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MTS FLASH

Office of Child Support Enforcement / Division of State and Tribal Systems

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Labor Day Signifies the "Unofficial" End of Summer

Although the sun shines a few minutes more than the exactly twelve hours of the First Day of Autumn, the Labor Day weekend leading up to the Labor Day Holiday (always the first Monday of September) marks a winding down of Summer for many people. Families with children look forward to school starting again. Perhaps the parents anticipate that even more than the students? Sometimes there is sadness felt for the end of fun, extra time with family and swimming in outdoor swimming pools; however, this can be balanced with the arrival of the much anticipated leaves changing colors and cooler temperatures.

The MTS, like the seasons in every calendar year, experiences ups and downs in activities and constant anticipation of forthcoming tasks that will add to the value of the system for its growing number of users. The MTS Change Control Board (CCB) seeks to monitor and record changes to the system so the users can accept and adapt to changes and see that their inputs are indeed being valued and implemented.

The APD Process

Once a tribe has begun the process of procuring the MTS, there are three possible implementation "paths" they could take: independent installation; installation with direct support from OCSE; or, join a consortium (Forest County Potawatomi and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are currently the two consortia leads).

- Independent Installation – This involves using internal tribal resources or hiring a contractor to assist. This path might take a little longer, but there is documentation available that the tribe's IT resources can reference to work through issues or concerns.
- Installation with Support from OCSE – This is very similar to independent installation, only with a lot more available help and guidance from DSTS personnel before, during, and after installation.
- Join a Consortium – The consortium lead assists with all installation activities from initial configuration support to training and help desk, case prep, data clean-up and conversion, and ongoing operations and maintenance support.

In 2015, DSTS fully expects there will also be at least one or two vendors in the marketplace that will have working knowledge of the MTS and its installation. These vendors would be available to

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support tribes wanting to install and operate the MTS, making Independent Installation even more viable for tribes.

Regardless of which option you choose, the following steps and milestones along the way are important:

1. Develop and submit an Advance Planning Document (APD) for federal funding (we are committed to work with you on drafts to ensure an approvable document upon formal submission). The APD will provide the following information and numbers:

    a. A "Statement of Need" describing why the tribal program needs the MTS.

    b. A "Commitment to Use" statement explaining that the tribal program is committing to use the system for some length of time to ensure a reasonable return on investment for the money spent to install the system.

    c. A "Resource Statement" that lays out resources by position, hours dedicated to the project, salary, and total cost by position and summed by all staff, plus any hardware, software, needed contracts, and any other resources (training, helpdesk, supplies, miscellaneous).

    d. A "Project Management Plan" that describes each discrete task to be accomplished, from initial project start-up to configuration, testing, case prep and clean-up, case conversion, training of staff, help desk and finally, ongoing maintenance and operations support. Each task will have a description, plus a schedule showing start and end dates, and a current status (complete, in-progress, not started, etc.). This section will also provide an organizational chart showing how all of the various stakeholders (tribal program, tribal IT shop, contractors, and other stakeholders) relate to one another and how they report to the program's leadership.

    e. A "Budget" that presents the costs of each resource listed above and how those costs will be expended (broken down by fiscal quarter and summed to the year). A second table will present the tribal and federal shares of the resource costs.

    f. A "Procurement" section that lists and describes each procurement or contract that the tribal program will need to execute before the system can be successfully installed. The information needed on each contract is: Term (start and end dates of the contract), a brief paragraph describing scope and a not-to-exceed amount of the contract. Also, any Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) the program executes with other departments in the tribe must be included here as well.

2. Complete and submit an MOU between the tribal program and OCSE. OCSE has a standard MOU for this purpose. The MOU addresses use of the MTS, security of the data in the system and other duties, such as being a member of the MTS CCB (applicable only if you are a Consortia Lead or a stand-alone installation). Consortium members are represented on the MTS CCB by their Consortium Lead.

3. Begin installation. Most installations take 4-6 months. Installation tasks and the amount of time they should take are as follows (this is an example only):

    a. Day 1. Start Installation.

b. Day 2. Set-up server(s), load software, and test operation.

c. Day 5. Attend one week of training for IT support staff.

d. Day 13. Start configuration planning to completion (configure how the system will work/operate, e.g., set-up batch job scheduling, worker security profiles and roles on the system, and define which modules to use or not use to support your program uniquely).

e. Day 13. Attend training for one week for end-users (caseworkers and financial staff).

f. Day 20. Select 50 cases for testing the configuration you have decided upon. When satisfied, run these fifty cases for two months in parallel with normal case work on the same fifty cases. Compare test results to actual, normal casework to ensure MTS handles these cases correctly based on the tribe's configuration of the system.

g. Day 50. Begin case preparation and clean-up.

h. Day 80. Begin manual case data conversion (estimate one hour per case, eight cases per person per day – this will speed up with experience, but for purposes of an APD give conservative estimates so that money is not depleted too quickly).

i. Day 81. Attend refresher training for the end users.

j. Day 88. Begin Help Desk services.

k. Day 120. Begin MTS operations and maintenance.

Note #1: The APD will fund all installation costs at 90% Federal Financial Participation (FFP). According to the example schedule above, the installation would take four months. The remaining eight months of the fiscal year, your copy of the MTS would be in maintenance and operations mode and funding for this period would also be documented and requested in the APD. An APD almost always runs through the end of the fiscal year in which it is submitted; however, after submission of the first full federal fiscal year budget through the APD, the tribe's future operations and maintenance costs would be funded as a line item in the annual budget and the APD would be closed at that point.

Note #2: The annual program budget that will contain all ongoing MTS maintenance and operations costs will also need to provide a reconciliation of the federal funding approved in the APD (e.g., explain what was and wasn't spent, and how much money is left over. That money then has to be deobligated).

An average APD shouldn't take more than 45-60 days to develop, especially if DSTS can review drafts in advance as part of technical assistance; then final federal review and approval should only take a couple weeks versus the 60 days we have under regulation.

Installation Status

Tribe	Status	Implementation Path
Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC)	Operational	OCSE Supported
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (FCPC Consortium)	Operational	Tribal Organization Supported
Lac Courte Oreilles (FCPC Consortium)	Installing	Tribal Organization Supported
Winnebago Tribe of NE (FCPC Consortium)	Expecting Revised APD	Tribal Organization Supported
White Earth Nation (FCPC Consortium)	APD Approved	Tribal Organization Supported
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI)	Operational	OCSE Supported
Modoc Tribe of OK (EBCI Consortium)	Operational	OCSE Supported
Suquamish Tribe (EBCI Consortium)	Installing	Tribal Organization Supported
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (EBCI Consortium)	APD In-Review	Tribal Organization Supported
Fort Belknap Indian Community (EBCI Consortium)	APD Pending	Tribal Organization Supported
Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boys Reservation (EBCI Consortium)	APD Pending	Tribal Organization Supported
Note: Tribe names in **BOLD** denote current or pending MTS Change Control Board members.		

White Earth Nation

An APD was recently approved by OCSE Commissioner Turetsky to fund installation and begin operations at the White Earth Nation program in Minnesota. With this APD approval, after all parties sign the MOU, White Earth Nation will become a member tribe in the Forest County Potawatomi Community consortium. We welcome White Earth Nation to the MTS Family!

What Can DSTS Do For You?

First and foremost, we developed the ***Model Tribal System*** to help you manage your tribal child support program. The MTS is built using "free and open source software," which makes it free of any licensing costs. This significantly limits the cost of operations and maintenance for tribes using the system. Another factor that contributes to reducing tribal costs is the fact that all installation costs are reimbursed at the 90% federal funding

rate, regardless of when a tribe chooses to install the system. This includes tribes operating their programs now at the 80% FFP matching rate. This 90% FFP match rate funding is only for installation of the MTS; all other installations of systems described below are always at whatever a tribes' federal funding match rate is currently (e.g., 90% in the first three years of the program becoming comprehensive, or 80% thereafter).

In addition, OCSE is willing to assist tribes with installation of the MTS, including of the system's configuration, training, and guidance with data clean-up, data conversion, functional testing (e.g., making sure paternity, enforcement, calendaring, and financials work for a tribe's program), as well as final operational readiness testing. We have resources to support up to two tribes per year with MTS installation, given the fact that an installation usually takes between 4-6 months each. We have also made sure that there are alternatives to OCSE supporting tribes' installation, as well as support for a tribe's on-going operations and maintenance of the MTS. Namely, we do that by federally funding installations supported by consortia of which there are currently two, led by: Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina. Of course, a tribal child support program can also always receive a copy of the MTS to install on their own (without OCSE or a consortium's assistance). In addition, all tribes using the MTS have an opportunity to provide feedback to the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the MTS via the MTS CCB either through the consortia leads, or directly as a stand-alone installation (and thus as a CCB member), not a part of any Consortia.

Second, OCSE has looked at the landscape of alternatives to the MTS which tribal programs may want to consider. For example, OCSE has longstanding regulations and policy that allows federal funding at a tribes' applicable matching rate for office automation, which includes the Osage Nation database that Greg Kidder developed using the ACCESS database program that comes with the Microsoft Office Productivity Suite and which he makes available to tribal programs free of charge. We have also reviewed another program that OCSE understands that some tribes have expressed interest in, namely a program called "Yellowbird" that we understand was developed by Greg Steen. Though the tribal systems regulations at 45 CFR Part 310 do not allow funding of the installation of this system (as it does not qualify as office automation), once the Yellowbird system is fully installed by a tribe with tribe-only funds, OCSE will approve a request for funding of the ongoing operation and maintenance of that software system through the tribe's annual budget process (including a budget amendment should the timing be off of the federal fiscal year cycle).

Third, we continue to support tribal usage (and funding) of state systems operated by tribal programs under intergovernmental cooperative agreements, just as we do with tribal consortia.

Last, OCSE has been supportive of additional IT-related opportunities for tribes, such as the recently-passed legislation granting tribal child support programs access to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS). OCSE now plans to begin determining how tribal programs would gain access to the FPLS technologically and in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible for all involved – tribes and OCSE alike. This additional level of support also extends to OCSE offering technical assistance to tribes wanting to build their own child support system using tribe-only funding, as well as in assisting tribal programs with planning for a new system, including conducting a Feasibility Study and an Analysis of Alternatives to help in making such a decision.

Alternatively, a tribe might want to bring these support services in-house, or possibly do both – an outside hire of Greg Kidder as well as hire a part-time person

in-house for support. Either or both of those options are acceptable and could be federally funded. In fact, hiring someone and bringing these services in-house for a year or two while that person learns under the tutelage of staff supporting Yellowbird on the Osage Nation database program might be a great option, ensuring that experienced support staff would remain available, regardless of future contracting choices.

Meet the MTS Team: Mike Goshorn

This month we are pleased to introduce Mike Goshorn. Mike has managed and directed development of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) functionality for MTS, which provides Electronic Funds Transfer capability for payments to participants and between MTS and state disbursement units.

Mike has also applied his systems architecture expertise to assessing the reliability and quality aspects of the MTS application and environments. Mike has 20 years of experience in software development. This includes serving for six years as a senior architect for a Medicaid Enrollment Broker product used by seven states. His expertise includes software development, process management including configuration management, software engineering best practices, and program/team management.

Mike is excited about working at OCSE, and working with the MTS application.

Mike spent much of his youth as an Army dependent, moving all over the United States. Mike is married to Kelly and he has three children: a daughter, 20, and two sons, 17 and 15.

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

2014: Electronic Funds Transfer functionality is added to current and future MTS Releases. Installations continue for two consortium member tribes, while two consortium lead tribes and two more consortium member tribes continue actively operating the MTS at their respective sites.

The MTS Flash is a bi-monthly publication of the Division of State and Tribal Systems (DSTS), in full collaboration with other divisions in the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information or to offer article ideas

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