

Public welfare agency burdened by paper processes. Xerox delivered needed relief.

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-James A. Weaver, Acting CIO, Departments of Human Services



BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services is a statewide enterprise that provides care and support to the state’s most vulnerable citizens. It works to promote, improve and help maintain the highest quality of life for Pennsylvania families by providing access to services that keep citizens safe and healthy. There are 2,754,000 unique individuals who receive a service from a PA DHS program. This means that for every 2.1 employed people in Pennsylvania, one person is receiving a benefit from PA DSH.

There are seven program offices within the PA DHS. Services provided to citizens make up all parts of life – from healthcare and assistance for low-income families to adoption and foster care, to housing and caring for older adults. Each program is responsible for screening, determining eligibility and enrolling participants in the assistance programs related to their services.

CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT

The Challenge

- One of Pennsylvania’s largest state agencies, serving nearly a third of citizens had paper-heavy processes to handle correspondence, claims and much more
- County offices relied on paper forms that were continually updated and reprinted, at high cost
- Citizen data must be kept private and secure

The Solution

- Xerox® DocuShare® ECM for automated processes such as correspondence tracking, claims processing, statewide reporting and much more
- DocuShare use as a digital filing cabinet to store 3 million documents ranging from paternity acknowledgment to licenses, all on-line, secure and searchable

The Results

- 13,000 agency workers can access on-line forms and records instantly
- 78,000 claims processed annually, with 90% less turnaround time and 80 staff hours saved monthly
- 17 file cabinets eliminated for just one project
- Hundreds of thousands of dollars savings from making forms digital

The health and human services industry is paperwork intensive. For every 2.1 employed people in Pennsylvania, one person is receiving a benefit.

THE CHALLENGE

The health and human services industry is paperwork intensive, and it became a significant challenge to manage all the documents and unstructured data the agency requires. For example, the agency receives 78,000 welfare client appeals annually, requiring hundreds of hours of photocopying, collating and documenting cases.

Employees had difficulties locating information, with files in cabinets that were spread across the state. Security was also a concern, as much of the data in the documents maintained by the states contains personally identifiable information about clients.

“Our applicants and clients are required to provide us with information ranging from their income details to their health records to their Social Security number – and they count on us to keep that data secure,” said James A. Weaver, acting chief information officer for the Departments of Human Services, Insurance and Aging. “We needed to transition from paper-based document management to a modernized, secure digital program to make sure we were managing data responsibly.”

THE SOLUTION

In 2005, the case load volume for each of PA DHS's 155 statewide offices was heavy, and the agency struggled with a cumbersome, error-prone, paper-based approach to screening and enrolling applicants for assistance programs such as Food Stamps and public housing. In some cases, DHS employees spent more time handling paperwork for applications than reviewing the applicant's eligibility. PA DHS engaged SRC Solutions to deploy Xerox® DocuShare in 2005 in an effort to convert its paper documents to digital. The agency planned to re-engineer processes for case workers and others, and gain control of the vast amounts of documents flowing through its offices.

PA DHS originally used DocuShare to address two issues. It was a digital filing cabinet to store forms for all county assistant offices. Forms previously had to be reprinted each time an address changed or a policy was updated, wasting paper and costing thousands of dollars per office. With DocuShare, changes to forms are automated and made digitally to nearly 400 forms, and print is done on-demand. The new workflow saves hundreds of thousands of dollars.

PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The state is responsible for tracking paternity acknowledgements for all children born out of wedlock. Xerox® DocuShare is leveraged to store this confidential and sensitive information, reducing the time to process a request for information from days to seconds, with postage costs dramatically reduced.

CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING

DocuShare is used to manage correspondence tracking. Certain types of correspondence legally require a response within a specific timeframe, so an efficient workflow is important. Each piece of correspondence is given a code for the department best suited to address it. After the department responds, the correspondence is digitally routed back to the secretary's office for final approval, and sent back to the constituent.

AUDIT PREPARATION

As a state agency that receives federal funds, it is subject to audits at any time. Prior to DocuShare, when the government requested information, employees had to physically weed through boxes of files. DocuShare now tracks every time someone accesses every document, an important record to show during an audit given the sensitive, personally identifiable information contained within the documents. With the input of several search terms, the agency can provide a comprehensive report in response to a federal request.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND FEMA

Another important use of DocuShare is to store information related to disaster recovery and FEMA. A collaboration of information between agencies expedites efficient payment to individuals, so there is no interruption in services in the event of a disaster.

THE RESULTS

In July 2012, PA DHS was recognized by the state with the Governor's Innovator Award for dramatically reducing the work hours and processing time it takes to send welfare client appeals to the court system.

- By handling the 78,000 annual claims electronically via Xerox® DocuShare®, the agency will save 80 hours of staff work per month, and reduce time to get a case to Commonwealth Court from eight weeks to less than one week – an almost 90 percent decrease in processing time.

- There are approximately three million documents stored in DocuShare, and more than 13,000 DocuShare users at PA DHS.
- The improvement in document security is significant – there is less risk involved with personally identifiable information.
- The agency is always prepared for a federal audit.
- Documents and information can be located within seconds. And since employees can simply access any document they need on DocuShare, network traffic have been reduced as people upload documents to DocuShare instead of sending mass emails with attachments.
- Paper reduction has also cleared agency office space: for one project alone, 17 file cabinets were eliminated when documents were digitized and stored in DocuShare.
- DocuShare also protects the agency against data loss in the event of disaster, and response time during an unforeseen interruption. When Pennsylvania experienced severe flooding, the workflow was able to ensure that clients continued to receive payment and services in a timely manner.

Digital solutions include:

- Track and process public correspondence
- Digitize, store and retrieve aid applications and case files
- Publish most recent agency forms
- Store information on child fatalities
- Projects for managed care
- Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program
- Store licenses to improve ease of access and disaster recovery protection
- Generate reports that are automatically distributed throughout the state
- Court records, adjudications and audio files of case resolutions

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