



ELEVATING THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE IN SOCIAL SERVICES

AN INTELEGY CASE STUDY WITH THE FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

THE CHALLENGE



With crowded waiting rooms, a less than responsive delivery system, the impending transition of the Affordable Care Act, and new Healthy Family clients entering the county service system, the Fresno County Department of Social Services needed a new approach to client service delivery. Families, seniors, and other clients could expect to wait up to 30 minutes in the lobby to check in for in-person visits. Clients visited the department in person an average of 3.5 times to prove eligibility and access the services they needed. The County took the challenge as an opportunity to improve services for local residents - with great results.



THE INTELEGY APPROACH

InTelegy partnered with Fresno County DSS to design a model flexible enough to expand rapidly, not only serve more clients, but to serve them efficiently and with dignity. InTelegy and Fresno County DSS analyzed the systems by which clients accessed services, as well as the processes that supported or created barriers for clients. The partners identified two fundamental solutions based on this analysis:

- 1) A transition from a case-based environment to a distributed work environment.
- 2) Modern technology to streamline the client experience.

To implement these strategies InTelegy supported Fresno County DSS in using the following strategies:

Workflow Redesign



- Analysis of the reasons for client in person visits led to a redesign of the lobby flow resulting in a reduction in lobby wait times and a decrease in the number of client visits to complete the eligibility process, saving the department and the client time.
- Online application submittal and phone interviews were encouraged at all client contact points to minimize in-person visits.
- Staff are flexibly assigned to tasks based upon client need and work volume.



Empowering Clients

- By providing expert support in the lobby with an Eligibility Worker, DSS was able to deliver immediate client support. In addition, Rapid Services Staff provide quick resolution for client questions and critical eligibility needs. Clients are able to obtain their benefits more efficiently and with a greater understanding of how the process works.
- By providing self-service technology, including lobby kiosks for self-service check in and self-service copiers, as well as linking lobby phones to the department call center for clients to process routine case updates such as address or phone changes, clients are equipped to help themselves at their convenience.
- By providing increased information and communication with clients a continuous informational presentation was developed to provide lobby, service center, program and community resource information educating clients on how to easily obtain the services they need.



Modern Technology

- New electronic signage and monitors alert clients with a ticket number to protect confidentiality and preserve the dignity of the client experience.
- Lobby computer terminals are available to encourage clients to access online applications and forms.
- Technology is now available that allows client documents to be scanned, filed electronically and returned to the client at the time of their first visit, or self-scanned and dropped off without waiting in line.

SUCCESS IN PARTNERSHIP

The project to update and improve Fresno County DSS's client service delivery system was a great success.

- **Client Convenience:** Lobby traffic decreased by 11%, meaning clients are able to access services with fewer in-person visits and more online and phone support. At the same time, CalWIN online applications increased by more than 10%. Clients wishing to apply for benefits no longer have to go through multiple steps, spanning multiple days or weeks, to obtain benefits.
- **Client Experience:** Client check-in time for in-person visits decreased from up to thirty minutes to less than sixty seconds. Lobbies are more welcoming and modern, with personal support staff ready assist clients immediately as well as self-service technology designed to help save clients time.
- **Savings for the County:** The first phase of the project was completed well within the approved \$3.5M project budget. Savings over time for the County are expected to be significant.
- **Successful Transition for the County:** Fresno County successfully transformed their client service delivery model during a period of dramatic increase in social services caseloads, while still meeting vital service objectives and investing in the dignity of the client experience.



ABOUT US

Fresno County Department of Social Services: With an annual budget exceeding \$549 million and a staff of 2,470 employees, Fresno County DSS is the county's largest department. Visit us at <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/dss>.

InTelegy: Established in 1996, InTelegy specializes in collaborating with Health and Human Service Agencies to modernize and streamline the client service delivery model, resulting in an improved client experience and increased staff efficiency. Learn more about us at www.InTelegy.com.