



Council on Children and Families

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Meeting Summary

Navigating Multiple Systems Advisory Council

Teleconference
June 25, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Advisory Members Present

Deborah Benson, Council on Children and Families
Allison Campbell, NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Chris Cargain, NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Mary Coppola, NYS Success
Zachary Garafalo, YOUTH POWER!
Victoria Gray, NYS Department of Labor
Melanie Hecker, YOUTH POWER!
Robin Hickey, NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
Vicky Hiffa, NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Michele Juda, Parent-to-Parent of NYS
Katie Leyden, Council on Children and Families
Elana Marton, Council on Children and Families
Mary McHugh, NYS Office of Mental Health
Phyllis Morris, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Danielle Olsen, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

Stephanie Orlando, YOUTH POWER!
Susan Perkins, Council on Children and Families
Jean Sadowy, NYS Office of Mental Health, Western NY Field Office
Janet Sapio-Mayta, Council on Children and Families
Susan Slade, NYS Department of Health

Project Team

Marty Hardin, Cogent Technologies
Paul Marano, Cogent Technologies
William McLaughlin, William McLaughlin Associates, L.L.C.
Fredda Merzon, Fredda Merzon Associates
Rebecca Meyers, Independent Consultant
Robin Miller, Council on Children and Families
Bill Przulucki, Council on Children and Families
Alice Rose, Cogent Technologies

Introductions

➤ Welcome and Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and Debbie Benson welcomed all present. Debbie thanked DDPC for approving a year 1 project extension. Debbie updated Advisory Council members on the progress of the project over the past four-five months. She explained that the project was successful in procuring Cogent Technologies for both Phase 1 and 2 of the NMS Project website build. Debbie thanked the Justice Center for their assistance with this procurement.



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Council Member Agencies

State Office for the Aging * Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Office of Children and Family Services * Division of Criminal Justice Services * State Education Department
Department of Health * Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs *
Department of Labor * Office of Mental Health * Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives * Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance



Deborah A. Benson
Executive Director

The Cogent team was introduced to the Advisory Council. Debbie reminded Advisory Council members that in addition to relying on their advice, they were brought them together as stakeholders and work partners. The project has moved into the development phase and members can now expect to be called on for additional assistance.

Bill Przylucki from the Council, then thanked Cogent Technologies for joining the project team and clarified the importance of understanding the two faces of the website: **1) the public face** (web pages, tools, user interface) and the **2) the administrative face** (back-end, database programs). The next steps of the project will be primarily focused on the development of the back-end database and administrative area.

Overview of NMS Project to Date

➤ Website Build Project Approach

Paul Marano expressed his excitement to be working on this project – building a tool to assist parents, youth and service providers and made several important points about the website:

- The administrative (back-end) of this project have to be developed first, which will allow staff and administrators to manage and update the content on the website, keeping it accurate and fresh.
- Cogent is currently in the data-discovery phase, collecting information about services and programs (where the information is coming from, who provides the information). Collecting this information is a challenge.
- This website will need to be user-friendly and designed very differently than other state agency websites.
- The best method to import data into the systems is still unclear whether data will be entered manually or through data-feeds, probably a combination of both methods. Clarification will be made over the next several weeks.
- Paul addressed some of the concerns people have voiced about the front-end of the project and that they will do their best to address those concerns.
- Paul clarified that the website will follow a responsive design, which means all web pages will be programmed to be device independent – meaning content will automatically rearrange when accessed on devices such as a smartphone, tablet and desktop computer.

Robin Miller explained that as the database and back-end user interface is developed, CCF will be providing training to content providers on how to log-in to the administrative area and upload their content for use on the NMS website. There will be a review and approval process for content loaded into the back-end.

Bill Przylucki added that some initial conversations with 211 have taken place and a representative of 211 is now on the Advisory Council and seated on the Content Development Work Group. Further conversations between our contractors, staff and 211 representatives as well as some other Content Work Group members that have interactive data initiatives will be scheduled.

➤ NMS Project Requirements Document

Becky Meyers explained that since February the ongoing project work of the project team has been creating a product out of all the research and outreach conducted in phase one of this project. Becky provided a quick overview of the NMS Requirements Document:

- Key objectives (page two): these objectives are the main goals that this project aims to achieve

- Functional requirements (page five): these are the capabilities that users should be able to access when using the website
- Throughout the document a prioritization is implemented with each component defined, outlining the amount and type of work required to complete each task.

Becky asked all present to review the Technical Requirements document and direct any questions or comments to Bill Przulucki, Becky Meyers or Robin Miller.

➤ **NMS Website Development Project Work Plan Overview**

Becky Meyers quickly reviewed the high-level Work Plan of the project. The website content planning and development phase began in May and it is now time to roll up our sleeves and get to work! Becky explained that one year from now (July 2015) is the expected public launch of this website, but explained that prior to that date; pilot testing will begin taking place, hopefully in early 2015. Becky also explained that along with the Content Development Work group, the other sub-committees of the Advisory Council will be launched within the coming months. Question arose asking Cogent Technologies about their experience working on projects with similar content of such complexity.

Paul Marano stated Cogent’s focus will be on chunking up the work and prioritizing. It is important for the Advisory Council to understand that websites constantly grow, improve and evolve. All content will not be in the system in the next twelve months, but the priority items will be in place. Paul also spoke of his experience working on the Kids’ Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse (www.nyskwic.org) with the Council and how this too was a huge dynamic, data-rich web project that is now a very successful user-friendly, data-rich website.

Alice Rose, also from Cogent Technologies, added that Cogent recently redesigned the Contract Reporter database and website – a website that matches service providers and bidders on a diverse array of contract opportunities. Similar to the Contract Reporter, the NMS database will need significant input from stakeholders and data providers. Unlike the Contract Reporter, the intention of NMS data is to have intrinsic value and incentive to service providers to keep information relevant and fresh. Robin Miller stressed the importance of obtaining a commitment from all data providers to supply relevant up-to-date content and make a commitment to keep their content up-to-date. Without up-to-date information, the website will quickly lose its value.

➤ **Sketch of Major Website Elements**

Becky Meyers reviewed the Sketch of Major Website Elements and explained that this document is a high-level schematic overview of the website, not necessarily how the website will appear to users. Becky quickly walked through the various elements on the document and explained that the “Central Elements” will be the main focus of the project. It is important to note that some elements will be much easier to flesh-out than others. Some elements such as “Child/Youth Development” and “How-To Guidance and Coaching” may be more abstract and will take longer to complete. Becky reminded the group that conversations with 211/311 will continue over the coming weeks.

➤ **First Meeting of the NMS Content Development Work Group**

Becky explained that the first work group of the Advisory Council, the Content Work Group, had their first meeting on June 17, 2014. The members of that work group were very enthusiastic and the group is thinking positively that by narrowing our focus, this project would be completed in a timely manner.

The first task of the Work Group is to create human services system taxonomy (this document was part of the meeting materials distributed). After the Content Work Group provides preliminarily additions and edits to the current document, this document will be distributed to the Advisory Council to review for their input and to negate any possible gaps. At that point the NMS project team will go

back to the survey results and choose priority information needs identified in our initial outreach research to focus on for the first phase of development.

The Content Development Work Group will also be working on a glossary, defining terms and acronyms to be used as a decoder for users. The project team has asked work group members to start developing individual glossaries until Cogent develops an administrative website for NMS where content providers can upload their glossaries to be implemented in various places throughout the NMS website. The Content Development Work Group has agreed to meet monthly and by telephone/e-mail as necessary.

Next Steps

- The Project Team reminds the Advisory Council that this project does not have a large and full time work force and is reliant on volunteerism. The major challenge of this project will be maintaining a timely schedule.
- Debbie Benson gave brief insight into previous ambitious Council projects and encouraged all to believe in the success of this project.
- It was decided the next meeting of the Advisory Council will be in the fall and will be an in-person meeting. More details will follow in the next several weeks.
- General questions and comments were raised:
 - A question was asked about the content management process. Becky identified Robin Miller as the point-person for data input questions and Robin again stressed the importance of commitment of our data providers to keep their information up-to-date. She explained that as content is added through the back-end, Council staff will be notified and have the ability to log-in and review, edit and approve all content for publication on the website.
 - A comment was made thanking the project team for useful diagrams and flow charts, which made visualization of the project much easier.
 - A comment was made about existing journaling tools. The Project Team will be following up to learn more about this tool and any possible shared resources.
 - Paul Marano stated that if anybody has additional tools and resources to share to please contact someone on the project team so that we can set up a follow-up meeting to discuss. Already the project team and Cogent are in the process of setting up meetings with folks involved in the following projects:
 - Kinship Navigator-NYS KinCare Coalition
 - NYS OTDA-MyBenefits.org
 - NYS Justice Center
 - NYS Department of Health
 - United Way of NYS and 211 (/311 in NYC)