

Q&A with Landis Rossi

A New Era for Child Support System Modernization

Leveraging advancements in technology and new federal guidance for your modernization project



Advancements in technology, simplifications to the Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) Feasibility Study requirements, and the infusion of federal stimulus funds make child support system modernization attainable at a lower cost and on a faster timeline than states have historically experienced. In this Q&A, **Landis Rossi**, national Child Support Practice Lead at CSG Government Solutions, provides guidance to states aiming to enhance customer service and improve program performance through child support system modernization. Over her career, Rossi has worked with child support programs in 10 states. Here she shares lessons learned and best practices to help states launch their system modernization projects.





What is driving the current focus on modernizing state child support systems?

There are several factors causing states to aggressively pursue child support system modernization. These include the increasing difficulty and cost of maintaining aging legacy systems, limited opportunities to enhance existing applications and constantly growing demand for efficient digital government services from all public-facing government programs. In addition, the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan provide significant additional funding to help states invest in system modernization.

How has the child support technology landscape changed recently?

In the past, system implementation approaches such as transferring and customizing a child support system from another state have typically required several years and hundreds of millions of dollars to implement. New offerings in the market allow more flexible development approaches. These include platform-based and low-code solutions, cloud hosting options, enhanced data analytics, artificial intelligence and user centered design. Solutions are more scalable, offering sustainability through lower maintenance costs and less demand on limited state IT resources.

How do new federal requirements impact child support system modernization?

Last year, OCSE released a streamlined process for states to develop and gain approval of their child support system modernization Feasibility Study. This new approach reduces or eliminates some of the more burdensome documentation requirements and simplifies the cost benefit analysis. CSG recently completed the new process with one of our state clients and found that it is more straightforward and less time-consuming. However, it does not reduce the need for in-depth analysis and development of meaningful documentation, including system requirements and architectural diagrams.

What are three key recommendations to states that are beginning a modernization project?

I believe the key to a successful project is to always be looking ahead. Here are a few recommendations for the early stages of the project:

1. **Lay the groundwork** for the effort with executive buy-in throughout your enterprise. Write a basic project charter that clearly states the business case for the modernization project and links it to your program's mission and goals. Work to make sure the influencers in your organization have reviewed the charter, understand it and support the effort.
2. **Try not to jump to conclusions too early** about the technology or other solutions you should be implementing. These early decisions will have wide-ranging downstream impacts. Reach out to other states to access their experiences with various platforms and approaches.
3. **Engage early with OCSE** to open lines of communication. Create a plan upfront for managing your APDs and Feasibility Study through the federal review and approval process. Waiting until the Feasibility Study is complete before having adequate interaction with OCSE can result in unexpected delays in federal funding and beginning the implementation.

How does CSG assist states in planning and executing a successful modernization project?

CSG offers a team with real-world experience and thorough knowledge of child support programs and systems, independent of implementation contractors and software vendors. We provide a range of project-related services including planning, project management, business analysis, quality assurance, and organizational change management. There is great benefit in contracting with a firm with experienced resources, knowledge of the current market for child support technologies and federal requirements, proven project methodologies and tools, and first-hand experience on similar successful state projects. We are currently working on major child support modernizations in eight states.



CSG Government Solutions is a leading public sector consulting firm focused on helping government agencies modernize critical program enterprises. Founded in 1997, CSG has established itself as a trusted advisor to more than 200 government agencies. Named one of America's Best Management Consulting Firms five years in a row by Forbes Magazine, we work with our clients to deliver high quality services that help to achieve their goals. Call or email Landis to discuss how CSG can help with your child support modernization at (208) 954-0429 or Irossi@csgdelivers.com. For more information, visit www.csgdelivers.com.