Client: Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

Partner: Advanced Imaging Systems, Incorporated (AIS)

Challenges:

Mecklenburg DSS provides public assistance to 223,512 residents by processing 8,846 applications and 18,291 re-certifications each month.

In 2009, Mecklenburg DSS case workers began single-page, document imaging using lightweight, low-capacity scanners due to an initially limited financial investment in scanning technology. These scanners were placed strategically throughout office buildings to allow access for multiple users. Unfortunately, the case workers were buried in over 900 applications every day with anywhere from 35-100 pages per application file. The short supply of scanners and the growing demand for scanning due to the high volume of work created a "perfect storm" of technology, human resource, financial, and customer service problems, including scanner breakdowns, case workers diverted from core service provision, additional paid overtime for case workers to close the backlog of applications, and increasing complaints from customers without their public assistance benefits.

To compensate for this perfect storm of challenges, Mecklenburg DSS expended more financial resources to expand document imaging to the mail room in an effort to assist case workers and close the supply gap for scanners. However, the use of single-page scanning with low-capacity scanners could not keep up with demand due to the volume spikes that occurred each month. On average each month, mailroom staff only had the capacity to capture 50% of the incoming client mail. These spikes created a backlog of mail, which ensured that client applications and supporting documents could not get routed electronically to the appropriate case worker in a timely fashion. Oftentimes, incoming client mail took weeks to get to the appropriate case worker in order for them to make critical business decisions such as approving or denying specific benefits to residents in need.

"This solution allows us to deliver the type of response time and customer service the residents of Mecklenburg County deserve."

\- Clayton Voignier

Key Benefits

Decreased document processing time from two weeks to 24 hours

Redirected $322,455 in annual labor costs to direct client services

Saved $71,236 in annual labor and paper supply costs

Reclaimed 1,248 square feet of storage space to be used for office space

Ensure security of documents and data from receipt through delivery

Reduced customer complaints by 23%

Improved productivity by 139%

Reduced requests for hard copy files from case workers by 37%

Recognized Benefits

Typically, the incoming client mail contains confidential case information. Thus, client mail records must be physically secure to maintain client privacy. Due to the growing backlog of client mail, case workers constantly entered the mail room to attempt to locate the necessary documents to process their clients' applications, which caused client mail records difficult to find. The lack of physical security created by the growing backlog exacerbated the existing problems.

Solution

AIS Business Process Outsourced Solution (BPO):
AIS receives incoming mail from Mecklenburg DSS daily as well as secure uploads of their multiple database files containing client demographic information. AIS prepares each case file for scanning, identifies the critical document types (over 100 total doc types), collects available demographic info, digitally captures the case file data at the highest quality level, perform 100% quality control on all scanned data, data mines the available demographic info from the case file with the county databases, and securely delivers the data to be uploaded to the county's OnBase document management software within 24 hours. AIS has assigned a specific production team to manage each phase of the BPO process to maintain continuity and quality while gaining efficiency. The team is staggered of 2 shifts to manage volume fluctuations within the project.
Outsourcing the scanning and data mining process to AIS allows Meck DSS the flexibility to grow without adding staff and infrastructure. AIS processes and uploads 100% of what is picked up within a 24 hour period. The chain of custody is secure. No more mail being hand delivered to case worker's office. Expedited scanning is the core business of AIS. Data mining process ensures that each piece of mail is securely routed to each case worker within 24 hrs. AIS Service Bureau Gives Meck. DSS Unlimited Scanning Capacity. AIS is located less than 10 miles the main DSS campus.

About AIS, Inc.

Founded in 1972, AIS believes in providing peace of mind for their Clients and to be the leader in strategic data management. Their mission is to deliver innovative solutions tailored to their Customer's needs. They align themselves with strategic partners and offer the best in data management products and services. To learn more about AIS visit their website at www.aisimc.com or call toll free at 1-800-365-1038

About Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

Programs and services provided by the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services are funded through federal, state and county revenues, in addition to grants and other donations, to meet the community's priorities as defined by the Board of County Commissioners.

Mecklenburg County Social Services Mission

To provide economic and social services to sustain and/or improve the quality of life for Mecklenburg County citizens

Mecklenburg County Social Services Vision

To be an involved and recognized leader in human services, valued by our stakeholders because of our needs-based customer focus in the delivery of services. We will help create a resilient community by proactively investing in our employees, operations and services, and by developing impactful relationships for the benefit of our customers.