Child welfare agencies must leverage today’s modern technology of mobility, social media and big data to carry out their mission – protecting children.

THE CHALLENGE

State and local governments are urged to create federally compliant systems that aid caseworkers in keeping children safe. Caseworkers need easy-to-use functionality that maximizes their time with children and families. At a minimum, child welfare systems should meet the following criteria:

- Configured using business rules
- Flexible enough to enable quick changes to process workflows
- Designed to enable integration with multiple systems
- Ability to enable child tracking and detailed outcome reporting for administrators and managers
- Able to provide for accurate and auditable service and payment data

A RAPIDLY EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

Regulatory and industry changes present both opportunities and challenges to Child Welfare agencies. In June 2016, the Office Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau (ACF/CB) published the final rule of the optional child welfare case management system model called Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

The final ruling starts a two-year transition planning period that began August 1, 2016, during which time states will need to evaluate the CCWIS model as an alternative to maintaining the existing SACWIS through the end of its system life.

CGI is working with states on strategies to right-size their child welfare systems through modern technology choices and improved data quality design to put better tools and information in the hands of child welfare workers.

NEW APPROACHES AND FRAMEWORKS

States have a range of priorities for their child welfare solutions: improved user access, greater interoperability, reduced program cost, improved quality and regulatory change being among the most pressing.

CGI is collaborating with states in the implementation of accelerators, mitigating risk and providing benefits to users well before the completion of the project.
These accelerators include:

- Enterprise Service Bus (ESB): Supports a modular child welfare system design, reduces IT operating cost by reusing state technologies, and can be built to empower individual module upgrades, providing new user capabilities with minimum risk.
- Smartphone/Tablet Mobile Integration: The deployment of a mobile child welfare application empowers caseworkers to engage clients in the field, reduce paperwork with real-time case updates, and improve data quality.
- Business Rules Engine: Migrating child welfare program rules away from legacy application code and into an external business rules engine allows for streamlining of program policy edits, better supporting the dynamic policy changes which are the reality for human services programs.
- Agile Development: CGI’s approach recognizes the opportunity a flexible and iterative implementation framework provides, and has evolved an approach that recognizes the needs and realities state agencies face.
- Balanced Governance: CGI provides a proven governance framework including project oversight, shared technology services, risk management and organizational change management roles.

THE RIGHT PARTNER, THE RIGHT CHOICE

More than 35,000 users depend on CGI-implemented child welfare systems every day. In Ohio, the system has processed more than 2.1 billion production transactions and has distributed more than $3.2 billion in payments to child welfare service providers. In Wisconsin, the system has processed more than 600 million production transactions and has distributed more than $3.2 billion in payments to child welfare service providers.

CGI takes an active approach to listening to our clients to fully understand their needs and requirements. That is why we consider the approval of caseworkers to be the most important recognition we receive. CGI’s emphasis on user experience and user-centered design has not only allowed case workers more time to focus on complex, rather than administrative, tasks but has improved the data quality which is the focus of CCWIS.

Examples of improvements reflecting their valuable feedback and advice, include:

- Calendaring links to help manage caseworker time
- Document management workflow integration
- Mobile-friendly design to provide child welfare functionality in the field
- Reporting capabilities to fully comply with child welfare requirements
- Service, expenditure and client statistical data to assist in budget monitoring, planning and program administration
- Outcome measurement digital dashboard to provide intuitive, easy-to-understand views of the state’s performance against federal outcome measures.