



**ACF State Systems Summit:**  
“Reaching New Heights in Human Services Collaboration”  
May 3 – 7, 2004  
Washington, D.C.

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The inaugural ACF State Systems Summit was held the first week of May 2004 at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. The State Systems Summit (Summit) was attended by State and Federal representatives from across the nation in support of TANF, the Children’s Bureau, and the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). The Summit was hosted by the State Information Technology Consortium (SITC) on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The agenda was composed of a collection of trainings, workgroups, and open sessions focusing on topics of interest to program and IT administrators within the areas of TANF, Child Welfare, and Child Support from across the country.

***Attendance***

The following details the number of States, Federal Agencies, and government vendors represented at the Summit:

- 283 Attendees;
- 50 States;
- 46 representatives from the sponsor agencies: Office of Family Assistance, (TANF), the Office of Financial Services, (State Systems), OCSE, and the Children’s Bureau;
- Eight non-ACF agencies including United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition (FNS), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (CMS); and
- 29 government vendors.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMIT**

***TANF***

An integral aspect of the Summit included the **66 TANF participants** from **33 States plus the District of Columbia and ACF** taking part in two targeted training seminars concentrating on the topics of Enterprise Architecture (EA) and Maximization of Resources. In addition to these training sessions, five Open Sessions focused on topics specifically related to TANF. The following illustrates the content of the sessions:

- **Architecting the State Human Services IT Enterprise:** EA is a framework that describes how an organization develops, manages, and uses information technology to optimally support its business functions. This two-day training focused on the substantial efforts to integrate the delivery of Human Services (HS) programs, which have been undertaken by many State HS Program Managers and Information Technology Directors. The significance of EA becomes more important as States look toward service integration across systems and influences of managing large-scale systems for customer-centric service delivery.
  
- **Strategies to Maximize Delivery of Services Within the Context of Budget Constraints:** This one-day training addressed the needs of State HS Program Managers and Information Technology Directors who have experienced significant challenges with budget shortfalls and continued requests for expansion of services. This national session focused on Maximization of Resources (“doing more, with less”) in the State HS Agency. As States look for areas to economize yet maintain existing levels of services and continue with service integration across systems the impact of this session becomes more evident.
  
- **TANF Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting:** This meeting included representatives from eight States, who have been members of the ACF/SITC TAG, focused on TANF activities over the past fiscal year. The status of outstanding action items and project activities concerning tasks within the contract was discussed. Updates were given on data sharing and exchange using a web-based application, the Data Warehouse Report, and the NHSITRC website.

**Open Sessions focused on TANF:**

- **Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) Update:** This session focused on the benefits of States participating in the PARIS project. Quarterly, on a volunteer basis, States may participate in matching Human Services payments with each other, the VA, DOD, and OPM to assist in reducing erroneous payments.
- **State Systems Profiles:** The SSP, a part of the National Human Services Information Technology Resource Center (NHSITRC) website, was discussed and a demonstration of how State IT organizations can review and update information online was performed.
- **Food Stamp Update:** A representative from the Food and Nutrition Service discussed the 2002 farm bill provisions and outreach initiatives.
- **TANF Reauthorization Update:** A spokesperson from the Office of Family Assistance detailed the most recent update on TANF Reauthorization.
- **Medicaid Update:** A delegate from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provided the latest Medicaid update.

## *Child Welfare*

The Child Welfare National Training Conference 2004 was a key component of the ACF State Systems Summit with **72 State and Federal administrators** and their contractors involved in the event. The training was comprised of three daylong sessions. This year's conference theme was **THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE: "Integrating People, Strategy, and Technology"**.

The conference was intended for State staff who plan and develop child welfare automated systems, either a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) or a non-SACWIS. A total of **42 States plus the District of Columbia** were represented at the training. The sessions were designed to benefit new child welfare information technology (IT) staff as well as experienced technical project staff. Conference topics included Change Management, Data Warehousing and Data Marts, Conversion of System Platforms, Enterprise Frameworks, Mobile and Wireless Technology, Testing Methodologies and Automated Tools, Sustainable Training Approaches, and an update from the Child Welfare XML Workgroup.

In addition to attending the training, participants had an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned on a wide variety of subjects including Release Management and Managing the Help Desk.

### **Open Session focused on Child Welfare:**

- **Data Exchange with XM:** This session provided insight into a technology prototype, which is exploring the application of XML Web Services technology to share information across Program, State, local and other boundaries to better enable comprehensive service delivery through interoperability and exchange of essential case information through the Programs' Information Systems.

## *Child Support*

In total, **131 State, Tribal, and Federal representatives** and their contractors attended and participated in four Workgroups and 10 Open Sessions all dedicated to the work of Child Support Enforcement. Included in that number were **28 States and eight Tribal** representatives. The following details the focus of each of the Workgroups:

- **IV-A/IV-D Workgroup:** Activities included identifying specific enhancements to the electronic interfaces between TANF and CSE systems to improve the collection of child support for public assistance-related CSE cases. Another vital piece is improvement of collaboration and interface efforts particularly surrounding the case referrals and exchanges of data. The **14 State** representatives along with their Federal partners from **ACF Region III, OFA, and OCSE** reviewed and discussed the results of best practice research as well as shared their ideas for enhancements to the electronic interfaces between TANF and CSE systems to improve the exchange of IV-A/IV-D data.

- **Tribal Child Support Enforcement Systems Workgroup:** The group, which consisted of nine Tribal representatives along with OCSE and ACF Region IV staff, continues to surface and document key issues that affect the potential for automation of tribal child support programs.
- **Interstate Workgroup:** This group composed of **11 State representatives** and their **Federal partners** continues its ongoing work on the interstate real-time access initiative.
- **APD Reform/State Accountability Workgroup:** A joint Federal/State meeting was held to identify practical methods to ensure State accountability for high-risk State systems projects. **Seven States along with OCSE, USDA/FNS, and CMS** participated in and contributed to this important discussion.

### **Open Sessions focused on Child Support Enforcement:**

- **Cost Allocation:** An overview of the new cost allocation methodology toolkit for systems development using the benefiting program concept was presented. The toolkit is intended to assist states in allocating the costs of a systems development project serving multiple programs across more than one Federally funded program.
- **Early Intervention:** A panel of States offered best practices on changing their approach toward non-custodial parents, reminding clients of upcoming hearings and appointments, and using automation to ensure appropriate child support orders.
- **FPLS Modernization:** A status update and review of plans for modernizing the FPLS (Federal Parent Locator Service) was delivered.
- **Interstate Case Reconciliation:** Life after the “match”, the discussion focused on keeping child support interstate cases in sync.
- **Case Closure Best Practices:** Guidance was provided on how to use State systems to correctly close child support cases in accordance with the regulations.
- **APD Reform:** This open forum was geared toward State representatives having the opportunity to provide input on proposed changes to Federal regulations. The session centered on soliciting input on how to reduce documentation and submission thresholds for low risk systems projects while ensuring accountability for higher risk systems projects.
- **MS-FIDM Freeze & Seize:** An update was delivered on efforts to develop requirements for this proposed legislative initiative.
- **APD 101:** A basic overview and answers to the most frequently asked questions about approval and prior approval of APDs and contract documents was presented.
- **CSE Update:** An agent from OCSE discussed various initiatives, workgroups, and projects related to child support.
- **IV-A/IV-D Discussion:** Members of the IV-A/IV-D workgroup provided an update of the research conducted to date and solicited best practices from the audience.