



MTS History

2000: Interim final rule for tribal child support programs published

2002-2005: Tribal Systems Workgroup studied feasibility of automating tribal child support programs, developed essential system requirements, and created the general system design

2004: Final rule for tribal child support programs published (45 CFR Part 309)

2006: Feasibility study, market study and cost-benefit analysis for MTS completed

2007: Concurrence of ACF Assistant Secretary to build MTS; software development begins

2009: Forest County Potawatomi Community selected to pilot test the MTS

2010: Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma joins pilot testing; tribal system regulations published (45 CFR Part 310)

2012: MTS Pilot ended

2013: EBCI begins installation as the first OCSE-supported tribe

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Happy New Year from the MTS Team



Happy New Year!

We wish you and your families a very happy 2014. We look forward to a great year ahead for the Model Tribal System as we complete the implementation at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and begin working

with the Cherokee Nation. We are celebrating the success of the MTS Service Group, a consortia operated by the Forest County Potawatomi Community that is working with both Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and Lac Courte Oreilles tribes on their implementations. A second consortia is set to ramp-up shortly led by EBCI, with the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma first to join, followed by installation of the Suquamish Tribe. As these implementations work to a close, we will be adding more tribes to the MTS family. If you have any questions regarding the MTS or an implementation for 2014, please contact us at MTSProject@acf.hhs.gov.

New Policy Document Released: Action Transmittal 13-04



We distributed an [Action Transmittal \(AT-13-04\)](#) to respond to questions raised during a conversation on July 11, 2013, held in conjunction with the ACF Tribal Consultation. During that meeting, we discussed the tribal APD submission process and other issues. This AT answers questions on the following topics:

- MTS General Information
- Advance Planning Documents
- MTS Change Control Board

Tribes are encouraged to read the entire AT-13-04, available on the tribal systems page of our website, and become familiar with its contents. The document represents OCSE policy on a wide range of topics. Here are some of the questions answered in the AT.

What is a tribal organization?

For the purposes of the MTS, a tribal organization is comprised of a lead tribe that has experience with the MTS and is available for hire by other member





tribes. If you choose the “Tribal Organization Supported” path, you will be hiring a lead tribe to provide one or more services on your behalf, such as MTS implementation, operations, and maintenance. These organizations can provide a range of services, including training, data clean-up, data conversion, help desk services, hosting, software maintenance, and software development. In this instance, the term “tribal organization” is specific to operation of the MTS and does not change the definition of “Tribal Organization” found at 45 CFR 309.05.

What is a lead tribe?

A lead tribe is a tribe that serves as the head of a tribal organization and offers MTS services to member tribes.

What is a member tribe?

A member tribe is a tribe that belongs to a tribal organization and purchases MTS support from a lead tribe.

Is there an MTS help desk for “OCSE Supported” tribes?

Yes. When a tribe chooses the “OCSE Supported” pathway, it will be given a phone number for both technical and end-user support throughout the implementation period. The exact hours of the help desk are negotiated with each tribe, as determined by the tribe’s needs and documented in the tribe’s memorandum of understanding.

How long does it take to implement the MTS?

For a tribe with 500 cases, it may take up to 6 months. The implementation phases and activities are listed below.

| Implementation Phases | Activities Included |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Planning and Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating the existing IT infrastructure• Writing the Advance Planning Document (APD).• Getting the APD approved• Acquiring needed hardware and software |
| Installation Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing current business practices• Documenting the “as is” process• Documenting new business processes that need to be adjusted because of the MTS• Gaining stakeholder approval of the new processes |
| Installation and Preliminary Test | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installing the physical MTS test, production and development environments• Reviewing configuration options and setting up the desired configuration• Developing test data and entering it into the MTS for testing purposes• Running preliminary tests to ensure that the system was configured appropriately |
| Conversion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training staff who will be using the MTS• Instituting a help desk to assist end-users• Converting cases from the tribe’s existing system to the MTS (either manually or automatically)• Reviewing the converted data to ensure that the data transferred correctly• Fixing or entering any data that was not converted or was not converted completely |
| Document Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying all documents that will need to be created or modified to support tribal business processes• Creating/updating existing MTS document templates to align with tribal practices• Creation of test data needed to test the documents• Creation of new templates as-needed• Reviewing completed documents and verifying them with needed stakeholders |



A sample six-month project may look similar to this:

| | Jan | Feb | March | April | May | June |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Planning and Acquisition | | | | | | |
| Installation Preparation | | | | | | |
| Installation and Preliminary Test | | | | | | |
| Conversion | | | | | | |
| Document Preparation | | | | | | |

It is important to note that this is merely an example for illustrative purposes. The length of individual implementation will vary based on the number of cases to be transferred, available resources, schedule, and other factors.

How much does the MTS cost?

The MTS has no built-in licensing costs or fees for any of its components, including the database, document management software, programming code, and documentation. The only expense is for the installation, maintenance, and ongoing operation of the system. These costs will vary depending on a number of factors, including:

- How many existing cases need to be cleaned-up, converted, or transferred?
- How many employees will need to be trained?
- Which implementation services can be performed by the tribe or need to be contracted out?
- Is new hardware or software required?
- Who will maintain and operate the MTS on the tribe's behalf?

For illustration purposes, the table below provides an approximation of the costs for installing the MTS in a tribe with 500 cases. As such, tribes should expect variations based on the required activities, including those performed “in-house” or through a contract.

| Item | Approximate Cost |
|---|------------------|
| Tribal Staff – System administrators, caseworkers, financial specialists, supervisor. | \$33,000 |
| Contracts – Data entry, installation support services, wiring, and cable. | 35,000 |
| Hardware/Software – For server. | 8,000 |
| Local Travel – Training attendance. | 500 |
| Training – Windows 7 and Red Hat Linux Usage. | 3,000 |
| Computer Supplies – backup tapes, printer paper, printer cartridges, etc. | 500 |
| Total | \$80,000 |

What is the current MTS National Launch Plan?

OCSE began the National Launch in June 2013. Current planning is for OCSE to install the MTS in new tribal child support programs once every six months. With a finite number of resources, OCSE is limited to supporting one tribe at a time as tribes submit APDs.

**Is there a time limit to decide whether to implement the MTS?**

No. Comprehensive tribes may decide to implement the MTS at any time by contacting OCSE and submitting an APD. The exact timing of the actual implementation will depend on the negotiated schedule in the APD and, if support is required, on the available resources of the tribal organization or OCSE.

Can a start-up tribe receive funding to perform MTS installation activities?

No. As stated at 45 CFR 310.20(a)(1), a tribe must have comprehensive status prior to submitting an APD for federal funding. If a start-up tribe is considering implementing the MTS, there are limits as to what and when MTS-related activities can begin. For example, some activities that can be done include attending demos of the system and working on tribal policies that facilitate the installation and configuration of the MTS after the tribe becomes comprehensive. However, actual implementation activities, such as purchasing hardware and software, attending training, and other system implementation activities, are not permissible during start-up.

MTS Data Conversion Using CSENet



One of the most daunting tasks for a tribe is moving its cases from a state child support enforcement system to the MTS. This is called case conversion. This usually involves printing out information on the tribe's cases from the state system and then manually keying the information into the MTS. This is a tedious task and is prone to error.

During the recent Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) installation, our Sysrad contractor used a clever approach to moving cases from the North Carolina system to the EBCI installation of the MTS. Sysrad asked North Carolina's child support program to generate Child Support Enforcement Network (CSENet) transactions for the cases to be transferred to the EBCI system. CSENet is a federally managed interface that allows state child support systems to exchange information about child support cases. Sysrad then wrote a conversion program to convert the CSENet data blocks into preformatted data that could be loaded directly on to the MTS. Not all data was converted. For example, EBCI entered order information manually, but the participants and cases were set up automatically by the CSENet transfer.

Since all state systems generate CSENet transactions, this approach may be practical for almost all MTS installations that have cases on a state system. This automatic conversion approach saves time and money and improves accuracy by reducing the amount of data entered manually.

For more information or to offer article ideas

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www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/tribal-systems