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**THE RIPPLE EFFECT**

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# Making it easier to help children in difficult situations

Helping the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare implement a major  
technology transformation

# THEY WERE TRYING TO TACKLE **HIGH-STAKES CHALLENGES** WITH **LOW-TECH RESOURCES.**

## THE SITUATION

The questions child welfare caseworkers ask every day can have life-altering consequences: Is the child safe in this home? Are there signs of abuse or neglect? Can they remain with their biological parents, and if not, what's the right foster home for them? What's the likeliest path to a permanent home? It's a demanding job and the stakes are incredibly high.

Child welfare caseworkers within the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) worked hard to help families, but they also needed help. Their caseloads were too high; their jobs were extremely stressful—then the pandemic strained the system further.

Every day, these dedicated professionals were making decisions that impacted lives—but gathering data to inform those decisions was often challenging. Some information had to be captured in the field and manually entered into databases hours or days later. Caseworkers often required additional information from disparate parts of the human services or justice systems. Inefficiencies and outmoded systems cut into time caseworkers could otherwise spend helping children and their families.

While the primary objective of child welfare is the safety and well-being of children, DHW also valued its staff's safety and well-being. To better meet the needs of the department, its caseworkers, and—most importantly—children and families, DHW needed better tools.



## THE SOLVE

There was no dispute about the need for a comprehensive technology transformation, but DHW wanted to take a thoughtful, human-centered approach, since success wouldn't be measured by metrics alone. A more efficient end-to-end process designed to close cases faster wasn't its priority; it needed to be focused on ensuring child safety and permanency faster.

DHW engaged Deloitte to help implement a new solution—Ensuring Safety and Permanency in Idaho (ESPI)—that would be informed by Deloitte's existing child welfare models and child welfare best practices and built with humans top of mind. Together with DHW, we examined the child welfare journey and identified a wide cross-section of stakeholder personas to design a system to meet their unique and various needs. We considered mobility and how newer caseworkers engage with technology as we explored modernization opportunities.

Compliance with stringent child welfare regulations was imperative. We worked with DHW to implement a solution that meets the rigorous national standards of the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

DHW asked Deloitte to build ESPI on a FedRAMP-compliant government cloud using Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Microsoft Power Platform, as well as Microsoft Azure services, and implement it within 24 months. Mission accomplished. Deloitte also stayed on through deployment to provide training and system and staff support before DHW assumed full operations and maintenance.

A CASEWORKER'S JOB IS CHALLENGING.  
**ACCESSING CRUCIAL DATA SHOULDN'T BE.**

# THE IMPACT

In any child welfare system, success generally takes the form of a safe, permanent home. For Idaho caseworkers, ESPI has opened access to data that can help facilitate permanency for the children in their care—either with biological parents or through adoption or guardianship. This holistic approach gives caseworkers critical information to guide decisions and connect children and parents with resources that can potentially help keep families together.

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The technology solution provides a modern user experience that is engineered for mobility, with a user-friendly caseworker portal and scalable cloud platform. Metrics can take on greater meaning in child welfare because they represent real children and caseworkers.

A photograph showing the silhouettes of four children running across a grassy field. The scene is set against a warm, golden sunset sky, with trees visible in the background. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

MORE ACCESSIBLE DATA MAKES CHILD PERMANENCE  
MORE ATTAINABLE.

# LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



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