

CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST

Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

Agency Priority	Title	Request Yr1	Request Yr2
1	Protection and Advocacy Central Registry Abuse Investigation Database	350000	0
Totals		350000	0


Craig Henrici

8-29-14

Date

Capital Budget Request

Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

Project Title

Protection and Advocacy Central Registry Abuse Investigation Database

Contact

Craig Henrici

Authorization Language

The Abuse Investigation Division of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) is authorized under Connecticut General Statute §§ 46a-11a et seq. This statute authorizes OPA as responsible for overseeing Connecticut's investigative and protective service response system to allegations of abuse and neglect involving individuals with intellectual disabilities who are between the ages of 18 and 59. OPA is also statutorily responsible for maintaining a central registry for such abuse and neglect cases. C.G.S. § 46a-11c(c).

Justification

Approximately 1,200 referrals for investigation are reported to OPA each year. As a practical matter, the agency's ability to competently handle this number of referrals requires the coordination and cooperation of several organizations, most notably the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the nearly two hundred authorized private agencies that contract to provide services for DDS clients. All of these agencies share investigative responsibility, yet there is no single information system in place to facilitate the business of protecting citizens with intellectual disabilities. Instead, various information silos are located throughout the provider network. These systems do not have the capability to communicate with each other and therefore basic investigative information such as photographs of injuries, copies of written statements and behavior support plans take an inordinate amount of time to access, copy and incorporate into physical case files.

For the last ten years, OPA has been utilizing an internally-housed and maintained ACCESS 2000 database to track case activities throughout the state and serve as a central registry for case related information. Although this system functions for basic case assignment and investigative activity, it cannot produce reliable management information and arguably falls short of the policy goals associated with our "central registry" mandate. Many person-hours are required to keep this database up to date. Importantly, the OPA database only functions when it is launched through a Windows XP operating system which Microsoft no longer supports. DDS Division of Investigations has similarly been tracking abuse investigation cases by way of their own separate ACCESS database, albeit a later version. Authorized private provider agencies are not able to access either OPA's or DDS's data systems but are nevertheless expected to initiate, complete and submit internal investigation reports to both agencies. The volume of investigative information generated and collected has been expanding along with DDS's qualified provider network and the demand for investigative information has mushroomed far beyond the parameters of the original ACCESS 2000 product design. During the past six years at least two agency reviews by the Auditors of Public Accounting have recommended that OPA receive appropriate funding to modernize its database system. Currently, representatives from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS, OIG) are conducting a review and evaluation of Connecticut's Abuse/Neglect response and investigation system relating to DDS clients who receive federal funding by way of the Medicaid Waiver program. On 8/22/14, auditors from the HHS OIG visited OPA and observed the current database system. Deficiencies in the system as noted above were observed by these federal auditors and it is expected that their follow-up report will recommend that Connecticut perform a comprehensive update regarding investigation case management systems.

Response to allegations of abuse and neglect involving Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens should be capable of occurring in real time and be supported by one centralized information system. The need for this upgrade is real and the proposal is consistent with Connecticut's current information system upgrade initiatives.

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: During several meetings and consultations between the Department of Information Technology (DOIT and now BEST) and OPA over the last five years, alternatives for replacing or upgrading the existing OPA database were explored. Most options were ultimately deemed to be impractical or cost prohibitive (or both). However, eventually certain web-based investigative data system products were identified as being both powerful and relatively inexpensive ways to upgrade the OPA central-registry database system. Further exploring revealed that such web-based investigative products are presently in use throughout the country, primarily by law enforcement and child protection agencies. The advantages of these products over traditional in-house systems appear to be many. These products are designed to accommodate the specific needs of investigative agencies and are continually updated in order to maintain state of the art, real time information system technology. Web-based systems can be accessed remotely by way of secured password networks, allowing investigators to consult the system from field locations. Web-based systems are developed with variable control settings and access levels that allow authorized agencies and personnel to view or generate information without compromising case confidentiality. Web-based investigative systems are also able to tap into available national forensic systems, generate complex statistical reports, send email notifications, capture photographic and auditory evidence, reinforce case management timelines and provide inter-case relationship analyses.

OPA has since hosted a product demonstration of this technology (Column Technologies, November 2012) whereupon the features described above were substantially shown to be fully and reliably incorporated into a web-based investigative information system. This technology was observed by BEST and OPA representatives as having the potential to transform all of Connecticut's disability abuse/neglect investigation and protection systems by including partner agencies (public and private sector) through a shared database system that more closely and thoroughly monitors the progress of evidence collection and the delivery of protective services throughout the state. Following the November, 2012 product demonstration, representatives from OPA had discussions with the Commissioner, investigative staff and IT staff from the Department of Developmental Services regarding the need to modernize Connecticut's abuse/neglect investigative response information system.

The Protection and Advocacy Central Registry Abuse Investigation Database (PACRAID) project will be a comprehensive upgrade, centralization and modernization to Connecticut's abuse investigation response and information tracking system. The new system will introduce cross agency database access in order to formulate a more effective state-wide regulatory oversight strategy while at the same time generating long term cost savings through greater efficiencies. OPA will replace its outdated database system with a web based design system with features as described above. The system will be introduced to the Department of Developmental Services (Division of Investigations, Contract Management, Protective Services, Mortality/Fatality Review) as part of a state-wide initiative to combine investigative information systems and certain key regulatory oversights. Features of the system will also be extended for use to the approximately 193 qualified providers who contract with DDS to provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Features of the PACRAID system will include:

1. A comprehensive-state wide investigative database which includes existing OPA case history.
2. Investigation intake and referral points of entry.
3. State-wide investigative case assignment and case management oversight (e.g. enhanced capacity for supervision and oversight of provider investigations).
4. State-wide individual protective services support tracking capabilities.
5. State-wide evidentiary data bank.
6. Uniform investigation reports.
7. Inter-agency investigation participation.
8. Access to national forensic database systems (as authorized).
9. Automated email notifications to provider agencies, law enforcement officials, State's Attorneys.
10. Generate timely follow-up and monitoring reviews of on-going protective services cases.
11. Investigative statistics and management support features.
12. Death statistics and mortality review information.

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Request Yr1	Gov. Yr1	Leg Rec Yr1
350,000.00	0.00	0.00
Request Yr2	Gov. Yr2	Leg. Yr2
0.00	0.00	0.00
Proj. Yr3	Proj. Yr4	Proj. Yr5
0.00	0.00	0.00

Statutory Ref . C.G.S. § 46a-11c(c).

Town Statewide

Program Abuse Investigation

Prior State Authorizations

Section Act	Authorized	Unallocated
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Project Cost Estimates

Project Item	Total Project Cost	Previous Funding	Other Funds	Year1	Year2	Balance
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Previous Funding

Source	SBC Meeting Date	Amount
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