



HHS Advisory
Helping You Make Wise Decisions

Child Welfare Services — Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS)

Planning and Strategy

HHS Advisory Point of View

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Drivers for the Future of technology Enablement for Child Welfare Services — Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS)

Child Welfare Services – State Strategic Planning Drivers

Strategic Plan Drivers for the development of a business and technology action plan for the enhancement of Child Welfare Services (CWS)

Strategic Business Needs

- Implementing strength-based child/family-centered policy, practice and programs that ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children
- Improving services to reduce risks to children and improve outcomes through -
 - Building new community and agency partnerships
 - Improving leadership, management, supervision and accountability
 - Improving processes and efficiencies and streamline case worker data collection
 - Providing business intelligence, predictive & performance analytics and dashboards to improve decision support at all levels
 - Integrating with other State programs, services, and systems
- Ensuring compliance with Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Title IV-E and CCWIS requirements

Critical Technology Support

State legacy systems have many shortcomings -

- System is not focused on a child/family-centered model of practice – focus is non data entry and repository with limited reporting and business intelligence capabilities
- Not built on contemporary technologies supporting easy integration and interoperability with partner agencies
 - Not an intuitive system and aligned with current CWS model of practice and strategic business needs
 - Does not support mobility and mobile solutions
 - Not user friendly nor easy to use, requiring navigation of multiple system layers to accomplish even basic functions required of child welfare workers
 - Enables inappropriate variances in case information, data and reporting, thereby diminishing ability to capture meaningful data on its client population and to strengthen decision support and accountability

Administration for Children and Families — Children's Bureau CCWIS Drivers

Strategic Plan Drivers for the development of a business and technology action plan for the enhancement of Child Welfare Services (CWS), Cont'd

Focus of CCWIS Rules

- Changes in Child Welfare Services (CWS) model of practice including:
 - Family Engagement — Strength-Based Child/Family Centered Services and Integrated Approaches to Service Delivery
 - Advances in Safety and Risk Assessments
 - Trauma Informed Services
 - Child and Family Services Reviews and Performance Improvement Plans
- Changes in the Technology Landscape:
 - Modularity
 - Interoperability
 - Reusability
 - Service-Oriented Architecture
 - Agile Development

Key Actions

- Supporting the strengthening of the integration of the full continuum of health and human services including child welfare services to improve access, outcomes, cost and quality of services
- Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau (CB) leadership has appointed an Interoperability Innovation Team focusing on the following goals:
 - Put ACF-CB clients at the center of the services provided
 - Embed the concept of interoperability in ACF-CB's day-to-day work
 - Critical need to ensure end-to-end integration of data and information for the child, family, CWS worker and community partners during the life of a CWS case –
 - Intake / Hotline
 - Investigation / Assessment
 - Case – Family Service Plan / Permanency Plan
 - Referral Management
 - Placement Management
 - Service Delivery and Case Management
 - Court Process and Reports

National Trends and Lessons Learned

Responsive Decision Support for Child Welfare Services

Enhancing Child Welfare Services – Evidence Based Guidance

- Implementing strength-based child/family-centered policy, model of practice and partnerships
- Improving services to reduce risks to children and enhancing safety, well-being and permanency outcomes
- Building community and provider partnerships and improving the integration with other State programs, services, and systems
- Ensuring compliance with Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Title IV-E and CCWIS requirements, and improving the agency's responsiveness to child safety, permanency, and well-being
- Improving CWS leadership, management, supervision and accountability
- Implementing technology as a decision support tool – not just a data entry and reporting mechanism
- Providing robust business intelligence and dashboards to improve decision support at all levels as well as predictive and performance analytics
- Improving Title IV-E revenue maximization and developing new investment resources



Enhancing Child Welfare Services

Rooted in Understanding the Child and Family's Journey

- **End-to-End Integration Supports Child Welfare Services (CWS) Effectiveness** and requires a clear and well defined holistic understanding of the life of a child welfare case from the hotline/intake to case closure and referrals and coordination with other Health and Human Services (HHS) service providers
- **Data/Information Integration** for the child, family, CWS worker and community-based provider through-out the life of the CWS case is critical to ensure the continuity and continuum of services essential to achieve CWS outcomes for safety, well-being and permanency

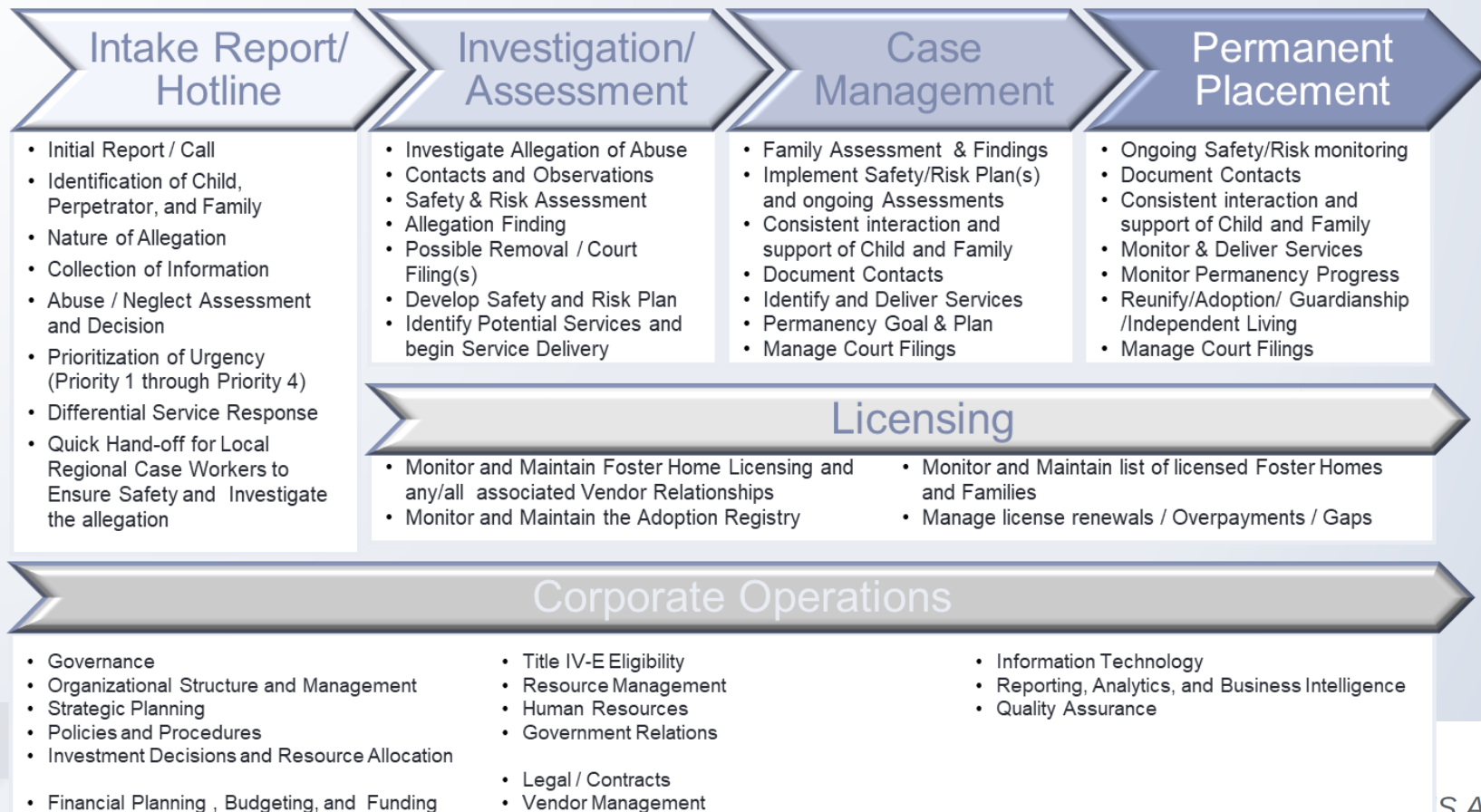
Continuity – Family experiences a clear and consistent approach and set of strategies from one worker to another throughout the Life of the Case



Congruency – Ensures the Effective Integration and coordination of services for the child and family throughout the Life of the Case



CWS Integrated Core Capabilities



CWS Data/Information Integration Ensures Continuity and Congruency of Efforts

Answers the Critical Question: *Why Are We Involved?*

Intake / Hotline Decision –
Why are we involved in this family?

Information collected and decisions made at **Intake / Hotline** informs and supports the urgency and assignment of an **Investigation / Assessment** focusing on **child Safety and Risk** to support our initial involvement

Investigation / Assessment –
Should we continue to be involved in this family? If yes, why?

Information collected and assessment made at **Investigation/Assessment** phase informs and provides guidance for the **Case Management** life cycle focusing on the willingness and capabilities of the parents / caregivers in providing for the **Safety, Well Being and Permanency of the Child(ren)** and whether in-home or placement services are required

Case Management –
How should we be involved in this family to address factors identified through intake and assessment?

Case Management activities and family engagement build on **Investigation / Assessment** information and decisions to **develop the case plan – family services plan** focusing on:

- Establish permanency goal
- Identify required services and strategies
- Continuing risk & safety assessments
- Determine child placement needs
- Achieve child safety, well-being and permanency outcomes



Child Welfare Services

Data/Information Integration – Moving Data to Action

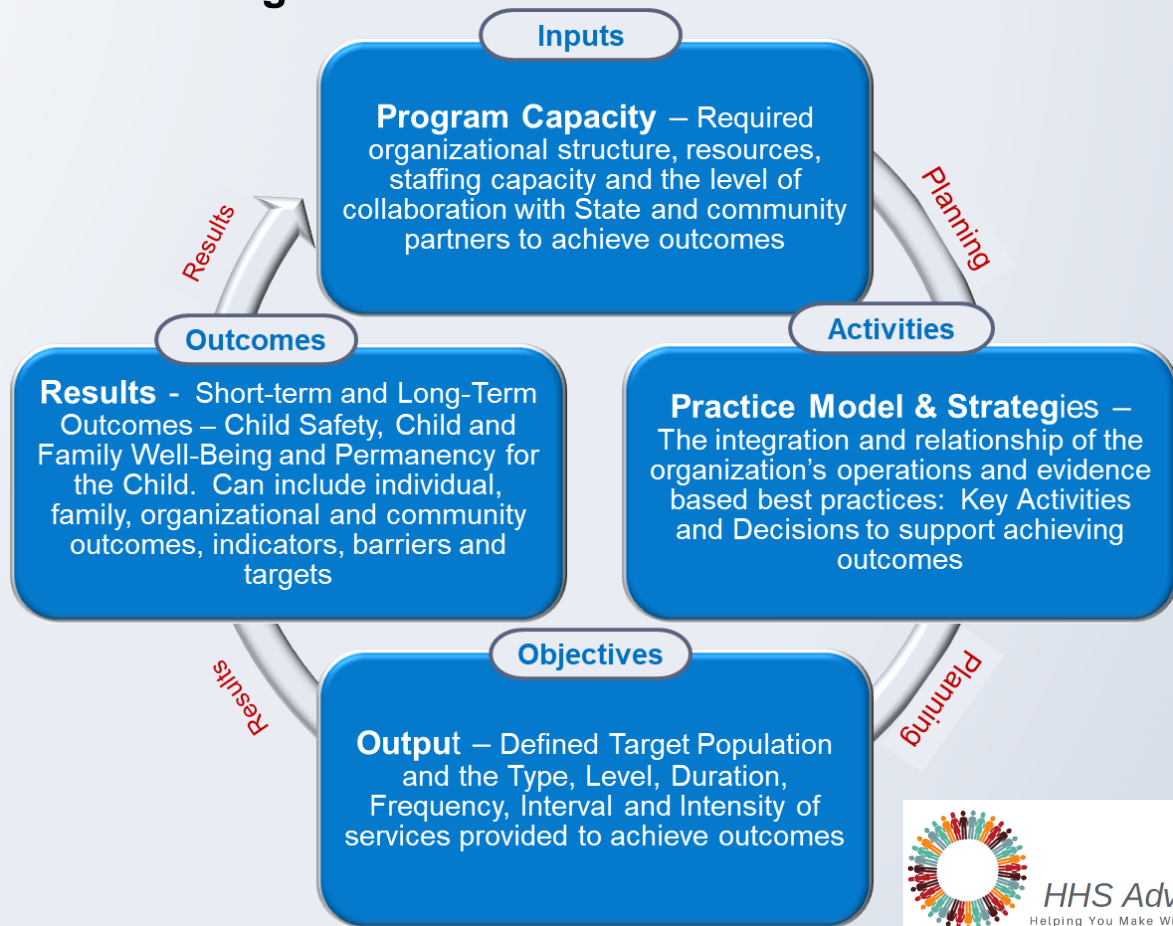
- At Each Level of Operations, Within a CWS Program Area, and across Program Areas
- Moving From Data to Information to Knowledge to Actions
- Improving ...
 - 1) Access
 - 2) Outcomes
 - 3) Costs
 - 4) Accountability
 - 5) Quality
- Data, Information and Knowledge for Improving Decision Support Capacity to -
 - Anticipate;
 - Support; and
 - Validate Key Decisions and Activities at All Levels



Child Welfare Services Continuous Quality Improvement

Data/Information Integration Built on the Logic Model

- Systems approach to CWS that focuses on identifying, defining and assessing the interconnectedness of activities
- Focuses on answering the questions:
 - *What difference do we want to make?*
 - *How do we know we are making a difference?*



Child Welfare Services Life of the Case Data/Information End-to-End Integration – Key Challenges

CWS Life of the Case

CPS Intake/Hotline Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Child Protective Services Intake — Hotline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number one CPS Hotline priority is Child Safety—and a child welfare case begins with the acceptance of a child abuse/neglect report ▪ The shared responsibility of all Hotline staff is to ensure Child Safety through a consistent, quality, and timely assessment of child safety and risk in response to all allegations of abuse and maltreatment—including the setting of an investigation or alternative response priority ▪ An Investigator is dispatched ASAP in priority cases ▪ All reports must result in accurate and timely decisions to move forward with an investigation or “differential response” if assessed as warranted ▪ Reports need to be tracked along with critical decisions in the acceptance and assignments of reports – through the life of the case ▪ All Federal and State requirements are being met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Failure in this stage places children at risk from not getting the due process of an investigation. ▪ Many states have faced criticism and unnecessary child fatalities for not getting reports or accepting reports for the investigation of abuse/neglect.
System Enhancement Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	

Life of the Case

CPS Investigation Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation and Safety/Risk Assessment and Safety Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child abuse investigation is critical for assessing the immediate safety of the child and the longer-term risk to the child if he or she remains in the home or is to be returned to the home ▪ If the report is substantiated, the investigation process and safety/risk assessment establish the vehicle and foundation for the agency's intervention in the life of the family to ensure the safety and well-being of the child—as well as the appropriate permanency goal ▪ Critical Title IV-E and Court process are essential to ensure the eligibility status of the case and adherence with State and Federal law and regulations as well as ICWA and ICPC requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Failure to conduct a thorough investigation and an objective and accurate assessment of safety and risk factors, leaves the child in danger of immediate and recurring abuse/neglect ▪ Most child fatalities can be linked back to the inadequacy of the investigation and safety assessment process and the lack of documentation and sharing of that information with those involved with the case
System Enhancement Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	

Life of the Case

Family Services Plans (Case Plan) Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Family Services Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To ensure that the agency is responsive to the needs of the child and family as identified through the investigation and safety/risk assessment process, a services plan needs to be developed to effectively manage the case▪ The service plan needs to identify the services necessary to ensure the child's immediate safety and what needs to be done to prevent recurring problems. ongoing Safety and Risk Assessment must be made and demonstrate link of "why" the state is involved in the case and needs to continue to be involved▪ The plan also needs to have a clear home monitoring / visitation plan if the child is to remain in the home or with a relative or fictive kin▪ Family services plans need to include the active participation and ownership of the family, extended family and the participation of others involved in the providing of services including foster family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Many states have had great difficulty in ensuring that their services plans are linked to the investigation and safety/risk assessment results▪ Failure to establish a clear services plan that is linked to the unique well-being needs of the child, places the child in risk of immediate harm as well as recurring abuse and neglect
System Enhancement Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪	

Life of the Case

Service Delivery Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Families and children need specialized services to address the many issues that confront families including health, mental health, developmental & intellectual disabilities, substance abuse, domestic violence, criminal behavior, etc.▪ The focus of services provided by the CWS agency, through purchase of services contracts and/or through collaborative relationships with community providers need to focus on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Strengthening the capacity of parents/care givers○ Improving the environmental conditions of the family▪ Best practices include building the capacity of caseworkers and supervisors in assessing the full range of needs of the child and the family. These practices must also include an effective referral readiness process in which the family and child are prepared for the services and the receiving agency is also prepared for addressing the needs of the child and/or the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No child or family comes into the CWS system with a single presenting concern▪ Failure to provide the full array of services essential for child and family well-being and the safety of the child can lengthen the child's stay in foster care, recurrence of abuse/neglect, return to foster care, lead to a disrupted adoption, or have adolescent leaving foster care who are unable to live independently
System Enhancement Needs	■	

Life of the Case

Case Management and Monitoring Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Case Management and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Family services plans need to be managed effectively and monitored to ensure that the services, supports, and home monitoring schedule necessary for the safety, permanency and well-being of the child are implemented▪ Case management needs to include working with the family, courts, and other service providers to ensure the continuity and congruency of all efforts to provide for the safety of the child, well-being of the child and family, and permanency▪ Best practices in family-centered strength-based case management and State and Federal requirements call for timely review of the service plan, working with service providers to ensure they are delivering the necessary services, visiting the child and the family to assess progress, and to make modifications in the services plan as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Failure to manage and monitor the services plan places children in a state of limbo and at risk▪ Even if an excellent job is done during the investigation and safety/risk assessment process and an effective family service plan is developed, the child will be at risk if no one ensures that the plan is implemented and monitored
System Enhancement Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪	

Life of the Case

Permanency Planning & Achievement Data/Information Integration

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Permanency Planning & Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Safety / Risk Assessments, Family Services Plans, Case Management and Monitoring, and Collaborative relationships with the court must all be directed to achieving permanency▪ Foster care placement must be seen as a temporary tool to provide for the child's safety and well-being as work is done to achieve permanency▪ An array of licensed and approved foster care settings need to be available to the CWS agency to ensure that the child is placed in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting▪ All foster care placement settings must be in compliance with all State laws and regulations▪ Proven best practices in family conferencing and concurrent planning need to be the foundation for the achievement of permanency. It is critical to begin working with the family early in the life of the case to assess both the "willingness and capabilities" of the parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Many States struggle with foster care "drift" – children lingering in the foster care system▪ Failure to quickly assess both the "willingness and capabilities" of the parents to provide for the safety, well-being and permanency of their child leads to longer length of stays in placement and time to achievement of permanency▪ Without a strong permanency infrastructure, children find themselves in a "state of limbo" – they may be free from abuse, but the emotional scares of not having the bond of a permanent home has proven to cause longer term negative impact on children than the original physical abuse they experienced
System Enhancement Needs	■	

Life of the Case

Permanency Planning & Achievement Data/Information Integration, Cont'd

Life of the Case / Best Practices Area	Description	Challenges
Permanency Planning & Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanency planning needs to include the possibility of Adoption as a goal if there is clear evidence that the parents are either unwilling or unable to provide for their child ▪ The use of concurrent planning has proven to be a successful practice ▪ Adoption practices need to include building capacity to provide adoptive homes for “special needs” children ▪ For adolescents who are not able to be adopted, the child welfare agency needs to have a model of practices that focus on meeting the unique needs of adolescents including Independent Living Program efforts consistent with best practices. The special developmental and behavioral needs of teens require placement services, counseling support, basic living skills development training and educational experiences that will provide teens with the ability to live successfully on their own ▪ Critical Title IV-E, ICWA, ICPC and Court permanency processes and requirements must be documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adoption begins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At intake as critical information is gathered regarding the child and their family and extend family and continues up to the selection of the Adoption Goal – it does not begin when the Adoption Goal is establishes – When a child first comes into care, failure to address adoption information needs upfront makes achievement of adoption more difficult at the time the goal is set ▪ Adolescents who are not provided critical independent and interdependency skills and prepared to be self sufficient and successful upon leaving foster care will face recurring problems and conflicts in their lives
System Enhancement Needs	■	

Agile Development Considerations for Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Challenges and Approaches

Overview

- **Waterfall and Modified Waterfall Methodologies** are used in more than 45% of outsourced application development projects where the jurisdiction wishes to transfer delivery risk related to project scope, time, and budget to the external Application Development (AD) / Systems Integration (SI) vendor
 - This was driven by the significant number of project failures and cancellations where the jurisdiction has taken on the Systems Integrator role and related risks, and would like the professional AD or SI firm to manage those risks
 - This often led to “big bang” approaches to deployment and significant failure in delivering enabling decision support technology – often over budget and off schedule
- **Iterative Methodologies** are now being employed to ensure a sequential approach to collaborative requirements development and multiple deployment releases / sprints along with robust AD / SI vendor accountability and management that bring value and benefits to the jurisdiction sooner as well as enhancing the ability to mitigate and course correct in response to unexpected challenges or changing needs and rules
 - Agile techniques can be used to enhance Modified Waterfall methodologies without compromising the benefits of the disciplined approach that is intended to keep all stakeholders focused on delivering the promised functionality on time and within the estimated or proposed budget



Iterative Methodology Characteristics and Challenges

Characteristics

- In general, key characteristics of Iterative Methodologies, such as agile, are:
 - Focused on a completed set of capabilities often called a “product” first – and at times without a well defined concept of the program (enterprise) within which the “product” must fit
 - Each iteration is a sequenced project with time certain (that is, a time box)
 - Estimation is based on how many requirements the team can deliver in the time box
 - Each iteration has a critical path that can be tracked, typically taking two to six months.
 - The product team stays together throughout the life of the product
 - Success and failure of the product is based on business measurements
 - Performance of the team is based on efficiency measurements

Challenges

- Agile is not the right fit for all solution development needs
- When requirements are well known and end-to-end integration is critical from module to module through the life of a decision support need, “pure” agile methodologies are not as effective in bringing the holistic value needed by the business
- In response to these challenges, newer **Scaled or Enterprise Agile Frameworks** are beginning to bring discipline and an enterprise perspective to agile development

Agile Development Challenges for Child Welfare Services

- If the life of a child welfare case (end-to-end integration) is not well addressed through separate agile development undertakings there is great danger of failing and negatively impacting the safety of children and placing them and the State's Child Welfare Workers at significant risk
- The agile systems development process must demonstrate a clear understanding and ensure a focus on the end-to-end integration around Child Safety, Well-Being and Permanency and the critical need for the movement of the Safety and Risk Assessment data/information from –
 - Intake/Hotline to the Child Protective Investigation / Assessment (including differential response)
 - Child Protective Investigation / Assessment Findings to the Family Services Plan and Case Management
 - Family Services Plan and Case Management to Identified Services (Well-Being; Safety; and Permanency)
 - From Family Services Plan and Case Management to the Court Process
 - Court Process to the achievement of the Permanency Goal (Reunification, Adoption, Alternative Goal or Independence)
 - Permanency Goal to Finalization
- Focusing on one agile module at a time, such as the Intake/Hotline, without the holistic enterprise view and the establishment and involvement of interdisciplinary teams involved with the Life of a Child Welfare Case can negatively impact the safety of children and the successful adoption of the technology solution



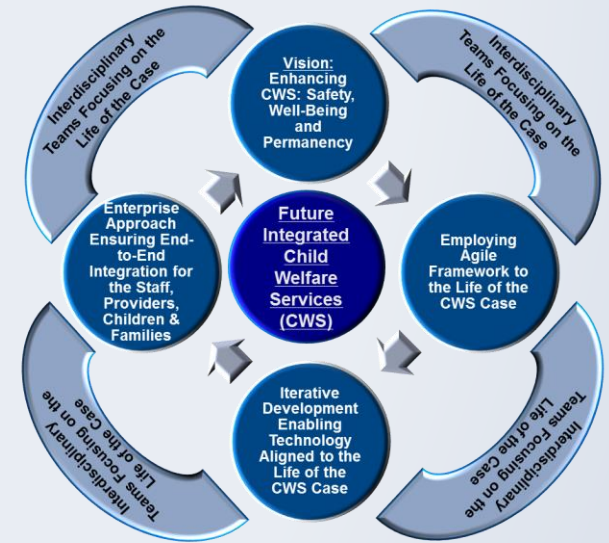
Agile Development for Child Welfare Services

Requires Understanding of End-to-End Integration Requirements

- The application of Agile to CWS must be able to focus on the life of the CWS case and the child and family's journeys — leveraging a holistic vision for CWS focusing on Safety, Well-being and Permanency at each step in the life of a CWS case – driven by the critical need for end-to-end flow of data/information for the family, child, CWS staff and purchase of service providers
- Emphasis must be on the Future State (“To Be”) rather than the “As Is” –
 - Moving to a child/family centered strength based model of practice – rather than a deficit model is critical in leveraging what we know works to produce better outcomes
 - The primary focus must be on the child's Safety, Well-Being and Permanency through the full Life of the CWS case from an integrated and enterprise perspective
- As we assess the current Federal emphasis on agile development of individual modules, often by multiple vendors, we see several challenges and problems –
 - The position for Agile is too often based on Traditional Waterfall vs. Agile – which is a false proposition in that there are a variety of development approaches in between Traditional Waterfall and Agile that allow for phased, sequenced and multi-release approaches
 - Agile is seen as the default for all HHS development efforts not just those that are best aligned with Agile development
 - The approach places emphasis on multiple vendors delivering Agile developed modules often without identifying the need for and ensuring end-to-end integration and providing for robust multi-vendor integration and management

Enterprise Agile Approach to Development for Child Welfare Services Supports End-to-End Integration Requirements

- The migration away from Waterfall approaches is driven by the significant number of project failures and cancellations
- Enterprise agile methods can manage the risks of large scale development where non-functional requirements and the need for enterprise architecture guidance are key to success
- The Enterprise application of Agile must be able to focus on end-to-end customer journeys – leveraging a CCWIS enterprise integration platform vision — and the critical need for end-to-end experience and flow of data / information for the consumer, CWS staff and purchase of service providers
- Emphasis must be on the Future State (“To Be”) rather than the “As Is” – Beginning with the CWS business transformation approach moving to a more Child and Family-Centric model instead of the program-centric model of the past decades



The primary focus for success in applying agile to a new CWS System must be on the life of the child welfare case from Intake / Hotline to the Achievement of Permanency



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