Human Services Policy Advisors Institute

Integrated Eligibility Systems
Housekeeping Items

MEETING IS NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION
During this meeting we hope to generate a frank and open dialogue. For that reason, our discussion today is closed door and not for attribution.

CHAT IS OPEN
Please leverage the chat functionality to share materials, ask questions, provide feedback, etc.

CONTACT FOR TECHNICAL HELP
For technical issues, please chat or email Mackenzi Matthews – mmatthews@nga.org

INCLUDE STATE IN NAME
Please re-name yourself to include your name and state (John, DE)
Agenda

New & Emerging Issues

Arkansas

Hawai’i

Open Discussion: Q&A
New & Emerging Issues

Small Group Discussion on Integrating Eligibility Systems in your State
Breakout Room Questions

• Considering your state’s current eligibility systems, what challenges are you facing in successfully reaching current benefit recipients or those eligible for benefits?

• What tools do you need in order to move forward in addressing these challenges?

• Humble Brags – Share an accomplishment your state has experienced in the field of human services workforce.
Today’s Topic

Integrated Eligibility Systems
Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) Overview
Arkansas Integrated Eligibility Vision

Framework for the State’s Health and Human Services Vision
High Performance Person-Centered Model of Practice Enabled by Technology
DHS Integrated Eligibility Vision

- Person/Family Centric Model
- Lowers Technology Risk and Costs
- Robust Self-Service Improves Customer Satisfaction
- Improves Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Increases Access to Data for Clients and Staff
- Integrated Platform / Decreases Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

DHS Objectives
DHS ARIES GOALS

- Provide a full service single streamlined application
- Use a person/family centric approach in the eligibility determination process
- Determine eligibility for Medicaid, SNAP and TEA in one system. Collect data and refer for other programs (VA, WIC, LIHEAP, CSE and Child Care)
- Implement a universal approach to application and case management processes
- Develop efficient workload management processes for all programs
- Train a flexible, customer focused workforce proficient in all programs
- Create a customer friendly experience when clients interact with DHS online, in person or by phone
- Create an efficient, worker friendly system that will enable process improvement
ARIES Overview

What is ARIES?

- The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) fully implemented the Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) in May 2022 to streamline and modernize the technologies used to serve Arkansans applying and receiving benefits for: Health Care, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program, and Refugee Cash Assistance. ARIES also produces referrals for Child Care Assistance and Veterans’ Assistance.

- ARIES is an integrated eligibility system designed to make applying for assistance less complicated and streamline work for DHS staff.

- Teams with representatives across multiple DHS divisions, Office of Information Technology, Finance, Interface partners, and other involved state agencies worked diligently since April 2019 to design, develop, and implement the new system to:
  - Be more family-focused, so that clients don’t have to put in separate applications for each program or for each family member (There were up to 8 different applications before.)
  - Adapt to any smart device, making it easier for clients who don’t have desktop computers to apply using other technologies
  - Offer a new worker portal that makes it easier for employees to assist clients and automatically accepts information a client enters online

- ARIES replaced two existing eligibility systems and eliminated reliance on the State’s mainframe.
• Access Arkansas website was upgraded:
  • Mobile friendly across phone, tablet, laptops, and desktop devices
  • English, Spanish, and Marshallese translation on screen
  • 24/7 availability
  • In addition to being able to apply online, clients can:
    • Manage their personal information
    • Check the status of their cases
    • Set up email and / or text alert preferences
    • Ability to opt in to electronic rather than traditional paper notices
    • View previous notices
    • Report changes
    • Renew their coverage
    • Upload documents directly into their cases
    • Schedule and reschedule eligibility interviews for SNAP / TEA
Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System provides benefits to workers, customers and service providers with specific functionality to support each end-user.

ARIES Components

- Prescreen
- Apply for Benefits
- Manage my Account
  - Renew Benefits
  - Report Changes
- Upload Verifications
- View Electronic Notices
- Schedule Appointment

Citizen Portal

Worker Portal

- Application Registration
- Enterprise Master Client Index (EMCI)
- Intake
- Data Collection
- Scheduling
- Correspondence
- Reports
- Referrals
- Interfaces

Community Partners Portal

- Serve as Authorized Representative
- Assist clients with applying for services
  - Scheduling appointments
  - Reporting changes
  - Renew Benefits
  - Upload and send documents to DHS
  - Check status of applications and Renewals
DHS used several implementation strategies to help the new system to be successful long-term, including:

- Ongoing testing, that began in January 2020, to ensure system is ready
- Broad and robust internal training and communication efforts to ensure staff understand what the new system can do and know how to use it. These efforts are monitored and analyzed for lessons learned and potential changes.
- A rollout strategy to carefully implement the system through a series of releases that allows time for feedback and changes
- Simplified language on a fifth to seventh grade reading level used for both Access Arkansas and the new letters that the system will send clients
- Designing the system with helpful guidance for clients throughout the online application, clear direction, and a help section that includes “how-to” videos and answers to frequently asked questions
- Holding focus groups that allow real clients to review our notices and the application and give us real feedback we can implement
- Resources for those who cannot or will not use the online system:
  - A redesigned paper application
  - Ways to get help: DHS helpline, calling a county office, visiting a county office
  - All notices mailed unless the client opts for paperless
  - Information and forms can be mailed, faxed, or delivered to a county office. The notice lists the ways a client can return information.
ARIES Overview

New Tools
## ARIES Overview

### New Tools

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<tr>
<th>Universal Caseload:</th>
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<td>In Arkansas, we no longer do our work for Medicaid, SNAP, and TEA based on county lines. We work as one statewide team. Anyone, anywhere can work on a case for a client.</td>
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### Advantages

- More consistent services statewide.
- Oldest / highest priority work always done first.
- Turnover / vacancies at local level have less of an impact on the overall service to clients.
- No specific caseloads per worker, only productivity expectations per worker.

### Implementation Challenges

- Big change and a big adjustment for staff and clients
- Responsibility for resource allocation rises to the executive level, rather than local unit level.
- Client education campaign is necessary
- Staff training / talking points are a must.
We Care. We Act. We Change Lives.
Background: Hawai‘i Career Acceleration Navigator (HI CAN)

- In early 2021, Hawai‘i applied for and was awarded an NGA Workforce Innovation Network (WIN) Grant
- Alignment with Governor Ige’s Administration to explore virtual opportunities to provide digital access to public services.
- Hawai‘i convened a cross-agency team to develop a comprehensive and user-friendly online service delivery hub in partnership with RIPL.
- The outcome was HI CAN, a virtual one-stop that leverages cloud technology to provide jobseekers with customized pathways to employment and various other support services provided by the State of Hawai‘i.
HI CAN Partnership

The State of Hawai‘i has partnered with RIPL to develop HI CAN which uses data, science, and technology to help the state connect Hawai‘i jobseekers to in-demand skills and careers and other supportive services they may need while exploring new career opportunities.

### State of Hawai‘i

- **Office of the Governor**
- **Department of Labor and Industrial Relations**
  - Workforce Development Division
  - Unemployment Insurance Division
  - Workforce Development Council
- **Department of Human Services (DHS)**
  - Director’s Office and Enterprise Office
  - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- **Office of Enterprise Technology**

### Research Improving People’s Lives (RIPL)

Tech-for-Social-Impact Non-profit
HI CAN Benefits: “Warm Hand-offs” to DHS Services

Referral Version 1

HI CAN provides jobseekers with information about a network of wraparound services to support them as they explore new career opportunities.

Jobseekers are directed to relevant external sites to learn more about financial assistance programs and how to apply for DHS social benefit programs.
## Proposed Eligibility Predictor and Application Autofill User Journey

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<th>User Opens Tool</th>
<th>User Information is Gathered</th>
<th>User Info is Checked Against DHS Requirements</th>
<th>User is Presented with Results</th>
<th>User Submits Application to be Processed</th>
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<tr>
<td>• User clicks on an eligibility screener button on the financial support page of HI CAN to begin the screening process.</td>
<td>• HI CAN pulls relevant user information to begin the process, and user is asked to input minimal supplemental info.</td>
<td>• HI CAN compares user info against basic eligibility requirements for multiple DHS programs.</td>
<td>• HI CAN will surface basic information about those programs the user is likely eligible for and user selects programs they would like to apply for.</td>
<td>• Relevant information available in HI CAN will be ported into a DHS &quot;starter application&quot; and user will be prompted to fill in remaining required fields.</td>
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Challenges and Roadblocks

- Change of Administration and Governor’s Cabinet
- RIPL Contract manager
- Willingness for collaboration and not return to siloed work
- Continued integration of a public assistance eligibility calculator and pre-fill application
  - Each program has their own eligibility criteria and federal poverty level (FPL)
  - Many nuances of age, program requirements, time limits, households, etc.
  - Current data are housed on a range of platforms
- Unknown maintenance costs and feasibility of sharing costs between departments
Takeaways for States

The HI CAN team adopted innovative strategies to launch a first of its kind platform to connect unemployment claimants with high-impact career pathways and provide other states with information on key lessons learned as they seek to elevate the user experience for unemployed people and other jobseekers.

- **Embrace innovative cloud infrastructure** to unlock data and create a seamless user experience.
- **Leverage cutting-edge data science practices**, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- Foster strong **leadership and deliberate collaboration**.
- Conduct **extensive user research and product testing** and iterate accordingly to maximize user experience and ensure alignment with cultural values.
- **Take advantage of external funding sources**, like RIPL’s Innovation Catalyst Grants which fund end-to-end technical assistance to develop customized solutions.
Open Discussion: Q&A
Closing and Next Steps
The Children and Families Team

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