



The Computerworld Honors Program

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Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

Welfare Client Data Systems

Organization URL:

www.calwin.org

Project Name:

CalWIN Benefits Mobile

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:

Mobile Access

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

The Welfare Client Data Systems (WCDS) Consortia of California Counties is the largest of three Statewide Automated Welfare Systems (SAWS), providing consortia Counties the automated tools required to support the Counties' medical, food, employment and general relief services to more than 3.6 million California families. The last few years of economic downturn in the U.S. has resulted in a tremendous growth in demand for Health and Social Services. At the same time, government budgets have experienced unprecedented cutbacks and workforce reductions, impacting the very resources required to serve the increased demand for these services. These factors were the catalysts that drove the demand to introduce and expand self-service solutions. In 2012, we implemented CalWIN Mobile. CalWIN Benefits Mobile provides enhanced self-service capabilities to families in need of health and social services assistance by providing a mobile application for Android and Apple smartphones and tablets with the following capabilities: Streamlined application for disaster assistance during a declared disaster. Upload of verification documents for disaster assistance. CalFresh Store

Locator (SnapFresh), which identifies local stores that accept the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. County assistance office locator, mapping and route guidance. Real-time balance inquiry for Electronic Benefit Transfer card (EBT). Access to the client's benefit information. We needed to rapidly deploy solutions that not only provided system access outside of traditional locations, but also addressed our changing client demographics (newly needy and tech-savvy population). Enabling clients to "serve themselves" using technology became an urgent need.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

CalWIN Benefits Mobile has been implemented in phases, with the first phase going live in October 2012. The first phase included: Streamlined application for disaster assistance, during a declared disaster. Upload of verification documents for disaster assistance. CalFresh Store Locator County assistance office locator, mapping and route guidance. The second phase rollout was implemented in January 2013 and provides the ability for clients do real-time balance inquiry of their Electronic Benefit Transfer card (EBT) benefits and provides users direct access to their benefits information. The CalWIN Mobile applications are fully integrated with the back-end CalWIN enterprise system.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

CalWIN Benefits Mobile is being rolled out in phases, with the first two phases implemented as described above. A third phase is in the early stages of requirements gathering, but some of the enhancements under consideration include: Providing the client the ability to update pertinent case information; e.g. address, phone number, email address etc. Providing client access to their electronic notices of action (eNOA). Enhancing the ability for clients to submit verification documents using mobile device camera capture and then uploading the images. Adding a rating and review capability for clients, allowing them to rate the quality/service of stores that accept EBT cards.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

The CalWIN Benefits Mobile applications provide a new level of service to our Counties' clients by providing mobile access to their specific case / benefit information. One client was excited by the real-time EBT balance inquiry capability, saying "there is nothing more embarrassing than holding up a checkout line because my EBT card is rejected for exceeding my balance. With this new capability, I am now able to quickly and easily check my balance." Providing the additional self-service capabilities to clients is expected to reduce the number of calls into County call centers and to caseworkers for simple benefit balance information.



Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

CalWIN Benefits Mobile is a huge step forward in providing greater access to information for individuals receiving health and social service benefits. A recent presentation of the mobile application efforts at a national conference on Health and Social Services received numerous questions and inquiries from representatives of other states interested in pursuing similar mobile solutions. According to a Pew Research Center report, there is a significant increase in mobile device usage, particularly in lower income households. The report indicates that lower income households are opting for mobile access to the Internet at higher rates on mobile phones and devices, and are not installing phones or Internet access in their homes. The CalWIN Benefits Mobile applications were developed to better support the evolving mobile device reliance, provide our clients with greater access to their account information and provide some relief to overburdened County support staff.