

Enterprise Client Tracking Systems for Community Action Agencies:

A review of client database systems implemented in
states and agencies across the Community Action network.

Fall 2011 - Version 1.1

*Compiled for the
Agency-Wide Information Management Systems Panel
(AIMS)*

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This study was made possible through a State Exemplary Practices grant from the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This grant was funded through the Community Services Block Grant Training and Technical Assistance Program which was supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

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Project Overview

During 2010–2011, the Agency-Wide Information Management Systems (AIMS) panel reviewed the current status of “enterprise” software systems used in states and agencies across the Community Action network. The AIMS panel works to encourage ongoing national collaboration on the topic of building capacity in the critical expertise required to effectively purchase and manage enterprise software systems. This document identifies the core functionality of existing client tracking systems based on the most current information available. Special emphasis has been given to the recent trend towards statewide shared systems. In addition to informing the network on the status of enterprise systems, the panel also solicited lessons learned and critical success factors from project managers and vendors. Based on these findings, this document provides future recommendations aimed at positively impacting current enterprise systems, as well as prospective new software implementations.

This information is offered to the Community Action network with the recommendation that future versions of this document be maintained through the oversight of a permanent body having an interest in building the capacity of states and agencies as they manage business processes using enterprise systems.

Special Considerations in Developing this Report

The scope of the AIMS panel did not allow in-depth examination of individual Community Action Agencies and the vendors who are developing enterprise systems for a single agency. Future guardians of this data repository may seek to highlight leading agencies with local enterprise systems.

Terms such as “agency-wide” or “enterprise” systems refer to a system in which most of an agency’s program data is collected and managed in a single repository. Overcoming 100 percent of all constraints from closed external systems is unlikely in the near future and so these terms should be understood in this context.

The vendors identified with contact information represent the known universe of software providers. These vendors are not considered to be preferred vendors for a Community Action Agency or a state. The burden of selecting the best vendor for a project remains with each project team. However, these vendors have provided valuable insight which will in turn improve the quality of future implementations. Each company expressed a family connection with Community Action and each draws proper pride from their role in enhancing the safety net for the nation’s most vulnerable communities and households. This document is not offered as a value comparison between vendors or specific data strategies. Rather than recommending a specific solution, the intent is to inform and inspire the network to continue the great work to date.

Current Statewide Enterprise Projects

State	Selection Date	Software Vendor
Alabama	2011	DBA Facs Pro
Arizona	2011	CAP60
Arkansas	2010	Custom
Connecticut	2010	SMC
Illinois	2010	Custom
Indiana	2010	Client Track
Kansas	2011	Selecting
Kentucky	2003	Custom
Louisiana	2011	CAP60
Massachusetts	2008	Community Networks
Michigan	2011	DBA Facs Pro
Minnesota	2005	Adsystem
Missouri	2001	Adsystem
Montana	2003	Custom
Nebraska	2003	ServicePoint
Ohio	2005	Custom
Oklahoma	2009	Captain
Rhode Island	2011	Client Track
South Carolina	2011	DBA Facs Pro
Utah	2011	DBA Facs Pro
West Virginia	2005	DBA Facs Pro

Historical Context and Current Efforts

A more complete appreciation of the AIMS panel and the purpose of this document requires a bit of historical context. This context is offered on the assumption that readers are quite familiar with the Community Action network and the role of Community Action Agencies in operating multiple anti-poverty programs. Additional information about the services and impact of Community Action Agencies is included in the appendix.

Over the past quarter of a century, local Community Action Agencies along with state and national organizations have served needy families amidst historic changes brought about by the introduction of information technology in the workplace. Early on, Community Action Agencies learned the value of automated business processes and began to build networked database systems. As technology advanced, the exponential increase of local, single-program databases introduced a data management nightmare for local agencies.

In 2001, leaders within the Community Action network formed the national Managing Multiple Databases (MMDB) panel to respond to these operational challenges. The panel sought to provide guidance to local agencies wrestling with administration of the myriad of local databases associated with their multiple grant funded programs. The also examined leading edge database technologies and considered their potential impact upon the business processes of Community Action Agencies. The MMDB group projected that web-based, statewide and agency-wide data systems would shortly become common place bringing a new set of business advantages and challenges. The potential for single-purpose state and national systems developed by separate funding entities was a significant concern. The trend towards shared, but disparate systems, would extend the data silos to the next hierarchical level thereby hindering efficient delivery and tracking of comprehensive services to families by local agencies.

Over the last decade as technology further developed, many agencies and a large number of states have chosen to build comprehensive client data systems to counter the earlier trend towards data silos. The AIMS panel was formed from a cross section of national, state and local entities to consider the status of such enterprise systems in Community Action, as well as to document the development of shared systems across multi-funded service programs with a special emphasis on systems shared by multiple agencies within a single state. Two questions summarize the quest of the panel:

- **What are the characteristics of State CSBG Offices, State Associations and local CAAs that effectively develop and implement enterprise information management systems?**
- **What are the critical factors that support or hinder replication of model systems?**

To answer these questions, the AIMS Panel conducted extensive data collection and discussions. This work yielded a compelling story of partnerships between agencies, state associations, vendors and state CSBG offices as agencies and states have begun a journey towards comprehensive data collection systems. For example, more than twenty states are now engaged at some point in a project to implement a statewide client tracking system. A significant number of these states are recent entries with others still yet considering the possibilities. Additionally, many individual Community Action Agencies have purchased or built enterprise systems to track clients served by multiple grants. A state software analysis of the twenty current projects is included in the appendix.

Special Challenges Faced by New Enterprise Projects

Shared and hosted data systems are not new additions to the Community Action technology toolbox. In fact some states have marked a decade from their original decision to launch a leading edge enterprise system. Yet until the past few years there were only a handful of serious statewide projects underway and a proportionate number of agency-wide projects. A number of project managers provided the AIMS panel with some insight into the obstacles facing the startup phase of an enterprise project.

An unstable environment for financial sustainability.

Most public funded, nonprofits are challenged by a scarcity of funds in the current economy. Although agencies are accustomed to improvising and stretching their dollars to provide services, the necessary resources for a new system often compete with other critical budgeted priorities. Even when startup money becomes available, the question of continued funding for maintenance and modification costs can discourage launching an enterprise project.

The problem of standardizing diverse agencies into a single system.

From a non-technical viewpoint, the challenge of collecting integrated data across multi-funded and independent thinking Community Action Agencies may appear to be impossible. Database systems require data to be categorized in a standard pattern which is often not immediately obvious. Convincing the critical stakeholders to embark on an enterprise project is an important, but labor intensive step.

Accommodating organizational structures and decision making processes.

For reasons important to the service delivery requirements within each state, agencies and states are uniquely structured along a spectrum of democratic participation to centralized directives. When stakeholders are granted a greater role in the initial decision to launch an enterprise system, the initial process is necessarily more cumbersome. On the other hand, critical early buy-in may also be developed in such cases. This point is not raised to advocate for or against any particular organizational approach, but rather to note that the specific infrastructure of an agency or state will influence the startup time line for major projects.

Overcoming the fears and "what-if's".

A whole host of technical and administrative issues are legitimately raised when implementing a statewide system. There are confidentiality concerns, security fears, liability issues and worries about system availability just to name a few. Most prospective enterprise projects have had to respond to such concerns before seriously allocating resources to develop a system.

Limited availability of mature success stories and startup resources.

Often startup project teams are initially composed of individuals with extensive Community Action expertise and limited technical knowledge. Frequently project managers have found themselves re-inventing the wheel on topics such as RFP development, vendor management, and project plan development. Although relevant expertise exists within some agencies and with the vendors serving Community Action Agencies, ready access to the universe of resources has been limited. There is no "starter-kit" for developing enterprise systems and thus entry into a new project often requires a fair amount of re-invention.

Organizational priorities competing against enterprise systems.

With the many challenges faced by the Community Action network, enterprise data systems have only recently begun to increase in priority. Nearly everyone loves the idea of seamlessly integrated systems, the elimination of data silos and push button reporting. But until more recent pressures to provide reports in real time and to increase services with even less funding, many found the priority of enterprise systems did not supersede other organizational goals and justify initiating a major project.

Viewing data systems as a "loss leader."

The idea that enterprise systems can be a fantastic tool for change, rather than a necessary evil has evolved slowly. Properly developed enterprise systems can become valuable instruments to redirect or streamline agency or state resources. Data sets resulting from enterprise systems can provide critical information needed to successfully modify business processes and maximize results. However, that vision is generally clouded by the up-front cost and human capital required for a successful project.

Primary Motivations for Developing an Enterprise System

During the process of interviewing the stakeholders responsible for implementing enterprise systems, the motivations prompting a decision to launch such a project were considered. An important set of common factors led to this major decision.

The financial burden and human resource challenges of data management.

Most Community Action Agencies struggled with the administrative burden associated with data management. This burden was especially onerous for smaller agencies, who often operate nearly the same number of programs as larger agencies, but have more limited options to fund technical support. Smaller agencies with far less resources faced a comparable reporting workload as larger agencies.

A need to produce agency client statistics more efficiently.

Accurate and current statistics are the lifeblood of any agency and state. The process of obtaining an unduplicated client count and other statistics without an integrated system is often grossly inefficient. Yet this capacity is critical in connecting multiple services to individuals and families, as well as for agency operations in today's competitive environment.

Compliance with standardized reporting requirements.

Federal reporting requirements include an annual report of Community Action services aggregated nationally from state reports. Known as the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) IS Report, the National Association of State and Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) collects and compiles this data. The CSBG IS Report uses a standard state reporting template so that national statistics for Community Action services can be aggregated. A number of states are choosing to implement statewide systems to collect CSBG IS data in near real time.

**The need for agency-wide reporting.**

Because CSBG funding is used to leverage and administer additional local, state and federal grants, agencies see benefit in the ability to quickly make a statistical case to a variety of funding sources. An enterprise system is required for such timely reporting.

**Leveraging new hardware and software hosting technology.**

Technology innovations over the past decade have brought the possibility of enterprise systems for multi-funded programs well within reach. Software development tools and hardware platforms have significantly evolved. The cost of an enterprise system has become more affordable, especially for agencies willing to collaborate and share expenses.

**The emergence of one or more agencies as technology leaders.**

Frequently one or more of the agencies in a state began a successful implementation of an enterprise system. The opportunity to replicate that success then led to a collaborative or even a statewide project. A significant number of the newest statewide systems were first developed and tested by a single agency before being adopted by the entire state.

**The desire to streamline client services and agency business processes.**

By reducing repetitive data collection and entry processes, the client experience and service level is typically improved when using enterprise systems. Duplicate entry of redundant demographic data can be virtually eliminated as processes which once frustrated clients and required extra time for data entry are improved.

Key Benefits of Enterprise Systems for Community Action

As enterprise systems have been developed on an agency-wide and statewide level, a number of benefits have been realized for the agencies and ultimately for the families served throughout the Community Action network. These advantages have resulted from the methods and infrastructures developed to manage such a major project.

Local Expertise

Local expertise in the development and maintenance of enterprise systems.

Linkages and Partnerships

Enhanced statewide linkages and supportive partnerships among organizations providing complementary services.

Training Systems

Training systems that support the rapid delivery of technical material and critical training.

Quality Control

Increased capacity in local agencies to address accountability, data accuracy and quality control of service delivery.

Project Management

Greater appreciation of project management principles and their application to non-technical projects.

Service Delivery and Business Processes Analysis

Improved analysis of service delivery systems and agency business processes to better administer resources.

Benefits Enrollment

Enhanced benefits enrollment systems to more effectively link eligible clients with services and work supports.

Data Exchange

Expanded capacity to manage data responsibly and efficiently in projects which require data exchange with an external system.



Lessons Learned While Implementing Enterprise Projects

During the interviews of project managers from state associations, agencies and state CSBG offices, a list of lessons learned and critical success factors was compiled. These insights were uncovered by project teams as they designed and implemented enterprise systems. This discovery process has produced some helpful guidance for the next wave of system implementations.

The process is going to take longer than you think.

Nearly every statewide project faced either a schedule delay or features were delayed to meet the project time line because of overly optimistic projections. These delays in turn frustrated the user community and were compounded when multiple modules were rolled out simultaneously. One project summary referenced technical difficulties as only one of many challenges impacting the project time line including funding changes, users' learning curve and agency readiness. Project Managers should plan for setbacks and be quick to communicate the new reality to those who are expecting results in the near term. Also, managers who are a step removed from direct project activities should ask for clarity on the feasibility of projected milestones.

Take "small bites" at first.

Experienced statewide project managers generally recommend a modular approach covering one or two programs in the first phase. The first programs selected should not have complex business rules or perhaps only the most critical data elements should be collected. This approach will reduce strain on the project team and testing teams and will also provide a positive environment in which to align the logistics of training and technical support. Starting out with multiple modules in parallel may introduce too many variables into the project plan and as a result the date for "the first big success" might come after most of the enthusiasm for the project has been lost.

Learn what is meant by "business processes" and learn how to document these processes extensively.

Vendor selection is a significant concern, but is only one element of project success. Both before and after the vendor selection milestone, there is much work to be done. A software vendor cannot transform existing paper forms and reports into a working system without documentation of the program's business processes. Don't assume that the vendor understands operational details which the agencies consider to be common knowledge. And be sure to determine if the "official" processes match up to the "actual" processes which are used in the field.

When building a system for multiple agencies, expect to compromise on features.

One of the strengths built into the work of Community Action is the ability to make local decisions as a best fit for the client population. Because of this local flexibility and targeted approach in each community, business processes vary between agencies. Usually vendors can accommodate variations in approach, but they need to know about these exceptions early in the design process. Costs are often significantly higher if changes are required late in the development process. Often there will be some compromise on core features before the final system will be useful for all agencies and/or programs.

Don't forget about future operating costs.

After the system is complete, there will be maintenance costs to consider. Be sure to spend time planning for resources to keep the project operating after its initial launch. Generally, operating costs will decline after the first year. Although introducing new modules may make these cost estimates difficult to calculate.

The agencies who are technology leaders may be disappointed to find that the new shared system initially has less features than their old local database system.

The most eager supporters in the early phase are often the more technically advanced agencies. In fact many of the statewide systems were first built as an agency-wide system before becoming a shared project. Enthusiastic volunteer help from individual agencies is critical to managing costs and building momentum. However, several years into the project the more technically savvy agencies may find themselves working with a system much less capable than their "old system." Losing good will from these experts can have a compounding negative influence. The case for the long term value of a shared system must be clearly made along with emphasis on the role of technology leaders. This effort becomes even more critical during statewide system development.

Develop a shared understanding of what project success looks like for all stakeholders.

Clearly document all measurable goals tied to a realistic time line. If success is not defined, a snapshot of the results might look like failure to the prospective users.

The vendor and the agencies may hold two very different pictures in their heads.

The world of technology and the world of Community Action often do not have a great deal in common. Each has its own language and culture in which common words such as "state", "application" and "program" have entirely different meanings. Further, each culture has devised its own vast collection of industry specific acronyms. When these respective worlds of compassion and logic collide, key components of a project may be threatened because of a communication breakdown.

The entire project team may turn over before the project is finished.

While such dramatic changes rarely occur all at once, significant changes in the composition of project teams should be expected. A few of the statewide projects have indeed maintained their core team throughout the project. However, statewide systems are complex, multi-year endeavors which can only be successful if there are talented professionals on the management team. The tendency for talented staff to be upwardly mobile can introduce knowledge gaps capable of grinding the project to a halt. Reasonable documentation is one of the most overlooked defenses against this project risk.

We had to go back to the drawing board.

Surprisingly, significant redesign or even a total rewrite of the first system is a rather common occurrence. There can be many causes for this circumstance, but most “design resets” can be traced to an initial failure to engage in comprehensive definition of system requirements. Often major details are missed in the original system design and stakeholders may not know what they need until they experience the first product. The down side of going through system redesign is that the failed first attempt may permanently bias some users against using a common system or a particular vendor.

We could have done a better job selling the statewide project to the users.

Without a compelling case for the new system, there will be resistance to the changes and associated costs from the user community. The project team must clearly understand the motivation for the project and articulate a simple message to individual agencies. Bring all stakeholders and decision makers into the process of building the project plan and identify the staff who can best document the step-by-step activities involved in providing direct services.

But we thought they would be happy to share their data.

Few technical topics are so energetically discussed as the issue of access to client data across organizational boundaries. This question can be raised both as an inter-agency and an intra-agency concern. Data exchange has the potential to end a project when unaddressed concerns exist about interfaces with client systems external to Community Action. After launching a statewide project, the project team frequently finds that the owners of external data systems are not receptive to exchanging or sharing critical data. Project teams should obtain data exchange agreements early in the project life cycle. Make certain that the agreements are authorized at the appropriate level and then determine that the expertise exists to meet the requirements of the agreement. Otherwise, a sound project might fail because security and confidentiality concerns cannot be resolved.

Critical Success Factors Identified by Key Stakeholders

The AIMS panel queried project managers to discover “must have” project elements which greatly increase the likelihood of success for a system. The goal was to determine where a project team should prioritize effort. Following are the key responses.

Assign a dedicated project manager from within Community Action for enterprise projects.

Most projects employed a project team consisting partly of volunteer help supplied by the agencies. After the system was rolled out, the initial project manager sometimes handed off responsibilities to another project manager with a skill set centered on communication and program management rather than technology.

Training! Training! Training!

Project managers reported the obvious correlation between the success of a system and the quality of training. In many cases the training regimen was increased as a corrective action to compensate for a troubled project rollout. The need for initial user training as well as ongoing training on new features is an expensive proposition. Some projects elected to spread the cost of training by developing a peer to peer technology support and training group. During these training sessions, potential new features suggested by the users should be collected to guide future software versions. Adequate training is an area of concern as training becomes a primary target when project budget cuts become necessary.

We didn't start out with a well defined communications plan.

At times project work may be quickly advancing, yet there is no visible sign of progress from the viewpoint of the agencies. Volunteer members of the project team can become frustrated with a lack of specific direction on how best to manage workload requirements in order to be available for business process analysis and system testing. A consistent communications plan keeps all stakeholders up to date on the project status and also enables agency management to anticipate when staff will be engaged in the project. Most team members and participating agencies prefer for the project manager to error on the side of too much communication.

End-user buy-in is critical.

The approval of executive level administrators and management is required, but most projects cannot financially survive without the volunteer effort supplied by front-line staff. These are the people who understand agency business processes and who will ultimately enter the program data into the system. These individuals also have the ear of decision makers when the question arises, “Why don't we have a working system yet?” Successful projects will organize the knowledge base of experienced staff and include them in planning and communication. Failing to engage the front-line user group is a serious risk to the success of a project.

Clearly define the scope of the project.

Include time lines and expectations for the vendor, the agencies and the project team. Too many software projects are ultimately labeled, “Oops! We built the wrong system!” Project scope definition must be revisited frequently during system development and implementation in order to make sure the scope is comprehensive and to determine that the project team is following the original guidance.

Make sure that vendors and other contracted staff have clear oversight from within the project team.

Usually this means a direct reporting responsibility from the vendor to the project manager. Vendors appreciate being provided clear and consistent directions regarding their contracted responsibilities. Avoid a situation where there may be multiple decision makers authorized on a project.

Vendor Observations About the Trend Towards Comprehensive Data Systems

Have you ever wondered what your vendors are thinking? We asked them. The truth is that supporting technology within Community Action can be a difficult proposition. As a network we are historically and notoriously complex, independent, underfunded and much more interested in the results than in the process. So we asked some of the vendors this question, “How can Community Action Agencies become better customers?” Below is a compilation of their answers.

Don't change the rules in the middle of the game.

Vendors identify this as “scope creep.” Translation: “We started to build you one system and now you want something else.” Change is inevitable and initial specifications are never fully adequate. Therefore, modifications to the scope of a project are perfectly fine as long as the changes follow established rules. Project teams should work with vendors to plan for the inevitable change requests. Prepare answers to key questions such as: Who can authorize changes? How will we notify stakeholders about changes? Who will pay for the modifications?

Let's spend a lot more energy on the test phase.

Exhaustive testing is not possible within the budget constraints of most Community Action software projects. However, agencies need to better appreciate the value of having run through the major test cases encountered during normal business. The front line staff most familiar with the business processes should be engaged to help the project team to develop and run test cases. The expense of burdening the most knowledgeable and efficient workers with testing will pay dividends by removing many of the bumps in the initial system rollout.

Please don't call everything a “bug.”

Undocumented features (bugs) are a staple of software development. However, classifying programming errors together with change requests, screen format changes, wish lists, etc. can unnecessarily lower the confidence of the user community in the overall quality of the product.

Service Level Agreements are the industry accepted baseline to evaluate the quality of the vendor's support.

Front line staff may experience frustration because they are not clear about the contracted response times or the service escalation procedure negotiated in the Service Level Agreement. Agency communication should provide simple guidance to users on the approved process for all support needs.

vague definition of goals will result in the wrong solution.

Spend the time required to identify the core problem when attempting to implement a new module or feature. Answer the question, "What problem are we trying to solve?" to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Incorporate S.M.A.R.T. Goals into the project.

Define successful project or phase completion using Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely goals.

Technology alone will not solve a systemic organizational problem.

Agencies have to determine if there is a need to engage in organizational change around a difficult business process before automating the process. Computers only process data; they don't manage anything.

When obtaining consensus on new features, don't determine the list of key stakeholders and decision makers exclusively by job title and presumed expertise.

Management sometimes understands a process differently than those who are engaged in direct services with clients. Undocumented ad-hoc procedures may have been developed by front line staff without any communication with the management level.

Foster "buy-in" of management and front-line staff.

Failure to develop buy-in usually occurs at the top or the bottom of the organizational chart. Either scenario can result in catastrophic project failure when implementing new business processes. Buy-in from top management translates into an approved budget. Buy-in from front line staff translates into a successful project.

Make sure you understand the true cost of a new system or technology.

Nearly every technology has an initial cost and an ongoing (maintenance) cost.

Be conservative in raising users' expectations in the early stages of a project.

The easiest part of any project is to announce what the project team is going to do. If a project is completed ahead of expectations, very few people will complain. However, new technology projects are rarely completed ahead of schedule because of the common practice of determining target dates under the assumption of ideal conditions. After the vendor and the agency develop a track record of working together, the accuracy of milestone projections will improve.

Hold an agency conversation about Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

Learn to define KPI's and determine the most important KPI's. Then prioritize requests for management reports around those measurement indicators.

Apply Community Action expertise on outcomes to technology decisions.

Ask your organization to consider the long term impact (positive and negative) of a new technology or process.

Start with the end in mind.

Define in writing what you are committed to accomplish with the systems project. What organizational impact is expected? How will the system make your staff more effective? How will you impact efficiency and ultimately customer outcomes? What are the tangible and intangible costs and benefits? What difference will the investment in technology make in the lives of the families you serve?

Don't fear the machine.

Many agencies and states are making great progress in technology training. However, some very knowledgeable program staff continue to have a measure of phobia towards computers. Technology follows the same kind of logic we use every day. One doesn't need to be able to rebuild an engine or a transmission in order to drive a car. A driver only needs to understand the basic rules of the road. Agencies should find ways to address the anxiety of users who feel that technology is frightening or unstable.

Let's talk! Especially when nothing seems to be wrong.

Agencies will readily engage in vendor communications if a project goes off track. However, when the project appears to be running smoothly, most will sacrifice communication to prioritize other critical responsibilities. In many instances major problems might have been prevented with regular communication. Vendors have developed the expertise to listen for inconsistencies in business rules during regular project reviews. Project managers should build a formal plan for non-emergency communication which includes both the vendor and the project stakeholders.

Core Competencies Required to Implement Enterprise Projects

The AIMS panel spent significant time discussing the following questions:

- What are the core competencies required of local agencies, state associations, state CSBG offices, and our national organizations including to effectively lead and direct the implementation of enterprise information management systems?
- Or conversely, what core competencies, if missing, may put an enterprise system at significantly higher risk of failure?

The leading answers are in no particular order.

Strategic Planning

- An ongoing strategic planning process integrated with enterprise technology planning.

Business Analysis

- An internal capacity to perform business analysis and translate the results into system specifications.
- Developing a culture of continual business process improvement around business analysis.

Technology Expertise

- A unified technology department (or contractor) interacting with all departments and following formal IT policies and procedures.
- Technology support staff with the ability to apply technical expertise towards aligning business processes with goals.

Risk Assessment

- Systematic risk assessment and risk mitigation strategies.

Contract Management

- Internal (or contracted) expertise to draft and manage contracts governing long term vendor/ agency relationships and responsibilities.

Project Management

- A standard approach to project management.

Data Sharing Protocol

- The capacity to exchange data with external partners.



Future Directions for Enterprise Technology

While it is impossible to predict the future, the AIMS panel identified key emerging technologies and trends relevant to shared enterprise systems. These trends should be examined in future months and years by the Community Action network. One fundamental expectation is that enterprise systems and related technologies will increasingly impact the manner in which nonprofits conduct business. At some level the importance of keeping pace with evolving technology will be directly tied to the ability of agencies to remain as significant participants in ongoing national anti-poverty efforts. The following are some areas to consider when investing future state and agency technology resources.

Linkages and Data Exchange

- Linkages with other organizations and data sets will be increasingly critical. A high-value future target will be to build linkages between primary Head Start data systems and CSBG funded programs. Other national systems such as health care systems will soon become mandatory data exchange partners.
- Pressure is building towards a standard method to exchange data and this capacity will need to be embedded within agencies and their support staff. The National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) provides a promising platform for participating in health data exchanges and other emerging integration efforts.

Technology and Management Expertise

- Agencies will need to tap into a technology knowledge base for quick responses which are relevant to the Community Action business culture.
- Agencies should seek to move ahead of the curve and develop agile training methods based on the latest technology in order to gain an advantage in a competitive funding environment.
- As hardware and software platforms continue to stabilize, soft skills will be in high demand. These areas of expertise include business analysis, vendor management, and project management.

Mobile Technology and Social Networking

- Mobile technology will enable seamless distribution of enterprise systems without the conventional constraints of time, infrastructure and space. This shift may require new approaches to technical support and data distribution which have not yet been fully considered.
- The proliferation of social networking in the next generation ensures that some interaction with social media will be a required technology for agencies in the near future.
- Agencies will need to learn how to leverage the data collected through enterprise systems to market services to clients with increased technical knowledge.

Data Management and Reporting

- Reporting will continue to trend towards simple ad-hoc methods for retrieving increasingly complex data. However, because of the trend towards information overload, agencies will need to build soft skills to present results in a powerful yet concise manner to gain the attention of funding entities.
- Successful nonprofits of the future will be those who can feed real time data results back into business process improvement activities in order to remain at the forefront of excellent service delivery.

Proliferation of Enterprise Systems

- Today, there are twenty statewide Enterprise systems in operation or being planned. Over the next decade, most if not all states will be operating a statewide enterprise data system.

AIMS Panel Recommendations

The AIMS panel has worked to identify the strengths and challenges relevant to developing enterprise data systems. It has sought to encourage the national network to leverage the considerable investment and expertise that now exists to support new and ongoing enterprise projects.

The panel developed nine recommendations for future actions related to enterprise data systems in the Community Action network. There is not an expectation that any of these items should be mandated but they are important and should be carefully addressed based on priority and the network capacity. Following up on the most critical of these recommendations is consistent with the ongoing self improvement efforts characteristic of the Community Action network. Effective reporting systems will enable Community Action to maintain leadership among antipoverty agencies as it strives for excellence while enabling families in poverty to find new hope and opportunity.

Training and Technical Assistance

Develop training and technical assistance targeted to medium performing agencies about organizational change and related management themes encountered during enterprise system design and implementation.

Agencies attempting to engage in structural redesign of the organization or redesign of business processes will need to address the impact of these changes upon current or proposed agency-wide data systems. Additionally, agencies seeking an enterprise system will need to consider whether changes to core business processes will be required.

Develop training and technical assistance targeted to medium performing agencies regarding how to fund and staff enterprise IT.

Limited funding and technical expertise are traditional barriers to developing comprehensive data systems. Agencies will need to establish the right mix of “contracted vs. staff” IT proficiency and will need to develop an effective management structure which enables the agency to direct IT and not vice versa. In most cases an efficient data solution requires some contracting of IT expertise and oversight of outside vendors. Rather than attempting to master every technology, agencies need to strengthen their ability to manage technology vendor relationships.

Evaluate additional training capacity needed to assure sufficient human resource capacity to successfully perform the systems analysis/management analysis necessary to continuously design and implement automated business processes in local Community Action Agencies.

Technology vendors and IT staff are often frustrated when applying the rigid rules of technology to the diverse approaches and spontaneous nature of Community Action programs. Commonly there are significant differences in the delivery of a specific service by agencies due to variances in target populations, agency resources and local approach to delivering services. Agencies must first understand their business processes and then develop the capacity to translate these processes into language and structure which can be implemented by technology professionals. The disciplines of business and systems analysis are well defined in the technology and for-profit communities. Community Action Agencies need to address business processes as a component of normal agency management activities.

Prepare a Tool Kit related to the essential capacities and competencies necessary for successful implementation and operation of enterprise systems.

Specific core competencies are required to effectively utilize agency-wide data systems. Often those competencies are discovered by trial and error during the process of developing enterprise systems. Consequently lessons learned in the implementation process are lost rather than being made available as guidance to other agencies. Preferably a body of knowledge will be maintained with evaluation instruments to identify critical capacities prior to engaging in systems evaluation, purchase and implementation.

Innovation and Best Practices in Technology

Given the realities of Community Action's pluralistic governance structure, evaluate strategies to evolve data standards.

In part, most agencies are unable to readily exchange data because of the need to develop a custom template for each data transfer between partners. Significant efforts are broadly underway at the federal level to encourage interoperability between data systems. The network should exercise leadership in this process in order to influence the development of data standards which can best be leveraged by agencies to manage business processes. The best scenario is for the Community Action network to proactively address these concerns rather than react to inevitable change.

Establish an ongoing small group charged with surveillance of business process automation in the social services industry and periodic reporting on trends.

Agencies are operating in an increasingly competitive environment and must remain current on the most effective technology for organizations delivering social services. Additionally there is an increased demand for the ability to exchange data with partner organizations. Collecting and evaluating current innovations in technology and applying these tools to the Community Action environment is an activity beyond the capacity of most agencies. A single collection point for expert advice with a supporting group of interested personnel will shorten the learning curve for agencies seeking to automate business processes.

As a special project, create a depiction of a complete model enterprise system in a Community Action Agency.

This project would include interoperability of all management and program systems in the agency. The purpose is to help senior managers in local agencies as well as in state and national organizations to visualize the extent of the possibilities through enterprise systems.

Explore the creation of a formal collaborative relationship between the group of leading adopters in Community Action and major enterprise software vendors to the Community Action networks.

Such an alliance would focus on improving the vendor/agency interface by helping agencies to become better customers and educating vendors on the business culture of Community Action.

Monitor and report back on current federal and state level efforts to improve interoperability of government driven categorical software systems used by agencies.

As stakeholders, agencies should understand and be represented in processes which can significantly impact the effectiveness of an agency-wide system. The network should seek to develop a capacity for Community Action Agencies and their associations to participate in these efforts.

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About the Agency-Wide Information Management Systems Project

As multi-grant funded agencies, one of the greatest administrative challenges currently faced by Community Action Agencies is to develop and maintain information management infrastructure that supports agency-wide integration of operations. A recent university study in Minnesota found that while a typical urban single-purpose nonprofit administers 15 funding streams, a typical Community Action Agency administers 60-70 different funding streams. All 60-70 funding streams come with both program constraints and reporting requirements. As a result, Community Action Agencies face an exceptional management challenge to deliver integrated client services while simultaneously measuring and evaluating results, and documenting and reporting compliance with the multiplicity of funders' requirements.

In observing private sector service industries, it has been noted that many have used "enterprise" information systems to transform the business processes of their organizations and their networks. This approach offers great potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local Community Action Agencies.

Funding to examine the status and potential of enterprise systems was awarded through a State Exemplary Practices grant through the Community Services Block Grant Training and Technical Assistance Program which was supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and administered by the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The National Agency-Wide Information Management Systems (AIMS) Panel

In 2010, a national panel was convened to examine the current state of the Community Service Network in regard to agency-wide or enterprise data systems, with a particular emphasis on data systems that support integrating business processes agency-wide. Panel members were recruited from the Community Action network including representatives from national partners, state CSBG directors, state association directors, local agency staff and technology experts.

Panel Members

Local Community Action Agencies		
*Pat McFarland, Executive Director	Minnesota	Anoka County Community Action Program
Darian Ross, Technology Coordinator	Arkansas	Community Action Program for Central Arkansas
Roberta Keller, Executive Director	New York	Chautauqua Opportunities
Brian Angus, Executive Director	California	Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Laura MacNeil, Deputy Director	Massachusetts	North Shore Community Action Programs
State CSBG Directors		
Connie Greer, Director	Minnesota	Office of Economic Opportunity, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Verna Best, Director	North Carolina	Office of Economic Opportunity, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Jennifer Sexson, CSBG Program Manager	Kansas	Kansas Housing Resources Corporation
State Association Directors		
Denise Harlow, CEO	New York	New York State Community Action Association
Arnie Anderson, Executive Director	Minnesota	Minnesota Community Action Partnership
Roger McCann, Chief Information Officer/Deputy Director	Kentucky	Community Action Kentucky
National Partners		
Allison Ma'luf, Associate Counsel	Massachusetts	CAPLAW
Janelle George, Social Science Analyst	Washington, DC	OCS
**Jeannie Chaffin, CSBG Senior Program and Policy Specialist	Washington, DC	National Association for State Community Services Programs
Lindley Dupree, Director of Training and Technical Assistance	Washington, DC	Community Action Partnership
Project Consultant		
Lyndell Durr, Consultant	Ohio	

*AIMS Panel Chair

**Effective 10/11/11, Jeannie Chaffin is now the Director of the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Information About Community Action

The Community Action Mission

Helping People. Changing Lives.

Community Action improves the lives of all Americans by addressing the effects of poverty and reducing the conditions that create poverty.

Anti-Poverty Goals

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Community Action maximizes the likelihood that people will become self-sufficient by using an approach that differs from other anti-poverty efforts. CAAs strive to provide flexible, local solutions. The nature of Community Action's flexibility allows each agency, working through its diverse board, to assess and address the specific needs of the local community it serves.

Community Action provides performance-based programming focused on demonstrating results and improving effectiveness, commonly known as Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). ROMA is a national Community Action initiative created in 1994 based upon principles in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

Six core anti-poverty goals guide the work of the national and statewide Community Action Networks and local metro area CAAs. CAAs utilize the performance indicators most relevant to their program participants.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Goal 1 (Family) | Low-income people become more self-sufficient. |
| Goal 2 (Community) | The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. |
| Goal 3 (Family) | Low-income people own a stake in their community. |
| Goal 4 (Agency) | Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. |
| Goal 5 (Agency) | Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. |
| Goal 6 (Family) | Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. |

More Information:

Community Action Partnership (CAP) - www.communityactionpartnership.com

Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW) - www.capl原因.org

National Association For State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) - www.nascsp.org

National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) - <http://www.ncaf.org/>

Statewide Software Analysis

The AIMS panel study discovered that a growing number of statewide client tracking systems have been purchased in recent years. This increase in statewide systems has been influenced by the factors referenced in this paper under the heading: Primary Motivations to Develop an Enterprise System. In addition, a number of states were able to initiate long-standing plans for statewide projects using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding.

The following description summarizes known statewide projects based on their launch dates. This list is compiled as of August 2011 and represents the best information available about each project. No inference is intended regarding the comparative value of a particular solution, because the data collection requirements in each state are unique. The AIMS panel expects that this information will be continually revised to reflect future developments in statewide enterprise systems.

States with Established Systems (Project Time line of Five or More Years)

Project managers and vendors in these states have mastered the difficulties of multi-year, multi-program enterprise software with an admirable perseverance. While this group acknowledges that many aspects of such projects are quite challenging, their success provides encouragement to the network by demonstrating that unified, consistent efforts will produce a viable shared system for multiple agencies.

Kentucky

2003 - Custom Development

The Kentucky state association (KACA) is responsible for development and maintenance of the statewide data system (CASTANET) utilized by the 23 agencies in the state. The system was developed by KACA IT Staff providing a maximum flexibility to respond to change requests. KACA cites multiple instances of leveraging this internal capacity to provide significant and measurable cost savings in delivering services. Reports are generated to respond to external queries about the impact of services on the residents of Kentucky. Advanced capabilities have been developed, such as the ability for case workers to stop in-progress utility disconnects via the software. KACA has also built interfaces between CASTANET and external systems for streamlined and integrated processing. A strong relationship has been developed with utility companies as a result of financial and process efficiencies resulting from this project.

Programs tracked include: ROMA collection and reporting, State Activities and Milestones, Progress and Achievement Plans, Scale Assessments, Case notes, Family Budgeting, Home Energy Assistance and Emergency Utility Assistance, Food and Nutrition, Homeless Assistance, Information and Referrals, Weatherization workflow, General Services and CSBG IS Demographics (Section G) Reporting.

Minnesota

2004 - Adsystem Software

Minnesota's VISIONS software system is a customized implementation of Adsystem's client tracking software and is used by all Community Action Agencies in the state. As the technology platform supporting most agencies was retired, the Minnesota State Office of Economic Opportunity worked with the members of the state association (MinnCAP) to design and implement a shared, hosted statewide system. A statewide steering group oversees the progress of VISIONS development and a statewide peer support group assists with training needs.

The software allows local agency administrators to configure VISIONS to track client data for unique local service programs without contacting IT development staff. In addition, a number of common modules have been developed including Weatherization and Head Start. VISIONS can pre-print and process “scan sheets” populated with client data to collect information, such as meal counts or attendance. These sheets are then electronically scanned into the database using Optical Character Recognition. The system also enables collection of service data via individual swipe cards issued to clients. Data exchanges have been developed with external systems including a state run LIHEAP system. Standard reports and ad-hoc reports are available to meet agency, state and national tracking requirements, including the CSBG/IS report. VISIONS provides a common platform along with a flexible framework for agencies to fully automate business processes.

Missouri

2001 - Adsystem Software

Intensive research and conceptual discussions for a statewide system began in 2001. The project survived a significant setback when the previous vendor left the software industry after eighteen months of work. In 2005, Adsystem began to implement the system for Missouri under the leadership of the state association (MACA).

All agencies in Missouri utilize the system and client services are tracked for multiple programs, including core CSBG Services, LIHEAP, Family Support, Case Management, Tax Assistance and Emergency Assistance. The software was customized to align with LIHEAP business processes to streamline and improve the accuracy of payments. Aggregate reports for state and national funders, including the CSBG/IS report, are routinely produced from this system.

Montana

1997 - Custom Development

Montana’s statewide system is managed by the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS selected a third party vendor for software development. The project provides a model of effective vendor management during changes in vendor corporate structure. Work began in 1997 to develop the Central Database Systems (CDS) as a central data repository for Montana’s 10 Human Resource Development Councils (HDRC).

CDS tracks all CSBG funded programs and also has modules for LIHEAP, Web Based Energy Audit, Mobile Energy Audit, Energy Education and HMIS. The system allows agencies to implement and track progress on grant work plans and to meet requirements for ROMA tracking and reporting. Customer satisfaction surveys are generated and tracked through CDS. A SNAP web service allows LIHEAP eligible clients with utility costs included in rent to receive additional food assistance. Over 400 Office of Public Assistance users, who are not part of the Community Action HDRCs, are provided with access to this data. In addition, the Veterans Administration is utilizing the HMIS module.

Future modifications include storing “before” and “after” pictures for Weatherization services and integrating GIS into the software. Currently an interface for Social Security number verification is being developed. The Montana DHHS continues to leverage significant investments in technology to develop new modules and align CDS with changing requirements for data collection and reporting.

Nebraska

2003 - ServicePoint Software

The state association (CAN) provides administrative oversight for a statewide implementation of ServicePoint software for Nebraska. Use of the software is mandated by the State of Nebraska. Programs for data collection include CSBG services, ROMA reporting, CSBG/IS Report, LIHEAP, Weatherization and Homeless Services. Additional service programs may be configured and tracked within ServicePoint. System administrators have developed processes for addressing service delivery across state boundaries within a metropolitan service area.

Ohio

2003 - Custom Development

The Ohio OCEAN project is a collaborative partnership between the Ohio Department of Development (Development) and the Corporation for Appalachian Development (COAD). Governed by a board of project stakeholders, the approach is a multi-year, multi-phased development to provide integrated data collection for all of Ohio's Community Action Agencies. Early implementations of the software were based on common data elements between CSBG, ROMA, Weatherization, LIHEAP and several utility payment assistance programs.

Phase one of OCEAN development established these core database elements and modules to track Weatherization and Energy Assistance. This effort has provided a hub for future modules, including the ability to collect CSBG, ROMA and related service data as well as an interface for income verification, financial systems and grant requests. Phase two extends the functionality of the Weatherization module, as well as provides tighter integration with Ohio's Interactive Voice Recognition and Automated Call Distribution (IVR/ACD) system in support of energy assistance programs.

West Virginia

2005 - DBA Facs Pro Software

The statewide system for West Virginia is an implementation of DBA Facs Pro. The original software purchase and development was managed by the state association (WVCAP). As the system was adopted across the state, the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) assumed oversight of DBA Facs Pro. System costs are covered by OEO funds and the vendor contract is managed by OEO. Utilization of the system is mandated for the 16 multi-county agencies in West Virginia.

Typically 75% of clients return for services each year through this unified intake system. Data sharing agreements are established between agencies so that client data can seamlessly move from agency to agency. Other non-Community Action nonprofits also use the HMIS module in DBA Facs Pro, including emergency shelters, The Salvation Army and churches.

The system tracks CSBG services, Head Start, Weatherization, and HMIS. Custom programs can be configured within the system and aligned with ROMA data collection. Ad hoc reporting is available along with standard reports. The state office generates the CSBG/IS report as a single report. Other information available to the state office includes board composition, bylaws, meeting minutes and attendance for compliance monitoring. An eligibility calculator searches statewide program offerings for clients. ROMA action plans function as a workflow manager for a client or a program and ROMA reports provide an analysis of progress on a standard scale. DBA Facs Pro also tracks group activities and volunteer hours.

States with More Recent Projects That Are Actively Collecting Data for State or National Reports (Less than Five Years in Existence)

This group of states has leveraged more recent advances in hosting and web-based technologies to shorten the project time line and enter the implementation phase more rapidly. These projects are now multi-year efforts which are actively deployed. Project managers and vendors have quickly adapted their approach to avoid the classic challenges which endanger the success of software projects.

Alabama

2010 - DBA Facs Pro

Alabama is currently in the third year of a statewide database project. Early leadership was provided from the Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA). CAPNA operates programs in fourteen counties and the agency developed an implementation of DBA Facs Pro which automated business processes and data collection in a single system. In 2009, the Alabama Department of Economic Community Affairs (ADECA) purchased software licenses for all agencies and assumed oversight for the software system.

In addition to custom programs which may be configured on an agency basis, DBA Facs Pro provides Alabama with a number of standardized modules. These include CSBG, LIHEAP, Weatherization, Head Start and Housing Programs. The eligibility processes captured by the software for LIHEAP are especially complex. Agencies are able to track and report progress towards ROMA goals for individuals and programs.

Early results from the software implementation are encouraging. Reports have been rapidly generated in response to inquiries from state legislators. Significant financial savings have resulted from identifying incorrectly coded payment assistance requests. DBA Facs Pro has been used by one agency to collect outreach data in a real-time remote operation at city hall offices. The system also produces the CSBG/IS report which is generated by ADECA. Stakeholders have invested significant resources in user training and encouraged user acceptance as the new modules are implemented.

Connecticut

2010 - SMC Partners Software

In comparison to most statewide systems, the data strategy implemented in Connecticut is unique. The state association (CAFCA) provides oversight for several components of a collaborative system developed by SMC Partners. A local agency, New Opportunities Inc (NOI), also provides subject matter expertise for the project. Analysis of the state's diverse client tracking systems identified the formidable challenge of consolidating these systems into one shared system. Rather than a single real-time system for all agencies, the approach focused upon building a common data warehouse and providing standard interfaces to export data into the system from a wide range of client tracking software applications.

The system uses a master person index and an identification algorithm to create an unduplicated count. The database stores varied customer data elements, including demographics, services and outcomes. ROMA reports and other standard reports provide a full picture of customer and agency performance. The project stakeholders continue to work to increase the number of programs transmitting data into the system and to minimize any delay in populating the database. Currently programs may upload data on a nightly basis to the data warehouse providing up-to-date statewide reports.

Two related products are interoperable with the central data warehouse. The ABC Benefits Calculator enables a customer or case worker to enter personal and family information and identify local, state, and federal programs for which the client may be eligible, along with a preliminary calculation of potential SNAP benefits. In addition, SMC offers a Case Management System for local agencies to track client needs assessment, enrollment, outcomes and service delivery for a range of Community Action programs. The ABC Calculator and the Case Management System are interoperable with the central data warehouse.

Massachusetts

2008 - Community Networks Software

The Massachusetts Division of Community Services (DCS) employed Community Networks to develop a system to collect and report data from all local agencies. Community Networks provides local client tracking systems to many of the agencies in the state. However, DCS does not mandate the systems used by local agencies. Rather agencies are encouraged to employ the vendor and software believed to be most appropriate for managing agency business processes specific to the agency.

The statewide data strategy involved building a system capable of accepting periodic data transfers for specific programs, including CSBG services, LIHEAP, Weatherization and Housing Development. Further, business processes related to the CSBG work plan application, approval and reporting between the DCS and the agencies were developed as a web based system. DCS sought to align the software with the successful business model already in place by simply automating the existing business practices.

The project has resulted in an iterative system between DCS and the local agencies in which CSBG work plans are developed in the shared system. Agencies continue to modify the work plan in response to DCS guidance until the plan is approved. Budgets for CSBG, LIHEAP and Weatherization follow a similar approval process. Agencies then use the system for cash requests. Final reports, including the CSBG/IS report, are generated from the system at the end of the grant period.

A Benefits Enrollment and Coordination System (BECS) is also available for CSBG and related services provided by agencies. Case workers can search the system for services which meet the needs of a particular client. The system generates secure referrals for qualified applicants.

Michigan

2010 - DBA Facs Pro Software

The state of Michigan has implemented a customized version of DBA Facs Pro for all Community Action Agencies. The software was purchased by the state association (MCAAA) and the project is managed by the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS). Project stakeholders significantly customized the Weatherization module to align the software with specific state business processes. Michigan is implementing modules for tracking CSBG services, emergency services, rental assistance, food assistance, LIHEAP, housing and migrant services, and tax assistance. Project challenges have been met with an aggressive training program and by adapting processes to technology infrastructure in rural areas. Future plans include developing interfaces between DBA Facs Pro and external tracking systems.

Oklahoma

2009 - CAPTAIN

The strategy for client data collection in Oklahoma was initiated by the North East Oklahoma Community Action Agency (NEOCAA). The Executive Director led a research project to identify a software vendor best suited to meet the needs of NEOCAA. This search concluded by selecting CAPTAIN software developed by CAP Systems as the agency tracking software. NEOCAA was particularly impressed with the comprehensive implementation of the CAPTAIN system by a local New York agency, Chautauqua Opportunities Inc (COI). Soon after implementation began at NEOCAA, the project expanded to include all of Oklahoma's Community Action Agencies.

NEOCAA and CAP Systems worked together to adapt the software to the business processes specific to Oklahoma's client intake model. Each agency is further able to configure the system to model the specific business processes required in their local community. Over half of the local agencies have been entering data for a year; the remaining agencies are newly on board.

The software collects data for CSBG Services, Head Start, Weatherization, financial assistance, tax assistance, and homeless services and can generate the CSBG/IS report. The CSBG/IS report is generated centrally by the state of Oklahoma Department of Commerce. CAPTAIN is configured to export data to several external systems, but that interoperability is waiting on the external entities to build capacity to receive the data. The client enrollment business processes are also modeled to manage internal referrals when a client enters through any program door.

States in the Purchasing or Implementation Phase of New Projects

One-time funding, including American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, has certainly given most of these projects a much needed boost. But these stimulus resources have further leveraged matching funds and shared contributions from all stakeholders, including states, state associations, vendors and local agencies. While these projects are comparatively new, their goals are achievable by observing standard project management practices.

Arizona

2011 - CAP60 Software

The Arizona state association (AZCAA) purchased CAP60 software for local agencies in 2011 with an anticipated rollout date of August 2011. CAP60 contains standard modules for a number of community services programs. The software is strictly web-based with no local installation and is designed to accept and process requests for design customizations within a short turnaround time. Other features of value to agencies include ad-hoc reporting and workflow management. Several large agencies will work with CAP60 to exchange data with legacy systems thus providing a single statewide data repository for CSBG and related data. The project will begin with data collection for CSBG services, Weatherization, Emergency Assistance and Fuel Assistance to be followed by other programs.

Arkansas

2010 - Custom Development

The Arkansas state association (ACAAA) has engaged IT staff at a local agency (CAPCA) to develop a web-based system (ACAATARS) as a shared system for client tracking. The system is currently being piloted by several agencies and development is ongoing to extend the existing modules and provide additional functionality. The software will track data for CSBG, ROMA, case management, volunteer management, donation tracking, LIHEAP and surveys. The system is configurable for additional program tracking.

Illinois

2010 - Custom Software

The Illinois Division of Economic Opportunity has engaged a software contractor to develop a modular system (STARS) for tracking client services in Community Action Agencies. The system is a hosted, shared system available to all agencies in the state. The first module rolled out has been the CSBG component to be followed by LIHEAP and Weatherization. The modular design will allow other program tracking to be implemented at a future time. The system will produce a single statewide report for Community Action.

Indiana

2010 - Client Track Software

The state of Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority has purchased the Client Track software for tracking CSBG and related program services by local agencies. A software contractor has been engaged to manage the IT aspects of the implementation and IHCD staff members are providing overall project management and user training. Data collection has begun with central CSBG services and will progress to other programs as the project plan unfolds.

Kansas

2011 - Selecting

The state association of Kansas (KACAP) has issued an RFP for a web based software system based on case management and family development principles to enable local agencies to meet reporting requirements for common Community Action Agency programs.

Louisiana

2011 - CAP60 Software

The Louisiana state CSBG office has purchased the CAP60 software for use in 42 local agencies. System plans include tracking all programs administered by agencies including CSBG services, housing services, food assistance, LIHEAP, Weatherization and transportation services. Extensive planning, training and design is underway for this project. The state association (LACAP) will manage project implementation and ongoing operations.

Rhode Island

2011 - Client Track Software

The Rhode Island Community Action Association (RICAA) has purchased the Client Track software for use by agencies in Rhode Island. The project team is currently collecting requirements and planning system configuration. This will be followed by system setup and testing and training before final rollout to the end users. Multiple programs and services are to be tracked including CSBG services, children and youth programs, Head Start, Weatherization, LIHEAP, food and nutrition services, housing services, tax assistance, family development, job skills training and parenting skills.

South Carolina

2011 - DBA Facs Pro Software

The state of South Carolina Office of Economic Opportunity is implementing DBA Facs Pro software for local agencies to track Weatherization, LIHEAP and other services. Additional tracking and configuration is available using this software.

Utah

2011 - DBA Facs Pro Software

The state of Utah has purchased and deployed DBA Facs Pro for Community Action programs and other agencies. The software is used for client tracking, including CSBG services, action plans, client interventions and food bank services.