

Questions (and some places to look for answers) for New IV-D Directors to Ask About Systems

- I. What is the status of the project's APD?
 - a. Is there an Active APD in place? To find out, [click here](#).
 - b. Is the APD up to date? When is the next submittal to OCSE due? APD's must be submitted annually, as well as on an "as-needed basis." For an overview of the APD process, [click here](#).
 - c. Is the APD eligible for closeout? Even if eligible, should we close it out or leave it open? For details on closing out an APD, [click here](#).
- II. What communications are in place within the state project?
 - a. Is there a Project Charter?
 - b. Is there a Communications Plan for the project?
- III. Who is the point of contact at OCSE for systems issues?
 - a. What communications are currently in place between your state project staff and OCSE systems staff?
 - b. What communications would be beneficial between the project and OCSE systems staff?
- IV. Are there any major upgrades, enhancements or system replacements being planned? If so, what is the status?
 - a. Has an analysis of alternatives for the upgrade or replacement system been prepared?
 - b. Has a feasibility study, with a cost/benefit analysis (CBA) been prepared?
 - c. Is the project actively working with OCSE staff to ensure Federal requirements for planning major systems upgrades or enhancements are being met? For details on CBA requirements, [click here](#).
- V. Does the project have an Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) requirements in accordance with Federal regulation 45 CFR 307.15(b)(10)?
 - a. If IV&V is in place, who is the IV&V provider, and how often are reports generated?
 - b. If IV&V is not in place for the project, are any of the triggers specified in 45 CFR 307.15(b)(10) likely to occur for the project in the near future.
 - c. For an overview of Federal IV&V requirements, [click here](#).
 - d. To see the current status of IV&V in your state and other states, [click here](#).
- VI. Are any systems costs shared between state agencies? If so, is there a cost allocation plan for sharing these costs? Is it Federally approved? For details on cost allocation, [click here](#).
- VII. What system automation practices are in place, or in development, for the project? What new automation is being considered? For details on automation enhancement projects in various states, click on the links below.
 - a. [Electronic Disbursement](#)
 - b. [Review and Adjustment](#)
 - c. [Case Closure](#)
 - d. [Interstate Electronic Funds Transfer](#)
 - e. [Web-Based Customer Service](#)
- VIII. What best practices from other states may be applicable to your system? For information on best practices, [click here](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Terms and Definitions

Advance Planning Document (APD)

The three primary purposes of the APD process are to:

- Describe in broad terms the State's plan for managing the design, development, implementation, and operation of a system that meets Federal, State, and user needs in an efficient, comprehensive, and cost-effective manner;
- Establish system and program performance goals in terms of projected costs and benefits; and
- Secure Federal financial participation (FFP) for the State.

Planning APD

The Planning APD (PAPD) is a written plan of action which requests funding to determine the need for, feasibility, and cost factors of ADP equipment or services acquisition. Includes a statement of the problem or need, project management plan, budget for project planning, and estimated total project cost. Commits to preparing the feasibility study, requirements (or needs) analysis, alternatives analysis, and cost/benefit analysis.

Implementation APD

The Implementation APD (IAPD) is written plan of action marking the transition from the mission and planning phase to the development and implementation phase - which supports the plan to acquire the proposed ADP services or equipment. Includes the statement of needs and objectives, feasibility study, requirements analysis, alternatives analysis, cost/benefit analysis, personnel resource statements, project activities, schedule, proposed budget and prospective costs, and system life.

APD Update (APDU)

The PAPD or IAPD must, at a minimum, be updated on an annual basis (Annual APDU). Additionally, an "As-Needed" APDU must be submitted whenever a significant change to the project cost, scope, or schedule occurs.

Project Charter

A project charter is a document issued by senior management that formally authorizes the existence of the project. It provides the project manager with the authority to apply organizational resources to project activities.

Communication Plan

A communication plan is a document describing the information and communication needs of the project stakeholders: who needs the information, when they need it, and how it will be communicated to them.

Analysis of Alternatives

An analysis of alternatives considers the universe of alternatives available for automation, such as transferring another State's system or enhancing an existing system. These alternatives are

evaluated at a high level with the goal of selecting the most viable alternatives for further, detailed analysis.

Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study determines whether it is sufficiently probable that effective and efficient use of Automated Data Processing (ADP) equipment or systems can be made to warrant the substantial investment of staff, time, and money being requested and whether the plan is capable of being accomplished successfully. This study compares the alternatives selected during the Analysis of Alternatives to the existing "Status Quo" system to demonstrate that the benefits of replacing or enhancing the Status Quo system outweigh the costs. The feasibility study results in a determination of whether upgrade or replacement of the Status Quo is feasible, i.e. would the cost of building the system be "paid off" over the life of the system. The feasibility study also provides a recommendation of which of the alternatives analyzed would be the best system solution in terms of cost effectiveness and in terms of meeting the goals and business requirements of the project. One of the key analytical tools utilized in the Feasibility Study is the Cost Benefit Analysis.

Cost/Benefit Analysis

The Cost/Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a detailed evaluation of the costs and benefits of each alternative identified during the alternatives analysis. It includes costs of current and projected operations as a baseline for (1) determining which alternative to select for automation and (2) measuring costs and benefits of the implemented and operational system over time. The CBA can be included as part of the Feasibility Study or stand as a separate document.

Independent Verification and Validation

Software Verification and Validation is a systems engineering discipline which helps the development organization build quality into the software products during the software development life cycle. Validation is concerned with checking that the development products meet the customer's needs, and Verification is concerned with checking that the system is well engineered. This is sometimes expressed as "Are we building the right system?" and "Are we building the system right?" Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) is Verification and Validation activities performed by an agency that resides outside the State's Title IV-D Agency and its umbrella agency.

The key benefits of IV&V are:

- Identifies High-Risk Areas Early
- Provides the State and Federal Governments an Objective Analysis To Deal With System Development Issues
- Provides Management With Improved Visibility Into the Progress and Quality of the Development Effort
- Reduces Errors in Delivered Products

The following criteria can trigger federally mandated IV&V assessment of a state child support enforcement system:

- State does not have in place a statewide automated child support enforcement system that meets the requirements of the FSA of 1988
- State has failed to meet a critical milestone, as identified in their APDs
- State has failed to submit timely and complete APD updates
- State's APD indicates the need for a total system redesign

- State is developing systems under waivers pursuant to section 452(d)(3) of the Social Security Act
- State's system development efforts are determined to be at risk of failure, significant delay, or significant cost overrun.

Cost Allocation

A procedure that State agencies use to identify, measure, and equitably distribute system costs among benefiting public assistance programs.