FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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CWS/CMS to CWS-CARES System Transition & Temporary Work Procedures

PURPOSE OF THIS FYI

This FYI provides staff with a high-level overview of the transition to the Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES), including what to expect as CWS/CMS is converted to read-only mode, how temporary manual documentation will be handled during periods of system unavailability, and where to access related resources.

DEFINITIONS

System Transition: The planned move from CWS/CMS to CWS-CARES, including the CWS/CMS read-only period and subsequent activation of CWS-CARES.

Go-Live: is the date when the new system or software becomes fully operational and available for use in the real environment. It's the moment when all planning, development, testing, and training are complete, and the organization officially starts using the new system in real-world, day-to-day operations.

Read-Only: A system state in which staff can view existing information but cannot enter, edit, or save data. Once CWS/CMS transitions to the read-only mode, it will be a permanent change.

Super User: A designated staff member who has additional familiarity with CWS-CARES and serves as a local resource for their office or workgroup. Super Users help colleagues navigate the system, locate available resources, understand transition and downtime procedures, and identify or escalate issues through the appropriate support channels. Super Users are not replacements for Supervisors, Office Leadership, formal technical supports or the CWS-CARES Help Desk.

Manual Documentation Templates: Standardized forms and logs provided by DCFS for manually recording work that would normally be documented in CWS/CMS. These templates will be used to record case activity when access to CWS/CMS becomes read-only. These templates are intended to support consistent documentation and facilitate subsequent entry into CWS-CARES.

Readiness Checklist: A standardized checklist used by offices, supervisors, and staff to confirm that required transition activities, resources, procedures, training, and support arrangements are in place before CWS-CARES Go-Live.

Reconciliation: The process of reviewing manually documented work completed during a system outage or transition period and entering all of the information into CWS-CARES once system access is restored. Reconciliation includes verifying that information has been accurately and completely entered.

Central Repository: The designated shared location where staff can access the most current CWS-CARES transition materials, including manual documentation template, required forms, FAQs, transition instructions, readiness resources, and bureau- or office-specific supplemental materials.

1. SYSTEM TRANSITION TIMELINE & ACCESS CHANGES

Go-Live Expectations:

- **CWS/CMS Read-Only:** CWS/CMS will transition from full access to read-only mode on **Thursday, December 3, 2026, at 5 p.m.**
- **Complete Contacts:** All outstanding contacts should be entered into CWS/CMS by end of business day **Wednesday, December 2, 2026**.
- **Court Reports:** All upcoming court reports due during the transition period should be generated and saved as Microsoft Word documents on **OneDrive** and shared with the appropriate Supervisor and Manager for each hearing.
- **Temporary Manual Documentation:** Staff will be required to use temporary manual documentation procedures once CWS/CMS transitions to read-only mode. These procedures will remain in effect during the transition period from **Thursday, December 3, through Monday, December 7, 2026**. However, the transition period may be extended if implementation activities require additional time. Staff will be notified of any changes through official communication channels
- **CWS-CARES Go-Live:** CWS-CARES will become available on **Monday, December 7, 2026,** following the transition period, with full system access available once the system is live.
- **Data Validation:** Staff will be required to log in and validate that they are able to access their caseloads, that all case related data has converted properly, and perform their daily tasks in CWS-CARES by end of business day **December 11, 2026**.
- **Official Communication:** Staff will receive a formal announcement from **Information Technology Services (ITS)** and **Executive Operations** prior to the transition with additional instructions and guidance.
- Any **Foster Care placements** that need to be included in the November payroll must be entered into CWS/CMS by **December 02, 2026**. Placements not entered by this date will need to be paid through a supplemental payment once CWS-CARES is live and the placement/payment can be submitted to CalSAWS via CARES.

2. TEMPORARY WORK PROCEDURES WHEN THE SYSTEM IS UNAVAILABLE

During the CWS/CMS **read-only** period, or any time a system is unavailable, staff will need to use temporary manual documentation procedures for **all activities that would normally be documented in CWS/CMS.**
Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Case notes and other case documentation
- Client and collateral contacts
- Court-related documentation
- Placement-related information and activities
- Other time-sensitive actions and information that cannot be entered into CWS/CMS

Staff should use the up-to-date approved forms and templates provided for temporary manual documentation. Once CWS-CARES is available, staff will follow established guidance for entering or reconciling information, as applicable. The specific forms and templates can be found on LA Kids.

3. STANDARDIZED MANUAL DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATE

To ensure consistency across all DCFS offices, **Executive Leadership** will provide standardized templates for manual documentation during any period when **CWS/CMS or CWS-CARES is unavailable**.
Manual Tracking Log — Department wide standard for tracking activities completed during system downtime
The template will be posted in https://mylakids.dcfs.lacounty.gov/cares-contingency/ for staff access.



4. RESPONSIBILITIES & TIMEFRAMES FOR RECONCILING MANUAL WORK

After CWS-CARES Go-live (12/7/26), all work manually documented during the transition period, or any subsequent system outage, must be entered into CWS-CARES in accordance with established procedures.
The following responsibilities apply:

- **Staff**: Enter their own manual documentation into CWS-CARES and verify that all required information has been entered accurately & completely.
- **Supervisors**: Review and confirm that reconciliation is complete for their teams and address any outstanding items or gaps.

- **Office Leadership**: Monitor reconciliation progress, ensure outstanding items are addressed and report completion status to Division Leadership on a weekly basis.

Target Reconciliation Timeframe
All manual documentation should be entered into CWS-CARES following Go-Live and within the next business day or already established policy timelines. For Child Protection Hotline (CPH), ERCP, and other 24/7 operations, all manually documented information generated during the outage period should be entered into CWS-CARES within three (3) business days following system restoration. Regional offices may utilize designated support staff to assist with reconciliation efforts to ensure timely data entry and minimize backlog.

Quality Assurance
Offices will conduct periodic spot checks using standardized manual documentation logs to verify that all required information has been accurately reconciled in CWS-CARES. Any unresolved, missing, or delayed entries should be promptly escalated through established supervisory and leadership channels for review and resolution. Documentation logs should be maintained until reconciliation activities are completed and verified.

5. WHERE TO FIND RESOURCES

A centralized repository will be established to provide staff with a single location for accessing materials during the CWS-CARES transition, including:

- **Manual documentation templates**
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**
- **Training materials**
- **Division/Bureau-specific supplemental materials**
- **Required Forms**

Staff should refer to the CWS-CARES Microsite for the most current versions of transition materials and resources. Required forms will be accessible on LA Kids Forms

6. READINESS CHECKLIST & TRAINING DEPENDENCIES

A readiness checklist is being developed to help staff and offices prepare for the CWS-CARES transition and Go-Live. The checklist will help ensure that:

Offices have identified their manual documentation needs and established appropriate procedures.

Staff know where to locate temporary work procedures, forms, and other transition resources. Staff understand the transition from CWS/CMS read-only access to CWS-CARES and what is expected during and immediately following Go-Live.

Supervisors have reviewed relevant workflows and temporary procedures with their teams.

Training Directives:
Prior to Go-Live, all staff must complete the required **Enablement self-paced modules** and attend **Instructor-Led Training (ILT)** appropriate to their role, as communicated by the Training Team and Information Technology Services (ITS).

Staff can access the Readiness Checklist on LA Kids:



Training dependencies: Staff must complete required Enablement Program (self-paced) modules and attend Instructor-Led Training (ILT) per their role prior to Go-Live, as communicated by Training and ITS.

7. COMMUNICATION PLAN (WHO, WHAT, WHEN)

To support staff and reduce confusion during the transition, communications will be issued at key milestones:

Pre-Transition — Two Weeks and Two Days Prior to Go-live: Department wide notification, targeted emails to Regional Administrators (RAs) and Assistant Regional Administrators (ARAs), and reminders to office leadership.

Transition Day: Read-only activation notice, a **"How to Work Today"** job aid, and instructions for accessing manual documentation templates and other temporary work resources.

Post-Go-Live: "CWS-CARES is Available" notification, login instructions, support channels, and guidance for reconciling manually documented work.

Distribution:

The Executive leadership cascade will communicate information to RAs/ARAs and staff. Super Users and office leadership will reinforce communications and provide additional support at the local office level.

Communication Resources:

Standardized email templates, quick-reference guides, FAQ links, and slide deck content will be posted in the centralized repository for easy access and consistent messaging.

8. SUPER USER SUPPORT MODEL & HELP DESK

Support before, during the CWS-CARES transition and after Go-Live will follow a tiered model designed to provide staff with the appropriate level of assistance while ensuring issues are escalated efficiently.

Tier 0 – Self-Service: Staff should first use available self-help resources, including quick-reference guides, FAQs, job aids, and other materials in the centralized repository.
Tier 1 – Office Support: Staff may seek assistance from designated **Super Users and local office leadership** for general questions, navigation, and temporary manual work procedures. **Over the shoulder technical support** will be available in each office during normal business hours and remotely for after-hours staff.

Tier 2 – County Technical Support: Technical issues should be submitted through the **eService Portal** by selecting **Business Applications → DCFS CWS-CARES** for assistance from County technical subject-matter experts (SMEs).

Tier 3 – Project Team Escalation: Issues that cannot be resolved through the first three tiers, or that require project-level clarification or intervention, will be escalated to the **CWS-CARES Project Team by County Technical Support**.

Super User Support:

Super Users will receive targeted guidance on temporary manual documentation procedures, downtime workflows, and available support resources. Each office should maintain an **up-to-date Super User contact list** to ensure staff know who to contact for local assistance.

9. IF THE SYSTEM IS UNAVAILABLE (UNPLANNED OUTAGE)

If CWS-CARES becomes unexpectedly unavailable, staff should take the following steps:

Begin Manual Documentation: Immediately use the standardized manual documentation templates for any work that must be completed while the system is unavailable.

Notify Local Support: Notify your **Supervisor and designated office Super User** and follow established local office guidance.

Address Access Issues: If the issue appears to be related to user access or permissions, contact your **COA** for assistance. If the issue persists, submit a ticket through the eService Portal.

Continue Critical Work: Continue necessary operations using the approved manual documentation procedures until system access is restored.

Reconcile Documentation: Once CWS-CARES access is restored, follow established reconciliation procedures to enter applicable manually documented work into the system.

If you have any questions regarding this release, please email your question to:
Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov