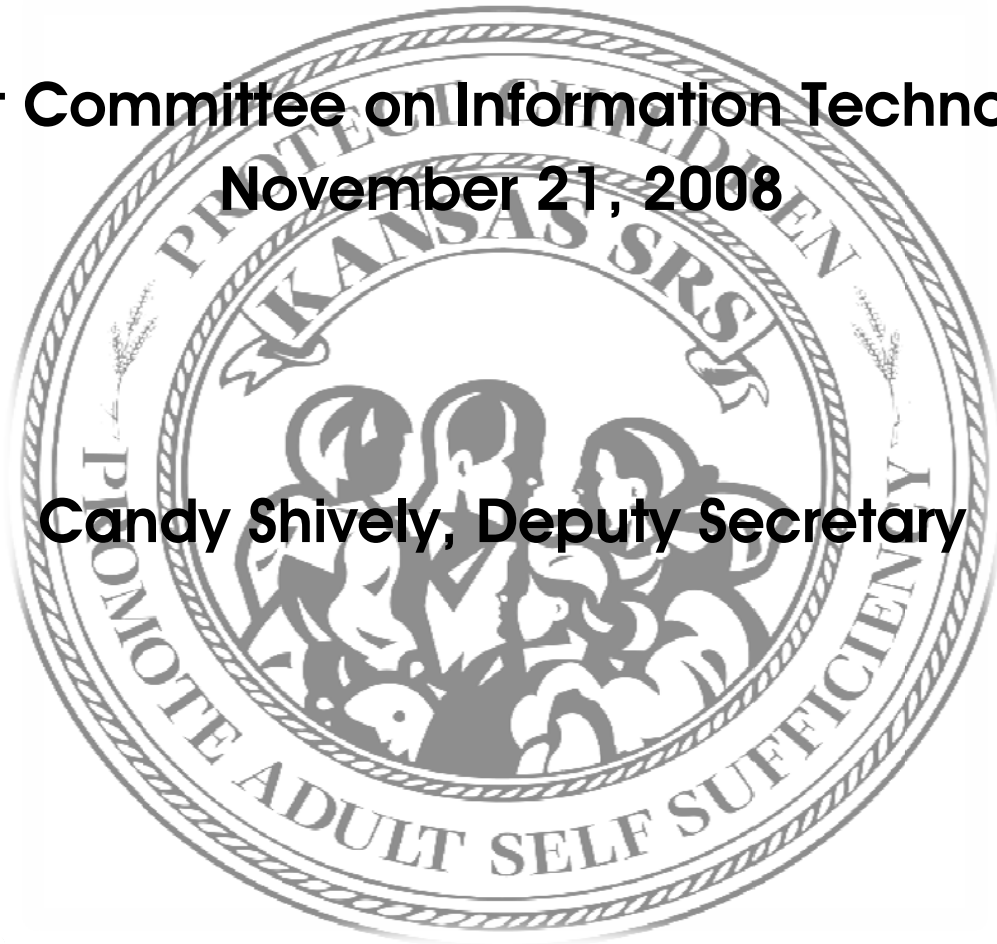


Kansas Department of
Social and Rehabilitation Services
Don Jordan, Secretary

Joint Committee on Information Technology
November 21, 2008

Candy Shively, Deputy Secretary



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Chairman Huelskamp and members of the Committee, I am Candy Shivley, Deputy Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information about the two call centers managed by SRS; the Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC) and the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Customer Service Center.

Kansas Protection Report Center

The KPRC receives reports of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and adults who reside in Kansas. Twelve staff, who have received specific training in interviewing skills and critical decision making and who have immediate access to Child and Adult Protective Service Social Workers, take calls in the KPC located in the Docking State Office Building, which is operated 24/7; and 41 similarly trained and resourced staff take calls in the six Regional PRCs around the state, which operate during normal business hours. The Kansas Protection Report Center has been in operation since 1999. On September 1, 2008, SRS streamlined operations of the KPRC. Just prior to that time each SRS Regional PRC maintained a separate toll free number.

On September 1, 2008 a single nationwide toll free number (1-800-922-5330) began being utilized as the conduit for reporting abuse or neglect in Kansas. During agency business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., calls received automatically route to the appropriate SRS Regional PRC based on that caller's phone number area code and pre fix. The KPRC located in Docking State Office receive calls outside of weekday business hours or from persons whose telephone number prefix isn't recognized by the phone system. During FY 2008, Kansas received approximately 53,000 calls reporting abuse or neglect of children and approximately 14,000 adult protective service calls.

Technology in the operating system for KPRC includes provisions for re-routing or reallocating calls in the event of inclement weather or other business contingency. As an example a percentage of calls from the South East Region and the Wichita Region are currently being routed to the KPRC in Docking in order to manage workloads. Changes to the call allocator system are made via the AT&T Business Direct Web Portal as needed to assure no interruption of service. The system is able to inform callers regarding the status of their call if they are not able to speak to a staff person immediately, with the option to leave a voice mail message. Approximately 10 per cent of calls go to voice mail and are returned the same day.

Child Support Enforcement Customer Service Center

The CSE Customer Service Center is located in Halstead, KS. The Customer Service Center was created in 2007 to meet two basic needs: Excellence in customer service and more effective use of CSE staff resources.

SRS examined other states' efforts in this regard and found an outstanding example in Nebraska. Using that model, SRS's request for proposals invited experienced, qualified vendors to partner with qualified, smaller Kansas communities to develop proposals for the new CSE Customer Service Center.

The successful vendor was 800-USA, and the CSE Customer Service Center has been in full operation statewide for eight months. Response from customers and staff has been positive. Our customers especially appreciate not playing "phone tag" with a specific worker, just to conduct routine business. They also like the extended hours, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., when a live CSE representative is available. Toll free calling is also good for customers, especially in interstate cases.

The CSE Customer Service Center is a busy place. There are over 130,000 cases in the CSE caseload. With two parents per case, their attorneys, employers, and CSE workers from other states all needing to contact the CSE Program from time to time, we expected monthly volume to run between 35,000 and 40,000 calls. Call center metrics have confirmed that expectation. In the past eight months, volume has averaged about 37,000 calls per month.

One reason for choosing 800-USA was their sophisticated automated support for call center agents. If the caller does not select a pre-recorded option, the caller is automatically routed to an available agent. If all agents are busy, the caller is placed in queue until an agent is available. The caller may choose to leave a phone number in a voicemail message, for a return call within 24 hours, but calls are not automatically routed to voicemail. Callers may stay in the queue as long as they choose. Contract performance standards require hold times to be no more than 120 seconds, on average. The contract also requires no more than 3% of calls to be abandoned, an indication that the hold time is too long from the customer's perspective. Typically, the CSE Customer Service Center has 34 FTE agents, fully-trained as CSE representatives, available to handle calls. Not all those agents are in use at all times. Their work schedules are staggered to cover the 12-hour business day, and fewer agents are needed during low-volume periods.

For the CSE Customer Service Center, daily call volumes peak between 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, and days following a holiday are high volume days. During the month, volumes are highest on the first and taper off as the month progresses. 800-USA uses an automated workforce management tool to match work schedules with anticipated call volumes, and they also make extensive use of part-time workers (20 to 30 hours per week) to effectively cover the midday peaks and higher volume days without wasting resources. CSE's management communicates regularly with 800-USA managers, to be sure they are aware of activities (such as mailings) that may temporarily increase call volumes or require special scripts for agents.

This concludes my testimony. I will be glad to respond to any questions.