

Over the last two years, New York's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS), and the state legislature embarked on a coordinated effort to deploy and assess mobile technologies in child protective services (CPS). New York is among a handful of states examining the use of mobile technologies to enhance child welfare and child protection service delivery. To date, over 600 caseworkers across the state have received laptops and various other mobile devices. Under the umbrella of **The New York State Mobile Technology Project**, four distinct and successive pilot and demonstration projects, along with the corresponding evaluation studies, were initiated and completed.

The New York State Mobile Technology Project

In 2006, the state legislature charged OCFS with testing and reporting on the use of multiple technologies in three LDSS. From that experience, lessons were applied to subsequent laptop deployments in two New York City (NYC) boroughs in late 2006, and at 21 additional LDSS in 2007.

The larger project known as, **The New York State Mobile Technology Project**, has two major parallel components – deployment and evaluation. The deployment of mobile technologies was a collaborative effort between the OCFS and the LDSS. The evaluations were the responsibility of the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany/SUNY, an independent research center.

The project, to date, has completed three phases and their corresponding evaluations of mobile technology deployment across the state to assess the impact of mobile technologies in CPS work. The fourth evaluation effort, entitled the **2008-2009 Demonstration Project**, is the subject of this report.

Each deployment and assessment is briefly described below:

- In the summer and fall of 2006, the first deployment and assessment, the **NYS Portable Information Technology Pilot**, was carried out with three LDSS – the New York City Administration for Children's Services (NYC/ACS), Monroe County Department of Human Services, Child and Family Services Division, and Westchester County Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Services. During this time, mobile technologies were deployed to approximately 60 CPS caseworkers to support casework and related-documentation activities. A range of mobile technologies were tested, including: laptops, notebooks, tablet PCs, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), telephonic dictation services, digital pens, and dictation software. The purpose of the assessment in this first deployment was to evaluate how was technology used in the work setting and the technology use impact the work itself. This report is available at: http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/assessing_mobile.
- From July 2007 to October 2007, a second deployment and assessment, the **Extended Pilot in New York City's Administration for Children Services**, focused exclusively on connected laptops and expanded the number of caseworkers testing technology. Connected laptops were selected based on findings from the **NYS Portable Information Technology Pilot**, which highlighted connected laptops as enabling information entry and retrieval to the state central database while out in the field. Two field offices from NYC – Manhattan and Staten Island – were selected and approximately 200 CPS caseworkers, supervisors, and managers received laptops and wireless cards. The objective of the assessment was to examine in greater depth the use of connected laptops in CPS work and to learn more about laptop use in large urban areas. The report is available at: http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/assessing_mobile_2008.
- The state legislature continued to provide funding in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2007-08 to test mobile technologies in more LDSS across the state. In May 2007, OCFS issued a call for proposals to all LDSS interested in applying for funding to pursue mobile technology strategies in CPS work. In October 2007, following the completion of the extended pilot in New York City, a third deployment and assessment, the **Demonstration Project in 23 NYS Local Social Service Districts**, issued over 450 laptops and tablet PCs to 21 selected LDSS in rural, suburban, and urban areas across the state. The objective of the assessment was to examine the opportunities and barriers for statewide deployment of connected laptops as well as the impact of laptops on CPS work in various settings across the state. The report is available at: [/publications/reports/assessing_mobile_demo](http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/assessing_mobile_demo).
- In SFY 2008-09, the state legislature provided additional funding to examine mobile technologies across the state. This assessment entitled, **An Extended Assessment**, focuses on three LDSS that previously deployed laptops as part of earlier deployments.