# ACESS

## A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System

## The Business Case


State of Louisiana
Department of Social Services

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# Summary of the Business Case

**What is this all about?**

The Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) needs a single integrated information system that is user friendly and that can be rapidly modified to accommodate the constant programmatic changes that occur in a public social service delivery system.

This business case addresses these needs. It outlines the rationale for undertaking '**A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System**' (**ACESS**) Project and determining what system development alternative is best for DSS and the State of Louisiana.

**Why is this important?**

DSS currently has 27 difficult to maintain silo legacy systems that use outdated technology, fragment service delivery, hinder accurate reporting, and frustrate the staff.

**What are the alternatives?**

DSS has identified four system development alternatives to address the needs of DSS through the ACESS project.

**Alternative 1 - Maintain the Status Quo**

DSS would maintain the 27 current stand-alone systems, making changes as requested by system users.

**Alternative 2 - Custom Build for Each Office**

DSS would design, build, and implement IT applications specifically tailored to meet the needs of each Office in the DSS enterprise.

**Alternative 3 - Transfer System from Another State**

DSS would undertake a procurement process to identify, select, and modify a successful solution that has been implemented elsewhere.

**Alternative 4 - Enterprise Framework**

DSS would implement an enterprise-wide technology framework that would provide a standardized set of business processes and procedures.

**What is the conclusion?**

DSS has determined that an Enterprise Framework will best meet the needs of the State of Louisiana and each Office's stakeholders.

# Statement of Need

DSS needs a single integrated information system that is user friendly and that can be rapidly modified to accommodate the constant programmatic changes that occur in a public social service delivery system.

The Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) needs a single integrated information system that is user friendly and that can be modified rapidly to accommodate the constant programmatic changes that occur in a public social service delivery system.

The system must improve services to clients with the same or fewer staff, exhibit substantial cost savings, and take advantage of current technology.

**Technologies Used by Supporting Systems**

| Software | Platform | System |
|---|---|---|
| CICS / ADABAS / Natural | Mainframe | Appeals<br>BATS<br>CAPS<br>Client<br>JAS<br>LAMI<br>LIRA<br>NDM<br>OFS RMS<br>OM&F Online Policy<br>Payroll<br>Personnel<br>RAS<br>SIEVS<br>TANF DC<br>TIPS |
| Windows / Visual Basic / SQL Server | Intel Client/Server | BLAS<br>QATS |
| Windows / Visual Basic / Access | Intel Client/Server | Folio |
| Windows / Visual Basic / Oracle | Intel Client/Server | CSDS |
| Windows / Oracle | Intel Client/Server | ASR |
| Windows / Access | Intel Client/Server | ICPC<br>OCS RMS<br>OCSR<br>Training |
| Windows / DOS / FoxPro | Intel Client/Server | LVARR |
| Windows / Excel | Intel Workstation | OFS QC |

It must change the current myriad of stand-alone systems, platforms, and software (see table at left) from primarily payment and client-tracking systems to an integrated case management system that pays clients and vendors, tracks performance indicators and outcome measures, and standardizes business processes across the Department.

And, finally, it must improve the system delivery models for the affected programs so that staff will have more time to carry out the mission of the Department to provide timely, accurate, and effective services to the needy citizens of Louisiana.

This business case addresses these needs. It outlines the rationale for undertaking '**A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System**' (**ACESS**) Project. It will also demonstrate why the project should be undertaken, and why it is a worthy expenditure of public funds.

This Business Case outlines the rational for undertaking the ACESS Project.

# Existing Problems with the Current Environment

DSS has 27 difficult to maintain silo legacy systems that fragment service delivery, hinder accurate reporting, and frustrate the staff.

Although the DSS legacy systems identified in the table above contain a massive amount of data, they use older and less flexible technology that is costly to maintain and difficult to modify. Additional problems are identified below.

***These legacy systems often operate independently.*** A Worker may have to log in and out of as many as seven systems to complete an application for benefits, and redundant data must be entered into more than one of these systems.

***Implementing changes are difficult.*** IT staff must deal with multiple platforms and programming languages to make changes in the current systems. Due to the time involved in making these modifications, DSS often has to establish manual processes to implement regulatory, policy, or procedural changes.

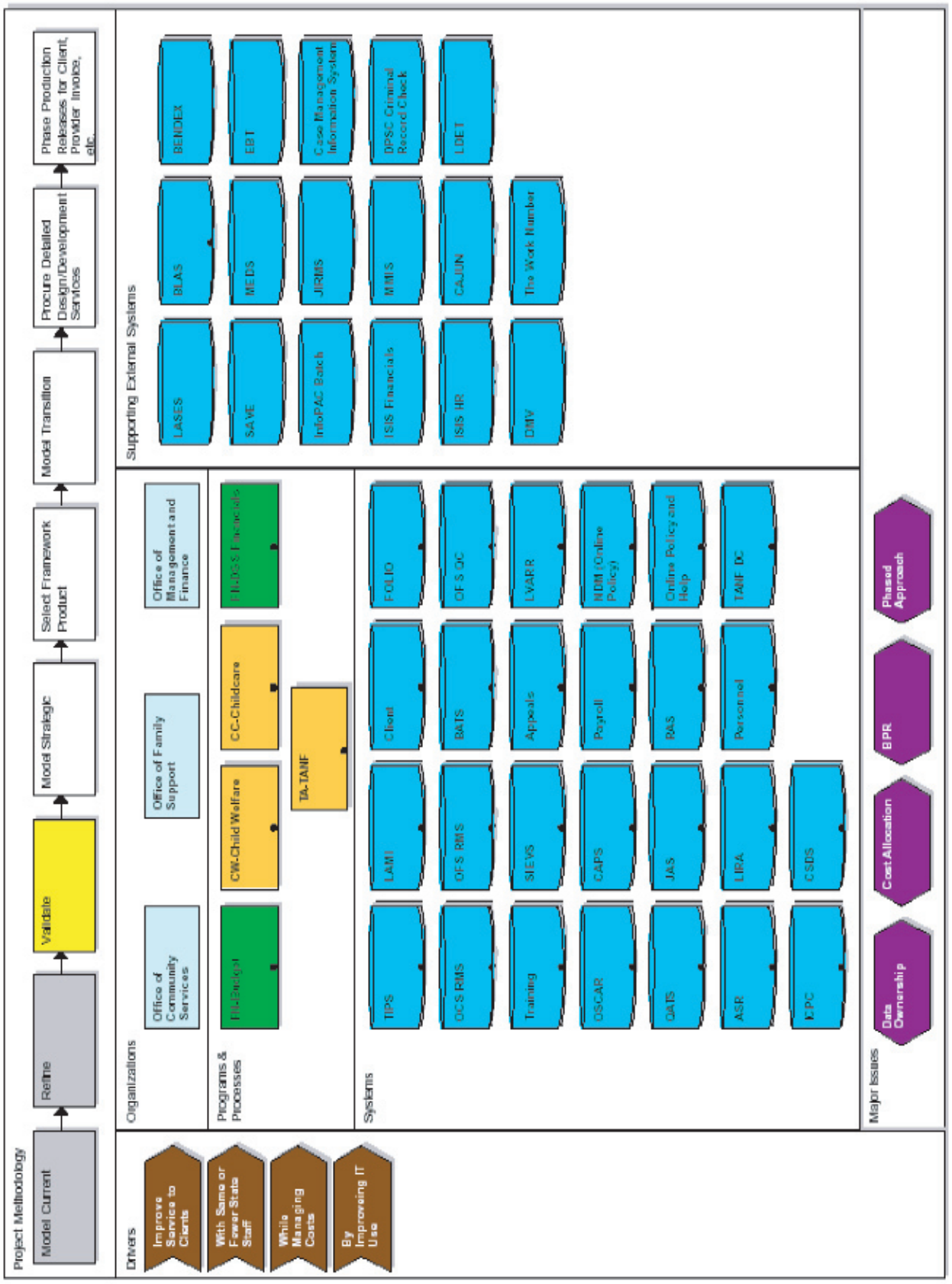
***Data integrity issues cause problems with reporting accuracy.*** The different systems that contain the data needed for reports are not necessarily in sync with regard to the currency or accuracy of the data.

***Service delivery is fragmented.*** A client may have to visit several Parish Offices to request DSS benefits or services. Additionally, a Worker does not necessarily know that a client is receiving, or could be eligible for, other services from DSS.

***Provider and Financial management are largely manual processes.*** Budgeting, invoicing, contract establishment and monitoring, and recruitment and training are paper-intensive and difficult to track because the most current data may not be available. Tracking the status of an invoice, for example, often requires calls to Parish Offices for someone to retrieve the physical invoice and verify its status.

***Staff are frustrated.*** Staff are currently buried in paperwork and frustrated with current systems. They need more time to work with clients in dealing with the presenting issues. Additionally, hiring and maintaining IT staff familiar with this older technology is becoming increasingly difficult.

The exhibit on the next page shows the complexities of the Department's existing structure. Because of its many organizations, programs, and systems that don't 'talk' to each other, DSS has made migrating to a single integrated case management system a priority.


Project Methodology
Model Current
Refine
Validate
Model Strategic
Select Framework Product
Model Transition
Procure Detailed Design/Development Services
Phase Production Releases for Client, Provider Invoice, etc.
Drivers
Improve Service to Clients
With Same or Fewer State Staff
While Managing Costs
By Improving IT Use
Organizations
Office of Community Services
Office of Family Support
Office of Management and Finance
Programs & Processes
FS-Budget
CW-Child Welfare
CC-Childcare
FS-DCS Financials
TA-TANF
Systems
TIPS
LAMI
Client
FOLID
DCS RIMS
OFS RIMS
BATS
OFS OC
Training
SIEVS
Appeals
LVARR
OSCAR
CAPS
Payroll
NDM / Online Policy
QATS
JAS
RAS
Online Policy and Help
ASR
LIRA
Personnel
TANF DC
ICPC
CSDS
Supporting External Systems
LASES
BLAS
BENDEX
SAVE
MEDS
EBT
InfoPAC Batch
JIRMS
Case Management Information System
ISIS Financials
MMIS
DPSC Criminal Record Check
ISIS HR
CAJUN
LDET
DMV
The Work Number
Major Issues
Data Ownership
Cost Allocation
BPR
Phased Approach

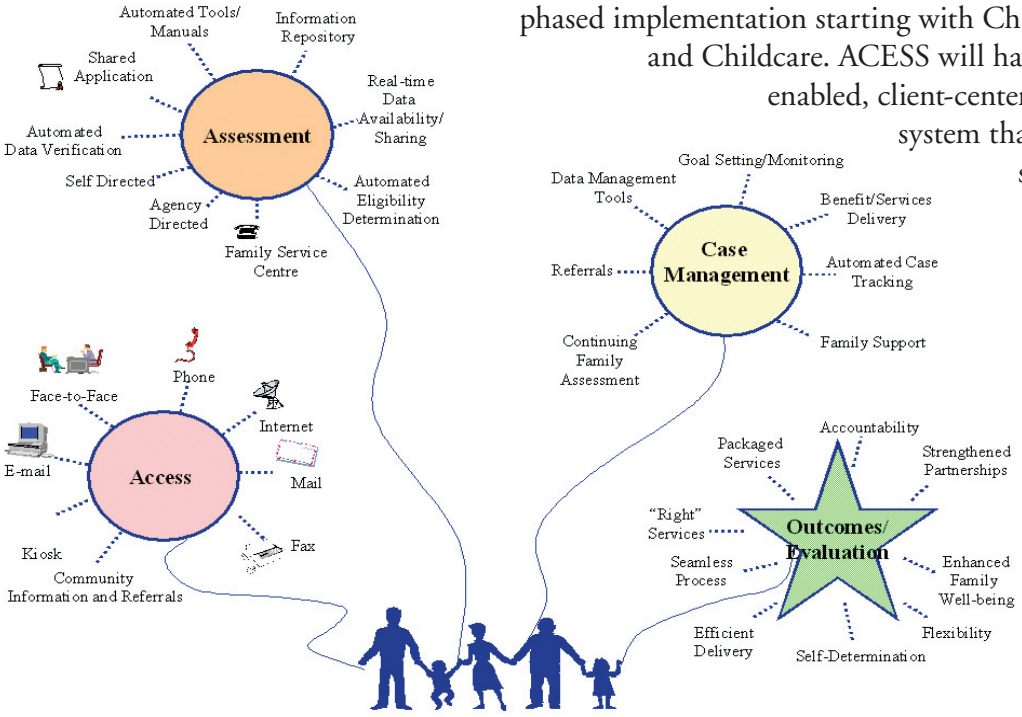
# Vision and Objectives

The ACESS vision is to implement a unified Department-wide IT solution to achieve economies of scale, cost savings, and interoperability between Offices in DSS.

In an effort to ease the problems inherent in the existing systems, it is envisioned that ACESS will achieve economies of scale, cost savings, and interoperability between Offices in DSS.

To achieve this vision, ACESS must leverage technology to gain efficiencies across the DSS enterprise, facilitate information sharing with reduced data entry, and implement simple system access for clients, providers, citizens, and Workers. It must also standardize business processes across the Department, simplify the support of operations so that DSS' technical infrastructure is managed efficiently, and allow the State to respond more quickly to changes in federal and state legislative mandates.

This goal of a single, state-of-the-art automated information system that will grow over time to support all of the programs administered by DSS is an aggressive one. DSS will manage this process through a phased implementation starting with Child Welfare, TANF, and Childcare. ACESS will have to be a web-enabled, client-centered information system that will improve service delivery and case management throughout DSS by increasing electronic information sharing and improving reporting.




This graphic displays the ACESS vision – a seamless process that coordinates access, assessment, and case management practices to achieve the results DSS desires and the families of Louisiana expect.

# Business Impacts

DSS analyzed the viability of four system development alternatives by determining if each address the state's vision and requirements. A cost/benefit analysis was then conducted for each viable alternative.

To provide efficient service delivery and effective management, the Department must have ready access to concise and meaningful information. DSS annually inputs into multiple disparate computer systems millions of transactions, concerning hundreds of thousands of clients, by more than five thousand workers across more than 150 remote sites.

Since the 1980s, DSS has utilized a mainframe-based set of computer systems to support the programs it administers. Although these systems have served Louisiana well, they have exceeded their life span. In migrating from the existing stand-alone legacy mainframe systems, DSS intends to improve staff efficiency and enhance case management and provider management functions, while improving data management within all of DSS. ACESS will provide a commonality of functions not currently seen because the 27 silo systems don't 'talk' to each other. This should reduce systems maintenance while enhancing future systems development.

To address issues of this nature the State has adopted an IT Master Plan that advocates the *'plan while building-build while planning'* methodology. This methodology recognizes that requirements and priorities for the complete plan often change once a working version is in place. It focuses on key issues that can be defined and managed, thereby rapidly delivering value to the State and allowing it to respond more quickly to changes in federal and state legislative mandates.

At the federal level, the vision for social service agencies is that each state have an integrated automated system capable of capturing and reporting critical program services, as well as benefit and payment data, in a standardized meaningful manner. At the State level, the vision remains to improve the lives of children and families by enhancing collaboration among the many state, local, and private agencies serving this population. The systems and tools of the past are inadequate to meet these demands. ACESS will allow Louisiana to achieve its goals of effective service delivery through better-integrated and more cost-effective service delivery.

In this section DSS determines the viability of four system development alternatives by determining if each address the state's vision and requirements. A cost/benefit analysis is then conducted for each viable alternative.

# Description and Analysis of the Four Alternatives

DSS identified four alternative approaches for addressing the problems in the current environment and realizing the ACESS vision of a cost effective and interoperable system for the Offices of DSS. The four alternatives are:

DSS identified four alternatives and then determined if they met the minimum requirements of addressing the problems in the current environment and realizing the vision of ACESS.

**Alternative 1: Maintain the Status Quo**
**Alternative 2: Custom Build for Each Office**
**Alternative 3: State Transfer System**
**Alternative 4: Enterprise Framework**

Each of the four alternatives are described in more detail below. DSS made an analysis of each alternative to determine if it met the minimum requirements of addressing the problems and realizing the vision of ACESS. The results of this analysis are included with the description of each alternative.

## Alternative 1: Maintain the Status Quo

DSS has determined that maintaining the status quo is NOT a viable option because it does not meet the minimum requirements.

This alternative would have existing IT staff maintain the 27 current stand-alone systems and make changes as requested by system users in the current prioritized fashion. However, continuing to support the current stand-alone systems is not a best practice from either the IT or program perspective.

Existing systems, which aren't Worker-friendly, rely on antiquated methods for data collection, lack timely reporting capability, and are difficult to maintain and costly to modify.

To remain successful means replacing antiquated mainframe applications and re-engineering business processes. Success also means meeting the ACESS vision of a web-enabled, client-centered information system that will improve service delivery and case management throughout DSS by increasing electronic information sharing and improving reporting.

Maintaining the status quo does not address the problems with the current environment nor does the status quo meet the ACESS vision. DSS has determined that maintaining the status quo is NOT a viable option because it does not meet the minimum requirements. Therefore, the status quo will not be considered in the cost/benefit section of the Business Case.

## Alternative 2: Custom Build for Each Office

DSS did determine that this alternative of custom building for each office can address the problems in the current environment and meet part of the ACESS vision. DSS decided that this option merited further analysis in the cost/benefit stage of the Business Case.

This alternative includes designing, building, and implementing IT applications specifically tailored to meet the needs of each Office in the DSS enterprise – similar to the direction initially adopted for the Office of Community Services that resulted in the LAKIDS design. In this approach the individual applications would meet the same or similar business needs, resulting in duplicate design work for each custom built application in each Office.

The advantages of this alternative are limited. Each Office would be able to design and build an information system tailored to meet its exact needs but there would be no understanding of similar business processes or common clients across the DSS enterprise. It's also more costly to design, build, implement, and maintain duplicative systems because they would each require lengthy development schedules and provide only limited reuse of code.

However, DSS has determined that this alternative can address the problems in the current environment and meet part of the ACESS vision. DSS has decided that this option merited further analysis in the cost/benefit section of the Business Case.

## Alternative 3: State Transfer System

DSS has determined that a transfer system does NOT address the problems in the current environment nor does it meet the ACESS vision.

In this alternative, DSS would survey other states to determine if there is an integrated solution that appears to meet the multi-programmatic needs identified for the scope of the enterprise. DSS would then undertake a procurement process to identify, select, and most likely modify a successful solution from another state.

Transfers usually involve older technology, older rules, and older requirements, and they often require extensive modification of the originating state's code. A more critical defect with this alternative is that while another state's solution may very well have some 'out-of-the-box' functionality and could therefore be implemented quicker and more cost effectively than a custom-built product, a framework transfer solution does not currently exist that includes the scope of programs under consideration in ACESS. There are systems that address one or two program areas (Child Welfare, TANF, and Child-care) but not all three.

Therefore, DSS has determined that a transfer system does NOT address the problems in the current environment nor does it meet the ACESS vision. It will not be considered in the cost/benefit section of the Business Case.

## Alternative 4: Enterprise Framework

After evaluating the responses to an RFI, DSS has determined that an Enterprise Framework can address the problems in the current environment and meet the ACESS vision. DSS decided that this option merited further analysis in the cost/benefit stage of the Business Case.

Enterprise architecture encompasses the ACESS 'framework' system. ACESS will provide a framework to support a standardized set of business processes and procedures, and this framework will be used enterprise-wide across the Department.

DSS examined and evaluated available framework technologies by issuing a Request for Information (RFI) in May 2002. The RFI process was intended to give DSS the opportunity to learn the capabilities and constraints of these tools, and to gauge the level of effort required to develop solutions based on these products.

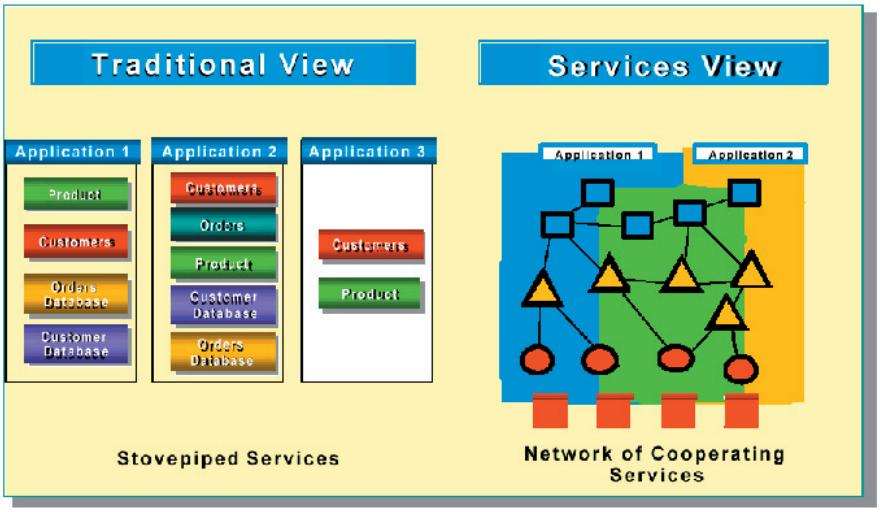
Eleven vendors products were assessed and given a rating based on how well each product met functionality that DSS might need. The functional requirements specified in the RFI were derived from a combination of representative program descriptions by offices potentially affected by the framework and from the detailed design developed for the LAKIDS Project. Technical requirements listed in the RFI were drawn directly from technical deliverables on work previously contracted for by the State. Individual technical requirements were grouped into the following seven broad categories: Technical Architecture, Presentation, Security, Business Logic, Data Access, Message-Oriented Middleware, and Configuration Management.

The results of this analysis demonstrated that framework technology for Human Services has developed to a sufficient degree to meet the Department's needs – so much so that between 40% and 70% of DSS' requirements could be met through existing framework products. Therefore, DSS has determined that an Enterprise Framework can address the problems in the current environment and meet the ACESS vision. DSS decided that this option merited further analysis in the cost/benefit stage of the Business Case.

The Enterprise Framework would be implemented using an incremental development and implementation approach to system functions starting with Child Welfare, TANF, and Childcare. The traditional method of system development is to build a new system in its entirety and then test and implement the system prior to new development. An incremental approach means enhancements would be implemented at the earliest possible time and in small and manageable portions with the Department reaping benefits in its data and service delivery needs sooner rather than later. An additional benefit is that the project would be able to be adjusted to changing requirements and the changing environment of the Department. Each new increment would be planned and developed with the latest information available.

Use of an Enterprise Framework approach would result in shorter development times, reduced costs, and programmatic efficiencies. Perhaps more important, it would enable DSS staff to focus more time on providing services to its clients. Additional benefits include:

*Leveraged technical environment.* The IT Support division will be able to focus its staff on fewer technical components. Initially, DSS will have additional products to support with the introduction of the enterprise, but as applications are merged into the enterprise and the legacy systems are phased out, the number of applications and systems that will need support will be reduced. In addition, because the newer framework products utilize more current technology tool sets, such as C++, Java, and VB scripting, availability of staff with the newer skill sets should be easier to acquire than experienced ADABAS/ Natural professionals.




*Shared data.* All Offices within the Department will be able to share common data elements such as employee information and client information. This will ensure better data integrity, as data will be entered only once.

*Shared processes.* All Offices will be able to share a common process, such as eligibility, while keeping their unique criteria. This will be accomplished through a structured 'business rules engine' capability in the architecture.

*Browser enabled.* Within the appropriate security constraints, DSS employees could access their portion of the enterprise-wide application from anywhere. Business partners, clients, and automated service providers could also use the system thereby allowing DSS to leverage this investment and to better provide services and streamline procedures.

*Faster turnaround.* The selected framework will become the standard for future applications development. Once the Department has adopted this technology, the State will have an enhanced system and therefore future system development and enhancements will both occur more quickly than currently possible.

# Description of the Estimated Costs and Benefits

Four system development alternatives were originally considered. DSS has determined that the following two of the four alternatives do not address the problems in the current environment and do not meet the ACESS vision.

**Alternative 1: Maintain the Status Quo**
**Alternative 3: State Transfer System**

**Cost Benefit Categories**

**Costs**
- System Development

**Benefits**
- Improve Staff Efficiency
- Increase Staff Job Satisfaction
- Improved Data and Reporting
- Enhanced Case Management Functions
- Enhance Provider Management Functions
- Streamline the Quality Assurance Functions

DSS has determined that the following two alternatives merit further consideration. DSS conducted a cost/benefit analysis of:

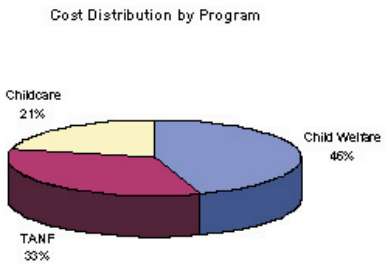
**Alternative 2: Custom Build for Each Office**
**Alternative 4: Enterprise Framework**

The analysis will start with the costs of these two viable alternatives. While each alternative varies in the degree it will meet the ACESS vision and objectives and thus is likely to differ in the amount of benefits it will provide, this difference is not measurable. Therefore, DSS has made the assumption that both of these alternatives will provide the same level of quantifiable benefit but differing costs.

The costs and benefits identified in this Business Case are based on the cost/benefit portions of the Advanced Planning Document (APD) that DSS provided to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in October 2002 and March 2003.

As part of this analysis DSS determined the proportion of functionality that is identical for all programs areas; identical for TANF and Childcare and similar with Child Welfare; functionality that is similar but not identical for all programs; and functionality that is unique to each program. The table on the following page highlights this analysis.

DSS used this functionality analysis as a major determinate of a cost allocation plan between Child Welfare (46%), TANF (33%), and Childcare (21%). Because the cost allocation plan was based on the functionality, DSS has estimated that the three program areas will often accrue benefits in comparable proportion. As part of the APDs, DSS has calculated the benefits for the Child Welfare portion of ACESS. In this Business Case DSS used the functionality based cost allocation plan and the Child Welfare benefits analysis to estimate the total benefits for ACESS.



| Overview of Potential Commonality Among Processes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Child Welfare** | **TANF** | **Childcare** |
| **Service Management** | • Intake Process<br>• Receives Report<br>• Record Report<br>• Assess Report<br>• Non-Report<br>• Investigation in Home<br>• Investigation Out of Home<br>• Legal Process<br>• Provide Family Services<br>• Child Placement<br>• Placement in Hospital<br>• Placement with Relative/Non-Relative<br>• Placement in a Residential Facility<br>• Foster Care Service Delivery<br>• Young Adult Program<br>• Change Goal/Adoption<br>• Conduct Adoptive Search<br>• Adoption Legal Process<br>• Adoption Petition<br>• Record Subsidy Pre-Finalization<br>• Record Subsidy Post-Finalization<br>• Denial of Adoption Subsidy | • Request Service<br>• Obtain Application<br>• Complete Intake Interview<br>• Attempt Cure<br>• OAD Sanction<br>• Reject Case<br>• Terminate Case<br>• Appeal<br>• Initiate Appeal<br>• Hearing Held<br>• Determine Initial Eligibility<br>• Drug Screen<br>• Find Work<br>• Post FITAP Services<br>• Manage Case<br>• Re-Determine Eligibility<br>• Time Limit Extension<br>• Quality Assurance | • Request Service<br>• Complete Intake<br>• Determine Eligibility<br>• 30-60 Day Process<br>• Waiting List<br>• Reject Case<br>• Terminate Case<br>• Appeal<br>• Initiate Appeal<br>• Hearing Held<br>• Manage Case |
| **Provider Management** | • Initial Recruitment FH/Adoptive Home<br>• Initial Certification Foster Home<br>• Recertification of Foster Home<br>• Establish Residential Facility<br>• Establish Agreement with RF/PA<br>• RF/PA Investigation<br>• Private Placing<br>• Set Rates for RF | • Provider Management<br>• CART<br>• Find Work (CART)<br>• Teen Pregnancy (CART) | • Provider Management<br>• Select Provider<br>• Review Provider Packet<br>• Improvement Grant<br>• CART<br>• Childcare (CART) |
| **Financial Management** | • Determine Eligibility<br>• Recertification and Change<br>• Maintain Federal Benefits<br>• SSA Benefit Reconsideration and Appeal | • Initiate Restoration or Recoupment<br>• Fraud and Recovery<br>• Initiate Fraud Case<br>• Initiate Recovery<br>• Initiate IPV | • Provide Payment<br>• Initiate Restoration or Recoupment<br>• Fraud and Recovery<br>• Initiate Fraud Case<br>• Initiate Recovery<br>• Initiate IPV |
| **Color Code Legend** | ■ Identical Processes<br>■ Identical with TANF & Childcare and Similar with Child Welfare<br>■ Similar Processes<br>■ Unique Processes | | |

## System Development and Other Related Costs

In an analysis of estimated LAKIDS costs, DSS projected that the development, implementation, and staff costs of a Child Welfare system at $19,925,639. This does not include SACWIS design and Gap Analysis activities as this is a sunk cost as will be discussed below. Using the cost allocation plan DSS has estimated the comparable costs for TANF and Childcare systems at $23,390,968. Since the cost of these systems would occur over four years, DSS has included a 1.9% inflation adjuster for a total cost of $46,703,687 to custom build systems for each Office. This estimate does not include ongoing operations and maintenance which would be higher for multiple systems than for a single system.

| Alternative 2<br>Custom Build for Each Office | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Cost | $46,703,687 |

The estimated cost for implementing Child Welfare, Childcare, and TANF functionality in ACESS is $40,491,133. But this estimate includes $8,442,027 in 'sunk costs' – costs for the SACWIS design and Gap Analysis that have already been accounted for. So this alternative is actually $14,654,581 less than the Custom Build alternative described above. The cost for the Enterprise Framework is $32,049,106. This includes $8,952,950 for analysis and assessment tasks, and $23,096,157 for design, development, and implementation activities. Breaking it out further, direct personnel costs during the $8,952,950 analysis and assessment phase will be $1,200,000; contractor costs, will total $2,853,450; office automation tasks, $1,000,000; hardware and software, $3,550,000; miscellaneous expenses, $109,500; training costs, $60,000; and indirect costs, $180,000.

| Alternative 4<br>Enterprise Framework | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Cost | $32,049,106 |

Costs during the $23,096,157 design, development, and implementation phase will include $2,365,000 for personnel; $9,960,407 for contractors; $2,400,000 for office automation; $1,300,000 for help desk functionality; $1,100,000 for conversion services; $3,800,000 for hardware and software; $516,000 for miscellaneous expenses; $1,300,000 for training; and $354,750 for indirect costs.

Child Welfare functionality will represent approximately 41% of these total project totals, or $13,140,133. TANF functionality will represent 34%, or $10,896,696. And Childcare functionality will represent 26%, or $8,332,768. The totals here, which have been taken from the APDU, are a bit more than the $32,049,106 because of rounding.

## Improved Staff Efficiency

Currently, Workers spend a great deal of their time on administrative tasks, often entering the same client data into multiple systems. With the implementation of ACESS, both OCS and OFS Workers will enter data only once into a single system and have it available to Workers in Child Welfare, TANF, and/or Childcare services. As a result these Workers will have more time to concentrate on providing a seamless service delivery process to the families and children who receive services from DSS.

| Improved Staff Efficiency | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $73,277,163 |

LAKIDS has identified $6,496,553 in improved staff efficiency benefits for Child Welfare. DSS has estimated $66,780,610 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $73,277,163.

Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

Currently in order for TANF Workers to provide basic FITAP and Find Work Services, they must use six different automated systems. Staff need to enter the same data into multiple systems and in some cases they must refer a case in one system to themselves in another system so that they can complete their work. ACESS will present Workers with a common front end with a single point of data entry for all systems. In addition, cross program data will be available to OCS and OFS staff, providing a more comprehensive view of a client's circumstances. The time savings afforded by ACESS will allow the Worker more face-to-face time with clients, and the access to additional client information will allow for a more holistic approach to matching clients' needs with the appropriate services. Thus ACESS will result in more efficient and effective service delivery. The following are some specific examples of how this will occur.

As defined in federal regulations of the Family Independence Work Program (Find Work Program), the Department has established an overall participation goal of 45% and a two-parent family participation goal of 60%. The integration of ACESS and the comprehensive view of client information will enable Workers to detect barriers to employment for Find Work clients and help them to better provide appropriate services. Having the time to concentrate on these employment-related efforts will enable the OFS staff to meet or exceed these and future participation goals mandated in federal regulations. Increasing the number of clients able to find and maintain employment and reach self-sufficiency and independence from TANF assistance will benefit DSS and the clients it serves.

TANF staff must now spend a substantial amount of their workday processing eligibility determinations and re-determinations. In some cases, this can approach 80% or more of a Worker's time - or four full

workdays per week. OFS estimates that ACESS could cut that time by 20%, freeing up a full workday for more effective case management.

OCS staff also must spend a large portion of time each day filling out paper forms that are often redundant, and in many instances the data is already captured in the automated system. As with TANF, the automation of these processes using a common front end with a single point of data entry should help to decrease the amount of time OCS staff takes in documenting the necessary Child Protection Investigation (CPI), Assessment, Foster Care and Adoption information.

Because of the need to route forms within the agency and to clients and providers, the time needed to complete the application process in OFS can take 30 days. With the integration afforded through ACESS, this time can be substantially reduced. OCS should also reap the benefits of a common eligibility function.

LAKIDS has identified $6,496,553 in staff efficiency benefits for Child Welfare. Due to the number of staff involved, DSS has estimated significant benefits to TANF and Childcare. DSS estimates that these programs will realize $66,780,610 in benefits though improved staff efficiency. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $73,277,163.

ACESS will also improve the efficiency of the DSS technical staff. Maintenance of the existing standalone legacy systems is costly and must be done one system at a time by highly trained technical staff. ACESS is much more efficient in that it uses English language business rules for many functions, meaning that changes can be made more quickly. For the most part, these rules will be incorporated into system tables, which will allow properly trained program staff to maintain and update the rules across the system at one time rather than relying upon IT staff to re-write complex computer programs.

## Improved Staff Job Satisfaction

Implementation of ACESS will enhance Worker and technical staff job satisfaction. Worker job satisfaction will improve because more of their time will be spent in direct client service and less time will be spent dealing with paperwork. In a 1995 independent study of OCS by C.D. Ellet from the Louisiana State University titled *A Study of Professional Personnel Needs,* turnover rates were clearly related in part to excessive paperwork demands and a poor case management system. The availability of a user-friendly single system could result in a reduction in turnover rate from the current 10% to 5% for direct service workers. The potential savings for the TANF and Childcare programs are even more significant because of the number of staff involved. The staff turnover rate in 2002 is 23.7%. Reducing that rate to 15.7% will result in significant savings to DSS.

| Improved Staff Job Satisfaction | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $9,806,152 |

LAKIDS has identified $612,376 in staff job satisfaction benefits for Child Welfare. DSS has estimated $9,193,776 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $9,806,152.

Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

DSS technical staff also face issues of job satisfaction and turnover. The turnover of DSS technical staff was 21.2% (7 of 33) in 2002. Support of the current legacy environment, particularly the proprietary Natural/ADABAS systems, is increasingly difficult and expensive. Finding individuals with skill in Natural/ADABAS, whether to train existing staff or to maintain existing systems, is a problem. By standardizing on a state-of-the-art enterprise technology product, DSS will be able to train existing staff and hire local resources to support the technology more easily and simplify the information technology activities in the future. Although staff will need to be trained on the new development environment, the underlying tool sets used are based on relational database technology and individuals with those skill sets are more readily available.

## Improved Data and Reporting

ACESS will provide DSS management with a single source of data for planning, analysis, and budgeting through both standard and ad-hoc reports. This data will be more current, consistent, and reliable than that which comes from the multiple stand-alone systems existing today – enhancing the ability of DSS management to quickly and accurately respond to requests for information from a wide variety of program stakeholders.

| Improved Data and Reporting | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $201,263 |

Why is this so important? OFS managers must now manually combine the information from 17 separate reports to produce a single workload activity report. With ACESS, a common data repository enhances the retrieval of data for searches and therefore ensures that all of the necessary information will be accessible in one place. And, with cross program data available, it will be possible to produce comparative reports to assist in better service delivery and fraud detection. This improved access to, and customization of, performance data will allow DSS management to provide more in-depth assessments of performance and provide a means for more timely and pro-active intervention.

LAKIDS has identified $92,581 in improved data and reporting benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $108,682 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $201,263.

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Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

## Enhanced Case Management Functions

ACESS will help ease case management work by allowing Workers to share information more easily with each other while maintaining confidentiality safeguards. Workers will be able to electronically enter all case-related data into ACESS, making many existing paper-intensive processes obsolete, and allowing others to have access to consistent and reliable data without needing to look at several different systems or reports. ACESS will track program requirements and time frames for the case so that Workers are prompted to take required actions exactly when they are due. Additionally, clients will be able to communicate online with their Workers to report new information or update progress at meeting case goals.

| Enhanced Case Management Functions | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $12,849,908 |

Why is eliminating paper processes so important? Home visit notes, court reports, and placement forms, among other documents, make up a case record's supporting documentation. This documentation requires maintenance, can be lost over time, and costs a substantial amount of money to retain. ACESS will allow the majority of the information to be captured in an electronic case record, thus eliminating the need to store paper documents. As a result, OFS estimates a 20% reduction in costs for the maintenance of their case records. The OCS could see an equivalent reduction.

LAKIDS has identified $7,446,384 in enhanced case management functions benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $5,403,524 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $12,849,908.

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Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

## Enhanced Provider Management Functions

ACESS will automate existing recruitment and retention efforts. This is important because while there is a great need within DSS to be able to recruit and retain providers, the current process is awkward, mostly manual, and not coordinated between offices. Having access to an online registration process where potential providers may view requirements and apply if they are interested will be a tremendous benefit to DSS.

| Enhanced Provider Management Functions | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $15,963,537 |

ACESS will also streamline the time-consuming certification process. Many of the contractors that provide services to DSS clients must be certified as well as licensed. Currently, DSS licensing data is kept on the Bureau of Licensing Application System, but certification information is not linked in any way with it. Once licensing is incorporated into ACESS, certification and licensing will work seamlessly.

LAKIDS has identified $7,343,227 in enhanced provider management functions benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $8,620,310 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $15,963,537.

Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

Additionally, Requests for Proposal (RFP) will be accessible to contractors through a DSS Internet portal, and those contractors will be able to respond to the RFP through this portal. Once a particular contract has been awarded, contract monitoring and electronic invoicing will be available as part of ACESS.

This electronic invoicing, from the entry by a provider to the payment for services, will be managed online. Providers will be able to submit their invoices online; they will also be able to track the activity of their contracts and the status of their invoice payments. This automated invoicing feature will save a significant amount of time for both providers and for DSS staff. Invoices will be more accurate because providers, who have an interest in receiving timely payments, will complete the invoices more accurately. And duplicate entry by DSS staff will be eliminated.

All contracting and electronic invoicing components will be candidates for early implementation into ACESS because of the immediate benefits that will be realized by both DSS and its providers.

LAKIDS has identified $7,343,227 in enhanced provider management functions benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $8,620,310 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $15,963,537.

## Streamlined Quality Assurance Function

DSS has a Quality Assurance (QA) unit that performs Food Stamp and TANF compliance reviews. This review data is housed in a PC-based Quality Assurance Tracking System (QATS), which makes available access to statewide data for ad-hoc reporting and also provides a basis for comparing and reporting compliance data. ACESS will allow much of this QA data capture process to be automated, and it will improve many QA functions because of the integrated database. This will allow QA Workers to streamline their processes through electronic access to needed information, increase accuracy by automating the compliance rules, and reduce the bottlenecks that occur because of delays in obtaining necessary case record information.

| Streamlined Quality Assurance Function | |
|---|---|
| | Total |
| Estimated Benefit | $1,071,539 |

LAKIDS has identified $492,908 in streamlined quality assurance function benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $578,631 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $1,071,539.

LAKIDS has identified $492,908 in streamlined quality assurance function benefits for Child Welfare. Using the functionality based cost allocation plan, DSS has estimated $578,631 in comparable benefits for TANF and Childcare. The total ACESS benefit is estimated to be $1,071,539.

Note: The savings were calculated for a seven-year period.

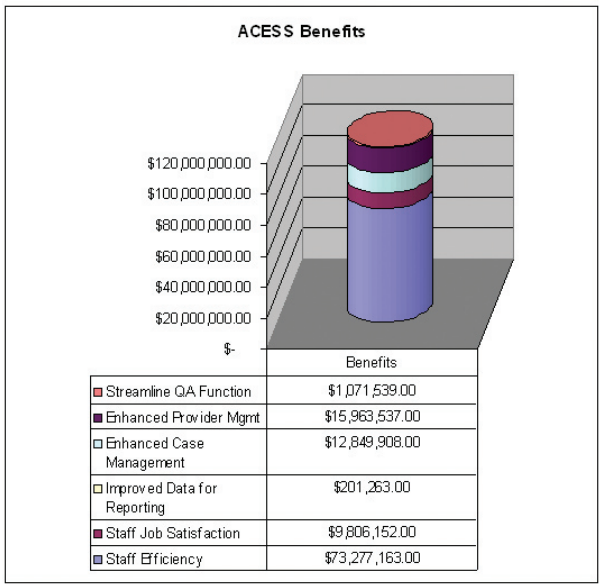
# Summary of Costs and Benefits by Alternative

DSS has determined that there is a strong business case for the ACESS project and that the Enterprise Framework alternative is the best solution for DSS and the State of Louisiana.

DSS evaluated four alternatives and determined that two did not address the problems in the current environment nor did they meet the ACESS vision. Since these two alternatives were determined to be 'Not Viable' options, DSS did not conduct a cost/benefit analysis on them. The two 'Not Viable' alternatives are:

**Alternative 1: Maintain the Status Quo**
**Alternative 3: State Transfer System**

The costs and benefits of the two viable alternatives were then analyzed. These viable alternatives are:




**Alternative 2: Custom Build for Each Office**
**Alternative 4: Enterprise Framework**

DSS determined that cost of the Custom Build alternative was higher at $46,703,687 than the cost of the Enterprise Framework alternative at $32,049,106. DSS then made the conservative assumption that both of these alternatives will provide the same level of quantifiable benefit even though they had differing costs. The total benefits was calculated to be $113,169,562. DSS has determined that there is a strong business case for the ACESS project whichever of the two viable alternatives is considered. However, since the Enterprise Framework alternative is less expensive and is more closely aligned with the ACESS vision, DSS has determined that the Enterprise Framework alternative is the best solution for DSS and the State of Louisiana.

| Cost/Benefit Summary | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alternative** | **Total Cost** | **Total Benefits** | **Net Benefit** | **Conclusion** |
| Alternative 1<br>Maintain the Status Quo | N/A | N/A | N/A | Not Viable |
| Alternative 2<br>Custom Build for Each Office | $46,703,687 | $113,169,562 | $66,465,875 | Costlier Solution |
| Alternative 3<br>State Transfer System | N/A | N/A | N/A | Not Viable |
| **Alternative 4<br>Enterprise Framework** | **$32,049,106** | **$113,169,562** | **$81,120,456** | **Best Solution** |

# Risks and Contingencies

The implementation of any major information system brings risks. Even far-off events like the war with in Iraq have a direct impact on the availability of state resources. To mitigate exposure, the State must, very early in the project development life cycle, make contingency plans for every possible risk. This involves evaluating specific project risk events to determine their probable threat to the project, prioritizing these events, and then developing applicable responses.

The newness of Enterprise Framework products presents a risk, so it's imperative that DSS be thorough as it goes through the RFP and procurement processes.

The newness of Enterprise Framework products presents a risk, so it's imperative that DSS be extremely thorough as it goes through the RFP and procurement processes to make sure that the product being bid and the vendor who is bidding are able to perform as advertised. Asking all finalists for a proof of concept can mitigate this risk.

Another risk is a lack of high-level sponsorship. DSS, through its Information Technology Governance structure, has already made strides to mitigate these risks by obtaining top management buy-in. Continuation of this support will be critical.

Lack of sponsorship is one of the greatest risks to a successful Enterprise Framework endeavor.

DSS has addressed many of the risks associated with enterprise architecture development by issuing an RFI and evaluating the capabilities of Enterprise Framework technology currently available. DSS has also prepared documentation to guide the customization of the Enterprise Framework for ACESS. The documentation includes two models – an 'As Is,' which documents DSS' existing process flows, and the 'To Be,' which documents the way DSS would like those processes to flow in the future.

To address the risks associated with leveraging enterprise architecture to manage change, DSS is engaged in Change Management activities that will continue throughout the project. In addition, after the Enterprise Framework is acquired, DSS will produce a Change Management Plan and develop Change Management Templates for the local Offices.

Once the framework is acquired, risks associated with implementation and operations come into play. These risks, and the associated mitigation strategies, are presented below.

***Not moving forward with modern techniques:*** Most of the multiple existing DSS systems operate using outdated technology, and the cost to maintain these systems over the long term will likely be greater than the cost to replace and refresh them. Implementing an Enter-

prise Framework will allow the Department to more rapidly and efficiently make changes to accommodate modifications in program rules and regulations as they occur.

***Technically inflexible:*** Since the technical architecture is shared across program areas, each will be required to operate within the constraints of that architecture. To mitigate this risk, DSS will keep all technology organizations across the enterprise informed of project status and decisions through the various Change Management communication channels.

The risks associated with framework implementation and operations:

- Not moving forward with modern techniques
- Technically inflexible
- Too leading-edge
- Locked into a specific technology/vendor
- Scope change

***Too leading-edge:*** While the enterprise-approach has been around for more than a decade, few governments and even fewer social service organizations have actually successfully implemented such a system. To mitigate this risk, DSS will closely monitor the selected framework and design/development vendors. To assist in this effort, DSS will procure QA services.

***Locked into a specific technology/vendor:*** DSS may not be able to quickly take advantage of technology improvements, depending on the framework vendor's ability to incorporate the improvement within its technology. This risk can be mitigated in two ways. First, DSS will require that the selected framework vendor's product be 'open' and comprised of off-the-shelf software products. Second, DSS will require that the selected framework vendor's product be kept up-to-date by requiring that the framework be upgraded within six months after a component product upgrade is made generally available.

***Scope change:*** This will be a multi-year project. During this time, requirements, regulations, initiatives, and priorities will change. The Project Management Team will define 'in scope' and 'out of scope' at the beginning of the project, will conduct regularly scheduled meetings to monitor progress, and will manage any scope change to lessen impact on the overall schedule, costs, and product delivery.

# Conclusions

Current legacy systems are at least 20 years old and are based on obsolete technology. They are expensive and difficult to maintain. Migrating from the existing systems to a web-based system promotes DSS' ability to streamline processes while more directly engaging all stakeholders in the sharing, reporting, and analyzing of information.

An Enterprise Framework is the optimal approach. It provides a commercial system built with current technology and oriented for flexibility to allow quick customization to meet current agency rules and requirements.

An Enterprise Framework is the optimal approach. It provides an off-the-shelf system built with current technology and oriented for flexibility to allow quick customization to meet current and future agency rules and requirements. The use of a framework is the most advantageous methodology to employ for large-scale organizations that have large standalone systems. Such an approach avoids the pitfalls of custom development efforts that typically are high risk and high cost, require lengthy development schedules, and provide only limited reuse of code.

As the foundation for ACESS, DSS proposes to purchase a commercial Enterprise Framework product that contains pre-built and pre-tested components to accelerate the design, development, and delivery of new applications. Sharing and reuse across applications can eliminate significant duplicate design and test efforts.

The primary benefit of this framework approach is that the product will come with some pre-built common functions (such as scheduling/calendaring, automated messaging, ticklers, checklists, and/or help) and common components (such as case management, contract management, financial management, eligibility determination, and/or reporting). Though the specific components that are included vary among the available products, the concept is the same - to provide a framework of pre-built and pre-tested components to support DSS' business processes.

| Conclusion Summary | |
|---|---|
| **Alternative** | **Conclusion** |
| Alternative 1<br>Maintain the Status Quo | Not Viable |
| Alternative 2<br>Custom Build for Each Office | Costlier Solution |
| Alternative 3<br>State Transfer System | Not Viable |
| **Alternative 4<br>Enterprise Framework** | **Best Solution** |

DSS will still be required to customize the functionality that already exists within the Enterprise Framework product and integrate and build the business functions unique to each program office, but to a lesser extent than 'building from scratch'. Therefore, DSS has determined that the Enterprise Framework is the best alternative for addressing the problems in the current environment, meeting the ACESS vision, and serving the State of Louisiana.