Indiana Expedites Federal Pandemic Assistance Delivery to Child Care Providers with Resultant

THE PROBLEM

Access to care has always been critical, but during the pandemic the need was amplified. Providers were stretched thin and child care was scarce. As a result, child care enrollment dropped by nearly 20 percent in the first year after the pandemic began. When the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) passed in March 2021, states were required by law to spend the funds, and the federal government mandated half the money be used for stabilization grants. In Indiana, OECOSL (Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning) was tasked with ensuring the process was effective, efficient, and met federal reporting requirements—all within a very tight timeline.

THE SOLUTION

OECOSL and the Resultant business technology team worked together to design, develop, test, and implement an application that could transform data points into real value for the state. The solution included:

1. Met federal guidelines.
2. Integrated data from OECOSL and other sources.
3. Provided real-time analytics.
4. Ensured easy access to data.
5. Allowed for feedback from early users.
6. Strengthened the launch.

THE OUTCOME

Resultant was engaged May 2021 to design, develop, and implement, and application launched in October 2021. OECOSL processed and approved applications with over $420 million awarded to date. Delivery to child care providers was expedited and data-driven decisions were made. Justin Allen, OECOSL’s director of finance and operations, says the process was more efficient than previous federal reporting, and federal reporting was simplified. The entire application was submitted online within 24 hours of submission.

THE IMPACT

The potential for relief came when the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) passed in March 2021. This broad-scale measure was designed in part to provide significant financial assistance to child care providers to stabilize their short-term funding. Without access to dependable child care providers, families with young children risked having to choose between staying in the workforce and caring for their children. Historically, the inaccessibility of quality child care has hindered workforce development for families with young children. The federal government provided application and eligibility guidelines but left room for states to make decisions on how to implement the measure. It is a broad-scale measure that has the potential to help child care providers earn the funds needed to be successful. As with many pandemic assistance measures, states were entering circumstances that pursued career objectives must opt out to care for children. For transparency and accountability, the Resultant business technology team provided a summary dashboard and summary infographic showing results from all applications as they are submitted, streamlining that process and speeding up the time between submission and fund distribution. Administrative staff also have a real-time metrics dashboard which ensures easy to access to data that is both used internally and reported as required.

THE TELL-TALE NUMBERS

The chart below shows key results from the Indiana ARPA grant application and fund distribution process:

- 22.3% lower costs of serving new families
- 14.5% lower rates of pay
- 28% lower location wage index
- 16.5% lower completion rate
- 20.9% lower employee benefits

The result is a faster delivery of funds to child care providers and a reduction in the cost of serving new families. This is an example of people-first technology leading the way. People-first technology leads to sustainably superior outcomes. We begin every engagement with apeople-first assessment to determine the best way to solve the client's problems and then work to deliver results that meet the client's objectives. Organizations that are people-first are doomed to failure, but people-first technology leads to sustainably superior outcomes. The OECOSL and Resultant team worked together to transform data points into real value for the state. The result is a faster delivery of funds to child care providers and a reduction in the cost of serving new families.