Going Paperless: Electronic Document Management and Workflow

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Presented by: Jennifer Keogh
Dakota County CDA
What is Electronic Document Management? (EDMS)

- Organizes and manages electronic documents within one system, providing unified method of retrieval
- Electronic documents may include:
  - Scanned images
  - Word documents
  - Excel spreadsheets
  - E-mail messages
Why EDMS and Workflow?

• Large volume of documents to be stored and retrieved on demand
• Shared Documents among multiple users and/or multiple locations
• Disaster Recovery
• Physical space is limited and document storage is voluminous
• Streamline and standardize processes due to Admin Fee cuts
• Ongoing Regulation Burdens
• Same amount of work needs to be completed
Steps

• Step 1
  - Discovery

• Step 2
  - Development

• Step 3
  - Records Retention Policy

• Step 4
  - Implementation

• Step 5
  - Fine Tuning/Maintenance
Discovery

• Identify and prioritize project goals
  • Reduce the bulk of active tenant files to address space, personal injury, and data privacy concerns
  • Began December 2003

• Process mapping and improvement
  • Consultant to map processes and recommend process improvements

• Establish project scope and timeline
  • Board Approval in 2003

• Identify and budget for hardware, software, and staffing needs
  • Selected separate imaging software rather than using a housing software with built in EDMS

• Inventory and group ALL document types taking into consideration circulation and retrieval requirements

• Identify and build internal champions for the project to drive change within the organization
Development

• Developed in Phases (ARCHIVAL VS WORKFLOW)
  • Archival
    • Scanning for Document Retention and Retrieval Only
    • Began September 2004 – fully implemented by April 2006
  • Work flow and upfront scanning
    • Began February 2007
      • Implementation phased in starting March 2008 through December 2008

• Selected Software
  • Purchased licenses and products
  • Assessed Server Needs

• Hired consultant to build workflow
  • Assigned staff to work w/consultant to define process requirements

• Maintain centralized issues log for entire work group and track all issues to resolution
  • Met weekly to review progress – staff spent hours w/consultant between meetings working through requirements

• Test
  • Involve users
Record Retention Policies

• Review existing record retention policies
• Review regulations governing retention practices
• Revised agency record retention policy:
  • **Electronic records are the agency’s official records when they exist**
• Submitted any policy changes to the State prior to implementation
• Approval
• Adoption of Practices
Implementation: Moving from Archival to Workflow

• Conduct user training and acceptance testing
  • Identify super-users and leverage their enthusiasm for the solution

• Staff phased in implementation
  • One Year Time

• Annual re-exams First
  • interim rent changes, moves, and terminations
  • New admissions, Ports and Small Programs

• Schedule “go-live” and ensure availability of technical support

• Respond promptly to issues and maintain issues log to keep track of bugs identified by staff
Fine-Tuning/System Maintenance

- Identify and Prioritize Issues
  - Wish List vs Critical
  - Low Hanging Fruit
- Issues Log
- Monitor user acceptance over time
- Build culture of continuous improvement
  - Signature Pads
  - Mobile Inspections
What does our Paperless Office Look Like?

• No need for file storage in workstations
• Multiple computer monitors allow viewing of documents while using other applications
• More scanners less photocopiers
• Generic and free-form documents are rare
  • Documents w/client and document specific barcode identification are the norm
• Signature pads replace pens and paper forms
Key Outcomes

Office Space and Supply Cost Savings

- Less space required for file storage and employee workstations
- Less space needed for storing paper supplies and bulk forms
- Reduced postage and office supply costs
  - Less paper, copier and toner, post-its, pens, no more staplers
Key Outcomes

Staff Time Savings

• Less time wasted looking for files and documents
• Less time spent trying to figure out the status of work on a file
• Less time spent routing and filing paperwork
• Less time spent pulling and organizing files requiring attention
Key Outcomes

Management Advantages
• Increased flexibility to address coverage gaps and workload fluctuations
• Monitoring performance and workload status is streamlined
• Quality control audits can be performed from desktop
• Electronic workflows force consistency for specific tasks and improve work quality
• Customer Service/Complaint Calls

• Reduction in Staffing
  • 2011 17 FTE’s to 14.86 FTE for FY 2015
Key Outcomes

Customer Service Improvements

• Electronic routing and filing of documents allows staff to provide more accurate and timely information
• Fewer misplaced documents and files means better service and less confusion
• Ready Access No More... “Let me track down the file so I can look into it for you.”
Key Outcomes

Benefits for External Partners

• Port packets can be created and sent electronically for prompt delivery
• Verifications can be sent and received from desktop to eliminate the delay and cost of mailing

• Auditors:
  • Increased flexibility to search for specific documents on demand and no longer need to sift through reams of paper in search of evidence of certain compliance document - saving time for more meaningful inquiry and analysis

• Legal Review:
  • File review completed on laptop and can print out documents on demand

• Fair Housing Review
  • Search by Reasonable Accommodation
Lessons Learned

• Break the project down into phases
• Don’t start unless you are ready
• Don’t replicate a paper world in an automated world
• Be Flexible
• Listen to End Users
• Change Management
Signature Pads

• Implemented 2011

• GOALS:
  • Reduce the amount of paper printed
  • Reduce the number of times a document is scanned and received

• Set up documents
• Test
• Implement
• Troubleshoot

• Not all documents will be compatible
HQS Mobile Inspections

- Implemented February 2014
- One year process
  - Set Up, Testing, Troubleshooting, Go Live, Troubleshooting

**GOALS:**

- Reduce amount of time scheduling inspections
- Reduce Admin Time processing inspections
- Save Postage Costs
- Customer Service
- Reduce Time Completing Inspections
HQS Mobile Inspections

- Pass Inspection with click
- Elimination of Double Entry
- Reduced Time Scheduling Inspections
  - 1.5 days to schedule to 30 minutes
- Improves accuracy of data collected
- Reduced OSA Position to PT

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7TSpUX0T74&feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7TSpUX0T74&feature=player_embedded)
Up Next... Owner Portal

USES
• Streamlines Inspection Process
• Expansion of Direct Deposit

BENEFITS
• Eliminates Paper Inspection Reports/Letters
  • Provides quicker results
• Improves communication
  • Customer Service
• Reduces Postage
• Reduces Staff Time
National Example
Tarrant County Housing Assistance Office
Texas

- HCV Program Only
- 2750 Vouchers (medium size PHA)
- Annual Admin Budget 1.8 Million
- 24 Staff
The Problem

- Reduction in Administrative Fees
- Ongoing Regulation Burdens
- Inability to determine Admin Fees in the future
- Inability to plan for the future
- Same amount of work needs to be completed
Conducted a Cost Saving Assessment

• Met with Management Staff to discuss a plan to determine how we can reduce cost and improve production.
Assessment

• Analysis of Current Staff Utilization
• Analysis of Current Workflow and Production
• Analysis of Leadership Structure to ensure Support and Operation needs are being met
Assessment cont’d

- Reviewed Occupancy Policy
- Review of Repayment Agreements
Staff Questionnaire

• What job tasks consume most of your workday?

• How often are you interrupted while you are doing a job task?

• What expenses can we reduce without compromising quality service?
Questionnaire
Results
What job tasks consume most of your workday?

• Daily Annual Re-examination Interviews with Program Participants
• Paper, Paper and more paper
• Incoming Phone Calls
What expenses can we reduce without compromising quality service?

- Staff Salaries & Benefits
- Overtime
- Postage
- Paper/Toner/Copies
Cost Saving Actions Implemented
What We Don’t Want…
New Paperless Workflow
iDIA

• HAPPY’s Integrated Document Imaging Archive
• Automated storage and retrieval of documents for:
  • Applicants
  • Tenants
  • Owners
  • Units
• Integrated to Assistance Check and EIV
Electronic Case Files

• Many advantages in using document imaging systems:
  • Increased access to documents
  • Better organization
  • Standardizes workflow
  • Fewer lost documents
  • Ability to review a case file when it is not physically present
  • Great for audits
  • Physical security of mail / files
  • Reduces office space needed for storage
  • Never ask ‘where’s the file’ again!
Retrieval

- Benefits to having system integrated to housing software
  - View all documents right from case records
  - Allows for efficiencies to be better realized
Mobile Inspection Cost Saving Benefits

- Eliminates double-data entry
- Improves accuracy of data collected
- Reduces postage
- Provides quicker results
- Improves communication
- Saves trips back to the office
- Collects email addresses for future communications
- Speeds up overall process
- Save 55K for Inspector’s Salary and Benefits
Summary

• Saved 120K on Staff Salaries and Benefits
• Reduced postage cost by 47%
• Reduce paper, toner, printer, and copier cost by 39%
• Improved our overall office workflow (less duplication)
• Improved communication with program participants and owners