access to many services for the clients. An unexpected good result of these satellite offices is as some of the offices are co-located with other agencies, and this has helped to reduce the stigma associated with county social service offices being viewed as "welfare offices."

Implemented:	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Community Agencies
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Outreach	Programs Affected: Child Care Assistance Program Food Stamp Program Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Medicaid / Medicare Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Security Income Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Contact: Darlene Faber Quality Assurance Coordinator – FSP ND Department of Human Services 600 E. Blvd. Rm. #315 Bismark, ND 58505 Ph: (701) 328-1832 Fax: (701) 328-1060 sofabd@state.nd.us www.state.nd.us/humanservices

NORTH DAKOTA



E-Manuals

Project Overview

The project was undertaken as a cost savings measure to allow faster policy implementation and prevent duplication of effort. The paper process was very labor intensive and time consuming, expensive in terms of printing and postage costs and we did not have control of when the process would be completed. The North Dakota Department of Human Services implemented the use of online policy manuals for all Economic Assistance Programs. The Food Stamp online manual was implemented in January 2004. All policy is maintained online. Paper manuals have been eliminated with the exception of one hard copy per county office available for public viewing.

Procedures

All updates and revisions are completed within the Food Stamp Unit. Updates and revisions are published on-line in a manual letter format one calendar month prior to the effective date to allow county eligibility staff adequate time to review them. The updates and changes are incorporated into the policy manual on the effective date. Changes and revisions for all Economic Assistance Programs are implemented in the same manner. The end user must only be knowledgeable of the one process. Training consisted of an intensive three-day session conducted by a certified Robohelp instructor. The Food Stamp Program volunteered as the first Economic Assistance Program to “pilot” management of our manual. A staff member in the Food Stamp Unit completed conversion to the on-line process and assumed complete responsibility for manual maintenance. Other Economic Assistance Programs work with another unit in maintaining their policy manuals.

Project Outcomes

All Economic Assistance Programs within the North Dakota Department of Human Services are using online manuals. This provides eligibility workers and other entities that we work with along with the general public an easy and efficient way of obtaining policy for all programs. With the elimination of paper manuals, the Food Stamp Program alone reduced their printing and postage costs by over 50%.

An unintended consequence of this project was that we no longer had paper manuals to use as training documents for the trainers or trainees. An unexpected result is that we developed a bound workbook for training purposes using the online manual. The workbook is provided to all trainees in hard copy form. The training workbooks have been very well received by county eligibility staff. Upon completion of statewide training, the workbook is made available electronically statewide. They are kept up to date and are available for counties to use for internal trainings and Field Staff to use to train.

Implemented: January 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: ND Department of Human Services
Target Population: Caseworkers and Reviewers	Processes Affected: Web-based Technology	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Michele Gee ND Department of Human Services 600 E. Blvd. Dept. 325 Bismarck, ND 58505 Ph: (701) 328-1633 Fax: (701) 328-1060 sogeem@nd.gov www.state.nd.us/humanservices

PENNSYLVANIA

FSP / CBO Application Project for the Elderly / Disabled



Project Overview

Some Community-Based Organizations (CBO) assist elderly/disabled applicants to complete a food stamp application and obtain the necessary verifications for the application process. Because a face-to-face interview has occurred at the CBO, an interview by the CAO worker will be waived unless additional information is needed or information that is provided is questionable or inconsistent. This process saves the households the time and expense of going to the CAO for an additional interview. Additionally, it simplifies the application process and will increase program access for this population.

Procedures

Generally the elderly and disabled population is underserved in the FSP. CBOs that participate in the Food Stamp Participation Project (FSSP) currently outreach to and assist applicants with the completion of FSP applications. Many of these organizations advocate for the applicant as a liaison with the CAO. Additionally, some CBOs already collect and verify information needed by the CAO to determine eligibility. By utilizing the interview already conducted by the CBO and verification provided; this process saves the households the time and expense of going to the CAO for an additional interview. This process was established to simplify the application procedure and will increase program access for the elderly and disabled population.

Project Outcomes

The process simplifies the application process for the elderly and disabled. Applicants do not have to provide repetitive information to two different organizations. This process saves the applicant time and money. Further, with the increase in caseloads at the CAO and the reduction of CAO resources, it is a more efficient use of the eligibility worker's time. The elderly and disabled population has been a hard to serve population and often did not apply for or receive benefits that would be an asset to their health and well-being. By implementing this process, the accessibility for this population to participate is improved. It also serves to lessen the anxiety, their expenses and any travel problems. Although our CBOs serve the elderly and disabled population, that is not their primary target population. We expect to see about 100 elderly and disabled applicants per year meeting the waiver's limited criteria.

A majority of CBOs use Pennsylvania's online application COMPASS (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Application for Social Services) to submit FS applications on behalf of households. Some of these agencies converse with the household over the telephone and never see them face-to-face. Those applicants are subject to the normal process of a follow-up interview with the CAO. We will request an expansion of our waiver to include telephone interviews once we have some positive data from the CBOs and CAOs.

Implemented: August 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Contracted CBOs ONLY	Partnerships: Community-Based Organizations
Target Population: Disabled Elderly	Processes Affected: Outreach Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Donna Roe PA Department of Public Welfare PO Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17105 Ph: (717) 772-7906 Fax: (717) 772-6451 droe@state.pa.us www.dpw.state.pa.us

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Combined Application Project (PA CAP)

Project Overview



Pennsylvania's proposed Combined Application Project (PA CAP) increases food stamp participation for SSI recipients by simplifying the application process. These households will provide SSA with additional information when they apply for SSI, and FSP benefits will be authorized by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) using information provided by SSA on the SDX. The PA CAP approval requires that all PA CAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through PA CAP, clients:

- Receive a monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and actual SSI income;
- Are certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe PA CAP;
- Collect shelter and utility expenses;
- Indicate the shelter parameters.

The information is then transferred to the DPW via the SDX where:

- DPW notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients with high monthly shelter expenses or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DPW office.

Project Outcomes

With the implementation of PA CAP, there will be an increase in participation for the SSI one-person households because of the simplified application process. Traditionally, these persons are hard to reach, and they often do not access benefits that would be available to them.

Benefit levels are pending approval from FNS, however PA CAP will have two different benefit levels when finalized.

Implemented: Not Yet Implemented	Status: November 2005	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Edward Zogby Phone: (717) 787-4081 Fax: (717) 787-6765 ezogby@state.pa.us

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Combined Application Project (SCCAP)

Project Overview



South Carolina's Combined Application Project (SCCAP) fulfills the federal mandate for joint application processing by allowing SSA staff to gather information regarding food stamp eligibility from clients during an SSI interview. The SCCAP approval requires that all SCCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through SCCAP, clients:

- Receive a monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and other income;
- Are certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe SCCAP;
- Collect shelter and utility expenses;
- Indicate the shelter parameters.

-- Only 4 to 5 percent of all SCCAP cases are opened via SSA.

The information is then transferred to the Department of Social Services (DSS) via the SDX where:

- DSS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 24 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$426 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DSS office.

Project Outcomes

South Carolina's SCCAP maintains a hotline from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Hotline staffs are able to help with lost or stolen EBT cards, benefit changes, address or other personal information updates, SSI status changes, new applicants, and many other issues.

Benefits:

SSI	Low Shelter Cost =	\$34
SSI + Other	Low Shelter Cost =	\$25
SSI	High Shelter Cost =	\$69
SSI + Other	High Shelter Cost =	\$58

<p>Implemented: SCCAP implementation began in September 1995. The project was last updated in May 2006.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: Department of Social Services (DSS) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)</p>
<p>Target Population: SSI Recipients</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p>	<p>Contact: Sissy Jeffords DSS Ph: (803) 898-0966 Fax: (803) 898-7141 Sieffords1@dss.state.sc.us</p>

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Group Home Project



Project Overview

South Dakota's group home pilot project provides standardized Food Stamp benefits to eligible residents in small group homes (adjustment training centers). The project greatly simplifies application and reporting processes and makes the Food Stamp Program more accessible, helps to increase participation for elderly and disabled small group residents and provides easily understandable, consistent procedures for facilities and State staff.

Procedures

South Dakota has standardized the allotment amounts for each eligible resident of small group homes. Small group residents must reside in a facility that is licensed for no more than 16 beds per residence and the resident must meet the Food Stamp disability or elderly definition. Facilities are required to assign staff as authorized representatives but their duties are not as cumbersome. All of the small group homes identified are certified through the State's Department of Social Services, Division of Development Disabilities to ensure the facilities meet the regulations issued under Section 1616(e) of the Social Security Act. The pilot project waives the face-to-face interview at application and recertification so the majority of contact is via mail and telephone. The facility is required to submit monthly resident lists and the State will continue to be required to complete periodic on-site visits to the facilities. Because this group population remains fairly stable, the adjustment in the standard allotment is completed twice a year – October and May. The October adjustment reflects actual July budgets and allotments for group home residents, with the October cost of living factored in. The May standard allotment reflects the actual February budgets with the SSA/SSI cost of living increases.

Project Outcomes

We have had positive responses from the small group facilities in the State. They appreciate the reduction in their staff's time, the simplification in budgeting the food stamp allotment, and the reduction in paperwork. Food Stamp staff are pleased about the reduction in relating to monthly reporting changes, face to face application and recertification interviews, and reduced contacts from the facilities.

The amount of paperwork and required contacts for both DSS staff and small group home staff has been greatly reduced due to the simplified application and reporting process. The group home agency is able to budget the cost of food per group home more efficiently.

Implemented: June 2004	Status: Through May 2009	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: ND Bureau of Information and Technology ND Department of Social Services – Division of Development Disabilities
Target Population: Disabled Elderly	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Medicaid Supplemental Security Income	Contact: Judy Toelle Department of Social Services – EA – Food Stamp Office 700 Governors Drive Kneip Bldg. Pierre, SD 57501-2291 Ph: (605) 773-3493 Fax: (605) 773-7183 Judy.toelle@state.sd.us www.state.sd.us

TEXAS

36-month Certification for Centralized Benefit Services

Project Overview



The Texas Health and Human Services Commission requested a waiver of section 7 CFR 273.10(f)(1) regarding the two-year limit on the certification period for food stamp households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled. We requested FNS to allow the State to provide a 36-month certification period for these households, as currently allowed for Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. Allowing a 36-month certification period will greatly improve program access for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled. Allowing a 36-month certification period for these categorically eligible non-SNAP SSI clients will allow us to use existing staff resources to process SNAP re-certifications in a timely manner. In August 2005, we will begin processing approximately 72,000 SNAP re-certifications. A 36-month certification period for categorically eligible non-SNAP SSI clients will also free up staff resources for possible future SNAP expansion.

Procedures

We propose to use existing automation resources to minimize the costs of implementing this project. This project will allow 36-months months of uninterrupted benefits for elderly SSI recipients. CBS has a positive impact on the agency’s re-determination timeliness and Quality Control (QC) error rates. Because of the efficiency and accuracy of this specialized unit, it was a natural decision to incorporate SNAP into their operations two years ago. We initially planned to expand our SNAP waiver into this caseload, but given the complexities of implementing this in a cost-neutral manner, we decided to apply one of our successes with SNAP to this other caseload of categorically eligible SSI recipients for whom we have ample eligibility data available through our SDX interface. We opted to apply a 36-month certification period for this categorically eligible SSI caseload.

Project Outcomes

CBS maintains on-going food stamp assistance for pure SSI households in a highly automated environment using State Data Exchange (SDX) files, thereby allowing local office staff to focus on more error-prone cases. This centralized eligibility process allows the agency to provide benefits more efficiently and improves program access for elderly and disabled SSI clients.

The SDX interface automatically notifies us of income changes, when an SSI client moves out of Texas, moves to a new address within Texas, or moves into a nursing home. The SDX interface also notifies us when a client dies or loses SSI eligibility.

Implemented: August 2005	Status: Pending Approval	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Centralized Benefits Services Food and Nutrition Service
			Contact: Mary Haifley HHSC, Building 2 Policy & Programs, MC2039 Austin, TX 78711-2668 Ph: (512) 206-4542 Fax: (512) 206-4556 mary.haifley@hhsc.state.tx.us www.hhsc.state.tx.us

TEXAS

Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)

Project Overview

The Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is a demonstration project designed to outreach the elderly SSI population. It was developed to simplify the process of applying for food stamp benefits for the client. In addition, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) increased workload efficiencies by pending fewer cases and by certifying SNAP cases for a longer period.

Procedures



The state office mails a simplified application to individuals who meet the SNAP criteria and the Centralized Benefits Services (CBS) processes the applications. The state office mails a 2nd application if the initial application is not returned within 30 days. The automated system notifies clients of their eligibility and notifies the EBT vendor to mail a Lone Star Card/PIN with instructions to eligible clients. SNAP cases are certified for 36 months and a person can apply at a local eligibility determination office at any time. SNAP clients are not required to report changes to HHSC. FNS and Social Security Administration (SSA) provides HHSC a weekly SDX tape match which allows us identify our target population and to outreach them. The SDX tape match also notifies HHSC when a client loses their SSI eligibility or no longer meets the Food Stamp living arrangement criteria.

Project Outcomes

The SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded food stamps. Administrative costs for the SNAP population are much lower than the administrative costs for the regular Food Stamp Program. The SNAP program is a more efficient use of administrative costs. Currently, five Texas Works Advisors manage approximately 70,000 SNAP cases. In addition, the project simplifies the application processing for elderly SSI recipients. Recipients who choose SNAP over traditional food stamps are required to answer one question and are not required to provide verification.

The agency had limited resources to implement SNAP. The project used existing automation to develop a very effective process to outreach potential SNAP applicants and update case record information. The Texas Works Advisors are able to process 250 SNAP cases per day due to information pre-populated from the SDX file.

<p>Implemented: August 2002</p>	<p>Status: 6-year Demonstration Project</p>	<p>Location: Statewide</p>	<p>Partnerships: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)</p>
<p>Target Population: SSI Recipients</p>	<p>Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application</p>	<p>Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program</p>	<p>Contact: Mary Haifley HHSC, Building 2 Policy & Programs, MC2039 Austin, TX 78711-2668 Ph: (512) 206-4542 Fax: (512) 206-4556 mary.haifley@hhsc.state.tx.us www.hhsc.state.tx.us</p>

TEXAS

Standard Medical Expense

Project Overview

The establishment of a standard medical expense deduction was primarily designed to help improve client access to benefits by simplifying the medical expense verification process. In addition, the state anticipated increasing workload efficiencies by pending fewer cases and allowing staff to spend less time determining the medical deduction amount and reducing the risk of quality control errors by simplifying the verification process resulting in fewer errors. Texas requested a waiver of CFR §273.9(d)3 to allow elderly or disabled household members who incur un-reimbursed monthly medical expenses in excess of \$35 to receive a standard medical expense deduction. Note: These households can still choose to receive a deduction for their actual expenses if the expenses exceed the standard deduction amount. The waiver was not approved as an administrative waiver, but the request was approved as a demonstration project under Section 17(b) of the Act.

Procedures



This project affects elderly and disabled food stamp households that have medical expenses in excess of \$35 and are eligible for a medical deduction. The standard medical expense deduction is an option for over half of all recipients who currently claim medical deductions. Elderly and disabled food stamp households can verify that they have monthly medical expenses that exceed \$35 and receive the standard medical expense deduction rather than providing verification of all medical expenses.

Note: Households with medical expenses that exceed the standard medical expense deduction still have the option of providing their receipts and receiving an actual medical deduction.

Project Outcomes

The project resulted in a decrease in workload for staff because recipients who choose the standard medical expense deduction are required to provide less verification.

This project streamlines the process for staff in determining a recipient's medical expense deduction. Recipients who choose the standard medical expense deduction are required to provide less verification, which, in turn, allows staff to spend less time determining the deduction.

Implemented: September 2002	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food and Nutrition Service
Target Population: Disabled Elderly	Processes Affected: Improved Benefits Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program	Contact: Mary Haifley HHSC, Building 2 Policy & Programs, MC2039 Austin, TX 78711-2668 Ph: (512) 206-4542 Fax: (512) 206-4556 mary.haifley@hhsc.state.tx.us www.hhsc.state.tx.us

UTAH

Automated Screen Scan System (eFind)

Project Overview

eFind is a web application that provides eligibility workers intelligent, filtered, well organized information (such as wage, unemployment insurance, child support enforcement and SSI data) from many different sources to determine eligibility for a variety of public assistance programs. There are 24 screens w/ information from 14 different sources. eFind was designed to increase accuracy and timeliness across the board by reducing the amount of time it takes to search alternate systems for pertinent information.

Procedures

Administration of eFind is done at the state level. Implementation required one Eligibility/IT Program Specialist, an IT team, and testers. On-going maintenance requires the Eligibility Program Specialist and IT staff as enhancements are made. DWS continues to add new information sources to eFind as they become available. This requires agreements from these information sources and the technical transfer/acquisition of the data. This project was funded in part by Utah's FY 2000 Reinvestment Plan with additional funds from TANF and Medicaid budgets.

Project Outcomes

The project has been particularly successful and innovative due to the remarkable efficiency and time savings gained by automating the screen scan process. What previously took 15 minutes or more now takes less than 3 minutes for each case. Utah expects to save \$2.1 million per year. Workers can manage a higher caseload, rather than hire additional staff. (This number is based on what it would cost to

hire 40 new staff). However, it is not possible to isolate within our budget specifically which cost savings are attributed to the eFind project.

This project works due to agreements between the Department of Workforce Services and other agencies to share information that is used in the eFind system. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is used to define the terms of agreements. Our relationships with these information sources remain mutually beneficial and on good terms.

Implemented: January 2004	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Medicaid
Target Population: Caseworkers	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Web-based Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: Kathy Link Department of Workforce Services 140 East 300 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111 Ph: (801) 526-9230 klink@utah.gov www.jobs.utah.gov

UTAH

Central Region Eligibility Service Center (CRESC)

Project Overview

The centralized call center was designed to provide better service to public assistance customers and more efficiently maintain on-going public assistance cases. Eligibility staff are more accessible to customers. Phone lines are open and staffed with trained eligibility specialists to answer questions, provide case information, obtain change reports and complete reviews Monday through Friday during business hours. Customers can pick up the phone from home or work, avoiding the transportation problems and office wait time. Office visits are no longer necessary. A CRESC customer's average wait time on the phone is less than 1.5 minutes on average. Ongoing public assistance cases are more efficiently maintained at the CRESC. Utah uses imaging and communication technology to maximize resources as the number of cases continues to rise.

Procedures

The CRESC uses call center phone technology to direct the incoming call to the assigned team, rotate the calls between available specialists and store the calls in queue when necessary. From their own computer, a supervisor can view a real-time pie chart that displays the call volume, wait time, call time and dropped calls for the team. CRESC Eligibility Specialists divide their time between taking customer phone calls and processing cases; completing reviews, processing verifications, working alerts. All incoming reviews and verifications are imaged into an automatic system that stores and displays the information from any workers computer. An alert is created when a review or verification is imaged, notifying the assigned eligibility specialist that it is ready to be processed.

Project Outcomes

The CRESC utilizes innovative ways to maintain accuracy and timeliness with high call volume and increasingly large caseloads. CRESC managers use motivational programs to award incentives that keep team members productive and timely in their alerts. Call center monitoring keeps the call wait time to a minimum; when call volume rises the supervisor can adjust staff accordingly. The CRESC maintains on-going cases. This allows the supervisor to handle a large team with higher caseloads and cuts administrative costs.

The CRESC was not designed to assist a specific client population; however, it is designed to meet the needs of all customers including those with disabilities or language barriers. Hearing-impaired customers are able to use a relay system that displays the callers words in readable text. When a yearly interview is required any customer may request a face to face interview rather than a phone interview.

Customers with language barriers may request a translator. Utah uses the Language Line, a translation service that can be used via phone.

Implemented: 1998	Status: Ongoing	Location: Utah's Central Region	Partnerships: UT Department of Workforce Services (DWS)
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Program Review & Evaluation Simplified Administration	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: Kathy Link Department of Workforce Services 140 East 300 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111 Ph: (801) 526-9230 klink@utah.gov www.jobs.utah.gov

VERMONT

Annual Corrective Action Plan Meeting

Project Overview

This Corrective Action Plan (CAP) meeting is an innovative approach to documenting the status of corrective actions, demonstrating progress and success, and establishing performance objectives in administration of the Food Stamp Program. The Food and Nutrition Team organizes and facilitates a daylong CAP meeting. This approach replaces a paper process and engages a broad spectrum of ESD staff in an interactive corrective action planning dialogue with FNS that fosters a meaningful exchange of ideas, and an immediate response to questions and recommendations. Discussion topics include program administration, program access, payment accuracy, fraud and claims, audit, training, and management evaluation.

Procedures

Participants provide handouts and other presentation materials to be filed in the Corrective Action Binder, which, with its notes and recommendations, is the official Corrective Action Plan. Concrete steps include:

1. Confirming meeting date with FNS.
2. Securing meeting space. (Has been Statehouse in Montpelier)
3. Identifying CAP activities and agenda topics.
4. Recruiting staff presenters (ensuring both urban and rural districts are represented)
5. Helping staff develop written briefs for back up to presentations
6. Setting up CAP binders with agenda, table of contents, and section dividers for each topic
7. Compiling briefs in CAP binder
8. Compiling brief biographical information on each presenter, including FNS
9. Providing name tags
10. Arranging refreshments
11. Facilitating discussion

Project Outcomes

The success of this project stems from the state agency staff's face-to-face interaction with FNS staff. Questions, answers, recommendations, and accolades are delivered in the first person, which underscores the humanity of all participants to remove any vestigial "we" (state) versus "them" (feds) attitude. The CAP meeting project has taken on a life of its own. There is significant staff time involved in preparation and all-day attendance at the meeting. Although some staff have voiced concerns about the commitment of staff resources required, there is strong support at ESD and FNS for continuation of this model, which has functioned well for the past four years.

Both FNS and ESD staff appreciate the opportunity to work together in this unique way to improve program administration and interactive dialogue among all parties involved. Vermont's CAP Meeting process has been showcased by FNS at several regional meetings as a best practice.

Implemented: December 2002	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) VT Department for Children & Families (ESD)
Target Population: Program managers, local office supervisors, & reviewers	Processes Affected: Program Review & Evaluation	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: Renee Richardson Agency of Human Services – Department for Children & Families – Economic Services Division 103 South Main St. Waterbury, VT 05671 Ph: (802) 241-2820 Fax: (802) 241-3934 reneer@ahs.state.vt.us www.path.state.vt.us

VIRGINIA

Redesign of the Combined Application

Project Overview

A team of state and local department of social services employees from all three of the major benefit programs is working to re-design the Virginia Combined Application. This document is currently a 14-page application. The team is working to combine simpler language with aesthetically pleasing design so that the document will be easier to use. The ultimate goal is to increase participation in all three programs. The current Combined Application is cumbersome. It is not user-friendly, and may be a barrier to participation.

Procedures

This project involved state and local staff from all three major benefit programs, as well as system support and the Department of Medical Assistance Services, in partnership with Kleinmann Consulting Group (KCG). KCG is facilitating the work group and will design the document and assist with training and testing.

Project Outcomes

This project is currently underway. This is the first time in about 15 years that this document has undergone serious revision.

Implemented: November 2004	Status: Not Yet Implemented	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Kleinmann Consulting Group (KDG) VA Department of Medical Assistance Services VA Department of Social Services (DSS)
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Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Medicaid Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Contact: VA Department of Social Services 7 North 8 th St. Richmond, VA 23219 Ph: (804) 726-7375 Fax: (804) 726-7356 www.dss.va.us
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VIRGINIA

Virginia Combined Application Project (VaCAP)

Project Overview

Virginia's proposed Combined Application Project (VaCAP) will offer a simplified application and certification process for Virginia residents who are certified for SSI. The Virginia SDX will be used to identify SSI recipients who are not currently receiving food stamps. The VaCAP approval requires that all VaCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income.

Through VaCAP, clients will:

- Receive a standard monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost;
- Be certified for three years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

VaCAP applications are not taken by SSA.

- A simplified application is mailed to individuals who meet the selection criteria.
- Applications must be returned to the local Department of Social Services (DSS).
- A second application is mailed automatically if the initial application is not returned within 30 days.
- DSS evaluates returned applications and determines eligibility.
- DSS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 36 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients with high monthly shelter expenses or monthly medical expenses may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DSS office.

Project Outcomes

VaCAP anticipates identifying and certifying anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 additional households. This is based on the fact the Virginia's current FSP participation rate is around 58 percent, which means an estimated 15,400 households are potentially eligible.

Benefit levels are pending approval from FNS, but VaCAP will have two different benefit levels when finalized.

Implemented: Not Yet Implemented	Status: January 2006	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Department of Social Services (DSS) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Simplified Administration	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: VA Department of Social Services

	Streamlined Application	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	7 North 8 th St. Richmond, VA 23219 Ph: (804) 726-7375 Fax: (804) 726-7356 www.dss.va.us
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VIRGINIA

On-Line Pre-screening and Application Systems

Project Overview

The project will implement an online pre-screening and application system. The system will provide access to all governmental and private nutrition support services in the state.

Procedures

In November 2002, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) launched the pre-screening tool, which currently screens for potential eligibility for eight different programs including Food Stamps, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Energy Assistance, Child Care, Children's Health Insurance, Help with Medicare Costs, and Medicaid for Pregnant Women. There is also a link to the Social Security Administrations (SSA) Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool.

Here's How It Works:

- Go to www.dss.state.va.us
- Click on "Am I Eligible For Assistance?" in the right column, and,
- Answer a few simple questions about your household's circumstances

On April 15, 2005, the VDSS launched the Virginia Food Connection, an online application for food stamps, WIC, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Applicants can apply for benefits from any location where they have Internet access. The application can be accessed at www.vafood.org. When the applicant clicks on the "SEND" button, the application is routed to the appropriate entity based on the city or county the applicant lives in and the programs applied for. In Phase II and III of the project, electronic signature will be added and the eligibility determination system will be populated.

Project Outcomes

In 2004, there were 84,930 web hits on the pre-screening tool and participation in the Food Stamp Program increased by over 24 percent between March 2003 and March 2004. VDSS expects that participation will continue to increase and that hunger in Virginia will be significantly reduced.

Citizens can determine if they might be eligible and apply for benefits from any location where they have Internet access, including their own home. Previously, applicants had to go to the local department of social services to be screened and apply. Local departments of social services are typically open during normal business hours, and in rural locations may be quite a distance from the applicant's home. Time off from work to apply, lack of affordable transportation, and distance from the local office were barriers to the working poor and elderly. The online screening and application have increased the points of entry into the system and reduced barriers to participation.

Implemented: April 2005	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) VA Department of Social Services
Target Population: Food Stamp Applicants Public Assistance Applicants	Processes Affected: Web-based Technology	Programs Affected: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Food Stamp Program (FSP)	Contact: VA Department of Social Services 7 North 8 th St. Richmond, VA 23219

		Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Medicaid Medicare Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Ph: (804) 726-7375 Fax: (804) 726-7356 www.dss.va.us
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WASHINGTON

Washington Combined Application Project (WASHCAP)

Project Overview

Washington's Combined Application Project (WASHCAP) allows SSA staff to gather information regarding food stamp eligibility from clients during an SSI interview for clients not already receiving food stamps. The WASHCAP approval requires that all WASHCAP cases:

- Receive SSI;
- Are one-person households in "A" living arrangements; and
- Have no earned income. They may have up to three consecutive months of earned income after starting WASHCAP.

Through WASHCAP, clients:

- Receive a monthly benefit based on their total shelter (rent/mortgage) cost and other income;
- Are certified for two years; and
- Use the current EBT process.

Procedures

During the interview for SSI, the SSA caseworker will:

- Describe WASHCAP;
- Collect shelter and utility expenses;
- Indicate the shelter parameters.

The information is then transferred to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) via the SDX where:

- DSHS notifies clients of their eligibility and assigns certification periods of 24 months.
- Eligible clients receive an EBT card and PIN instructions.
- Clients whose monthly shelter expenses exceed \$529 or monthly medical expenses exceed \$35 may be eligible for higher benefit amounts by applying for the regular FSP at a local DSHS office.

Project Outcomes

WASHCAP ran into some minor problems with cost neutrality. WASHCAP clients who would have received a higher benefit in the regular FSP were converted to the regular FSP automatically. This caused WASHCAP benefit costs to become higher than if clients participated in the regular FSP. To fix this issue, some cases were converted back to WASHCAP, but all clients have the option to opt out of WASHCAP and apply for the regular program.

WASHCAP has no standardized benefit amounts. Benefits are determined using actual income from SDX, current standard deduction, standardized shelter amount, and the SUA.

Implemented: December 2001	Status: Ongoing	Location: Statewide	Partnerships: Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
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			Social Security Administration (SSA)
Target Population: SSI Recipients	Processes Affected: Outreach Simplified Administration Streamlined Application	Programs Affected: Food Stamp Program (FSP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Contact: Linda Baskin DSHS Ph: (360) 413-3105 baskinj@dshs.wa.gov