

# Expert Navigation and Growth



## CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF FAMILY SERVICES AGENCIES

QUOTES COURTESY CYNTHIA GUERRERI, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT • ALYSSA GODUTI, PRESIDENT AND CEO

Any business or organization must be able to adapt to a changing landscape and demonstrate its value and successes using data. However, it is not always clear what data will be most impactful or if performance management systems are set up to capture it effectively. Archaeological reporting – or reporting retrospectively after a key shift in strategy or staffing – can be a critical first step. Exact Change Strategies (ECS) worked closely with **Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies, Inc. (CCFSA)** on archaeological reporting and then to design and implement a new performance management system and framework that would offer a solid foundation for the future, no matter what the landscape.

*“We’re living in a time where data and data analytics are absolutely drivers of resource development. We need to be able to account for dollars we receive and clearly show ROI.”*

### A Continuum of Services

CCFSA is a network of 15 community-based nonprofit organizations across Connecticut that have been serving and strengthening families for over 100 years. Its members are community-based, state licensed, and nationally accredited. They work with clients to help them envision new realities and provide them with opportunities. CCFSA works to build the capacity of its members as well as advocate for policies and programs at the state and national level that are in the best interests of Connecticut’s diverse communities and families. By hiring ECS, CCFSA has been able to stay responsive to the needs of its members, staff, and funders while working to increase its own capacity and remain at the forefront of its field.

As the leader of a network of statewide organizations, CCFSA serves as an administrative umbrella, providing contract and fiscal management, program design and oversight, as well as quality assurance. Through this innovative model, local family service agencies directly serve their communities with reduced administrative costs. CCFSA and its members are able to build on best practices, offer consistency in program delivery statewide, and leverage localized resources. ►



**The premier resource to strengthen Connecticut’s diverse individuals and families, and the communities in which they live. Collectively, CCFSA’s 15 members serve over 180,000 families a year at 100 program sites with over 4,600 staff and 5,100 volunteers. They have a combined budget of more than \$214 million.**

*“It’s been very helpful that ECS knows our agency and history [with data management] while we navigate growth. They can meet us where we are.”*

The CCFSA member organizations provide a continuum of services to individuals and families of all ages, including:

- mental health and substance abuse services
- early childhood services
- parent education
- disability services
- family strengthening
- adoption
- employment support
- senior services
- home visiting services
- immigrant and refugee support
- domestic violence services
- housing
- basic needs
- case management

### **Navigating Data and Transitions**

Initially, ECS worked with CCFSA to address immediate reporting needs and take stock of past accomplishments through archaeological reporting. At the start of the partnership, ECS and CCFSA leadership worked closely together to investigate the current situation and needs. This involved studying existing data sources and spreadsheets, determining what data was important to capture, and then creating critical funding reports. ▶



*“They know the software and our program. They also have a clinical social work background, so understand the work we’re doing too. They’re a bridge”*

Some projects may end when a pressing need is met. However, CCFSA leaders had the foresight to go further and lay the foundation for their growth as an organization and network with the expert guidance of ECS. CCFSA was preparing to implement two new programs: Counseling Services and Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance. ECS designed and built a dynamic Efforts to Outcomes® (ETO) system specifically for these major program areas using its distinctive Performance Management Framework.

Working in close collaboration with CCFSA leadership, ECS created an ETO system that includes custom data collection and reporting to meet the specific and diverse needs of CCFSA and its member organizations. ECS was able to provide ETO site administration services as well as training and technical assistance to ensure that CCFSA staff and members had a highly functioning database and the foundational knowledge to use the system effectively.

CCFSA was also able to enhance its data collection overall, matching their desire to move from simple counts of individuals served to a more complex assessment and understanding of the people that they serve, the outcomes that result, and the effectiveness of various approaches and services. ►

*“The data we had was counts – how many people did we serve and did we do it in a timely fashion. I’m more interested in using ETO to tell the story of the differences we make. That’s what is going to sustain us with current and potential funders.”*

*“I was able to insert an assessment into ETO for our Housing program that captures how well we are doing with regards to race and cultural sensitivity in service delivery. Now, that assessment can be used across all of our programs for a more comprehensive, system-wide view.”*

*“ECS has provided continuity and that has been a huge benefit for us. Their quick response supports us in meeting deadlines and helps us to proactively engage in discussions about meaningful outcomes and measures for new programs. I understand program performance even better. I can see more possibilities and am working to make them a reality.”*



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*“The ECS team was extremely gracious and gave us step-by-step guidance using their Performance Management Framework. They trained all of our staff, which was extremely helpful. I’m also happy with their quick response time.”*

## CCFSA’s Collective Impact by Program Area

### Safety Net Programs

- **3,224** families served, breaking down barriers to self sufficiency
- **79%** of cases served successfully
- **86%** of children and families served are safe

### Parenting Education Programs

- **335** classes offered to **3,351** individuals
- **5,415** children benefit from their parents’ participation

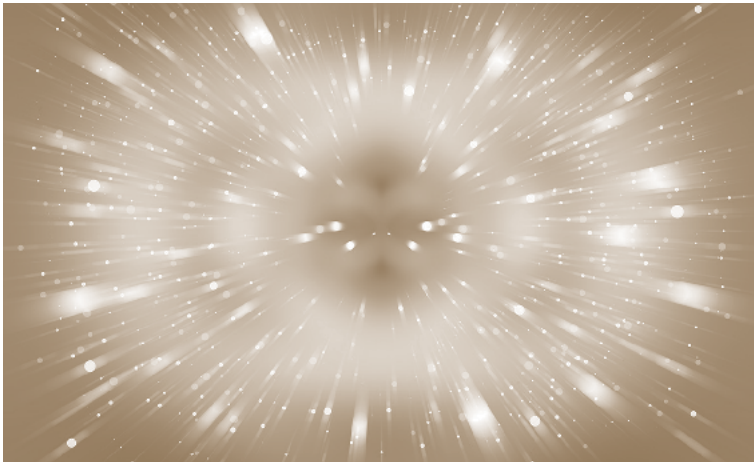
### Leadership Development

- served **30** emerging leaders served

### A Foundation for the Future

CCFSA and ECS have a strong ongoing partnership that strengthens the foundation of family services throughout CCFSA’s entire network. There is now a system in place to build upon as they continue to expand their work and take a multi-generational approach to impact cycles of poverty through barrier reduction and building resilience in families. They can assess performance in major program areas and have a focus on both performance and outcomes in statewide case

management services. The organization has elevated its data-driven approaches and has even been able to assess the economic outcome and value of services. With a solid foundation, CCFSA can continue to navigate growth and change in its organization and field. ●



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