Annual Report on
Bright Futures Information System Modernization Plan

In Accordance with Act 72 Sec. E. 318.4 (2019)

Submitted to: House Committee on Appropriations
House Committee on Human Services
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Health & Welfare

Submitted by: Ken Schatz, Commissioner
Department for Children and Families

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VERMONT

AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
Department for Children and Families

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<div style="text-align: center">**Executive Summary**</div>

In 2019, the Legislature appropriated $1,000,000 of one-time funding for the purpose of developing and implementing a modernization plan for the Bright Futures Information System; of which, $100,000 shall be designated for developing the modernization plan and the remainder shall be designated for implementing the plan.

The Commissioner submits this report identifying the following:
>   (1) an initial project plan and timeline;
>   (2) a fiscal analysis of the plan; and
>   (3) the project team tasked with overseeing the project's implementation.

For reference, the specific legislative language found in Act 72 is as follows:

Sec. E.318.4 BRIGHT FUTURES INFORMATION SYSTEM; MODERNIZATION PLAN

>   (a) The $1,000,000 one-time funding provided in Sec. C100(a)(17) of this
>   act is for the purpose of developing and implementing a modernization plan for
>   the Bright Futures Information System; of which $100,000 shall be designated
>   for developing the modernization plan and the remainder shall be designated
>   for implementing the plan.

>   (b) On or before December 1, 2019, the Commissioner shall submit a
>   report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and
>   to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare
>   providing:
>>   (1) an initial project plan and timeline;
>>   (2) a fiscal analysis of the plan; and
>>   (3) the project team tasked with overseeing the project's implementation.

<div style="text-align: center">**Part I: Background**</div>

The current Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) is both the current work management tool for the Child Development Division (CDD) of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the public access site for parents, child care providers, transportation providers, and people working in the child care industry.

The public website provides information to the general public about child care benefits.[1] This resource assists Vermonters in finding information on locating a provider, becoming a child care provider, accreditation, credentials and certificates including a course calendar, links to the DCF website for forms and brochures, and information on grants available to child care providers. There is also a contact page that provides telephone numbers, addresses, and other contact information for CDD and its community partners.

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[1] http://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/

In addition, the public BFIS site also has complaint functionality that allows the public to enter a complaint or view the status of an existing complaint. The public may also start an application for child care subsidy, to become a child care provider, or track a service request through the public website.

This public site allows parents, child care providers, transportation providers, and people working in the child care industry to log in and access their accounts. From their accounts, parents can look up their Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) case. For childcare providers, they can access their application/re-application process or submit their attendance records for CCFAP payment etc. For people working in the industry, they can submit their application for background clearance to work for a childcare program or track their credentials and professional development. There are approximately 6,000 parents; 1,200 childcare programs with approximately 2,400 provider logins; and 8,000 work force users in the current system.

BFIS is also the current work management tool used by internal CDD employees and our partner agencies via an internal portal to manages cases in each of their units. There are approximately 300 internal state employees and partner agency users. It is important to note that not all internal users are state employees and may be employed by a contracted partner agency. All units depend on data collected and altered within other units and the BFIS replacement system must contain rules for notifying or triggering tasks when changes are made by another unit.

BFIS serves four business units:
- Child Care Benefits
- Provider Management
- Child Care Quality
- Workforce Quality

The current BFIS system is out of date and does not allow CDD to change the way it calculates subsidy payments in order to comply with federal regulation. In order to meet regulatory requirements, CDD must implement system changes that are not able to be implemented on the current BFIS system. These changes are required by October 2021.

Modular System

In alignment with guidance provided by our federal partners at the Administration of Children and Families(ACF) and outlined by an architecture assessment performed by the Agency of Digital Services (ADS), all new systems should be developed in a modular and extensible framework to prevent redundant systems for single use functionality. Modularity is a framework that allow components of a system to be used, reused and replaced without impact to an overall solution. It allows for the extension of specific functionality to other divisions without requiring a big bang onboarding approach.

Additionally, a well-planned integrated modular solution can help prevent over-dependence on a single technology vendor. Through its architecture assessment, the ADS and CDD discovered that modular development could be utilized to create an integrated system that allows for human service case management at the client level. Specifically, the following modules:

- Intake System: includes referral, triage, intake, and action;
- Case System: includes case management, resource management, goals and objects, client management, assessments, consent management, service management, and service delivery;
- Provider Facing Environment: portal login;
- Links to external data sources (such as SSMIS, Vision); and
- Work-flow management.

In light of the ACF Guidance and desire for extensibility to replace the current BFIS system and other systems within CDD, CDD plans to pursue an integrated modular data system that meets business needs for the division and allows for broad-based management of service delivery.

Part II: Project Plan and Timeline

In July 2019, CDD began work to develop the modernization plan required to replace the current BFIS. As part of this development, CDD identified 15 major program workstreams which are supported by the current BFIS. In consultation with ADS, it was determined a Business Analyst was required to assist in mapping the project.

In August 2019, CDD submitted an ADS Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) Resource Request Form requesting the assignment of a Project Manager and Business Analyst. A Project Manager and Business Analyst have been assigned to this project. From August to November, CDD and ADS have worked through a 12-week plan to accomplish the following:
- Document current state business operations based on the 15 major program workstreams;
- Establish a set of high-level requirements and guidelines for a future application;
- Identified Salesforce.com as the recommended solution for the project; and
- Generate a Vendor Request for Information (RFI) to understand the potential Level of Effort and timing it will take to deploy such a solution in a Salesforce.com environment.[2]

Development Timelines

As mentioned above, part of the requirements for the Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) that Vermont receives, requires CDD to change the way it calculates subsidy payments. In order to meet regulatory requirements, CDD must implement system changes that are unable to be implemented on the current BFIS system. These changes are required by October 2021.

CDD anticipates that the development timeline for the project will be 86 weeks. In order to meet the October 2021 deadline, the start date would need to be March 1, 2020. This timeline is based on the following inputs:

1. Procurement: 22 Weeks which includes Request For Proposals (RFP) creation, posting, bid selection, and contract negotiations.

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[2] Salesforce presents several opportunities for significant cost savings, lower-risk IT projects and improved consistency of state data across all agency activities. Salesforce is a cloud-based constituent engagement platform that supports consistent and efficient delivery across various service domains and multiple agencies. The platform includes endless low-code customization possibilities and scalability.

2. Development: 38 Weeks, estimated from a vendor response to the Level of Effort.
3. Implementation: 26 Weeks for User testing, training, and launching the new application.

ADS is currently developing the RFP for the project for release in February of 2020.

Part III: Fiscal Analysis

The on-going annual cost of the current BFIS system is $153,270. The following costs are associated with the replacement of the BFIS system:

Estimated One-Time Development Costs	
Application Development	$ 6,755,200.00
Total	$ 6,755,200.00
Estimated On-going Annual Costs	
Business Application Support Position (1 FTE)	$ 84,584.00
Maintenance and Operations	$ 484,000.00
ADS Enterprise Architect	$ 22,880.00
Licensing Fees	$ 241,335.00
Total	$ 832,799.00

Application Development
The estimated cost of $6.7 million is based on building a comprehensive BFIS replacement system including basic functions, a parent portal, etc. in a modular, integrated and extensible framework as described above. This cost was calculated based on an architecture analysis performed by ADS staff who used vendor responses as a starting point. The initial responses gave a range of development costs from $3-20 million. ADS then assessed the responses based on the architectural needs for CDD and was able to create a narrower estimate of the development cost of this system.

Business Application Support Position (1 FTE – Pay Grade 25)
In the mapping of the BFIS system architecture, it has become apparent that CDD will need a new business application support position who can who pull and write custom queries for data reporting, make programmatic level changes to electronic forms and notifications, has a technical background, and can work and collaborate with the Agency of Digital Services. This position would manage the development, user testing, implementation, and ultimately the new BFIS system.

Maintenance and Operations
Maintenance and operations costs include vendor annual maintenance/service costs and cost allocation for the additional state IT systems that will be utilized in the solution. These additional systems are specifically: document automation, business rules management, integration platform, and identify and access management. State IT labor will also be required to operate and maintain the solution.

ADS Enterprise Architect Position
Costs associated with this existing position are related to the ongoing implementation of this system.

Licensing Fees

Associated license costs are for moving the system onto a Salesforce.com platform based on an Enterprise License cost of $95 and a community license cost of $0.81/month/login. CDD estimated the number of logins required based on its current user base.

Part IV: Project Team

A steering committee has been created for this project and is made up of the following members:

Marie Schonholtz, ADS Enterprise Project Manager
Judith Rex, DCF Director of Policy and Planning
Sarah Truckle, DCF Financial Director
Mark Combs, ADS Chief Technology Officer
Michael Nagle, ADS DCF IT Manager
John Quinn, ADS Secretary
Paul Pratt, ADS Portfolio Manager
Darin Prail, ADS Director of Digital Services
Jillian Niggel, DCF Finance Director
Pam Dalley, DCF Operations Director
Ken Schatz, DCF Commissioner
Martha Maksym, AHS Deputy Secretary

Summary

The Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) is an integral tool for delivering child care subsidies on behalf of eligible families to their providers as well as an important system for regulating Vermont's 1,200 child care providers. The Department's and the Administration's top priority, as it relates to child care and early learning, is to increase access to these services and to make them more affordable. The BFIS system is at the practicable intersection of both goals.

As required by Act 72, CDD has identified an architectural need, timeline, and associated costs to modernize its current technology stack handling services delivered to Vermonters to improve early childhood learning and education.

The Administration is still determining ways to fund this work. The Department and Administration have been thinking creatively about possible funding streams. Last fall, the Administration applied for the federal Pre-School Development Grant (PDG), through which $3 million dollars over three years would have been allocated to the Department to redesign the BFIS; however, in December 2019 the federal Administration informed the Department that Vermont's application was unsuccessful.

Considering this news, the Governor's continued efforts to improve access and affordability for working families to child care, and the different funding options that have not yet been fully explored, the Department requests the funding for the BFIS Modernization Plan remain an area around which the Administration and Legislature continue to collaborate throughout the 2020 legislative session.