



**State of Rhode Island
Department of Administration / Division of Purchases
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**Solicitation Information
October 19, 2012**

ADDENDUM # 1

RFP#7458179

RFP Title: DHS Project Management

Bid Opening Date & Time: 10/30/12 @ 10:00 AM (Eastern Time)

Notice to Vendors:

ATTACHED ARE VENDOR QUESTIONS WITH STATE RESPONSES, AS WELL AS THE RHODE ISLAND ACTION PLAN INCLUDED AS APPENDIX A

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED.

**David J. Francis
Interdepartmental Project Manager**

Interested parties should monitor this website, on a regular basis, for any additional information that may be posted.

**Vendor Questions for RFP #7458179 DHS PROJECT MANAGEMENT
(DHS)**

Question 1: Page 6 of the RFP references the “Rhode Island Action Plan” which was developed during the Phase I planning year for the project.

Could you post the link to this plan? It would provide potential applicants with the context they need to understand the responsibilities of the project manager.

Answer Q1:

Yes, we have included the plan in this addendum, please see Appendix A ATTACHED

Question 2: Is this replacing a current contract?

Answer Q2:

No.

Question 3: Can you give a list of titles and or job descriptions the State of New York will be in need of?

Answer Q3

I cannot comment on titles or job descriptions for the State of New York.

Question 4: Could you please clarify the pricing required for this RFP?

Answer Q4:

The vendor should quote a price for each individual proposed (up to 2 individuals per vendor) on an hourly basis for the duration of the project based upon the chart in Section 3.2 – Statement of Need.

Question 5: Available number of open positions?

Answer Q5:

There is only one position.

**State of Rhode Island
Action Plan
2012-2015**

**Work Support Strategies
Streamlining Access to Work Support Programs
and
Strengthening Rhode Island Families**

Sandra M. Powell

Director, Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Steven M. Costantino

Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Lincoln M. Chafee

Governor, State of Rhode Island





Rhode Island's Work Strategies Action Plan was developed and informed by a diverse group of key stakeholders from the staff who provide direct services to families, client advocates to policy makers. The plan embodies the spirit and vision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and demonstrates how Rhode Island will expand participation in work support programs to promote healthy families, economic self-sufficiency and academic success for our children.

"It is our responsibility to all Rhode Islanders to ensure that health and human service programs are accessible, efficient and effective. In the end, all Rhode Islanders will benefit."

Sandra M. Powell, Director,
Department of Human Services

The Ford Foundation's Work Strategies - Streamlining Access and Strengthening Families Planning Grant (WSS) has provided Rhode Island with the opportunity to develop a Strategic Action Plan, inclusive of 21st century strategies, to redesign the service delivery system of four essential work support programs for low-income Rhode Island families. These programs are: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid (RIt Care/CHIP), Low-Income Child Care and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF-RI Works), hereinafter referred to as WSS programs and/or WSS benefits. The goals of this Action Plan are intended to maximize participation and cross-enrollment in all of these WSS programs so that low-income Rhode Islanders can stay and progress in the workforce and to create a high quality, replicable, customer-driven service delivery model.

Rhode Island has a state population of 1,014,029 with 12.2% being at or below the poverty level. Rhode Island has the third highest unemployment rate in the nation at 10.8%, higher than the national average of 8.5%, and the highest of the New England. Thus the Planning Grant provided Rhode Island with the resources and invaluable technical assistance to conduct a critical analysis of the business processes and service delivery of WSS programs to low-income individuals and families. Data analysis and business process mapping techniques were utilized to evaluate each of the WSS programs from the perspective of the quality of the service delivery system to our clients and the efficiency and effectiveness of the business processes for our staff. The findings revealed programs and processes that are siloed, fragmented, redundant, inefficient and costly. Frustrated clients and hardworking, but stressed staff, are overburdened by multiple and confusing program applications, bureaucratic business processes, and inflexible technology and policies that have led to increasing delays in our ability to enroll clients in WSS programs in a timely manner. The backlog of cases have increased program errors and doubled overtime costs since 2008. Rhode Island families who are currently eligible for these WSS programs are not participating in them because of the barriers our system imposes on streamlined access to and retention in WSS programs. DHS staff are overburdened by paper intensive processes, and they lack the tools of modern technology that would help them work efficiently. The quality of our service delivery has suffered and the administrative costs to maintain the way we do business have soared.

We are at a tipping point where all of our resources are strained and yet the need for WSS benefits increases. The only resolution is to take action to transform the way we do business. Rhode Island can no longer sustain the current business model with its focus on paper-driven and bureaucratically-laden

processes and policies that impede participation and retention in WSS programs.

Timing is critical to implementing an Action Plan that: addresses the mounting challenges the state's economy and high unemployment have imposed on low-income working families so they can access or remain in the workforce with the help of WSS programs; that prepares all programs and systems for the expansion of Medicaid and influx of new participants in 2014; that increases awareness of WSS programs and how to access them; that uses data to guide, inform, monitor and continually improve program participation and service delivery; and that takes advantage of opportunities to coordinate and integrate activities including Rhode Island's Health Insurance Exchange to ensure consistency and streamlined access to WSS benefits.

Rhode Island is fully committed to achieving the goals and vision of this Action Plan which is a multifaceted approach to streamlining access to and participation in all WSS programs. Communication strategies will target underserved populations to inform and encourage participation in all applicable WSS programs. A "No Wrong Door" service delivery model will offer clients a choice in how they access WSS programs, either remotely or in person. A single application for all WSS programs will facilitate and maximize cross-enrollment in the WSS programs. Business Process Reengineering combined with parallel changes in policy and the tools of modern technology will enable workers to determine eligibility and enroll clients quickly and efficiently, in many cases in the same day, as well as reduce churn to enable clients to retain WSS benefits for as long as they are eligible.

The changes that will result from the successful implementation of this Action Plan will increase timely enrollment, participation and retention in Rhode Island's WSS programs while reducing administrative costs and burdens. A renewed organizational culture will emerge throughout DHS Field Offices that demonstrates our inherent respect for clients and staff alike. The ultimate outcome of successful implementation will be that low-income individuals and families will participate and retain the full array of WSS benefits.

This Action Plan reflects the vision developed through our collaborative efforts during the Planning Year that included engaging a diverse group of stakeholders. The WSS planning process has confirmed the need for systemic change and this Action Plan is the road map to make it happen with continued strong leadership and the engagement of our valued stakeholders. Rhode Island's leadership, geographical size, political will and close proximity to DHS Field Offices and partners will facilitate project implementation. WSS benefits and programs will no longer be seen just as a safety net for low-income individuals and families, but more so as a catalyst to help individuals stay and progress in the workforce leading to stronger Rhode Island families and a stronger Rhode Island economy.

2.(a) Rhode Island has been very deliberate and thoughtful in developing realistic goals that reflect the many different "voices" that participated in the development of this plan, the lessons learned from the

Planning Year, the unique advantages offered by the size of our state that will enable successful implementation, and the commitment and leadership of our state officials to make these changes happen. These goals are focused on improving the financial stability of low-income individuals and families in Rhode Island. The following goals will lead to systemic change in the delivery of work support programs while reducing administrative burdens and costs. The outcomes will make it easier for individuals and families to access the full array of WSS programs and participate in and retain all applicable WSS benefits that will help them stay and progress in the workforce. These goals make sense for Rhode Island low-income families and they are attainable in the three-year implementation period. They include:

- Communications targeting underserved populations which will maximize participation and cross-enrollment in the full array of WSS programs helping them stay and progress in the workforce;
- A “No Wrong Door” service delivery model which will provide multiple access points to WSS programs so that low-income individuals and families can easily learn about and apply for all WSS benefits via a single application based on their individual needs and circumstances;
- Business Process Reengineering supported by policy, procedural and technological reforms that will enable overburdened workers to determine eligibility and enroll low-income individuals and families in all applicable WSS programs quickly and efficiently, providing same day service in 85% of the cases, and reducing churn to less than 5% of cases, enabling participants to retain WSS benefits without interruption in order to stay and progress in the workforce;
- Technology that will facilitate integration of the application, eligibility determination and renewal processes to promote streamlined access to and retention of all eligible WSS benefits;
- A proactive policy approach which will continually inform strategies to streamline access, enrollment and retention in all WSS programs;
- A system of easily developed and retrievable data reports, utilizing a data dashboard and client tracking system, that will regularly inform and support policy and business process changes, and track outcomes leading to continuous quality improvements for individuals accessing benefits;
- A renewed culture focused on internal and external quality customer service that will emerge with continued staff engagement and training;
- WSS programs, systems and processes that will be aligned with health care reform initiatives; and
- DHS offices and operations will be replicable models of efficiency and effectiveness-readily responding to client needs and inquiries while reducing state administrative burdens and costs, cutting overtime in half to pre-recession 2008 levels.

2.(b)(i) The attainment of these goals relates specifically to increasing the share of low-income individuals and families that will receive and retain all the WSS benefits for which they are eligible. Rhode Island’s successful implementation of the strategies to achieve these goals will mean low-income individual and families will be able to access the full array of WSS benefits in a way that is easiest for them, either remotely or in-person. Once eligible, DHS will make it easier for clients to retain WSS benefits for as long as they are eligible for and need them to stay and progress in the workforce. The goals reflect Rhode Island’s commitment to implement our comprehensive strategic Action Plan to break down the barriers that prevent clients from accessing the full array of WSS benefits; to limit the number of visits and contacts it takes to enroll and retain WSS benefits; to remove the redundancies and duplications that negatively impact full participation in WSS programs; to provide timely, quality

customer service to all DHS clients; and to continually analyze relevant data to improve the delivery of WSS programs to individuals and families in Rhode Island who need them most. The strategies and steps necessary to achieve these goals, detailed in the next section, are specific and will result in an increased number of people applying for all WSS programs; reduction in the amount of time from application to participation; increased cross-enrollment in WSS programs for which clients are eligible; reduction in stress for overburdened staff and offices; reduction in churn and administrative closures leading to more sustained participation in WSS programs providing benefits for low income Rhode Islanders to stay and progress in the workforce.

2.(b)(ii) The successful implementation of our strategies to achieve these goals will clearly result in a quality experience for applicants and participants who will feel less burdened due to streamlined access, eligibility, enrollment and retention processes and requirements. New business processes and quality customer service will convey a respect for the client's time, so they can focus more on work goals and outcomes and less on redundant bureaucratic requirements. State administrative burdens will be reduced by the timely processing of applications and renewals leading to a reduction in errors and potential penalties. Effective and efficient business processes and service delivery will reserve overtime for atypical surges in workload as opposed to a standard management practice.

2.(b)(iii) Rhode Island is fully committed to participating in the rigorous evaluation of the implementation of our Action Plan which includes the provision of information and data along with data analysis to monitor outcomes and measure the impact on families, workload and efficiencies. We envision a service delivery system that will serve as a national replicable model of efficiency and effectiveness for clients and staff alike. The lessons gleaned from the evaluation component will be invaluable to other states; especially those that are challenged by business processes focused on paper, inflexible and outdated legacy systems, lack of staff, the need for union engagement essential to systems change, struggling economies, high unemployment, and public and political sentiments that at times question the efficiency of human service programs. Rhode Island's compact size makes it a laboratory to test hypotheses and replicate successful strategies.

3.(a) Rhode Island will implement the following strategies to maximize participation in and cross-enrollment in all WSS programs:

Rhode Island DHS Offices – Models of Excellence

- 1. Develop and implement strategies including effective communications, guided by data analysis, targeted to underserved populations, to inform and encourage participation in all WSS programs**
- 2. Reengineer business processes and redesign DHS lobbies to create a first class WSS service**

delivery system

- 3. Implement policies and processes to provide for streamlined documentation, standardized verification and eligibility requirements across all WSS programs**
- 4. Develop a system of regular data reports utilizing the data warehouse and client tracking system for use by various audiences to monitor and improve processes and outcomes**
- 5. Implement technology changes to support streamlined access to, participation and retention in all WSS programs**
- 6. Develop and implement staff engagement and training strategies to adopt a culture focused on quality customer service**

3.(b) DHS will take the following concrete steps to implement each of these six strategies.

1. Develop and implement strategies including effective communications, guided by data analysis, targeted to underserved populations to inform and encourage participation in all WSS programs

The ability to identify and target outreach efforts to underserved populations to inform them about all the WSS benefits available to them and how to access these benefits is essential to our goal to maximize participation and cross-enrollment in WSS programs. RI will procure the services of a Consultant to provide the level of expertise necessary to develop effective information and communication strategies for our low income and multilingual and multicultural individuals and families. Our goal will be to develop the most effective methods of targeting and engaging underserved populations in the participation in the full array of WSS programs by providing effective and clear information. The Consultant will work with members of the WSS Advisory Team comprised of community stakeholders who currently advocate on behalf low-income individuals and families and already have outreach initiatives underway. We also plan to build WSS outreach strategies into existing partner initiatives including the University of Rhode Island’s SNAP Outreach Program and the state’s 211 initiative, both represented on the WSS Project Advisory Team. Resources will be utilized to develop new messaging and strategies to inform and encourage participation in all WSS programs; provide parents with clear information about the quality of Child Care programs; integrate strategies with current community and statewide initiatives; identify new outlets to deliver our message; and to develop collateral and signage for DHS field offices. Information from Focus Groups and Data Reports will guide decision making, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and continuous improvement of the message and delivery. This Consultant will work in tandem with the Advisory Team and staff to make recommendations on revised notices and documents to ensure messages and contact information are clear and concise to all populations. In the interim, DHS will take immediate steps to improve outreach to underserved populations by highlighting “work supports” on the DHS web page and working with community partners.

2. Reengineer business processes and redesign DHS lobbies to create a first class WSS service delivery system

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DHS will reengineer business processes and redesign DHS lobbies to facilitate easy and efficient enrollment in all WSS programs. A visual representation of how clients will be triaged and routed from the DHS Intake Lobby to appropriate next steps is shown on Attachment 8.(d)(i). The following guiding principles will direct our efforts to achieve our new vision to create a first class client and improved staff experience.

- DHS Intake Lobbies will be welcoming, customer-focused, professional and accessible
- DHS Intake Lobbies will display multimedia information that is culturally sensitive
- A triage approach supported by clear signage will ensure clients are directed to appropriate next steps in the application process quickly and efficiently
- A knowledgeable Benefits Specialist, who is an Eligibility Technician, will be the first worker to greet clients, direct them to next steps and encourage participation in all WSS programs
- Self-service resource areas with computers and phones will support streamlined access to services
- A single application for all WSS programs will streamline access by eliminating multiple program applications
- Client inquiries will be resolved at first contact where possible
- Drop-off boxes will be available for clients who either do not want or need to stay; their documents will be quickly reviewed and they will be advised of appropriate next steps
- Client complaints will be resolved with supervisor intervention if necessary
- Decisions regarding program eligibility will be consistent with DHS’ newly revised policies

A Triage service delivery model will direct clients walking into DHS Field Offices quickly and efficiently. The redesign of DHS lobbies combined with the reengineering of our business processes are relatively low cost and provide high impact changes that will streamline access and cross-enrollment in WSS programs. Equally important, these changes are sustainable in the long term and amenable to continuous quality improvement as we incrementally break down the silos that exist between programs. DHS will adopt a process management model focused on tasks and workload moving away from the inefficient alpha caseload model. This will be a sequential transformation engaging staff in continued planning and implementation as we initially work within WSS programs in year one, and incrementally increase cross-program integration in years two and three. This incremental approach will be supported by parallel changes in policy and technology improvements and on-going training and improved communications. Newly formed teams will focus on tasks and facilitate cross-enrollment in WSS support programs. A Benefits Specialist will route clients to one of the following three teams or workers within these teams based on the client’s need and responses to triage questions.

Teams	General Description of Team Responsibilities
Intake Team	This team will focus on the processing of “same day” enrollment in WSS programs for clients who are eligible. An Intake Team component will include customer service to resolve all client inquiries other than application and enrollment.
Pending	This team will have the primary responsibility for mail, answering phone calls and getting

Team	cases ready for the Processing Team and to focus on renewals. Notices will be revised and reflect the telephone number of the Pending Team Unit.
Processing Team	The team will have the primary responsibility for completing applications that were not able to be completed in the same day. A portion of this team’s responsibility will also be to focus on renewals.

Program specific staff will be co-located next to each other. The teams will be comprised of Eligibility Technicians and Social Caseworkers. The co-location of staff within teams is an important step towards integration, recognizing that full integration will take time as we engage staff and the unions in planning efforts. This new model will allow managers to focus their time on managing processes not caseloads.

3. Implement policies and processes to provide for streamlined documentation, standardized verification and eligibility requirements across all WSS programs

Policy changes will facilitate the sharing of verified client information and will implement standard procedures for using verified information known to the agency. The sharing of information across programs is essential to decrease the program silos that have evolved over time. These changes will reduce application-processing time, eliminate the need for clients to provide multiple copies of documents, improve customer experience in accessing benefits and decrease work for staff by eliminating the need for requesting additional information already verified in our system. Initially, DHS will take steps to simplify and align WSS program rules while engaging in an on-going process of policy review and revision. DHS will implement Express Lane Eligibility, Administrative Renewals, develop a single application, both web-based and on paper, to streamline access and cross-enrollment.

DHS will take the following steps immediately to increase cross-enrollment across WSS programs:

Workers will review applications received for one program, check income eligibility for other WSS programs and advise clients of other program eligibility
Revise the FPL summary sheet so workers can scan eligibility for other WSS programs
Include information about other WSS programs on paper applications and SNAP web application
Revise SNAP web application to include application information about RIte Care, Child Care assistance

Increase Retention in Programs and Reduce Churn

Align SNAP and RIte Care renewals
Expand functionality of the IVR to simplify the process of change reporting
Redesign notices with in-put from staff and representatives of the WSS Advisory Team

DHS will take the following steps to streamline enrollment in WSS Programs:

Simplify and Align Program Rules and Streamline Verification		
Low-Income Child Care	SNAP	RI Works (TANF)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the separate childcare application for cash assistance families • Align renewal period with other WSS programs • Eliminate verification of the work schedule and accept self-declaration of resources • Maximize the use of data matches with outside agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement standard medical deduction • Mail all replacement EBT cards to reduce office traffic • Implement the SSI Combined application process • Retain cat-el: Allows no asset test for most households-aligns with RIte Care and simplifies program administration. Also allows increased income limit – better meet needs of working low income families. • Accept self-declaration of rent and utility expenses according to DHS policy • Maximize the use of data matches with outside agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefine the assessment process for developing work plans • Accept self-declaration of resources according to DHS policy • Maximize the use of data matches with outside agencies
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4. Develop a system of regular data reports utilizing the data warehouse and client tracking system for use by various audiences to monitor and improve processes and outcomes

The lessons learned during the Planning Year have confirmed the importance of data to inform policy to implement change. The ability to regularly produce relevant data reports to be used by multiple audiences will help us better understand existing problems that impact participation and cross-enrollment in all WSS programs; will inform budget and personnel decisions; and track changes and outcomes that will continually inform strategies to improve our business processes. DHS will take the following concrete steps, in collaboration with key stakeholders, to produce useful reports that will inform policy and decision making and guide continuous quality improvement to business processes and service delivery of all WSS programs to underserved populations:

- Brainstorm a listing of regular reports to be utilized by various audiences, i.e., Policy Makers, Program Administrators, Managers, and staff
- Prioritize reports needed most which will be produced first to meet critical Department informational needs
- Determine which reports can be produced through the Data Warehouse and/or Client Tracking System and which require customized reports developed from our legacy MIS system.
- Develop relevant and user-friendly reports utilizing the Data Warehouse and Client Tracking System and other specific report from our legacy MIS system
- Develop a Data Dashboard so users can regularly and routinely run key reports
- Work with DHS Training and Human Resource Team to develop and implement a training plan for users to operate the client tracking system and data dashboard
- Regularly run reports that will track timeliness by program, pending cases, renewals due, churning by program, caseload overlap review income within each program to determine eligibility for other programs, and other key measures as identified by the Data Analysis Team
- Regularly review the relevance and usefulness of reports and continually improve the quality of these reports over the life of the project and beyond.

5. Implement technology changes to support streamlined access to, participation and retention in all WSS programs

Technology is an important component of Rhode Island’s multifaceted approach to transition DHS field offices to Models of Excellence. The technology changes we propose have been identified repeatedly during the Planning Year as essential to support effective and efficient business processes and quality customer service. These are the tools that will support and promote business processes intended to streamline access, move clients through the system quickly and efficiently, readily respond to customer inquiries, and ease the burden of overstressed staff and offices. We believe these planned technology changes are reasonable and needed to bring our vision full circle.

DHS will implement an on-line application that is a single application that will mirror the paper application for all WSS programs. It will encompass all WSS programs. DHS plans to re-use and enhance the current SNAP and SSP on-line functionality to create a single public-facing, on-line application. The functionality of this application will be developed for future integration with the Health Insurance Exchange/Integrated Eligibility Solution. Once implemented, the DHS web application will:

- Have the ability to transfer data into eligibility system (using existing technology)
- Allow applicants to create a new application for benefits
- Allow applicants to create their own user account
- Allow applicants to save data and return to complete at a later date
- Allow applicants to report a change to data on a current case
- Allow applicants to view current benefit information, possibly historical data

In addition these changes will enhance DHS worker and client notification processes and eliminate extensive staff manual data entry that is both time consuming and can lead to errors.

DHS will build a new Client Tracking System, compatible to RI technology, that will support the new triage model to move clients quickly and efficiently through the intake process for all work support programs. This system will allow DHS Intake staff and managers to monitor clients waiting for services by queuing individuals into virtual categories allowing staff to see the number of individuals waiting for services. The Client Tracking System will also include an important reporting functionality.

DHS will expand the functionality of the Interactive Voice Response System (IVR), in place for two years solely for the SNAP program, to streamline access to information for families enrolled in Low-Income Child Care and the Rhode Island Works Programs (TANF). Information from our existing eligibility system, InRHODES, will automatically update the IVR data on a nightly basis. Clients will be able to call one number and retrieve up to date information regarding the current status of their case. The expanded IVR will direct callers through a series of options which include prerecorded messages regarding office locations, hours, and the ability to leave contact information to request an application by mail. The IVR will include notification functionality to advise clients of appointments. Callers needing

staff-assisted services will be routed to DHS staff on the Pending Team dedicated to this function. A visual representation of how callers will be triaged through the IVR is included on Attachment 8.(d)(ii).

DHS will procure document imaging technology that will scan important documents relevant to eligibility and enrollment to be utilized across all WSS programs to reduce the current redundant burdens on clients and staff alike. This centralized repository of scanned documents will allow all WSS programs to share common documents while protecting documents that are program specific. Scanning technology will facilitate document retrieval, eliminate duplicative files for each program, reduce paper and storage costs, enhance quality control and disaster recovery. DHS will explore future integration of this technology with the HIX initiative.

6. Develop and implement staff engagement and training strategies to adopt a culture focused on quality customer service

The DHS Staff Development Unit will be instrumental in developing and implementing a training strategy for new and existing employees aligned with both the new business process model, customer service and the overall DHS vision for staff training. DHS will utilize its existing training contract with the University of Rhode Island to develop training modules, manuals and materials that will compliment the new business processes and IT changes to devise a training plan for initial and on-going training. DHS will explore the utilization of partner and community resources for training space and other resources. The importance of engaging our staff and unions in the change process has been one of the most important lessons learned during the Planning Year and their continued input and perspective is essential to developing and sustaining effective business processes. DHS, as part of this staff engagement strategy, will create the following teams inclusive of a cross representation of WSS program managers and staff, including bargaining unit members, to develop and continually inform business processes over the next three years.

Team	Purpose
Triage Team	Develop strategies to inform triage business processes
Intake Team	Develop strategies to inform intake business processes
Pending Team	Develop strategies to inform pending team business processes
Processing Team	Develop strategies to inform processing team business processes
Notices and Documentation	Review current notices and documents sent to clients, make revision recommendations to make them more effective and to reduce churn

3.(c) Rhode Island is committed to link the implementation of the WSS initiative with the technology changes envisioned under the Affordable Care Act for the new Health Insurance Exchange (HIX). The leadership of DHS and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) are committed to a

vision of integration of these initiatives in the best interest of clients who are accessing health insurance and work support benefits and to avoid investing limited resources in duplicative systems. Both initiatives have serious implications for our legacy system, InRHODES, and DHS Medicaid staff. Representatives from the HIX initiative have been active participants on both the WSS Project and Advisory Teams and the WSS Project Leader is participating on the HIX Leadership Team. The WSS programs are scheduled for integration with HIX in 2016, but every effort will be made to accomplish integration before that time. DHS will implement an on-line single application for all WSS programs as an intermediary step to move us from the current legacy system into the technological changes planned by the HIX. The business rules and technical functionality to develop an on-line application will not be duplicative as future integration with HIX is the ultimate goal. Rhode Island will continue to explore the utilization of 90-10 funding to the benefit of both initiatives that will lead to cost savings. DHS and Medicaid are committed to an on-going forum to facilitate communication and to develop a thoughtful, realistic plan for integration of the WSS and HIX initiatives.

Rhode Island's approach has been to include the Low-Income Child Care Program in tandem with the other WSS programs as it is an integral support to low-income working families. The Planning Year included a critical analysis of the agency's Child Care Unit, including technical assistance provided by the Urban Institute and CLASP in November 2011 which reviewed four areas of the operation where families have contact with subsidy staff including: enrollment, eligibility, determination and change reporting. A subsequent report identified challenges in each area with strategies and recommendations to overcome them. Data analysis during the Planning Year confirmed that *over 50% of Child Care closures result in reapplication in 30 days*; and amongst all WSS programs, *Child Care has the smallest client caseload and the greatest renewal volume*. Families are overburdened with the redundancy of documentation requirements. Also the current alpha caseload management of work processes often leads to unnecessary denials. A Child Care only application inhibits cross-enrollment in other WSS programs. While some policy strategies identified in the plan are specific to childcare, like elimination of verification of the work schedule, others are overarching strategies that will impact all WSS programs including low-income Child Care.

The issues related to producing data during the Planning Year forced us to face the challenges we already knew existed in gathering and producing data. It has been labor intensive, costly and not user friendly. The data that was produced during the Planning Year informed the elements of this plan and energized our commitment to build our data capacity to inform decision making at all levels and drive business process improvements. We fully recognize that data will help us tell our story internally and to external stakeholders as well. The Action Plan strategy outlines a new system of reports that are both relevant and user-friendly and will allow us to monitor our progress during the implementation period and make ongoing improvements. A regular system of reports from the Data Warehouse and the Client

Tracking System and creation of the Data Dashboard will provide effective ways of informing and guiding systems change efforts.

4.(a)(i) The critical analysis done during the Planning Year, particularly relating to data and business processes, pointed to serious barriers, silos, inefficiencies and redundancies that prevent access and retention in WSS programs by the people who need them most to stay and progress in the workforce. This analysis identified the issues and guided our decision-making in choosing strategies and concrete action steps to achieve Rhode Island’s goals of creating a WSS service delivery system that maximizes participation and cross-enrollment in all WSS programs. While the analysis identified the barriers related to cross-enrollment and retention, it also revealed opportunities to overcome these barriers.

The data compiled during the Planning Year revealed the caseload for individuals receiving SNAP benefits was 127,500 excluding the elderly and disabled. We have approximately 51,500 SNAP cases excluding the elderly and disabled. For the RI Works (TANF) caseload, the data revealed 16,000 individuals and 6,648 cases. Because most of these clients are categorically eligible for Family Medical and SNAP benefits, the majority of these recipients are also receiving SNAP and Family Medical Assistance. With respect to the Child Care Assistance Program, the data revealed 4,953 cases which included the families receiving cash assistance who also receive Child Care. Of the 4,953 cases, approximately 3,400 receive the low-income subsidy for Child Care only with no cash assistance. Our data indicates for example, that between December 2008 and 2011 the SNAP caseload increased by 84.6% while the Rite Care/Rite Share program increased by 13.4% which highlights the recessionary change.

According to the Mathematica Report, “Reaching Those in Need: State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates” (December 2011), Rhode Island’s overall SNAP participation rate was 68% in 2009 overall and 50% for the Working Poor. Rhode Island is in the lowest quartile for both. FNS also publishes the “Participant Access Index”, which they calculate as a share of people below 125% poverty rather than those eligible. For 2010, Rhode Island’s participation rate was 78%. The implementation of the strategies and action steps in this Action Plan will move Rhode Island from the bottom quartile of states to the top quartile of states over the three year period.

Using the data collected during the Planning Year, we have learned that of the approximately 3,390 Child Care cases with income below 130% FPL, only 41% of our caseload receives both Child Care and SNAP benefits, but not family medical. The Data indicates 49% of our Child Care cases receive SNAP, Family Medical and Child Care. This is an opportunity for increased cross-enrollment in SNAP and Family Medical for our Child Care recipients. Of the cases reported as receiving either Family Medical or SNAP (about 51,000) approximately 40% receive both Family Medical and SNAP. This is also an opportunity to increase cross-enrollment where individuals receiving these benefits receive both

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Family Medical and SNAP benefits. Because neither the SNAP Program nor the Family Medical has an asset or resource test, there is opportunity for increased cross enrollment. Thus Rhode Island will increase cross-enrollment in all WSS programs 65% in the first year, up to 75% in the second year, and up to 90% in the third year.

Rhode Island has six field offices for approximately 200,000 unduplicated public assistance recipients, and approximately 140,000 unduplicated cases. As of December 2011, DHS had 217 Eligibility workers and 46 support staff in these field offices. The Providence Field Office is the state’s largest office and data analysis confirmed the problems conveyed by managers and staff alike, especially since the reduction in staff in 2008. In Providence, there are approximately 60,000 cases in total, the average number of RItCare cases per eligibility worker is 1,499. The average number of SNAP cases per eligibility worker is over 1700, the average number of RI Works cases per worker is 368 cases, and the average number of cases per Child Care Worker is 672. Since July of 2008, DHS staff has sustained an overall 21% decrease in the workforce as depicted below:

Positions	Number of Workers July 2008	Number of Workers December 2011	Percent Change
Clerical Support Staff	91	46	-49.1%
Social Caseworkers	104	71	-31.7%
Eligibility Technicians	138	146	+5.8%
Overall	333	263	-21%

Rhode Island’s strategies and goals, especially the reengineering of business processes to focus on tasks supported by parallel changes in policy and technology improvements, will lead to greater efficiencies for over burdened staff.

Rhode Island DHS has traditionally had to incur overtime expenses as a regular management tool to meet caseload demands. DHS spends approximately \$5.6 million per year in overtime costs. Those costs have doubled since 2008 when there was a significant reduction in the workforce at the same time the need for WSS programs increased due to the recession. Aggregate overtime costs in Field Operations for all programs are as follows:

Rhode Island DHS has traditionally had to incur overtime expenses as a regular management tool to meet caseload demands. DHS spends approximately \$5.6 million per year in overtime costs. Those costs have doubled since 2008 when there was a significant reduction in the workforce at the same time the need for WSS programs increased due to the recession. Aggregate overtime costs in Field Operations for all programs are as follows:

FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY2011
\$ 2,802,871	\$ 4,753,003	\$5,626,377	\$5,685,590

APPENDIX A –STATE OF RI ACTION PLAN

The analysis of overtime expenditures since the onset of the ‘Great Recession’ is clear evidence that our current business and service delivery model is broken and no longer sustainable. Rhode Island is committed to reverse this trend over the three year implementation period and we will be able to reduce overtime expenditures by half over the three year implementation period.

Churn is a significant issue that impacts maximum participation and retention in all WSS programs. The following chart clearly depicts the high percentage rate of churn within each of the four WSS programs for the first seven months of 2011:

SNAP Renewal	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Average
Re-applied within 30 days	59%	67%	68%	72%	68%	68%	67%	67%
MA Rite Care Renewal	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Average
Re-applied within 30 days	46%	51%	53%	60%	51%	49%	54%	52%
RIW Renewal	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Average
Re-applied within 30 days	47%	53%	38%	47%	54%	35%	46%	46%
CCAP Renewal	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Average
Re-applied within 30 days	55%	59%	62%	65%	55%	59%	54%	58%

Business process analysis during the Planning Year clearly indicated that the large amount of returned mail is a major factor contributing to the churn problem. For example, in the Providence field office, on average 500 pieces of mail a day are returned in the SNAP Program alone. Of the mail sent to our clients, 25% is returned. This data and subsequent analysis guided our choice of strategies and action steps to reengineer business processes; coordinate and align renewal dates; revise notices and communications sent to clients; incorporate customer service as a component of Intake and to maximize utilization of the IVR and data matches for verification of work, income and citizenship will lead Rhode Island to its goal to reduce churn to below 5 % and to reduce returned mail to 1-2% of mail sent over the three year period.

The chart below depicts the high percentage of EBT replacement cards for a six month period. Replacement cards are categorized as cards given to clients who previously received a card. As such, individuals who go off public assistance for any duration of time will have their reissued card classified as a replacement card when/if they become eligible at a later date.

	Total Cards	Replacement	
November 2011	5,755	3,198	55.57%
Average	5,638	3,050	56.22%
Replacement cards are categorized as cards given to clients who previously received a card. As such, individuals who go off public assistance for any duration of time will have their reissued card classified as a replacement card when/if they become eligible at a later date.			
July 2011	5,555	3,055	57.44%
August 2011	6,263	3,487	55.68%
September 2011	6,441	3,815	59.23%
October 2011	6,023	3,198	53.10%

This analysis clearly identified the need to develop an efficient business process for replacement EBT cards. The new process to mail replacement EBT cards will reduce the replacement rate from over 50% per month to 25% per month resulting in staff and office efficiencies.

With respect to the SNAP program, DHS has improved the timeliness of processing both expedited and non-expedited cases since 2009 when the timelines of processing cases had suffered dramatically due to severe staff reduction starting in 2008. However, timeliness is achieved through continuous overtime. For Family Medical Assistance cases, a significant numbers are not processed in a timely fashion. Recent reports indicate that there is currently a backlog of 374 applications pending over 45 days; and over 4000 cases (including long term care) overdue for renewal. Statewide, Rhode Island receives about 4,200 Family Medical Assistance applications per month (including long term care). The successful implementation of two SNAP PDSAs (part of the Plan, Do, Study, Act methodology provided by Southern Institute as part of the Planning Year funding), exercises in the Providence and the Woonsocket Field Offices (third largest in the state) has been very successful. The PDSA methodology which prizes staff engagement have lead to changes in business processes for the SNAP program. The staff suggested ways to change program business processes to deliver same-day eligibility determinations for SNAP benefits. Providence has sustained a 61% same-day service eligibility determination rate since October 2011, and Woonsocket has sustained over a 70% same-day eligibility determination rate since January 3, 2012. The new business process model focused staff efforts on the *tasks* of processing eligibility, as opposed to alpha-based caseload model with subsequent appointments to determine eligibility. Prior to the information we received as a result of Ford Foundation funding during the planning year, the rate of same-day service utilizing the alpha caseload model was 0% (other than expedited cases being determined within 7 days). During the Implementation period, Rhode Island will increase same-day receipt of benefits to 85% and will reduce cases overdue for processing of eligibility and renewal to less than 5% over the three year period.

4(a)(ii) Rhode Island expects to create a first class customer experience for all clients accessing WSS services, whether in-person, by phone, mail or via the web. Better and varied modes of communication targeted to underserved populations will inform and encourage cross-enrollment in the full array of WSS programs; will educate clients on how to access WSS programs and increase their understanding of

documentation requirements. Clients will be treated with renewed dignity and respect for their time and guided to next steps quickly and efficiently. Client inquiries will be directed through an IVR to dedicated staff who will be responsive and ensure clients get what they need as quickly as possible. DHS offices will be welcoming, efficient and accessible. A knowledgeable benefits specialist will help customers navigate the enrollment process and encourage maximum participation and cross-enrollment in WSS programs. The WSS strategies and action steps will demonstrate respect for our staff as well. They will see that many of the changes that they recommended in creating their “future state” during the PDSA training sessions have been included as action steps in this plan including: expanded utilization of the IVR, a single application for all WSS programs, same day service; a task-focused business process model, and efficient EBT processes are all important elements of this plan to achieve their vision too. Data will be used by all levels of the organization to track access and cross-enrollment in WSS programs to continually improve participation and retention in all WSS programs.

4.(b)(i) The changes that will result from the successful implementation of the strategies of this Action Plan will mean the low-income individuals and families who are not currently participating in all the WSS programs for which they are eligible as indicated in 4.(a)(i) will participate and retain the full array of benefits to keep them working and progressing in the workforce. This will lead to healthier, stronger, and more financially stable families. DHS Field Offices have been stymied by inefficient and redundant business processes and outdated technology to support those processes as evidenced by overcrowded offices and unsatisfied clients. The changes will mean clients will find DHS Field Offices welcoming, efficient and readily responsive to their needs. Clients will be able to access services remotely lessening the burdens evidenced by overcrowded offices and overstressed staff. Staff will work in an environment that supports efficiency and timeliness allowing them to focus on great customer service. We have already seen the impact of delivering same-day service. Clients are not just satisfied; they are delighted. As evidenced by the backlog, delays, redundancies and high costs outlined in section 4.(a)(i), Rhode Island can no longer continue nor afford our ways of doing business. Over the last several years the state has implemented fiscal fitness initiatives to address growing budget deficits, which have impacted state services as well our 39 cities and towns. The changes that will result from the reduction in administrative costs and burdens, especially in relation to overtime, come at a time when Rhode Island needs it most. Most importantly, the changes will support continued participation in the workforce, supporting the state and local economies.

4.(b)(ii) The lessons gleaned from the Rhode Island experience will be significant to other states who are challenged by siloed programs and staffing assignments, business processes driven by paper with multiple applications, inflexible and outdated legacy systems, lack of staff engagement essential to systems

change, strong collective bargaining units, struggling economies, high unemployment, and skeptical public and political sentiments about administration of human service programs. Rhode Island's approach will be particularly valuable to those states with similar challenges, and who may seek a multidimensional approach to change: business process redesign, policy alignments, training, communications improvement, improved data utilization and targeted technological enhancements. Additionally, agency and community stakeholder engagement is essential for transformative change. Rhode Island will implement lower cost, high impact parallel strategies that will yield initial and long-term outcomes that will energize and engage staff along the continuum of change and will be sustainable. The lessons learned as we incrementally integrate WSS strategies with those of the Health Insurance Exchange will also be valuable to other states.

4.(c) A visual representation of Rhode Island's Logic Model is attached-Attachment 8.(d)(iii). This Logic Model represents Rhode Island's vision and plan to achieve high impact change through multiple investments that range from the time commitments of state policy makers, staff, consultants and key stakeholders; to technology and automation innovations, to equipment and infrastructure procurements; to leveraged funding and data resources. These investments will allow Rhode Island to take concrete action steps to implement the six strategies identified in 3.(a). The successful implementation of these strategies will impact multiple audiences including low-income individuals and families, DHS staff, partner agencies and providers. As implementation of these strategies unfold, the targeted audiences, especially low-income families and DHS staff, will increasingly understand and benefit from the impact of these changes. Initial outcomes will generate an understanding among all audiences that maximizing participation in all eligible health and WSS programs is essential for low-income individuals to stay in the workforce and help children succeed academically. Low-income individuals and families will increase their awareness, knowledge and understanding of all the WSS programs that are available to them, the requirements for eligibility and how to apply for all WSS programs. DHS staff will increase their understanding of the new business process model and how changes in technology and policy will support their work. In addition, partner agencies and providers will have a greater understanding of their important role in the new service delivery model. Increased knowledge and understanding will lead to action and client and staff empowerment. Individuals and families will demonstrate their ability to apply for all WSS programs and feel the impact of responsive, courteous customer service; and staff will realize the impact of these changes as they adopt the business process model. These intermediate outcomes will be reflected in timely enrollment, increased participation and retention in all WSS programs and administrative costs and burdens will be reduced as indicated in 4.(a)(i)(ii). A "quality" culture will emerge throughout DHS Field Offices and within WSS programs. DHS Field Offices will be replicable models of efficiency and effectiveness. Finally and most importantly, low-income individuals and

families will maximize participation and cross-enrollment in the WSS programs that will help them stay and progress in the workforce, leading to financial stability, stronger families and stronger local and state economies.

5.(a) Rhode Island’s strategies and action steps were developed in response to the challenges and barriers that were identified during the Planning Year with in-put from a cross-section of staff and stakeholders. The strategies were vetted through the WSS Advisory Team and Leadership Team led by the Director of DHS. The Director set the tone from the beginning that our success was dependent on our ability to develop goals and strategies that are realistic for Rhode Island; that are well informed by a broad group of stakeholders who will remain instrumental throughout the implementation years; that a strategic and incremental approach to breaking down the silos within programs will result in a greater likelihood for successful implementation, will have a higher impact on the entire system and will be sustainable beyond the implementation years. This approach to accomplish our goals takes into account the scope and scale of the work necessary to make this transformation happen. These Action Plan strategies that redesign and reengineer business processes, change policies to streamline documentation and standardize verification and eligibility across programs, improve communications, develop a single application and deliver training are lower cost and attainable in shorter time frames. These strategies combined with the more time intensive, higher cost elements to develop an on-line application to be integrated with HIX, develop data reports, enhance the IVR, procure equipment to implement scanning and mail processes are also critical and will result in high impact, sustainable system changes.

5.(b)(i) The lessons learned during the Planning Year are interwoven throughout this implementation plan and heavily influenced both our choices and approach to implement change. The WSS Project web portal provided on-going, easy access to policy guidance that helped shape our vision, inform our strategies and glean lessons from the other project states. The planning process, data analysis, technical assistance and site visits during the Planning Year have been invaluable in developing an Action Plan comprised of concrete steps to achieve system changing outcomes that will result in an effective and quality experience for clients and staff alike. Along the way, staff at every level have been energized by the process. Administrators and Field office managers have participated in site visits to Washington, Idaho and New Mexico giving them a concrete vision, knowledge and “models” to associate with system redesign. The team members who participated in these site visits returned with a sense of excitement and confidence that we are on the right path to make similar key changes in Rhode Island. These states have been responsive and generous in sharing information that has guided our plans. Early in the Planning Year, we developed business process flow charts for each WSS program by examining each step in the application process which pointed to siloed programs and redundant processes. The inclusion of line staff in Value

Stream Mapping activities with the facilitation and technical assistance of the Southern Institute, the Urban Institute and CLASP encouraged staff to see processes *through the eyes of a client* and to make immediate, tangible improvements in some of those processes through the PDSA cycles. The expertise and feedback of our staff during the PDSA sessions have been invaluable in identifying process barriers within programs and developing strategies to eliminate those barriers. The Staff witnessed firsthand the positive impact of changing process management from an alpha case load to one focused on tasks with the successful implementation of the same day SNAP PDSA in two offices.

Producing and analyzing data during the Planning Year, including the completion of the Data Assessment Tool in April 2011, enabled us to focus on important statistics that have informed strategies and action steps outlined in this Action Plan. Data, as indicated in 4.(a), informed our choice to maximize participation and cross-enrollment through a multifaceted approach that includes communication, business process, policy, technology, training and data. We are committed to improving our capacity to utilize and analyze data stored in our newly populated Data Warehouse. While mindful of the challenges that we have encountered in producing data, we are confident the development of the Data Dashboard, containing regular reports with Data Warehouse and Client Tracking System data, will be much more effective than the costly and labored process of producing one-time reports from our legacy MIS system.

The Value Stream Mapping activities with the Low-Income Child Care Unit identified several barriers to access and retention that will be resolved by changes in policies and rules. The work schedule has been the document most likely to be missing from initial applications and the least likely to be supplied even after a second request. A separate Low-Income Child Care application is not required. The 6-month renewal requirement was identified as a barrier to retention. This Action Plan includes the following policy changes to address these issues: elimination of verification of the work schedule, elimination of the separate childcare application and extension of the recertification period from 6 to 12 months. DHS plans to lessen the burdens on families to ensure WSS benefits go to the individuals and families who need them; however, DHS will implement important internal practices to ensure ongoing program integrity through a system of checks and balances, i.e., effective utilization of data matches; creation of a mechanism to inform parents of the subsidy paid to providers on a regular basis and expanded utilization of employer records data matching.

The culmination of planning, assessments, site visits and technical assistance that has occurred over the last year has energized and prepared DHS and our stakeholders for change. We are at an important turning point. This was evidenced by comments made by staff during the Value Stream Mapping Process in January 2012, demonstrating their eagerness to be part of that change. One comment resounded above the rest, “I am a Social Case Worker who gets to do very little social work” and conveyed the picture of field offices laden with redundancy and inefficiency. By the end of the day, this same Social Case Worker was part of a team that created a “future state” which called for cross-trained

teams focused on tasks, an improved IVR for all programs, an efficient process for replacing EBT cards, one application, scanning and scrolling program information in DHS waiting areas. It is clear that staff input strongly informed the strategies included in this Action Plan.

5.(b)(ii) Rhode Island resisted the notion that technology investments alone could resolve all the issues and barriers that impact maximum participation in WSS programs. Rhode Island chose a multifaceted approach that ranges from business process improvements and policy changes to investments in technology, training and communications believing this approach will have widespread impact and will be sustainable in the long term. It makes sense for Rhode Island. There is consensus among those that had in-put into the elements of this plan that Rhode Island is special in many ways, most notably our compact geographical size. Given our size, everything is in close proximity- DHS administrative offices, field offices, staff, state administration, legislative officials, partner agencies and key stakeholders. This proximity facilitated full and active participation in all of our team meetings during the Planning year. This Action Plan represents input from our stakeholders. DHS has a rich history of stakeholder involvement and this will be especially important during the implementation years. The size of our state and ability to bring people together will allow us to implement some of our strategies rather quickly so that clients and staff will see the impact of changes in the first year. Once changes start to happen, their impacts will be well noted in our state.

Rhode Island is well down the planning path to implementing the new Health Insurance Exchange with an RFP for an integrated eligibility system to be issued in April or May 2012 to be ready for January of 2014. The HIX integrated solution will include a web-based portal with common intake screens, including access to real-time federal and state data to determine eligibility. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge for the WSS initiative. WSS programs are scheduled for inclusion in Phase III to be implemented in 2016; and while efforts will be made to integrate these programs sooner an earlier implementation date is not fixed. In the interim, DHS will develop and implement an on-line application with transferrable technology to help move us from the current legacy system to future integration with HIX' broad technical functionality.

The elements of the Work Support Strategies Initiative that relate to the quality of Child Care for low-income families closely align with the top priorities of the recently awarded Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC). As the largest public funder of early childhood care centers in Rhode Island, DHS assisted on the grant writing team and is a key member of RI's Early Learning Council. For children of low-income families, research has demonstrated that participation in a high-quality early learning program can improve their health, social-emotional development, cognitive ability, and later school success. It is important that we take advantage every opportunity to maximize resources to achieve our mutual goals.

There has never been a more critical time in Rhode Island to streamline access to work support benefits so that low-income families can stay and progress in the workforce. Since the start of the recession, Rhode Island's unemployment rate has been amongst the highest in the US. For December 2011, RI ranked 3rd highest in the nation at 10.8% (with a national average of 8.5%) and highest in New England according to the RI Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT). During the same month RIDLT further indicates that 60,800 Rhode Islanders were unemployed and actively seeking work. Since the start of the recession, 12.2% of Rhode Island's are at or below the poverty level. If UI benefits are not extended in March 2012, 25,000 UI recipients will no longer qualify for benefits according to RIDLT, with critical implications for RI's human service delivery system.

5.(b)(iii) This Action Plan was developed by a Advisory Committee and Project Team under the strong leadership of the Director of Human Services with the support of the Secretary of EOHHS. The Project Team, comprised of senior leaders, managers, and advocates, have brought their individual expertise in policy, finance, program management, information technology and service delivery to the planning process. An Advisory Committee whose membership includes legislative representation from the R.I. General Assembly, partner agencies and key community stakeholders and advocates has ensured the "voice" of the people served by the system is heard and reflected in the Action Plan amongst other partners. This structure also facilitated the flow of information among committees, the WSS initiative, and the work of the HIX initiative. Value Process Mapping training sessions included a cross section of line staff and managers who deliver WSS programs in field offices throughout the state. Focus Groups which started in the Planning year will continue into the implementation years to ensure our strategies are effective and make necessary changes when they are not. This Action Plan reflects the collective vision of those who participated in its development, and the plan is stronger for it.

5.(b)(iv) Throughout the Planning year Rhode Island thoughtfully considered the implementation of a Call Center, added policy changes such as extending Child Care to unemployed low income families for six weeks, a Benefit Portal with a new eligibility system and a Benefits Screener. While we did not focus on technology alone to streamline access to WSS benefits, we considered technology options that would support and enhance our other strategies and plan elements. In the end, the progress that was made in confirming our vision to integrate the WSS initiative with the technology changes envisioned by implementation of the HIX guided our decision making. The functionality of the HIX will include a web-based portal with common in-take screens, including access to real-time federal and state data to determine eligibility; a Call Center; and include a rules engine to permit the construction of complex eligibility rules that could enable the construction of a client anonymous Benefits Screener. This approach will maximize the utilization of resources and avoid costly duplication. The decision to develop

an on-line application to be integrated with HIX technology will be a cost effective bridge until such time as the WSS programs are integrated sometime between 2014 and 2016.

6.(a)(i) The Department of Human Services is one of four state agencies that operates under the umbrella of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) along with the Departments of Health (DOH); Children, Youth and Families (DCYF); Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). The constituents of many of these agencies, particularly DCYF will benefit from streamlined access to WSS benefits. DOH has been a partner in our plans to implement streamlined data matching for birth records. The strength and commitment of the EOHHS and DHS leadership to improve the client experience in accessing WSS benefits while reducing administrative burdens and costs positions the state well for successful implementation.

6.(a)(ii) Rhode Island anticipates stability in leadership through the three-year implementation period with the next General Election scheduled for November 2014. This is significant as it positively impacts Cabinet leadership which includes EOHHS, DHS and the Race to the Top ELC Grant. The plan clearly expresses the commitment of our leadership. This stability in leaders is very significant to keep the implementation moving forward, to effectively address barriers that may arise and to ensure coordination of effort and integration of statewide initiatives.

6.(a)(iii) The history of state human service agencies in the last several decades reveals a responsiveness and adaptability to several developments: progress in the understanding of human services fields nationally, shifts in demographics in Rhode Island, the advent and maturation of federal programs, automation, policy and political decisions on government expenditures, the changing strengths and weaknesses of social support networks, and the many models of service delivery that have been tried. At this point in time basic realizations remind decision-makers that the needs of individuals and families cross the boundaries of programs and departments; that rigid demarcations among these same programs and departments hamper efficiency, raise cost, and deliver poor customer service. These are major reasons for which the EOHHS was created. Collaboration is now drawn into the blueprint of health and human service agencies in Rhode Island so that policy, budgeting, strategic planning, and service delivery are shared enterprises guided by the needs for efficiency and the needs of the customer. DHS also has a strong working relationship with agencies outside of EOHHS, particularly with RIDLT and the Department of Education. The relationships DHS has with other state agencies within and outside the Health and Human Services Secretariat will and strengthen the effects of the actions we are planning over the next few years.

6.(a)(iv) Historically, the capacity and ability to develop and use data within and across programs to inform business processes, decision making and continuous improvement has been a significant challenge. This was confirmed throughout the Planning Year and detailed in our 3rd quarter progress report. This is largely due to our aging legacy system, InRHODES, which is based on outdated technology that is inflexible and costly to maintain. During the Planning Year we worked to more fully understanding the challenges related to our capacity to gather data and produce relevant, useful reports for decision making. We fully recognize that our capacity to effectively utilize data is a most significant issue that will impact our ability to monitor our implementation progress. The Action Plan includes effective strategies to overcome these challenges, strategies that were developed with thoughtful input from key WSS Project and Advisory Team stakeholders.

6.(a)(v) Rhode Island administers its public assistance programs, including the WSS programs within siloes. Historically, DHS policy and rule changes were made within the individual programs, with little to no thought about integration of the program requirements. Also, the state has many rules and regulations that are not federally mandated, nor do they exist in state law. Many of DHS' documentation verification requirements are not mandated in federal law; therefore the State has significant opportunity to make changes and streamline access. During the Planning Year, we reviewed all WSS program eligibility requirements. We created a Comparison Chart of all program eligibility requirements so that RI would be better able to identify the opportunities to align these requirements. By aligning program requirements, more applicants are eligible for cross enrollment in all WSS programs. RI is committed to make the policy and rule changes necessary to encourage cross enrollment in all WSS programs and to make changes necessary to assist the staff in their ability to more effectively use client information gathered in one program for the eligibility determination in another program.

6.(a)(vi) Just as our capacity to use data has been a serious challenge so too are our historic business processes. The current business alpha caseload process was developed many years ago with a focus on compliance with federal and state laws and department rules and policies, and with little focus on the quality of service delivery and access to WSS programs. These business processes were developed within each of the WSS programs, building silos which have limited cross program access as indicated by Planning Year data. The Value Process Mapping training sessions have confirmed that staff feel overburdened and stressed by inefficient, redundant, and fragmented business processes. The efficiency of business processes has been further hampered by a lack of technological innovation facilitating remote access to and information about WSS programs. Long standing State job descriptions and engagement of bargaining units have also been a challenge. The WSS Action Plan strategies are a comprehensive approach to systematically eliminate program silos with a new business process model supported by

policy changes, technology improvements, communications improvements, training, continued staff engagement and data reports to continually inform business process improvements and streamline access to WSS programs.

6.(a)(vii) Throughout the Planning Year DHS has devoted significant staff resources to develop the strategies that will transform our system, and we are committed to doing the same throughout the implementation years to ensure the success of our efforts. This includes the resources of our Administrative Division, Staff Development Unit, Information Technology, Policy, and Field Operations units. The dedication of these resources is necessary to effectuate change on the front lines in our DHS Field Offices and to enhance remote access to our programs. The involvement of all of these units and staff during the Planning Year has resulted in enthusiasm and key support to ensure successful outcomes. The DHS Field Managers have been actively involved in the Planning Year and their input has been invaluable in developing strategies that will impact staff and clients in meaningful ways. They have become vested in this transformation to quality service, and as the Field Manager of our largest office said to staff during the last PDSA training session, “these changes will help us put the “human” back in human services” The close proximity of Field Offices in Rhode Island will facilitate the change process in consistent ways.

6.(a)(viii) Over the years, the effective services delivery has been hindered by an overall lack of technological innovation which has inhibited the redesign of business processes and the effective flow of communication between and among staff and clients. The lessons learned during the Planning Year have made it clear that we have developed burdensome business processes over time to work around this lack of technology. The result is a system laden with paperwork that prevents timely, responsive service delivery and access to WSS programs. The PDSA training sessions and Customer Focus Groups pointed to the inability of staff to return phone calls as a major problem resulting in crowded offices, overburdened staff and unhappy customers. The lack of technology to support efficient business processes is a significant issue that impacts our ability to breakdown silos between programs and streamline access to work support benefits.

6.(a)(ix) The strength of our stakeholder relationships has been highlighted throughout this plan and is evidenced by the broad representation on and strong participation in the WSS Project Team and Advisory Committee. DHS has a long history of stakeholder collaboration through program advisory committees. The WSS Project committees continued that legacy with broad representation from statewide advocacy organizations, state and local government agencies and community organizations. They have been a valued “voice” who have informed each of the strategies and elements of this plan to make the system

more accessible to the citizens of Rhode Island who need these supports to keep working and raise healthy, academically successful children; and to streamline government services to reduce administrative burdens and costs for the benefit of all Rhode Island families. Their continued involvement will have a major impact on the successful implementation of Rhode Island's Action Plan.

6.(a)(x) The political willingness to provide high-quality and effective human services programs to Rhode Islanders has existed for many years, in the Governor's Office and its executive departments, and in both chambers of the General Assembly. This favorable political environment will continue going forward with the following caveat. While the State of Rhode Island has done as much as possible for program participants - particularly in rosy fiscal circumstances, and while ideology, policy, and strategy have never been obstacles to the improvement or expansion of services, the fiscal environment is not favorable. The loudest voice in the room of public discourse is budgetary.

Rhode Island has been significantly impacted by the current recession. Our unemployment rate remains among the highest in the nation. State revenues have dropped since mid-FY2008. This has set up the bind that many states are in: increasing human services demands with shrinking resources to meet those demands, both rising demands and contracting resources due to a poor economy.

While there are positive state budget developments this fiscal year – significant public pension reform with accompanying savings, and, higher-than-expected tax revenues each month – forecasts over the next five years do not see a sudden economic turn-around in Rhode Island. Oddly, this “budget context” is negative in most respects but positive for what the WSS Implementation Grant proposes. As in many realms, difficult times lead to innovation, which is the goal of this plan.

6.(b) This Action Plan identifies effective strategies to overcome the most significant challenges that have long been a barrier to streamlined access to WSS benefits for RI low-income individuals and families. These challenges, as noted in 6.(a), include ineffective business processes, inability to gather and utilize data, lack of technology, and a stagnant state economy. Rhode Island has been thoughtful, in a real way, in developing a comprehensive plan that will address each of these challenges. We did not approach these challenges as separate problems to be resolved, but as integral pieces of the larger puzzle. This plan is a multifaceted approach to make parallel changes in each area as we move towards full integration throughout the implementation years. A major focus of our plan is to change the way we do business from the minute a client walks through the door. The redesign of DHS lobbies and the new task-focused business process model will move clients to next steps quickly and efficiently. We will first work within programs to break down the silos while engaging staff in planning the details of each business process, incrementally changing our working culture. The success of the new business process model is dependent on the inclusion of modern technology tools to support staff and streamline access.

DHS will enhance the functionality of the existing IVR to include additional work support programs and will re-use the functionality of the on-line SNAP application to develop a single public-facing on-line application. These changes coupled with the development of a client tracking system will facilitate streamlined access to WSS benefits and efficient client flow once a client enters the system. This Action Plan includes realistic strategies to improve our ability to gather and utilize data by developing user-friendly data reports from data stored in the Data Warehouse and Client Tracking system. These reports will monitor our implementation progress and continually inform decision making and business process improvements.

The changes that result from this Action Plan will be welcomed by key legislators and by budget-makers. The WSS Initiative promises two things. First of all, it will improve production in the field without requiring unsustainable new investments of state resources. The changes that are planned are low-cost and high-yield. Secondly, the focus of benefit access and participation is a stable and empowered workforce. Rather than adding further strain to limited finances, the programs administered by the department will be an economic asset for the state. Rhode Island's Action Plan will transform our service delivery system from one focused on paper to one focused on people. The new working culture will demonstrate respect for both our clients and our staff. The result – DHS Offices are transformed to Centers of Excellence!

7.(a) The Three-Year Implementation Budget for Rhode Island is found in Attachment 8.(c). The total funds needed to accomplish the goals of the plan is \$2,120,000. Rhode Island is requesting \$1,500,000 from the Ford Foundation to execute this plan. As detailed in Attachment 8.(c), additional resources will come from other funds, and, re-allocation of funds in current vendor contracts. Our funding strategy is open to the possibility of taking advantage of 90/10 Medicaid funding as the requests for proposals generated by the planned procurement of a new eligibility system are finalized and the plans for including all WSS programs unfold.

Rhode Island is committing the amount of \$620,000 in other resources to our efforts to streamline and enhance access to WSS Program benefits. Upon an opinion received from the Administration on Children and Families, Rhode Island will use money received through the WSS grant as state match for TANF expenditures and maintenance of effort.

7.(b) There are no major risks in what we propose for funding. The funding strategies put forth within the Budget Attachment rest on resources that Rhode Island realizes are existing and reliable. However, there are two uncertainties. Ford Foundation funding level is yet to be determined, an amount to which any

grantee would have to adjust. Rhode Island also anticipates that some of the elements of our plan may be impacted by development of the eligibility system for the HIX. Our funding strategies and our implementation timeline would be affected in a positive way to whatever degree the WSS efforts are joined with the ACA roll-out.

7.(c) Rhode Island's rationale for the plan's activities and its funding are well thought out and realistic. The intent is to accomplish as many of the WSS Plan as possible in the first twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. The plan's activities and rationale are as follows:

Project Manager: Beyond the commitment of DHS staff, there is a need for a person who will assist in managing the innovation being introduced by the initiative into the operations of the department, coordinate efforts to implement the grant, and ensure that the benchmarks set by the department are met. Ford funds shall be used for this resource in the amount of \$302,500 over the three year period.

Re-engineering our Business Process: Rhode Island In-Kind resources shall be used to re-engineer our business processes from a caseload assignment method to process management. Permission has been given for funds from the Planning Year to be used to re-engage the Southern Institute prior to June 2012 to assist with this task.

Improved Communications: A Communications Consultant will be contracted to assist in constructing a strategic plan for communications that will review all current client communications materials with recommendations and design of new and additional materials and media. The Consultant will be expected to take into account the multi-lingual and multi-cultural nature of DHS clients. Ford funds shall be used for this resource in the amount of \$45,000 over the three year period; an additional \$10,000 of Ford funds will be used for printed materials. Rhode Island will dedicate \$50,000 from vendor contracts for changing client notices.

Online Application: An online single application will be developed that will encompass all DHS InRHODES programs. This action will multiply access points to work support programs and enable the client to be considered across all programs. DHS's plan is to re-use and enhance functionality already in place to create a single public-facing on-line application. Ford funds shall be used for this element of the plan in the amount of \$460,000. Additional funds amounting to \$80,000 shall be dedicated from other funds. It is anticipated that the Online Application shall be completed within 12 to 18 months.

DHS Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System: Rhode Island’s Implementation Plan provides for the improvement and more extensive use of the Interactive Voice System. Rhode Island is requesting funding to integrate RIWorks and Child Care into the IVR, and to make improvements to the SNAP component. The IVR will support the new Business Process by being programmed to have all calls needing a worker go to the staff team responsible for phone calls, “customer service and coverage,” and by automating notification of renewal dates and interviews. Ford funds shall be used for this element of the plan in the amount of \$86,150. Additional funds amounting to \$118,000 shall be from other funds. It is anticipated that this project shall be completed within 12 to 18 months.

Client Tracking System: A Client Tracking System will enable managers to allocate personnel and resources to services the clients better and more quickly. Ford funds amounting to \$45,600 shall be used for this element; \$11,400 of other funds will be used for this element. It is anticipated that this project shall be completed within 6 to 18 months.

Lobby Redesign: The physical changes planned for the six field offices are an essential part of the transformation of DHS business processes. It will alter the client’s first experience of the work support programs and support the creation of an Intake Unit for all program benefits. The lobbies will be re-designed to facilitate a work flow different from present practice that will allow the clients to be seen by an intake worker the same day. Ford funds amounting to \$108,000 shall be used for this element. RI anticipates that this will be completed in 6 to 18 months.

Data Dashboard Management Tool: Development of a front-end interface to allow access to information necessary to implement and evaluate this plan, and guide ongoing improvements is essential for success. Ford funds amounting to \$42,100 will be used for this element; \$71,900 of other funds will be dedicated to this as well. This shall be completed in 12 to 24 months.

Document Imaging: Having documents in digital form in a centralized document repository makes them portable and accessible. It eases time, eliminates duplication, and lessens administrative burden on staff and clients. This improvement will support the emphasis on cross-enrollment among programs that the new business process targets. This is a longer term initiative and plans will very likely be modified by coordination with the proposed Health Information Exchange Portal and Integrated Eligibility Systems.

Ford funds shall be used for this element of the plan in the amount of \$268,950. Additional funds amounting to \$223,700 shall be dedicated from other funds. It is anticipated that this project will take 12 to 36 months to complete.

Employment/Income Verification Vendor: A vendor will be sought to provide automated verification of employment and wages. This will greatly reduce the burden on both the client and worker, with many requests for documents, trips to the field office, and phone calls being eliminated. Additionally, it will be possible for workers to share information across programs Ford funds amounting to \$30,000 shall be used for this element, and \$30,000 from other funds. RI anticipates that this will be completed in 6 to 12 months.

Staff Engagement and Training: One of the most critical elements for success of the implementation plan is the cooperation and contribution of DHS staff. Besides the work of the DHS Staff Development Unit, Rhode Island will use an existing training contract with the University of Rhode Island over the three year period for this purpose.

Consultants: The Economic Progress Institute and Rhode Island Kids Count: \$70,000 of Ford funds over the three-year period will be used to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of these two organizations whose missions are well-aligned with the Work Support Strategies Initiative. They have been very involved with our streamlining efforts.