

## Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

### Current Status

Oregon uses the Integrated Information System (IIS), the Family and Children Information System (FACIS), and various ancillary applications to manage its child welfare programs. IIS, FACIS, and associated systems track clients, providers and services statewide, provide fiscal functions, and produce management and federal reports.

IIS was developed in phases from 1979 to 1984 and FACIS was developed and interfaced with IIS from 1994 to 2000. Development of FACIS relied on preserving the original hierarchical IIS database by utilizing a “screen scraping” technology to gather and display mainframe information on FACIS windows. This technology is still used today.

Although IIS and FACIS together are considered Oregon’s primary SACWIS, they meet only about 25% of the federal requirements and Oregon child welfare needs. While multiple functional areas were originally planned for FACIS, only the intake and assessment modules were actually completed, leaving Oregon workers with a partial solution to meet their day-to-day business and case management needs. Additional work has been done in other areas, such as eligibility, court reporting, and adoptions, but has not been completed.

Many adjunct systems that were either in existence prior to FACIS or have been developed by the user community since FACIS, assist with managing Oregon’s child welfare business for those particular areas. Having multiple systems means that users must sometimes re-key information, manage multiple security access passwords, and follow convoluted business processes based on fragmented systems.

Additionally, a 2002 federal assessment of FACIS by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) found that Oregon’s system met only 22 of the 72 mandatory SACWIS requirements, demonstrating its incompleteness and shortcomings. Subsequent research and analysis have revealed that building on the current system as it exists today would not be cost effective or provide for a viable SACWIS.

### Inadequacies of the current SACWIS

The following list briefly describes the high-level problems with Oregon’s current approach to FACIS and the other Child Welfare applications:

- **FACIS is not SACWIS compliant, and does not meet all the needs of child welfare practice.**

- **Development tools are obsolete** – Many of the development tools currently being used by FACIS are no longer being supported by their vendors or are no longer considered acceptable industry standards.
- **The FACIS application is difficult to maintain and to troubleshoot day-to-day production problems** – The FACIS application stores data on various platforms such as Sybase, DB2 and IMS databases. This data is stored and accessed throughout the FACIS application. Most of the data on the mainframe is accessed through the IIS program using Sybase Direct Connect server and screen scraping technology. This complex technical approach makes it difficult to debug and resolve problems and involves resources with various technical skills such as Small Talk, Sybase, Sybase Direct Connect, COBOL, CICS, IMS, etc.
- **FACIS development documentation is lacking** – Because there has been little documentation produced by developers, and no formal training for implementation of developed modules for maintenance staff, maintenance of FACIS is complicated. Maintenance complexity inhibits the ability to be responsive to needed changes, and would make future development costly and time consuming.
- **FACIS design flaws** – The design and architectural flaws in FACIS make the application difficult to maintain and enhance.
- **Specialized resources are retiring** – A number of mainframe programmers who support IIS are eligible to retire in the next few years. According to Oregon’s research with the Gartner Group, these skills are not currently being taught and so the potential for replacing these people at a similar cost, if at all, is not likely.
- **Adequate number of skilled workers needed to enhance and maintain FACIS hard to find** – FACIS is written in older versions of Cincom SmallTalk and Delphi, which are no longer supported by their respective vendors. Finding resources skilled in Cincom SmallTalk and Delphi is difficult and cost prohibitive.
- **Total case picture difficult to determine** – Because there are many different applications that need to be brought under the SACWIS umbrella, it is difficult to gather a total picture of the child’s circumstances and the details of the case. Existing systems lack the ability to track many non-paid services essential to improving family well being. This makes it difficult to understand all the services being provided to the child.
- **Level of effort needed for Federal Reporting** – AFCARS and NCANDS reports can only be partially system generated. To produce the reports, multiple resources with specialized skills have to coordinate to extract all the necessary information from the different storage locations to produce the required data elements on these reports. Because there is little direct mapping of required federal reporting elements to fields in FACIS, many elements require complex calculations/manipulations of data to complete the reports.

## Replacing Existing Child Welfare Systems

- Developing and implementing a new system will be a large and complex project. DHS is working with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to assure a system that will provide “best practices,” as well as meet federal criteria. Oregon has implemented a Certificate of Participation effort to pay the state’s percentage of SACWIS costs.

- DHS will continue to support child welfare business through existing technologies during development of the new system.
- During initial project planning for Oregon's SACWIS Project, ten major activity tracks were identified. Each of these activity tracks will be coordinated within the overall plan.
  1. Project Management
  2. Federal Approval of APD's and Procurements
  3. Documentation of the Oregon Child Welfare Practice Model
  4. Organizational Change Management
  5. Budget and Funding tracking and reconciliation
  6. Recruitments and Contracts
  7. Planning and Oversight
  8. Data Migration (Conversion)
  9. Interfaces
  10. Implementation

## **Benefits of the new SACWIS**

The new SACWIS will support many of the themes under development in the DHS strategic plan. In addition to cost savings and cost avoidance, a new SACWIS will bring the following benefits:

- ***Align technology systems and support with needs of the Children, Adults ad Families Cluster (CAF)*** – The new approach will provide a system that is better aligned with CAF needs
- ***Reduce the complexity of systems and procedures*** – The current multiple platform environments in the FACIS system are very complex and difficult to maintain. A new system will reduce the number of technology platforms and simplify maintenance.
- ***Modernize*** – Many of the technology components of FACIS are obsolete or un-supported. The new approach will implement modern technologies that will have continued technical support through the life of the new system.
- ***Standardize Processes*** – The new approach will standardize child welfare practices within Oregon and will bring Oregon practices into alignment with other state and federal standards.
- ***Transform Skills*** – The new approach includes transition planning and training to transform the skills of current maintenance and development staff from obsolete technologies to current technology skill sets.

## **Progress**

### **DHS is on schedule to complete planning for the new system by January 2007**

- The Planning & Quality control RFP (Request for Procurement) process has been completed and DHS has awarded a contract to Walter R. McDonald and Associates.
- A Request for Information was posted and five vendors completed system presentations during March 2006.
- Discussion between DHS and DAS to procure a Quality Assurance vendor has started with a completion date targeted for September 2006.
- The Implementation RFP will be developed and posted fall 2006, with a target start date of April 2007.