

JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW INTEGRATED CHILD WELFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN PENNSYLVANIA: PROGRESS REPORT

A STAFF STUDY

April 2022



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REPORT

*Development and Implementation
of a New Integrated Child Welfare Case Management System
in Pennsylvania: Progress Report*

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A fourteen-member Executive Committee comprised of the leadership of both the House of Representatives and the Senate oversees the Commission. The seven Executive Committee members from the House of Representatives are the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. The seven Executive Committee members from the Senate are the President Pro Tempore, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. By statute, the Executive Committee selects a chairman of the Commission from among the members of the General Assembly. Historically, the Executive Committee has also selected a Vice-Chair or Treasurer, or both, for the Commission.

The studies conducted by the Commission are authorized by statute or by a simple or joint resolution. In general, the Commission has the power to conduct investigations, study issues, and gather information as directed by the General Assembly. The Commission provides in-depth research on a variety of topics, crafts recommendations to improve public policy and statutory law, and works closely with legislators and their staff.

A Commission study may involve the appointment of a legislative task force, composed of a specified number of legislators from the House of Representatives or the Senate, or both, as set forth in the enabling statute or resolution. In addition to following the progress of a particular study, the principal role of a task force is to determine whether to authorize the publication of any report resulting from the study and the introduction of any proposed legislation contained in the report. However, task force authorization does not necessarily reflect endorsement of all the findings and recommendations contained in a report.

Some studies involve an appointed advisory committee of professionals or interested parties from across the Commonwealth with expertise in a particular topic; others are managed exclusively by Commission staff with the informal involvement of representatives of those entities that can provide insight and information regarding the particular topic. When a study involves an advisory committee, the Commission seeks consensus among the members.² Although an advisory committee member may represent a particular department, agency, association, or group, such representation does not necessarily reflect the endorsement of the department, agency, association, or group of all the findings and recommendations contained in a study report.

¹ Act of July 1, 1937 (P.L.2460, No.459); 46 P.S. §§ 65–69.

² Consensus does not necessarily reflect unanimity among the advisory committee members on each individual policy or legislative recommendation. At a minimum, it reflects the views of a substantial majority of the advisory committee, gained after lengthy review and discussion.

Over the years, nearly one thousand individuals from across the Commonwealth have served as members of the Commission's numerous advisory committees or have assisted the Commission with its studies. Members of advisory committees bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to deliberations involving a particular study. Individuals from countless backgrounds have contributed to the work of the Commission, such as attorneys, judges, professors and other educators, state and local officials, physicians and other health care professionals, business and community leaders, service providers, administrators and other professionals, law enforcement personnel, and concerned citizens. In addition, members of advisory committees donate their time to serve the public good; they are not compensated for their service as members. Consequently, the Commonwealth receives the financial benefit of such volunteerism, along with their shared expertise in developing statutory language and public policy recommendations to improve the law in Pennsylvania.

The Commission periodically reports its findings and recommendations, along with any proposed legislation, to the General Assembly. Certain studies have specific timelines for the publication of a report, as in the case of a discrete or timely topic; other studies, given their complex or considerable nature, are ongoing and involve the publication of periodic reports. Completion of a study, or a particular aspect of an ongoing study, generally results in the publication of a report setting forth background material, policy recommendations, and proposed legislation. However, the release of a report by the Commission does not necessarily reflect the endorsement by the members of the Executive Committee, or the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Commission, of all the findings, recommendations, or conclusions contained in the report. A report containing proposed legislation may also contain official comments, which may be used to construe or apply its provisions.³

Since its inception, the Commission has published over 400 reports on a sweeping range of topics, including administrative law and procedure; agriculture; athletics and sports; banks and banking; commerce and trade; the commercial code; crimes and offenses; decedents, estates, and fiduciaries; detectives and private police; domestic relations; education; elections; eminent domain; environmental resources; escheats; fish; forests, waters, and state parks; game; health and safety; historical sites and museums; insolvency and assignments; insurance; the judiciary and judicial procedure; labor; law and justice; the legislature; liquor; mechanics' liens; mental health; military affairs; mines and mining; municipalities; prisons and parole; procurement; state-licensed professions and occupations; public utilities; public welfare; real and personal property; state government; taxation and fiscal affairs; transportation; vehicles; and workers' compensation.

Following the completion of a report, subsequent action on the part of the Commission may be required, and, as necessary, the Commission will draft legislation and statutory amendments, update research, track legislation through the legislative process, attend hearings, and answer questions from legislators, legislative staff, interest groups, and constituents.

³ 1 Pa.C.S. § 1939.



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House Resolution No. 119 of 2021 directed the Joint State Government Commission to study the development and implementation of an integrated child welfare information system in the Commonwealth and analyze its status and progress. Staff found that the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) began operations at the end of 2014 and continues as one of the information systems integral to the work of child welfare professionals and policy makers in Pennsylvania. In 2019, a major statewide effort was launched that involves the Department of Human Services, the Office of Administration, and Pennsylvania's 67 counties to replace CWIS as well as the six county case management systems currently used in Pennsylvania and install a new, comprehensive system instead. The new system - the Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) system - will be compliant with the new federal requirements established for the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) that the states are encouraged to implement.

Staff held meetings with representatives of these agencies responsible for the development and implementation of the new system, and discussions were supplemented by extensive correspondence. The report includes a summary of expenditures associated with its development as well as projected timeline and costs. Commission staff did not find recommendations for legislative action that can expedite further development and installation of the CW CM system.

The Commission highly appreciates both agencies' input as well as the contribution made by the county children and youth agencies.

The full report is available at <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn J. Pasewicz
Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

House Resolution No. 119 of 2021 directs the Joint State Government Commission “to conduct a study and make recommendations concerning the development and implementation of an integrated child welfare information system for child welfare programs overseen by the Department of Human Services and administered by county children and youth agencies.”⁴

Achieving this goal required that the Joint State Government Commission staff work in close collaboration with the Department of Human Services as well as the Health and Human Services Delivery Center of the Pennsylvania Office of Administration. The Joint State Government Commission staff held meetings with representatives of these agencies responsible for the development and implementation of the new system. The meetings were conducted via Zoom and occurred on December 8, 2021, and February 11, 2022. The meeting discussions were supplemented by extensive correspondence. The JSGC highly appreciates both agencies’ input as well as the contribution made by the county children and youth agencies.

As directed by the resolution, this report presents a description of the new child welfare information system, its main features, its goals and objectives, its current status and progress, and a summary of expenditures associated with its development as well as projected timeline and costs.

⁴ HR No. 119 of 2021.

CCWIS: MAIN FEATURES AND GOALS

Child welfare information is collected and tracked by states in various ways, each using one of several data collection and sharing systems. It is the states' responsibility to collect and store information on children and families to meet federal reporting requirements. The experts point out, however, that “the line between purely serving data collection purposes and providing integrated service delivery to achieve improved decision making and data analysis is a meaningful one.”⁵ A web-based, integrated case management system is expected to improve access to data and utilization of data between counties and across state agencies. It is especially important in areas of child abuse and foster care services. When the caseworker has an opportunity to see all the relevant information in real time, she or he can make a better decision for children and families. This is the main purpose of the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

This purpose has gained support of leading child advocacy organizations and charitable foundations. The Annie E. Casey Foundation enthusiastically endorsed the new system, stating “the advent of CCWIS is truly a defining moment in child welfare” and highlighting what it views as the main strength of the CCWIS model: “its ability to drive solutions that focus on people rather than process.”⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, in collaboration with the American Public Human Services Association, has funded the development of the CCWIS Model RFP, a toolkit designed to help child welfare leaders streamline their procurement processes with a goal-driven framework that emphasizes program and policy objectives and prioritizes outcomes for children and families. According to the senior director of policy and practice at the American Public Human Services Association, “this toolkit is intended not only to support state leaders in procuring and developing modern technology infrastructure, but also to drive innovation in how integrated child welfare service delivery systems are designed with a focus on child and family wellbeing outcomes.”⁷ The Annie E. Casey Foundation has also facilitated regular remote meetings of the CCWIS Navigators Group. This group includes representatives of the states who participate in monthly calls where they can speak to each other about questions and progress related to CCWIS. This is a beneficial exchange of opinions and experiences among those engaged in a formidable transformation effort.

⁵ National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL). *Child Welfare Information Systems*, last modified June 25, 2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-welfare-information-systems.aspx> (accessed November 15, 2021).

⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Tool Kit Helps Child Welfare Leaders Streamline Procurement Processes*, <https://www.aecf.org/blog/tool-kit-helps-child-welfare-leaders-streamline-procurement-processes>.

⁷ Ibid.

CCWIS was introduced in August 2015. On August 11, 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) outlining changes in technology and guidelines to agencies how to build smaller systems reflecting their practice models as well as the federal reporting requirements. The CCWIS project requirements are specified in Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations.⁸ They include the “efficient, economical and effective requirement”; the CCWIS data requirements; reporting requirements; data quality requirements; bi-directional data exchanges; data exchange standard requirements; automated eligibility determination requirements; submission requirements; and others.⁹ Detailed technical requirements, along with the information about technical assistance, self-assessment tools, and monitoring reviews, can be found in the Children’s Bureau’s technical bulletin #7.¹⁰ The information collected and reported to the federal government by the states is compiled into the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). Both systems are publicly available on the Children’s Bureau’s Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data website. The new CCWIS regulations intend to facilitate modernization of state child welfare systems, reduce maintenance costs, and increase flexibility for the states, allowing them to better customize their system to their specific needs. A CCWIS-compliant system is a system that is effective, prevents duplication, facilitates improved data quality, promotes data-sharing with other agencies, and allows agencies to build systems tailored to their needs.

The cardinal feature of Pennsylvania’s child welfare system is that it is state-supervised and county-administered. This is a critical factor that determines the Commonwealth’s approach to the system modernization and its strategy in developing a version of CCWIS that would be most suitable for its needs. As noted by experts currently working in this field in Pennsylvania, “having a system like this in place will not only ultimately allow counties to spend money they may be currently spending on supporting individual IT systems on more pressing needs, such as recruitment and retention of staff, but it will also allow them to have a truly efficient system that meets their unique needs.”¹¹

⁸ 45 CFR § 1355.52.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Children’s Bureau. *Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). Technical Bulletin #7: CCWIS Technical Assistance, Self-Assessment Tools, and Monitoring Reviews*. August 26, 2021, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/ccwis_tb7_0.pdf.

¹¹ Ms. Elysa Springer, Director of the Systems and Data Management, Division of Operations, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. A personal e-mail to the Joint State Government Commission sent on December 13, 2021.

CHILD WELFARE CASE MANAGEMENT PROJECT: OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE

Pennsylvania's Child Welfare System: Current State

In the Commonwealth, protecting the health of children “who are alleged to be, or are determined to be, victims of child abuse or in need of general protective services is the collective responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), public and private children and youth agencies, and community service providers.”¹² The Commonwealth’s child welfare system is supervised by the state but administered by counties. Pennsylvania’s 67 counties have their own County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) that work collaboratively with OCYF to administer child welfare programs. CCYAs contract with private children and youth agencies and other community partners to deliver the necessary services at the local level. CCYAs maintain a certain level of autonomy, but they are required to deliver child welfare programs in compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and policies.

To achieve consistency in providing quality child welfare services, OCYF and CCYAs “need real-time child and family-specific information, service and financial data, and aggregate program information, across counties, to efficiently and effectively track outcomes, monitor performance and compliance, and make business decisions based on accurate and timely information.”¹³

Currently, in Pennsylvania, six county-level systems are maintained, along with the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS). This technology structure results in “significant costs, inefficiencies, low data integrity, and difficulty in meeting federal requirements.”¹⁴ The DHS identified several challenges posed by the existing technology structure:

- Lack of quality data, including historical data, to support analytics, reporting, identification of trends, and decision-making
- Access to point-in-time data only, which makes it difficult to see effectiveness across populations
- Lack of definition of measurements across the state, including those of effectiveness of services

¹² *Child Welfare Case Management Project: Project Charter and Governance Structure*. Last Revised 08/10/2020. P. 3. Document provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Mr. Jonathan Rubin, Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Services – Office of Children, Youth and Families, on December 8, 2021.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

- Lack of data sharing across counties and between counties and the state, which impacts children’s safety
- Duplication of resources across information technology (IT) spending and human capital (staff)
- Technical issues: browser compatibility, multi device support and compatibility, keeping hardware/software up to date, and challenging user experience/system usability
- Limited system and user adaptability/flexibility; limited flexibility with cases/teams
- Inconsistencies and gaps across counties, including child welfare practices, data, processes, and systems; this includes standardization of data definitions and case plans/assessments
- Lack of timely referrals, intake, and delivery of services
- Decisions occasionally made based on perception rather than standards.¹⁵

The introduction of Phase 1 of the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) addressed some of these challenges, but not all.

CWIS Phase 1 – Referrals

Phase 1 of the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) went live on December 31, 2014.¹⁶ It is the CWIS system that is currently in operation.

The focus of this phase is on referrals and screening functions. Phase 1 includes system changes required to expand state-level access to referrals, screening, and clearances by providing real-time data on CPS and GPS reports.¹⁷

Phase 1 incorporates the following key features:

- Collect and record CPS and GPS cases at the state level
- Electronically transfer the CPS and GPS cases to appropriate county for investigation
- Electronically transfer the investigation/assessment results from the county to the state

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Most information in this section was provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Elysa K. Springer, Director of the Systems and Data Management, Division of Operations, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in a personal e-mail on December 9, 2021.

¹⁷ Child Protective Services (CPS) reports are those that allege a child might have been a victim of child abuse. General Protective Services (GPS) reports are those reports that do not rise to the level of suspected child abuse but allege a need for intervention to prevent serious harm to children.

- At the state level, view the investigation/assessment status, outcomes, and whether services were provided
- Modernize process for mandated reporters to submit CPS and GPS cases online
- Modernize process for child abuse clearances
- Enhance reporting and visibility to statewide Child Welfare data.

The key goals of Phase 1 include

- Visibility of CPS and GPS reports at the state level
- Improved reporting for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System
- Automated and streamlined child abuse clearances
- Self-service options for mandated reporters and child abuse clearances
- Single access point for counties.

An important advantage of the implemented Phase 1 CWIS is that it “allows county children and youth agencies to obtain information on families that were served in other counties within the commonwealth.”¹⁸ Phase 1 CWIS provided case workers with access to the state system, which is a big step forward. The county/state interaction is, however, limited. There is common intake; still, counties are unable to see specific cases in their entirety. After CWIS was launched, the DHS sought input from the counties, analyzed their current practices, and used the counties’ feedback to standardize business practices and better meet the users’ needs.

***The Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) Solution:
Description and Scope***

Implementation of Phase 1 CWIS meant some progress, but there are many areas that require improvement. The Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) Solution is expected to provide this improvement and open many new opportunities.

CW CM is envisioned as a statewide case management system that will replace CWIS as well as the six county case management systems currently used in Pennsylvania. The new system is expected to enable

- Flexibility in supporting county nuances and responsiveness to diversity of counties when necessary

¹⁸ Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. *Annual Child Abuse Report 2014*, <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/OCYF/Documents/2014%20Child%20Abuse%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

- Identification of child welfare best practices
- Implementation support and coordination to incorporate best practices and flexibility to the state and counties.¹⁹

The CW CM project vision statement reads as follows:

To have a comprehensive, state-of-the-art child welfare system that:

- Improves outcomes for our children and families.
- Provides a statewide view of the child.
- Supports improved collaboration and partnerships.
- Enhances decision making and program improvements.
- Provides a tool for child welfare professionals that is viewed as indispensable to their practice.
- Responds to diverse county operations through flexible configuration.²⁰

In addition to the project vision statement, the department developed a detailed list of the CW CM project objectives to be achieved by the implementation of a new, comprehensive statewide system:

Improved Child Safety and Well-Being

- Provides for real-time child and family-specific information, financial data, and aggregate program information accessible at the state and county levels in order to efficiently and effectively track outcomes, monitor county performance and compliance, and make business decisions based on accurate and timely information
- Provides transparency across data and a complete view of child and family
- Ensures the system is versatile and configurable so that it accommodates different child welfare practices across the state

Effective Case Management Tool

- Supports user needs, is end-user friendly, and is easily and readily adaptable into the user's daily routine
- Reduces technical and data barriers to support child welfare outcomes

¹⁹ *Child Welfare Case Management Project: Project Charter and Governance Structure*. Last Revised 08/10/2020. P. 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

- Provides workers with the tools needed to support and streamline their day-to-day operations

Increased Cost Savings

- Cost savings are realized across system maintenance, operations and implementation activities
- Limits additional cost of ancillary development
- Upon final and complete implementation, system enhancements and changes will only need to be developed on the statewide solution, as opposed to the state solution and the six county systems in use today. A more detailed view of financials will be available once the overall approach and technology have been finalized.

Compliance with Federal Regulations and Local Reporting Requirements

- Enables the state and counties to meet federal reporting requirements more effectively, efficiently, and economically and to obtain Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) funding, where appropriate
- Allows the counties to produce reports needed at the local level

Improved Data Quality and Accessibility

- Improves the accuracy and timeliness of data to evaluate child welfare program performance and outcomes and improves the tracking and auditing of the use of state and federal funds
- Decreases manual data collection
- Standardizes data inputs across the system
- Meets individual county and state requirements for reporting
- Provides counties with access to their own data for reporting needs

Enhanced Performance Measurement and Outcomes

- Improves data analytics, generates greater insight from the data, and reduces the level of duplication of IT management across 67 counties
- Provides scalable and measurable data to support performance measurement and positive outcomes for children and families

Improved System and Process Efficiencies

- Supports IT process changes by implementing a modern platform that emphasizes configurability over coding, along with cloud availability
- Provides opportunities for programmatic growth and expansion
- Provides collaboration across governing bodies to ensure IT investments support business objectives at a reasonable IT cost
- The platform technology should include as much functionality as possible to minimize county development of ancillary systems.²¹

The DHS emphasizes a balance of standardization and flexibility to achieve consistency throughout the Commonwealth and at the same time incorporate needs, capabilities, and nuances of specific counties that vary greatly across the state. The CW CM Solution is intended to be “a comprehensive, modular system that will support best practices across the state, implement standardization when possible, and allow flexibility to support unique processes that are deemed critical by the counties.”²² The new system will provide deeper case information and allow for better case management, with the most significant impact in the areas of child abuse and foster care.

The CW CM Solution is a vast project. The project activities, proceeding in several phases, include planning, discovery, business process alignment (BPA), system configuration and development, security, testing, training, data conversion, implementation, maintenance and operations, and others. The scope of the CW CM Solution has been finalized throughout the planning process, with input from the state and the counties. Variances in current county business processes need to be identified and streamlined via BPA sessions, with remaining nuances to be supported through system flexibility. Data from the counties’ systems need to be converted and integrated into the new, comprehensive one. The development and implementation of the new system is an arduous, painstaking process that requires a lot of effort on the part of the department.

As the department embarked on the CW CM project, it outlined the anticipated timeline for project activities through 2023 and issued the official governance document that delineated the governance structure and processes for the CW CM Solution. The document was reviewed and verified by all its stakeholders. The CW CM governance structure included teams and workgroups supported by the state and county staff, described their expected responsibilities, and explained how strategic and operational decisions would be made.

The CW CM will be a part of a broader case management solution pursued by the DHS: the Enterprise Case Management System (ECM). ECM will be a case management platform that will support human services systems across the enterprise. The DHS expects the new system to “support consistency, uniformity, efficiency and effectiveness, when possible.”²³

²¹ *Child Welfare Case Management Project: Project Charter and Governance Structure*. Last Revised 08/10/2020. P. 6-7.

²² *Op. cit.* P. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*

ENTERPRISE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ECM)

ECM: Background Information

Platform Selection

The Department of Human Services came to a realization that it needed to replace or expand several systems which were primarily performing case management functions, including the system supporting child welfare.²⁴ After extensive research for individual systems, the DHS determined that the best approach for the department was to implement a common platform-based solution. The unified, comprehensive case management system for child welfare, which will be part of this solution, will eliminate the need for the six welfare care management systems currently used by the CYAs.

In July 2017, the Commonwealth underwent consolidation of information technology (IT) personnel and a transformation of IT service delivery to support the agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. One of the major goals of the consolidation was to move away from large custom-built applications that are difficult and expensive to implement and maintain. The goals of the change are to optimize IT efficiency and cost effectiveness and to leverage systems that support similar business functions, such as case management.

The Commonwealth has recognized that the current approach of using custom-built systems is not sustainable moving forward. The custom solutions are costly to maintain, and the lengthy process to make changes to custom-built solutions results in a limited number of releases of functionality per year. The result is limited flexibility to respond to changing business needs. Based on these considerations as well as on the Office of Information Technology direction to minimize the use of custom solutions, the DHS decided to move towards a platform-based solution. The advantages of a platform-based solution include

- Reduced development (configuration) time and cost: with a platform, much of the baseline coding work is already complete. With a low-code approach, applications can be delivered faster. Platforms often come with a library of application features or pre-configurations that can be leveraged. Some of these features or configurations would be too costly to develop if done with custom code. The platform also supports re-use of configurations across the platform, reducing the effort to share common functionality among the tenants in the platform.

²⁴ Most information in this section was provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail on December 31, 2021.

- Improved quality: Baseline platform coding has already been developed and tested, which leads to improved quality for the overall solution configured on the platform.
- Innovations: Use of the platform allows the DHS to take advantage of innovations and best practices built into the platform.
- Improved Maintenance: Platforms support continuously delivers updates with low or no downtime. Updates to baseline platform code are handled by the platform contractor.

System Integrator Selection

Once the approach to use a shared platform was adopted, the next decision was to determine whether the platform should be chosen in advance of seeking the services of a system integrator (SI) or selecting the SI first and asking the SI to specify the platform that should be used. The SI will be responsible for system configuration and integration with other DHS/county systems. The DHS chose to perform platform research and select a platform-based solution to

- gain a broader view of the available solutions in the market, without relying on what a third party might choose to share
- make an important decision that is well-aligned with the organization's needs, priorities, and enterprise architecture strategy
- assess the capabilities and value of the solution independently, which is often difficult to identify if bundled with implementation services
- make the best decision about the solution, and then consider the level of experience potential SIs have with implementing that solution within the process for selecting a SI
- mitigate the risk of having proposals with large and varying price ranges that obscure the true value of the platform.

To select the platform-based product best fitting DHS program office needs, a capability analysis was conducted across the in-scope program offices. This capability analysis was conducted based on several industry standard architecture framework methodologies including federal frameworks to identify the business capabilities or processes required to support human services case management work. These frameworks included the National Human Services Interoperability Architecture (NHSIA), the Medicaid Information Technology Architecture (MITA), and the KPMG Enterprise Reference Architecture for Health and Human Services (KERA). The in-scope program offices confirmed the need for the business capabilities or functions and identified any new capabilities that may have been missing but needed to support their work.

The resulting final Capability Matrix for Enterprise Case Management was sent to the platform vendors considered industry leaders. These vendors were also competitively qualified to sell their products on a Commonwealth statewide or federal software contract. Those vendors were also the ones who responded to the various program Requests for Information (RFIs). Platform vendors provided written responses to each Capability to state how their product would meet that Capability by choosing one of the following responses: Out of the Box, Configurable, Requires Customization, Supported in a Future Release, or Not Supported. Demonstrations of the products were also conducted for the Commonwealth and county representatives.

The Commonwealth and County Participation in Business Process Re-engineering

A vast and far-reaching project like ECM affects many individuals and groups. The ECM stakeholders include administrative entities, county organizations, program offices, hearings and appeals, providers, service/support coordinators, service recipients, and other groups. In a state-supervised and county-administered child welfare system that Pennsylvania has, the DHS and each of the 67 counties share responsibility for ensuring the availability of children and youth services, which makes close and effective collaboration between the DHS and the CYAs crucial. The new, integrated case management system should facilitate that and provide CYAs with new opportunities to improve their services. Each of the 67 counties is responsible for providing a wide array of children and youth services:

- Services designed to keep children in their own homes, to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to help overcome problems that result in dependency and delinquency
- Temporary, substitute placement in foster family homes and residential childcare facilities for a child in need of the care
- Services designed to reunite children and their families when children are in a temporary, substitute placement
- Services to provide a permanent, legally assured family for a child in temporary, substitute care who cannot be returned to his/her own home
- Services and care ordered by the court for children who have been adjudicated dependent or delinquent.

All counties are required to carry out the same federal and state mandated child welfare programs; however, these programs are implemented in various ways among the 67 Pennsylvania counties. The ECM developers acknowledge that “these different operating models, which are combinations of people, process, and technology, are the counties’ response to best meet their county’s needs, local demands, and expectations within their resource constraints.”²⁵ Implementation of an integrated case management system is expected to allow the county human service organizations to better achieve their goals by giving them the ability to

- Promote effective communication among stakeholders at all levels;

²⁵ *Enterprise Case Management System (ECM)*, <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/ECM/Pages/Home.aspx>.

- Experience a more holistic view of those being served; and
- Reinforce the connection DHS and the counties have with the individuals and families being supported, as well as their providers.
- The nature and extent of permissible access will depend on the stakeholders' role, duties, and what they may legally access.²⁶

CYAs have been engaged in the process of the ECM development. Demonstrations of case management systems were conducted for the staff of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, the OCYF and CYA personnel. Some counties, however, feel their participation in the system development and selection process should have been more significant. For example, Allegheny County's DHS Director has expressed her dissatisfaction with the fact that "counties were not included in the selection of the IT system (Pegasystems) which the state selected on behalf on the counties, and [their] county has not been asked to be involved in the evaluation of the System Implementer that will stand up the functionality on this IT platform."²⁷ Counties are concerned about the "significant time investment required from counties that needs to be planned for and allowed." They remind that "agreeing on system changes within counties is a multi-step process that involves engaging multiple business and practice units."²⁸ This may be a more challenging and time-consuming process for larger counties. The second largest child welfare service county in Pennsylvania – Allegheny County's DHS – would like to see the state-level alignment processes that would enable and support their thorough review and internal discussion as they believe that internal consultation, review, and vetting are critically important for the final success with a project of such an immense scope of potential changes. Counties would like to be assured the new IT system align to best practices in child welfare. They contend that any major changes must be "informed by and supported by county child welfare leadership and practitioners, and ideally informed by best practices and leading national experts."²⁹

The DHS acknowledges that the business capabilities were put together by the department (with KPMG's help) and the technical capabilities were approved by the HHSDC; however, both were shared with the counties. Typically, the DHS procurement process does not include other entities, so they put together the business and technical capabilities for the platform (based on the RFI and county input) and invited county representatives to attend demos and provide feedback. According to the DHS leaders responsible for the selection of the platform, "quite a few" representatives of the current systems attended. The county representatives were given the business and technical capabilities with the vendor responses and a copy of any documentation provided by the vendor for the demos that were performed. After the demos, "each attendee was asked to provide feedback that was all taken into consideration when selecting PEGA."³⁰ Counties were not actively involved in the selection of the system integrator.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ms. Erin Dalton, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 24, 2022.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on April 5, 2022.

The DHS is fully aware that the counties need to plan for the the significant time investment required. That is one of the reasons why the department made the decision to suspend the user stories during the COVID-19 pandemic and issued the SI vendor RFP with the user stories that were completed at the time while at the same time indicating that the contract would be amended to include the remaining user stories that are still being completed at the time of this report. While working on user stories, the DHS aspires “to determine a best-in-breed business process in hopes that there will not be unique processes at the county level and rather consistent processes to investigate child abuse allegations as well as steps that may need to occur once an allegation is founded.”³¹

Counties appreciate the attention to their specific practices and procedures. On the other hand, there are concerns that “any promise of configurability or flexibility in the new statewide system to conform to individual county needs will create an overly complicated system that, if implemented too quickly, will have kinks that will introduce significant challenges and barriers to fulfilling [their] child welfare duties, as well as increase long-term maintenance costs.”³² A reasonable balance, probably, needs to be found.

The Commonwealth and CYA representatives continue to be actively engaged in configuring the platform. They are defining common business processes and user stories to be utilized. This process is time-consuming and is expected to go on through most of 2022.

Once a system is implemented, counties will have an opportunity to take part in the discussion of the need and priority for future system enhancements; there is a governance structure in place that includes county participation.

ECM: Scope and Structure

The Enterprise Case Management System (ECM) is presented as a new way to provide enhanced case management for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and its business partners through the implementation of a common technology platform to help plan and deliver improved services people receive through DHS-supervised programs. According to the statement on its special page, “ECM allows for:

- Easier sharing of information among DHS program offices, counties, individuals/participants, and providers to enable better decision making for improved outcomes for those we serve
- Increased ability to determine the effectiveness of services provided across programs and the impacts to the people we serve while supporting continuous improvement efforts

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ms. Erin Dalton, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 24, 2022.

- Enhanced data security including expanded access to information
- Reduced effort and cost to maintain multiple systems because of the use of a common platform.”³³

The DHS defines a main objective of ECM as providing “a complete picture of the services and supports the people DHS serves receive through programs sponsored by the program offices within DHS and the counties” and lists specific goals and objectives to be achieved once the ECM system is implemented:

“An integrated enterprise case management system will:

- Provide a more holistic view of those DHS serves
- Promote effective communication among stakeholders at all levels
- Reinforce the connection DHS and the counties have with the individuals and families supported as well as their providers.”³⁴

Once the ECM system is implemented, the DHS expects it to provide many benefits to its clients. The DHS indicates the following benefits users will experience as a direct result of ECM:

- **Improved coordination of care and service planning:**
ECM will allow for greater visibility into a participant’s services when they are shared across programs.
- **A more active role in planning and care:**
ECM will allow individuals to see information about their services and supports in real-life time and enable them to ask questions and receive information.
- **Appeals management:**
ECM will allow for the electronic submission, management, and monitoring of appeals.
- **Strengthened communication:**
ECM will allow for streamlined communications, as individuals/participants, DHS, counties, and business partners will have access to all case information in one tool.³⁵

The new case management system is vast in scope. The ECM platform is the structural foundation for four major DHS subsystems:

³³ *Enterprise Case Management System (ECM)*, <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/ECM/Pages/Home.aspx>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

- **Home and Community-Based Services Subsystem (HCBS)**

The HCBS will replace what is currently known as the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS). It will serve as the enrollment and case management system for the Pennsylvania DHS program offices, counties, and providers supporting the Home and Community-Based Services programs, including Medicaid waivers.

- **Hearings and Appeals**

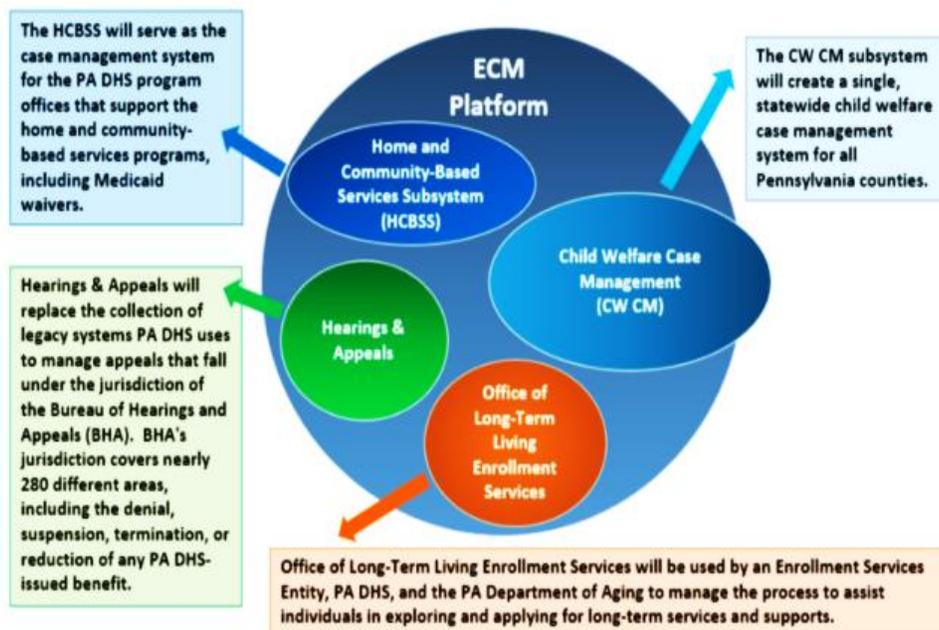
The Hearings and Appeals subsystem will replace the collection of legacy systems the DHS uses to manage appeals under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

- **Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) Enrollment Services**

The OLTL Enrollment Services subsystem will be used by the OLTL Enrollment Services Entity, DHS, and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to manage the process of assisting individuals in exploring and applying for long-term services and supports.

- **Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM)**

The CW CM subsystem will create a single, statewide child welfare case management system for all Pennsylvania counties.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. *ECM Graphic*, <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/ECM/About-ECM/Pages/ECM-Graphic.aspx>.

The Commonwealth selected PEGA as the platform that will be used to meet the DHS's requirements for case management capabilities. PEGA will provide, configure, and maintain the ECM platform. PEGA will also provide Tier 2 Help Desk Services related to the platform. The Commonwealth has already purchased the PEGA platform, with a target date to stand up the platform in late spring 2022.

The ECM System Integrator (SI) will configure and operate the ECM system, working closely with PEGA for the delivery of the ECM business solution. A range of activities that will be carried out by the ECM SI vendor include but are not limited to the following:

- In coordination with HHSDC and OCYF, determining implementation strategy, timeline, and costs
- In coordination with the Commonwealth and counties' current system vendors, performing data conversion
- Facilitating discovery and sprint sessions with stakeholders
- Configuring the ECM subsystems on the platform
- Developing customizations
- Developing and maintaining interfaces/integration between the platform and the Commonwealth and DHS systems
- Performing testing
- Providing Tier 2 Help Desk Services related to the applications
- Maintaining the ECM subsystems
- Deploying releases.³⁶

In April 2022, the Commonwealth has not yet selected the ECM SI.

³⁶ *Enterprise Case Management System (ECM)*, <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/ECM/Pages/Home.aspx>. Additional information was provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on February 7, 2022.

Throughout the implementation process and later, when the new system is operational, the HHSDC will be responsible for

- Contract administration and management
- Federal funding liaison with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
- The Commonwealth project management
- Assistance with conversion activities
- Ad hoc business applications duties
- Network administration
- Security oversight and administration
- Desktop administration for the OCYF.

Activities performed by the OCYF will include

- Participation in BPA/US sessions
- Business subject matter expert (SME)
- Coordination with county users for conversion and system implementation readiness
- User acceptance testing.³⁷

ECM will be implemented in phases:

- Phase 0 (Target start date: 2022): ECM PEGA Platform
- Phase 1 (Target start date: 2022): Home and Community-Based Services Subsystem (HCBSS), Hearings and Appeals, Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) Enrollment Services (HHSDC will be working with the ECM SI to determine the order of Phase 1)
- Phase 2 (Target start date: 2023): Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM).³⁸

Decisions will be made about the order of subsystems within a phase and the roll-out strategy for each subsystem, and the emergent timeline information will be shared with the counties when it becomes available.

³⁷ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on February 7, 2022.

³⁸ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Jan Kantner, Project Manager, Project Management Office, HHS IT Business Relationship Management, PA Office of Administration, Health and Human Services Delivery Center, in a personal e-mail sent on January 20, 2022.

CHILD WELFARE CASE MANAGEMENT (CW CM) PROJECT: PROGRESS

CW CM: Recent Activities and Associated Costs

Implementation of the new child welfare case management system is a vast and challenging project. It requires significant effort on the part of various state and county agencies and their consistent collaboration. It is important to realize that all these agencies must perform the activities related to the CW CM in addition to their regular, already demanding responsibilities. The COVID pandemic presented an additional challenge: the DHS, counties, and various Commonwealth offices involved in the project had to make COVID a priority and adjust to different modes of operation to serve their clients under unprecedented circumstances. All of these factors, in addition to the intrinsic complexity of the project, explain why its development and implementation have been taking longer than originally expected.

The project was initiated in 2019. In 2020, the DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) and the Health and Human Services Delivery Center (HHSDC), in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) and other stakeholders, finalized a detailed CW CM project charter and governance document, outlining the project scope, goals, and objectives as well as its governing and operational structure.³⁹ Since then, the activities generally proceeded in accordance with the project charter, with a temporary suspension of meetings during the first several months of the pandemic, after which they resumed with certain adjustments.

Currently, the CW CM advisory board, the CW CM steering committee, and the CW CM workgroups have been meeting regularly. The CW CM BPA and User Story sessions have also been convening regularly. In some instances, discussions held during the CW CM BPA and User Story sessions have necessitated the standing up of informal subgroups. These subgroups – the CW CM BPA and User Story Ad Hoc Area Focus Groups – are identified and held on an ad-hoc basis. Resources from the OCYF, county children and youth agencies, and other areas (depending on need) are being utilized for these sub-groups. Ad-hoc focus sub-groups are typically identified and convened for one of two reasons:

1. To expand and clarify upon business needs/processes which are not solely within the scope of the OCYF and extend to other DHS program offices, other state agencies, other county staff beyond the CCYAs, and/or providers.

³⁹ See Pages 7-10.

2. To identify best practices and innovating approaches which can potentially be leveraged for a future state of child welfare.⁴⁰

Some workgroups listed in the *Child Welfare Management Project: Project Charter and Governance Structure*, were most active during the first years, to launch the project. For instance, the CW CM staffing workgroup had been actively meeting in 2019 to perform an initial analysis of needs. This group is no longer actively meeting, but it can be reconvened on an as-needed basis. Several other workgroups, such as the training team, will start their activities at later stages of the project, when their services are required.

In addition to the CW CM workgroups, staff from the OCYF and a representative from each of the county case management systems participate in the ECM Communications workgroup.

A significant amount of work is necessary to meet the federal CCWIS requirements. There are several key activities and reviews that states are required to engage in, for their CCWIS systems to be considered compliant with federal standards, and, therefore, eligible for full CCWIS funding. At this stage of the project, the DHS was focused on two areas: the Advanced Planning Document submission and the Data Quality Plan and data quality activities.⁴¹ The agency is required to take steps to meet all necessary Advanced Planning Document (APD) submission/documentation requirements outlined for CCWIS. The agency is also responsible for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive data quality plan, and engagement in active monitoring and management of data quality. This plan must begin to be submitted as part of the APD once the agency formally notifies the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) it will implement a CCWIS. In addition, agencies must ensure that the CCWIS supports data quality by requiring biennial agency reviews of automated and manual data collections processes. These biennial reviews must include Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCAs) that have contracts or agreements with county child welfare agencies.

An important area of the data quality activities is associated with the AFCARS 2.0 efforts; it is a major part of the CW CM data cleanup and conversion efforts. The OCYF is currently in the process of designing a new system which will allow for the collection of Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data from the county case management systems. The new system that is being designed will ensure that Pennsylvania is in compliance with the AFCARS Final Rule (also referred to as AFCARS 2020 or AFCARS 2.0) reporting requirements identified by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau that were published as part of the final rule issuance in May of 2020 (85 FR 28410). This new system will seek to improve upon data quality concerns illustrated in the current state AFCARS Improvement Plan, specifically, the concern that Pennsylvania currently does not have insight into the raw data which exists in the county case management systems that contributes to the AFCARS files the counties presently send to the

⁴⁰ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on March 2, 2022.

⁴¹ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Elysa Springer, Director of the Systems and Data Management, Division of Operations, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in a personal e-mail sent on March 7, 2022.

OCYF four times per year: twice in April and October for the OCYF to compile into the final statewide AFCARS submission that is sent to the ACF in May and November of each year, as per federal requirements, and twice in January and July for what the OCYF refers to as the ‘Pre-Prod Submission’, which is essentially a test review of the most current version of the county AFCARS files. The new AFCARS 2.0 system will collect not only the county AFCARS files containing the AFCARS reporting elements, but also the raw data in the current county case management systems which contribute to the AFCARS file. The new system will also require the data be sent to the OCYF by counties on a much more frequent basis (weekly).

This AFCARS 2.0 effort is relevant to the CW CM efforts for the following reasons:

- While the OCYF currently has knowledge of some data quality issues that exist in the county case management systems and impact AFCARS data, this visibility is currently limited, as counties frequently engage in internal data cleanup efforts prior to the submission of the AFCARS data to the OCYF. This allows the OCYF to see only issues that either exist following these cleanup efforts or were found by viewing the county extraction code that counties are required to share with the OCYF, who in turns shares with the ACF. The new system will allow for better visibility into the quality of the data on a more real-time basis, as the required weekly submissions will not allow for extensive manual efforts to scrub data prior to submission. Additionally, the OCYF will gain visibility of the raw data contributing to the AFCARS elements, which was not previously possible, and the new system will give the OCYF insight not only into potential issues with how AFCARS data is being derived at the county level, but also differences in data collection methods between county systems for the raw data in question. These improvements collectively will allow the OCYF to engage in critical data quality efforts, which will result in the improvement of the quality of the AFCARS-related data that will eventually become part of the CW CM system. Therefore, this work can be considered to also be an effort relevant to the CW CM Data Quality and CW CM Data Conversion workgroups.
- When the OCYF initiated the work order for the AFCARS 2.0 system, it was specifically requested that the IT vendor responsible for the delivery of this system ensure the solution would be able to be reused with the CW CM platform in the future, to the greatest extent possible.⁴²

From October 2020 to the end of 2021, the main focus of the DHS and the HHSDC was the procurement of the DHS Case Management Platform, which includes Child Welfare (that was accomplished at the beginning of 2022), and the procurement of the System Integrator (still in progress). The DHS and the HHSDC reviewed information on systems in marketplace that would potentially accommodate the Commonwealth’s case management needs and organized demonstrations of case management systems for the OCYF and county personnel as well as for the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals staff. After the DHS decided to combine all case management

⁴² Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, and Ms. Elysa Springer, Director of the Systems and Data Management, Division of Operations, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in a personal e-mail sent on March 2, 2022.

functions into one DHS ECM system procurement for the Child Welfare, the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, the Home and Community-Based Waivers, and the Enrollment Brokers for Long-Term Services and Support, three platform vendors whose platforms were deemed capable of accommodating the business capabilities and technical services required for a case management system gave demonstrations and answered questions from the DHS, HHSDC, and other stakeholders, including some county representatives, and feedback on the demonstrations was collected from all participants.

Business Process Alignment/User Story sessions with the OCYF and the counties were started but had to be halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sessions were resumed later; they are scheduled to continue through September 2022. Follow-up research was done with IT consultants on viability of platforms for the DHS use cases. As a result of continued vetting of potential platforms, the PEGA platform was selected and presented for approval to the DHS ECM Steering Committee, and it was approved. After the contract negotiations with PEGA, including service and pricing, the Commonwealth submitted and obtained federal approval, negotiated and finalized licensing agreement with PEGA and secured the purchase order with reseller to purchase the license.

The SI selection process is ongoing. Proposals received from SI vendors are under review. They are being evaluated from various angles, including determination of contractor responsiveness. The process is expected to continue for several more months.

Enterprise Case Management (ECM)			
Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM)			
FFY 20-21 Estimated Reconciliation			
	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)
Design, Development & Implementation			
Requirements Planning Phase			
Business Planning Vendor			
Child Welfare (KPMG)	\$2,231,266	\$1,115,633	\$1,115,633
Phase 2 Child Welfare User Stories and Business Process Alignment			
HHSDC Staff	\$91,909	\$45,955	\$45,955
Child Welfare	\$329,484	\$164,742	\$164,742
Travel	\$2,676	\$1,338	\$1,338
Training	\$375	\$188	\$188
Contracted Staff	\$72,864	\$36,432	\$36,432
County Staff:			
Personnel	\$2,256,175	\$1,128,088	\$1,128,088
Travel	\$51,870	\$25,935	\$25,935
Training	\$51,870	\$25,935	\$25,935
Common Workgroup Activities			
User Story Prioritization	\$0	\$0	\$0
Communications	\$22,293	\$11,147	\$11,147
Data Sharing	\$165,290	\$82,645	\$82,645
Phase 2 Child Welfare Data Cleanup Activities			
State Personnel			
Child Welfare	\$0	\$0	\$0
HHSDC Child Welfare	\$0	\$0	\$0
Child Welfare County Personnel*			
Personnel	\$3,077,473	\$1,538,737	\$1,538,737
Travel	\$51,869	\$25,935	\$25,935
Training	\$51,869	\$25,935	\$25,935
Total Requirements Planning Costs	\$8,457,283	\$4,228,641	\$4,228,641
Implementation Phases			
Phase 2 Implementation**			
Platform Vendor	\$0	\$0	\$0
System Integrator (SI) Vendor	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Implementation Costs - Phase 2	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	\$8,457,283	\$4,228,641	\$4,228,641

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

***CW CM:
Estimated Timeline and Costs***

The timeline was initially predicated on two purchases: the Enterprise Case Management (ECM) platform and the System Integrator (SI) vendor. Presently, the Commonwealth has purchased the platform, but the SI selection process has not been completed yet. The SI vendor will be responsible for the system platform configuration and ongoing maintenance, data conversion, and several other important functions. Thus, until the SI vendor is in place, neither the timeline, nor the costs can be confirmed.⁴³ It is important to underline that the timeline and costs presented below should be considered as estimated, not final, because the System Integrator (SI) procurement is still underway. The length of time for contract negotiations cannot be defined. It is unknown what the selected SI will propose in terms of timeline to implement the various DHS programs onto the PEGA Enterprise Case Management Platform.

At present, the estimated CW CM timeframe looks as follows:

Year 0 (or FFY 2022)	Business process alignment/user story (BPA/US) sessions; research and development of operational best practices
Year 1 (or FFY 2023)	CW CM finalization of BPA/US; amendment of the SI contract for ECM Phase 2; implementation planning, strategy, and conversion requirements
Year 2 (or FFY 2024)	CW CM implementation starts
Year 3 (or FFY 2025)	CW CM implementation continues
Year 4 (or FFY 2026)	CW CM implementation completes
Year 5 (or FFY 2027)	CW CM maintenance. ⁴⁴

A more detailed CW CM draft timeline, as seen by the DHS in February 2022, can be found in Appendix B.

Once all the elements for the new case management system are in place, the process of its implementation and transfer from the currently utilized systems will require a careful preparation on the part of both the state and the counties. The Commonwealth and CYAs are fully aware of the importance of the new statewide case management system for ensuring the safety and well-

⁴³ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on January 31, 2022.

⁴⁴ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on February 7, 2022.

being of children in Pennsylvania. As pointed out by the Director of the Allegheny County DHS, “this is a high stakes endeavor and deserves the resources and planning process necessary to appropriately mitigate risks.”⁴⁵ Various factors need to be considered in order to mitigate risks. It will be necessary to weigh costs and risks to be mitigated. A pilot appears to be a safer approach. Transitional period deserves particular attention. Counties express concerns regarding what they characterize as “the aggressive timeframes that are being proposed, as [they] believe that the issue of data migration will be a monumental task that will take an extended period of time.”⁴⁶ The counties’ concerns are partly based on their negative experiences with past system development endeavors (PACWIS, CWIS). They feel that the CWIS roll-out problems were triggered by the rushed development and implementation necessitated by the deadline set up for the DHS by the 2013 amendments to the Child Protective Services Laws. As a result, “the development of CWIS went right to the last minute, but that left no time for counties to develop their interfaces.”⁴⁷ At the time of the CWIS launch, the DHS was, indeed, under intense pressure and had very limited time due to the deadline established by the newly enacted legislation. The DHS experts, however, point out that the initial difficulties with the CWIS largely stemmed from the very fact that Pennsylvania counties have separate systems; this, in their view, highlights the need to have a single case management system for the Commonwealth.⁴⁸ Lessons learned from prior experiences have informed the present-day process. Counties have been much more involved in the CW CM effort, which will be conducive to a more positive outcome.

On behalf of the counties, Mr. Brian C. Bornman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYF), states in his letter: “With this new system, Pennsylvania has the opportunity to develop a comprehensive, functional, and user-friendly system that could greatly enhance the safety and well-being of the children of the Commonwealth; however, this can only happen if there is adequate time for the system to be developed, data to be migrated, and users to learn how to utilize a new system effectively.”⁴⁹

Allegheny County’s Department of Human Services, the second largest child welfare service county in the Commonwealth, recommends “a pre-implementation plan spanning at least two full years”; they contend “this longer timeline will be more efficacious and hopefully allow additional state resources, and optimally nationally recognized child welfare experts in an advisory capacity, to elicit full engagement of counties and state departments.”⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ms. Erin Dalton, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 24, 2022.

⁴⁶ Mr. Brian C. Bornman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 14, 2022.

⁴⁷ Mr. Brian C. Bornman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. An electronic message to the Joint State Government Commission sent on March 17, 2022.

⁴⁸ Ms. Elysa Springer, Director of the Systems and Data Management Division of Operations, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. An electronic message to the Joint State Government Commission sent on March 18, 2022.

⁴⁹ Mr. Brian C. Bornman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 14, 2022.

⁵⁰ Ms. Erin Dalton, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 24, 2022.

The Commonwealth and counties are considering various strategies to mitigate the risks associated with transitioning from the existing systems to a new one and to make the process smooth and as problem-free as possible. Counties’ propositions include “migrating existing case management systems into the new platform in stages, rather than all at once” as this would “provide the opportunity to troubleshoot one system at a time, rather than trying to fix the plethora of issue that come up whenever a new system is implemented.”⁵¹ Some counties would like to be able to retain their legacy systems and share the data with the newly developed system through their own application programming interface (APIs); this, however, appears to be contradictory to what the Commonwealth is trying to achieve, and it is not CCWIS-compliant, nor is it cost-effective; besides, the separation of the county systems and the state system, actually, led to some challenges with data transfer in the past. One proposed option would be “implementing a statewide system for all counties (consolidating four of the current systems), and also allowing larger counties like Allegheny and Philadelphia to continue to utilize the CWIS 1.0 Referral data exchange and transition to the new all-county system over time.”⁵²

Presently, the DHS is deliberating a variety of implementation strategies that will later be discussed with other stakeholders. The department leaders have repeatedly expressed their commitment to ongoing dialog with counties on implementation process. Mr. Jonathan Rubin, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Human Services – Office of Children, Youth and Families, confirmed in his message to the Joint State Government Commission, “I will certainly commit to the partnership and co-planning in collaboration with the counties and through the Steering Committee and Advisory Board.”⁵³ The DHS is prepared to engage in exhaustive discussion and analysis to ensure that it chooses the best strategy.

At this point, the child welfare case management system costs can only be estimated. The estimates below were presented by the DHS in January 2022.

CW CM Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$0	\$11,000,000	\$11,000,000	\$11,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$43,000,000	--
Technical Initiatives	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$9,000,000	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$0	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$7,200,000	Staff to support OCYF
Total	\$3,000,000	\$16,400,000	\$16,400,000	\$13,400,000	\$10,000,000	\$59,200,000	--

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

The above costs assessment is based on the assumptions that Year 1 will start in September 2023 and will begin CW CM implementation activities while Years 2-4 will encompass CW CM implementation.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Mr. Brian C. Bornman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. An electronic message to the Joint State Government Commission sent on March 14, 2022.

⁵² Ms. Erin Dalton, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. A letter to the Joint State Government Commission submitted on March 24, 2022.

⁵³ Mr. Jonathan Rubin, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Human Services – Office of Children, Youth and Families. A personal e-mail to the Joint State Government Commission sent on March 18, 2022.

⁵⁴ Information provided to the Joint State Government Commission by Ms. Sandra Patterson, Chief Information Officer of the Health and Human Services Delivery Center, Pennsylvania Office of Administration, in a personal e-mail sent on January 31, 2022.

More detailed CW CM cost estimates, provided by the DHS in March 2022, can be found in Appendix C. These costs are the DHS costs only and do not represent county costs. These costs are estimates and will need to be revisited when the System Integrator vendor contract is finalized.

CCWIS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN OTHER STATES

Overview

Before the rulemaking that implemented the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), most states utilized a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). States also had the option to create their own systems that still complied with all the federal reporting regulations. The new rulemaking established CCWIS, which allows states to modernize their data collection systems and also tailor them more specifically to the needs of each state. The information reported from both the old SACWIS and the new CCWIS is found in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). Thirty-five states and Washington, D.C. are either intending to implement or have successfully implemented CCWIS systems.⁵⁵

The new regulation took effect in August of 2016. Agencies received 24 months to determine if they would transition existing systems to CCWIS requirements or designate their system as non-CCWIS. Changes found in the new CCWIS regulations are as follows:

- The focus changes to data and quality, rather than mandatory system functionality.
- CCWIS requires new data exchanges with education agencies, the courts, and Medicaid claims processing systems.
- The new regulation requires a data exchange standard for interfaces with service providers and other agency systems.
- The IV-E agency must develop a data quality plan, continue to monitor data quality, and implement responsive actions to address findings found in data quality reviews.
- Finally, the CCWIS regulations encourage agencies to build a child welfare information system tailored to their business needs rather than to federal functional requirements.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ National Conference of State Legislatures. *Child Welfare Information Systems*, last modified June 25, 2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-welfare-information-systems.aspx>.

⁵⁶ Administration for Children & Families. *CCWIS Executive Guide*, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/executive_guide_to_ccwis.pdf (accessed December 30, 2021).

Development and implementation of a new case management system that would satisfy the CCWIS requirements has turned out to be a complex and challenging enterprise. While most states acknowledge that CCWIS will lead to significant improvements in child welfare services, they have realized that transformation of their existing processes and creating new systems will require a significant amount of time and effort. The majority of states that have committed to implementing a CCWIS system are still at various stages of its development or transition. The following section presents a brief review of the current CCWIS status of child welfare information systems in two states: Colorado and Ohio. These states were selected for this report as they have an administrative framework of child welfare services and programs that is similar to Pennsylvania's: they are state-supervised but county-administered. They are also generally deemed successful in providing child welfare services. There are differences in the way child welfare services are operated and delivered in each of the three states; however, the experiences of Colorado and Ohio may be of some use in assessing the progress Pennsylvania has made in its system development efforts.

Colorado

Colorado has operated on a legacy SACWIS called Trails since 2001. Over time, as more systems from state agencies were used, they were integrated into Trails. In 2013-2014, Trails was updated by integrating a Results Oriented Management (ROM) System and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Community Performance Center, which allows the community to access data about child welfare. This system was evaluated and determined to need a "system overhaul."⁵⁷

The CDHS created an advisory committee in FY 2015 to be in charge of the modernization process, which would provide improved usability for caseworkers; improved county case management; integrated data to improve overall case management; improved reporting; and alignment with CDHS' public facing educational website and data center, the CDHS Community Performance Center, which shares frequently updated data about the children, youth, and families involved in Colorado's child welfare system.⁵⁸

The Colorado Trails User Group (CTUG) is a group that includes stakeholders from Trails users, the Division of Child Welfare and the Office of Information Technology. The group provides insight on strengths and weaknesses of Trails and suggests new updates or policies that would be helpful. The group also tests possible updates.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Colorado Department of Human Services. *Child Welfare Data and Accountability*, <https://cdhs.colorado.gov/our-services/child-and-family-services/child-welfare/child-welfare-data-and-accountability> (accessed December 30, 2021).

⁵⁸ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2017 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2017, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 36.

⁵⁹ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2021 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2021, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 19.

The modernization was implemented through multiple release processes: September 2017, November 2017, March 2018, July 2018, January 2020, May 2020, and Spring 2021. Each release was accompanied by training materials to make the transition as smooth as possible for Trails users.⁶⁰ The database used by both Trails Legacy and Trails Modernization is called Oracle, but it has been upgraded with “table modifications and data conversions being driven based on user-defined requirements.”⁶¹ Once the modernization process is complete, there will be 45-percent new functionality in the system. As functionality is added to Trails Modernization, it is removed from Trails Legacy. As of 2022, the upcoming updates will deal with the fiscal, case, and assessments aspects of Trails. With the more recent releases, the project provides more technical assistance and communications about the updates with each of the launches.

As of September of 2021, Trails Modernization housed about 5,400 users including workers from “64 county departments, 22 judicial districts, and the Division of Youth Services.”⁶² The system is used to document “services, payments, and activities including referrals, assessments, cases and commitments.”⁶³ The modernization process allows online and mobile access to the system, improving the ease of access for CDHS workers.⁶⁴ The information recorded in Trails is used to generate around 1,000 reports to fulfill federal reporting requirements. Workers use Trails to record “status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals.”⁶⁵

In 2015, a web application was launched called Trails Hotline Application, which would provide fields for hotline workers to fill in and then transfer the information into Trails.⁶⁶ In 2017, Trails was improved to more easily collect and store clients’ medical information including diagnoses, prescribed medication, and alternative services. The information is updated in Trails on a monthly basis for clients.⁶⁷ Trails enhancements were also made in 2017 in response to legislation requiring that there be a statewide screening tool for youth at risk for sex trafficking. The enhancements ensure that case workers can properly document the screening.⁶⁸ In 2018, enhancements were made to Trails to allow data on participants in the John H. Chafee Foster Care for Successful Transition to Adulthood Program to be collected directly in Trails, as it was previously stored in its own database. Modernized Trails will collect more data on Child Protective Service professionals like their gender and date of birth and will allow the option of indicating the

⁶⁰ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2022 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2022, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 24.

⁶¹ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2020 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2020), https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 6.

⁶² Colorado Department of Human Services. *Trails Modernization Overview*: PowerPoint presentation, September 9, 2021, https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/2._cdhs_trails_update.pdf, P.2.

⁶³ *Ibid.* P. 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* P. 3.

⁶⁵ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2017 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2017, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 36.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* P. 81.

⁶⁷ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2018 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2018, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* P. 36.

level of educational attainment.⁶⁹ Trails houses the data used by the Administrative Review Division (ARD); therefore, the ARD has been involved in the modernization process.⁷⁰

One difficulty encountered in Trails is the documentation of financial information. Two categories regarding foster care cannot be separated for expenditure data because of the way the data is shared from Trails. The two categories are foster family and relative foster care and group or institutional care. Additionally in 2019, Trails was unable to collect data comprehensively on Promoting Safe and Stable Families services, which could lead to duplication of information.⁷¹ As of January 2021, Colorado was in a transitional stage between Trails, which was not CCWIS, and Trails Modernization, which will be CCWIS. At that time, Colorado was in the Development and Operational phase of implementation, which indicates that “some functionality has been implemented while development continues for the remaining functionality.”⁷²

Entries are created in Trails Modernization through hotline workers adding records. These workers enter the call date, time, the reporter county and the responsible county, and the call type and call reasons. Reporter information includes the full name, phone number, e-mail, method of reporting, reporter type and relationship and agency name address and phone if available. Family information like the family name, address, and phone numbers is also included. A call narrative follows, and lastly, the call disposition page allows the hotline worker to create a referral or connect to an existing referral. Hotline supervisors either approve or decline a hotline record. Hotline supervisors are able to transfer pending referrals to different counties and assign them to a primary worker. Primary workers can access and accept an incoming referral from another county. Once accepted, primary workers can see their entire workload through Trails Modernization and filter it by record type, family name, date, and responsibility. Pending referrals can be restricted for viewing by only the primary worker and their supervisor.⁷³

For each client in Trails Modernization, the system stores general information, including sex assigned at birth, date of birth, age, Client ID, State ID, Social Security Number, custody status, whether they are in placement and alias name as well as relations, addresses, phone numbers, SB94 cases, admissions, child welfare (CW) referral/assessments, cases, prevention cases, critical information, assigned staff, placements, associated providers, critical incident reports, and trauma informed care (TIC). Each case associated with a client is available with open dates, close dates, case type, county, region, who it was last assigned to, service/placements, and a closure summary. CW referrals and assessments are recorded by referral type and date, family name, who they were assigned to, and the responsible county. The names of those involved are recorded with the

⁶⁹ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2019 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2019, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 54.

⁷⁰ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *2022 Annual Progress and Services Report*. Denver, CO, 2022, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B32vshZrERKsd0JRZTdSQ0k0QzQ?resourcekey=0-CorlyE9sEnvJKwB9H_dIPA. P. 48.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* P. 71.

⁷² Children’s Bureau, Office of the Administration for Children & Families. *CCWIS Status*, last modified January 12, 2021, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/ccwis-status>.

⁷³ Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families. *Fundamental Trails Learning*, <https://coloradocwts.com/trails-resource/trails-fundamentals/> (accessed January 21, 2022).

perpetrator and victim denoted. Each referral or assessment has a narrative, allegation/findings, and closure summary.⁷⁴

Trails Modernization also hosts the safety assessment tool and the risk assessment tool. Out-of-home placement and family services plans and interviews, contacts, and visits are hosted in the legacy Trails system.⁷⁵

When fully implemented, Trails Modernization will be utilized by the 5,400 users from county departments, judicial districts, and the Division of Youth Services (DYS). Colorado contracted CGI Group Inc. to lead the first phase of modernization that would focus on the intake and resource module and the two following phases that would focus on a rebuild of the system that would optimize web access and mobile access and increase efficiency for end users. The approach to modernization will also fulfill the requirements of the CCWIS regulations. The goal of this modernization was articulated by CGI as “eliminating duplicate data entry, providing simple navigation, granting access to mobile technology and providing enhanced reporting.”⁷⁶

The approach of CGI involves multiple rounds of releases that will bring the system up to date rather than a single point of overhaul of the existing legacy system. After a review of the contract by Colorado Digital Services in June of 2020, there was a shift in the framework from viewing Trails as a “project” to viewing it as a “product.”⁷⁷ There was also a shift to prioritizing the highest value activities and creating teams to focus on these issues. By June 12, 2021, Trails Modernization had undergone Release 7, which “brought all DYS users into Modernized Trails and subsequently represents 50% of all Trails users operating in a singular system.”⁷⁸

The modernization process is facing difficulties, however. Though half of users are on a singular platform, the Oracle upgrade caused delay in bringing the remaining 50 percent of users from the legacy system to Trails Modernization. CGI is also no longer a part of the modernization project after September of 2021, as it was unable to bring full functionality before the expiration of the contract. It was extended slightly to ensure a smooth transition of the project after Release 7 to state workers.⁷⁹ As a result of these setbacks, the current strategy for FY 21-22 emphasizes system stability and hygiene, agile releases that will be smaller and more sustainable for the state workers than the previous release, augmenting in-house talent, and developing product metrics.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ CGI: *CGI Selected to Lead Modernization of Colorado’s Child Welfare System*: Press Release. March 15, 2018, <https://www.cgi.com/us/en/cgi-selected-lead-modernization-colorado-child-welfare-system>.

⁷⁷ Colorado Department of Human Services. *Trails Modernization Overview*: PowerPoint presentation, September 9, 2021, https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/2._cdhs_trails_update.pdf. P. 6.

⁷⁸ *Trails Modernization Overview*. P. 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 9.

Ohio

The Ohio child welfare system is called Ohio SACWIS, although it is currently in a transitional period to a CCWIS system. Ohio made the choice to retain the name from the original system so as not to confuse users and avoid a renaming process. The current system is utilized by “88 local public children services agencies, 30 Title IV-E juvenile courts and over 90 private foster and adoption agencies.”⁸¹ Ohio SACWIS also contracted with CGI for development, but splits the tasks between CGI and state application developers.⁸² When making improvements to SACWIS, the project team seeks input from various stakeholders including Public Children Service Agencies (PCSAs), Private Child Placing Agencies (PCPAs), IV-E Juvenile Courts, Foster Care Advocates and more. Input comes in the form of webinars on new functionality, surveys distributed by SACWIS staff, agency meetings, a Title IV-E Juvenile Court Roundtable, calls, workgroups and the Partnership for Ohio Families Regional Teams and Advisory Group. Some new features in development are functionality with a mobile interface and increased clarity in what documentation users are required to input.⁸³

Ohio SACWIS stores information for the child welfare system like abuse and neglect information and safety assessments. The system makes subsidy payments monthly for adopted children and reimbursement payments for both foster case management and foster care training.⁸⁴ SACWIS contains six major tabs: home, intake, case, provider, financial, and administration.

The intake tab allows the user to record information under seven categories: reporter, basic, participants, ACV/AP detail, allegations, specialized, and decision. The reporter tab allows the user to record the date, time and type of contact. The basic tab records the intake workload name, the intake category and intake types. This page also asks whether the report alleges human trafficking or a child fatality, if the report requires a specialized assessment or third-party involvement, and if there is law enforcement involvement.⁸⁵ The participants tab collects the name, date of birth, age, date of death if applicable, gender, social security number, race and ethnicity, address, and phone number. When participants are added, there is an option to assign pre-prepared roles through the system. If the participant has relationships already recorded in the system, they will be retrieved and added to the case when prompted.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Ghering, Cathy and Liz Holzworth. *CCWIS Strategies: A State Panel Discussion on Progress and Plans to Support Key Initiatives*: Webinar from US DHHS, December 14, 2020, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/Transcript%20-%20CCWIS%20Strategies%20A%20State%20Panel%20Discussion.pdf>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan* (2019), <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/CFSP2020-2024.stm>. P. 15-16.

⁸⁴ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *Annual Progress and Services Report* (2015), <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/APSR2015.stm>. P. 4.

⁸⁵ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *Intake Redesign-Changes to Intake Screen/Tabs: Knowledge Base Article* (2016), https://jfskb.com/sacwis/attachments/article/612/Changes%20to%20Intake%20Workload%20Screen_SEP2016.pdf.

⁸⁶ *Adding Intake Participants: Knowledge Base Article* (Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, 2016), https://jfskb.com/sacwis/attachments/article/612/Adding%20Intake%20Participants_SEP2016.pdf.

The alleged perpetrator/alleged child victim (AP/ACV) detail tab provides conversational prompts for a worker to ask the reporter to collect information on the situation, including questions about the child's current location, safety, and condition. There is an option to utilize questions on cognitive, behavioral, and emotional capacity of the parent as well as behavioral and functioning questions. The allegations tab collects the allegation setting and address, screens for infant positive toxicology allegations and disabled infant allegations and has an option to check a box where a child fatality or near-fatality has occurred. If the worker has indicated that a specialized assessment is necessary, a specialized tab will appear, and the worker can fill in the fields for the Out of Home Care setting type and name, the behavior of the caretaker, and the number of children the alleged perpetrator has access to. Lastly, the decisions tab helps to determine whether the situation is an emergency, and it indicates the screening decision, the screening pathway, county priority, and date and time for screening decision. There is a comment box under the intake narrative for decision comments. The intake screen also houses templates and policy references that workers can use while working with reporters. The templates can be transferred to the narrative with the click of a button.⁸⁷

The intake workload page displays the screener's name and status and who has claimed the intake. The intake workload page will rank the intakes by screening priority, moving those intakes which have not received a screening decision to the top of the list.⁸⁸

One difficulty with the transitional CCWIS Ohio SACWIS system is the eventual need for the system to be cloud-based. With its current structure, allowing for cloud-based functionality would require the replacement of the struts of the current system, which would take six to eight months to complete. During this process, there would need to be a code freeze, which would not allow the system to respond to update requests from users. Once the struts are replaced, however, the cloud-based system would support eventual added functionality more easily.⁸⁹ Additionally, Ohio SACWIS includes a financial system to facilitate the payment for prevention services. Those who worked on the transitional SACWIS encountered issues determining whether the costs would be covered by counties and reimbursed by states or covered initially by states. Without clarity of policy, those building the functionality in the system cannot build systems to properly support the needs of the users.⁹⁰

In response to feedback from stakeholders, 4,008 work items were completed in FY 2018. The two categories that received the most work items were the screening/intake model and resource management. In 2018, Ohio SACWIS worked on creating an interface between Traverse Mobile and Ohio SACWIS to allow workers to access information more conveniently and provide prompts during documentation of visits.⁹¹ In FY 2020, there were 3,629 work items completed with 23 percent in the screening/intake module and 27 percent in the case management module. New features are occasionally added to Ohio SACWIS to increase data quantity and quality,

⁸⁷ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *Intake Redesign* (2016). Op. cit.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ *CCWIS Strategies: A State Panel Discussion on Progress and Plans to Support Key Initiatives* (Webinar Series, December 2020), <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/Transcript%20-%20CCWIS%20Strategies%20A%20State%20Panel%20Discussion.pdf>. P. 6-7.

⁹⁰ Ibid. P. 8.

⁹¹ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan* (2019), <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/CFSP2020-2024.stm>. P. 19.

including Bridges for foster children, the NEICE Interface for interstate children placement, and the Support Enforcement Tracking System (SETS) for keeping track of child support.⁹²

In the 2022 Annual Progress and Services Report, the future goals for improvement were continued improvements to the Residential Treatment Information System (RTIS). The updates will eventually allow workers to log “monthly contact, discharge plans, review of the plan, services and recording children directly placed with families.”⁹³ This information would then be accessible to county workers to avoid duplicate records and allow for ease of access. Other future goals listed in 2022 were linking a child’s Department of Education data to children in the child welfare system, adding tools to prompt more complete initial assessments and adding tools to improve prevention planning. As new updates and functionality are added to Ohio SACWIS, training modules and visual resources are updated for users.⁹⁴

A Data Quality Plan (DQP) has been established to ensure that Ohio SACWIS is CCWIS-compliant. The DQP targets completeness, timeliness, and accuracy. While ensuring users meet these standards, the data is analyzed for anomalies. The number of anomalies is recorded and reported to a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) data subcommittee, and the subcommittee offers solutions to ensure the accuracy of data going forward. The Office of Families and Children data and reporting team also meets monthly to discuss possible improvements to data quality.⁹⁵

⁹² Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *2022 Annual Progress and Services Report (2021)*, <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/APSR2022.stm>. P. 70.

⁹³ *Ibid.* P. 71.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 71.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* P. 151.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The innovative Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) has a potential to vastly improve data collection and provide integrated service delivery to achieve improved decision-making and deeper data analysis. It is expected to create opportunities for better case management, with the most significant impact in the areas of child abuse and foster care. It is intended to bring improved access to data and utilization of data between counties and across state agencies. This may be particularly important in Pennsylvania, where child welfare services are state-supervised but county-administered.

The Commonwealth embarked on the Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) project in 2019 and has been continuously working on it since then. The CW CM Solution is a vast project. The project activities, proceeding in several phases, include planning, discovery, business process alignment (BPA), system configuration and development, security, testing, training, data conversion, implementation, maintenance and operations, and others. The scope of the CW CM Solution has been finalized throughout the planning process, with input from the state and the counties. Variations in current county business processes need to be identified and streamlined via BPA sessions, with remaining details to be supported through system flexibility. Data from the counties' systems need to be converted and integrated into the new, comprehensive one. All these tasks amount to a complicated, multi-faceted, and labor-intensive process.

The development and implementation of a CCWIS-compliant system in Pennsylvania requires a significant time investment on the part of both the DHS and the counties. It is important to realize that all the agencies involved are working on this project in addition to their regular demanding responsibilities. The COVID pandemic with its unprecedented challenges put additional pressure on the department and the counties. Many practices and procedures had to be modified, and some of the CCWIS-related activities had to be temporarily suspended as providing child welfare services under especially difficult circumstances had to remain a priority. Suspended activities have been resumed, and the work on the new system installation is ongoing. The process may have been slowed down to a degree by the general state procedures related to procurement rules, vendor selection requirements, and other regulations that are beyond the department's decision-making authority and beyond the scope of this particular project.

For the CCWIS to fulfill many promises that are associated with it, the system needs to be developed and installed in a deliberate, meticulous way. The transitional period requires special attention to avoid creating any disruptions in the ongoing child welfare services or jeopardizing secure data transfer. The Department of Human Services and the counties appear to be cognizant of that. They are committed to continue working on the new system and to ensure safe and effective installation. The main recommendation is for them to continue working in close collaboration with each other and to select the safest and most effective strategies, based on the best practices developed in the Commonwealth and nationwide.

At present, it appears there is no legislative action required that can expedite the process of CCWIS development and installation in Pennsylvania.

Recommendations to the DHS may include the following:

- Work in close collaboration with county children and youth agencies
- Develop the safest transition strategies to minimize risks associated with the roll-out of the new system and data transfer; consider using a pilot as one of such strategies
- Provide adequate training to the county personnel that would enable them to utilize the new system securely and confidently
- Ensure prompt technical support for the state and county employees throughout the transition period and afterwards
- Incorporate best practices in child welfare developed in the Commonwealth and nationwide, to the greatest extent possible.

The department has already started working in these directions. If designed and installed carefully and thoughtfully, the new statewide integrated child welfare system can be expected to bring significant improvements in safety and well-being of the Pennsylvania children who depend on it.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
House Resolution No. 119 of 2021

PRINTER'S NO. 1913

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. **119** Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY BOBACK, SCHLOSSBERG, HELM, RYAN, PICKETT, HOWARD,
STEPHENS, MIZGORSKI, KAUFFMAN, SAMUELSON, M. MACKENZIE AND
STRUZZI, JUNE 24, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, JUNE 24, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study and make recommendations concerning the development and
3 implementation of an integrated child welfare information
4 system for child welfare programs overseen by the Department
5 of Human Services and administered by county children and
6 youth agencies.

7 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth's child welfare system is
8 administered by the counties, each of which currently use one of
9 six different case management information systems and none of
10 which allow for the sharing of information between counties; and

11 WHEREAS, The inability to share information through an
12 integrated system between counties creates a situation whereby
13 patterns indicating abuse are less likely to be detected and
14 relevant information is less likely to be known, increasing the
15 likelihood that abusers will evade detection; and

16 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in
17 its 2014 Annual Child Abuse Report, indicated that it had
18 implemented phase one of the Child Welfare Information Solution,
19 purporting to allow for the exchange of information across

1 counties and eliminating gaps in information throughout the life
2 of a case; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Health and Human
4 Services Administration for Children and Families, in 2016,
5 published regulations pertaining to the Comprehensive Child
6 Welfare Information System, which provided guidance, flexibility
7 and both technical and financial support for states that chose
8 to update and integrate their child welfare information systems;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Years after it was first identified as a priority,
11 Pennsylvania still does not have a system that allows for the
12 sharing of information between counties; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services has been unable to
14 provide specific information about past or anticipated progress
15 on the project; therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission conduct
17 a study of and report on the status of this project; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That the report shall include:

20 (1) A detailed summary of expenditures and progress.

21 (2) A projected timeline for the project.

22 (3) Identification of available resources including
23 those available through the United States Department of
24 Health and Human Services Administration for Children and
25 Families.

26 (4) Projected costs.

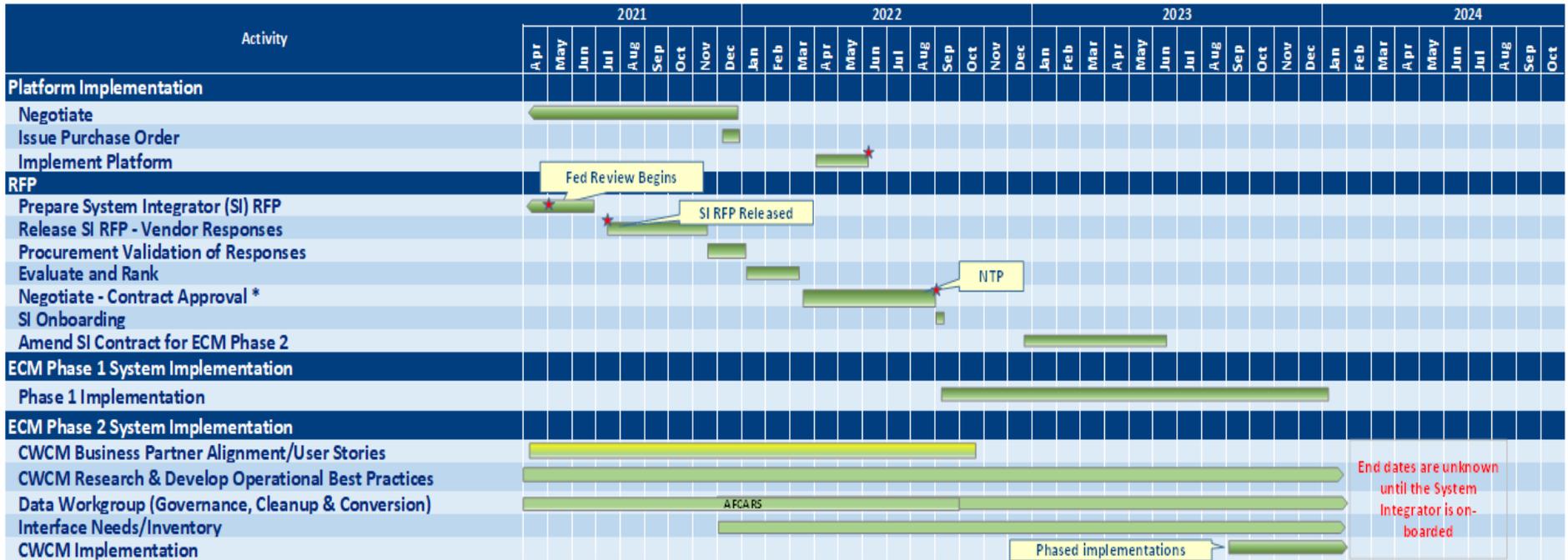
27 (5) Recommendations on legislative action that may
28 assist the Department of Human Services or otherwise expedite
29 the process of developing and implementing an integrated
30 statewide child welfare case management system in the

1 Commonwealth;
2 and be it further
3 RESOLVED, That the report be submitted to the House Children
4 and Youth Committee and the House Appropriations Committee
5 within six months of the adoption of this resolution.

APPENDIX B

Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) Draft Timeline

Child Welfare Case Management (CWCM) Draft Timeline



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

APPENDIX C

Child Welfare Case Management Cost Estimates

Child Welfare Case Management Cost Estimates				
DHS Costs Year 1	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Technical Initiatives	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	Staff to support OCYF
Total	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	
DHS Costs Year 2	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$11,000,000	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000	
Technical Initiatives	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	Staff to support OCYF
Total	\$16,400,000	\$8,200,000	\$8,200,000	
DHS Costs Year 3	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$11,000,000	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000	
Technical Initiatives	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	Staff to support OCYF
Total	16,400,000	\$8,200,000	\$8,200,000	
DHS Costs Year 4	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$11,000,000	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000	
Technical Initiatives	\$0	\$0	\$0	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	Staff to support OCYF
Total	\$13,400,000	\$6,700,000	\$6,700,000	
DHS Costs Year 5	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	Comments
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$10,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	
Technical Initiatives	\$0	\$0	\$0	Data conversion
Contracted Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	Staff to support OCYF
Total	\$10,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	
Grand Totals	Total	Fed (50%)	State (50%)	
New Platform & SI Vendor	\$43,000,000	\$21,500,000	\$21,500,000	
Technical Initiatives	\$9,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	
Contracted Staff	\$7,200,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000	
Totals	\$59,200,000	\$29,600,000	\$29,600,000	

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.