IT Solutions for Public Disaster Relief
FOR STATE OF TENNESSEE DHS

Learn how this custom application with remote capabilities helps the State of Tennessee Department of Human Services provide financial assistance to those affected by recent disasters.
A New Emergency Assistance App to Support Disaster Relief for State of Tennessee

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES NEED FOR IT SOLUTION

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) is located in Nashville, TN. Serving 2 million Tennessee residents, TDHS offers a variety of State benefits for citizens of Tennessee including Child Care, Family Assistance, and Disaster Relief.

A devastating tornado struck Nashville on March 3, 2020. Following the disaster, the outbreak of COVID-19 put the country in a national emergency. COVID-19 relief efforts began on March 12, 2020. In this emergency situation, TDHS was in need of a solution to support and improve the lives of Tennessee citizens during these difficult times.

In an effort to support the state of emergency around both the tornado and COVID-19, Pharicode was able to quickly design, build, and implement a solution for the State of Tennessee. Within 72 hours, the Pharicode team and State of Tennessee DHS employees worked around the clock to deploy the Emergency Case Assistance application on March 16, 2020. Because of COVID-19, the self-service portal and the ability to apply remotely became a critical overnight requirement.
THE SOLUTION:
EMERGENCY CASH ASSISTANCE

Funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, the Emergency Cash Assistance is designed to provide financial aid for qualifying families that lost employment or at least 50% of their earned income as a result of the pandemic state of emergency.

While their previous process was entirely manual and took place on paper, implementing online applications and verification reduced processing time from several hours to around 20 minutes per citizen.

Additionally, fraud monitoring time was reduced from weeks—or even months—to a matter of minutes.
HOW IT WORKS

Funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), Emergency Cash Assistance provides two monthly cash payments to families that were employed as of March 11, 2020, and have lost a job or lost at least 50% of their earned income due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Ultimately, this project improved both internal processes for the State of Tennessee and the user experience for citizens of a state experiencing a pandemic on the heels of a natural disaster.

TDHS Commissioner Danielle W. Barnes stated:

“"We know the next few months are going to be a challenge for families across our state who unexpectedly lost a job through no fault of their own. This emergency cash assistance will provide families with the temporary resources they need to support themselves during what we hope will be a short time away from their jobs. Helping families through this emergency is how we continue building a thriving Tennessee."
Custom Development, Integrations, and CSM

WORK STREAM 1
This is the Engagement Layer Modernization project which includes:

- Citizen and Staff Portal
- Data Model
- Family Assistance and Child Care Automation
- ForgeRock, RedHat, and Box Integrations

WORK STREAM 2
This was the Disaster Response Emergency project which included:

- Emergency Care Assistance Tornado/COVID-19
- Disaster SNAP - Tornado
- Pre-Qualification Questionnaire
- Additional Applications as Required
“We want to say thank you for being all-around great partners. When we embarked on this journey no one could have expected this turn of events. Through it all, you and your team have proven to be the right choice as a development partner as we navigate these new uncharted waters helping to support our Tennessee Citizens.

We would like to give special thanks to Wendy, Justin, Robert, Travis, and Sherry for all of the effort they extended to deliver the Disaster and now Pandemic online services. We have been touted by the USDA FNS Agency as a huge success in part because you all joined with us in helping bring our vision to reality.

There really are no other words we can say except, thank you.”

- SoTN Senior IT Manager

“You guys are AWESOME! I said the same to the team after our call yesterday not expecting the deliverable this morning!! Wow. [...] What a crew you all have...A...mazing. Thank you!”

- SoTN Project Manager
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