



December 2021

A CARES Program update

The CARES Program is a wholesale modernization of the Ohio Attorney General’s office collections business, marked by the implementation of a new, state-of-the-art collections system. This modernization of people, processes and technology is achieved through many transformative changes that will benefit all stakeholders. To keep program stakeholders informed about the CARES Program, the program team will bring you periodic updates in the form of this newsletter. For more information about the program, continue to check our web page at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/CARES and email AGOCARES@OhioAGO.gov with any questions you may have.

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From Executive Sponsor **JOE RUST**



Every year at this time, we are reminded of the need to take a moment to reflect on our blessings.

On a professional level, I am thankful for the progress being made on the CARES Program, which is centered on implementing a state-of-the-art collections system in the Collections Enforcement Section of the Ohio Attorney General’s Office (AGO). The robust platform is one that you and all other Ohioans deserve.

The commitment from our program team, staff, partners and clients has been outstanding. Each day, week and month yields tangible progress toward our shared goal of a successful transition from our current CUBS system to the new system, C&R Software’s Debt Manager.

The road is long, but we are headed in the right direction, with a high-quality map and sound strategy to guide us and a talented and dedicated team to lead us there.

From Section Chief **LUCAS WARD**



I want to take a moment to send a shout-out to our entire Collections Enforcement Section. We’re having a wonderful first half of the fiscal year and are on track to reach our debt-collection goal of \$217 million by the end of 2022. This success is even more impressive given that, in addition to regular job duties, many on staff have been called on to provide feedback (as subject-matter experts) at each detailed design session, attend additional workshops and/or perform system testing.

The implementation of CARES Rollout #1 is going very well – and that wouldn’t be possible without the dedication of every member of the Collections Enforcement team!

Thanks, everyone! And happy holidays to all!

From Program Manager DAVID MONTGOMERY



The CARES Program continues to execute Rollout #1, which involves 34 of the 60+ agencies that make up State Client Services (SCS). As the first to receive Debt Manager, these 34 agencies will help us validate the new system's ability to process new certifications. The program consists of three crucial components: Debt Manager Implementation, Business Transformation, and IT Transformation.

In mid-November, we marked the five-month milestone of a 13-month implementation schedule for Rollout #1. More than 40% of the common business workflows and SCS workflows have been either designed or configured (built) by the Debt Manager Implementation Team and are currently being tested by C&R and AGO teams.

The Debt Manager Implementation Team has been working closely with our external technical partners on standardizing interfaces and validating our approach with Key Bank, the Ohio Treasurer's Office, the Ohio Department of Taxation and internal AGO systems. We are making progress in developing a pre-processing step to separate certification records that, during the "interim" state of dual systems, are required to remain in CUBS from those required to go to Debt Manager.

We are also pleased to report that we've completed our design of the new SAGE Accounting System, which is now in the development stage. And we have launched the previously mentioned AGO System Testing Team, made up of both ITS and Collections staff. This team has the important role of confirming that the AGO-configured Debt Manager can perform to our office's requirements.

The next four to six months are significant in that we will be completing what remains of Rollout #1 development and system testing as we prepare for the final stage of User Acceptance Testing, due to be conducted in May or June 2022.

From IT Transformation Lead STEVEN HEANEY



The primary objective of the CARES IT Transformation Team is to guide the Attorney General's Office to self-sufficiency in supporting and maintaining its core Collections Enforcement system. To make that happen, the AGO is committed to providing IT support and services for the Collections Enforcement Section beyond the implementation of Debt Manager.

Most notably, the office is building a CARES technical support team, which will maintain and upgrade the CARES application for the long term. This team — consisting of developers as well as system testers (aka quality assurance) and conversion staff — will also work with existing ITS infrastructure, database and security teams. Together, they will provide first-in-class support for the CARES ecosystem.

First, in order to provide future flexibility, we need to standardize processes to develop a streamlined and efficient framework upon which to build the CARES application. To that end, the IT Transformation Team is "normalizing" the interface files and file exchange processes used by Collections Enforcement with Client Agencies.

Currently, the AGO has more than 70 distinct file formats and CUBS processes for passing data back and forth with clients. Debt Manager will significantly reduce the number of custom interfaces and introduce standardized interface files, considerably reducing the complexity of the CARES application maintenance.

Standardization will require the engagement and assistance of client and external partners. The significant upsides of that, though, will be simplified maintenance and support and a more efficient work process. In addition, standardization will allow for greater automation, freeing staff to develop and add higher-value services to the CARES application.

From Business Transformation Lead **HERSCHEL ELKINS**



Business Transformation is the process of fundamentally changing the system(s), processes and people across a whole business or business unit. In the case of the CARES Program, our Business Transformation efforts focus on the changes associated with replacing CUBS with Debt Manager and re-engineering the associated business processes affecting both internal staff and external entities that work with the Collections Enforcement Section.

Likewise, the Organizational Change Management aspect of the CARES Program centers on the changes necessary with the implementation of Debt Manager, primarily focusing on the internal staff and external entities affected by the change.

As part of these efforts, Collections Enforcement has hired Lisa Trujillo as our trainer. Lisa will be responsible for creating an ongoing training program and continually improving business processes. Directly, Lisa will be focusing on Debt Manager training and our dual-environment training needs. In addition, she will create an employee on-boarding process and work with the Collections Enforcement management team to address the training needs of Client Agencies, Special Counsel and Third-Party Vendors.

Coming up in December and January, the Business Transformation Team will be holding additional reporting-strategy meetings with Client Agencies to discuss changes to reports and to gain feedback before finalization of the reports. In some cases, we will be able to share prototypes of reports before the meetings to allow you time to review and comment. Expect to receive invitations for these meetings very soon.

In January and February, the Business Transformation Team — in coordination with the IT Transformation efforts regarding standardization of interface files — will share the new standard file layout as well as the plan to institute two-way encrypted file transfers of all data being sent to and from the Debt Manager application. Instituting two-way encrypted file transfers protects client and constituent data while in transit.

Our goal is to provide Rollout #1 agencies ample time to make any necessary changes to adhere to the certification file layout and new two-way encrypted file transfers. Our teams stand ready to guide and support any Rollout #1 agencies that need assistance with these changes.