

CWS-CARES Legislative Update

March 2026

Executive Summary

The Implementation Services contract was awarded on March 24, 2026. Onboarding of the new team has begun. Over the next few weeks, the vendor will analyze the completed, in progress, and remaining activities and deliverables to ensure the project meets its obligations to provide organizational change management, training, and support of readiness activities for the October 26, 2026 Version 1 (V1) Go-Live.

All open milestones remain red for the month of March due to the volume of stories, identifying defects, fixing defects, vendor retesting, and state Quality Assurance (QA) retesting. Milestones 11: Aftercare & Re-Entry, 24: Track Assistance Costs, 26: Maintain Resource Family Home, and 28: Legal Action have several defect fixes being retested by the vendor. Milestones 29: Federal Reports and 30: State Reports have completed development, vendor testing, and state QA testing of infrastructure to support reporting.

Simplified Milestone Development Dashboard

The milestone chart below illustrates the CWS-CARES development progress across business requirements, design, build, vendor testing, and state testing, grouped by Extended User Scenario Testing (EUST) alignment. It is important to note that a "Ready for User Feedback" status of 100% marks the milestone complete, however user feedback testing will occur during the designated EUST period.

EUST 3

Milestone	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	Business Requirement	Design	Build	Vendor Testing (SIT)	State Testing (QA)	Ready for User Feedback
Milestone 6.1: Prevention Services	2023-03-27	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 07: Case Plan	2023-09-11	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	71%	68%
Milestone 7.1: Case Management Assessment (CMA)	2024-04-15	2025-12-26	100%	100%	100%	100%	63%	5%
Milestone 09: Case Management: Engagement & Services	2022-12-05	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 10: Case Closure	2023-02-27	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	89%
Milestone 10.1: Structured Decision Making (SDM)	2023-04-24	2025-07-11	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	85%
Milestone 11: Aftercare & Re-Entry	2023-12-04	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	97%	68%	61%
Milestone 13: Adoption	2024-02-12	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	58%	57%
Milestone 14: Warrants	2023-01-03	2024-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 16: Jurisdiction and Disposition	2023-11-06	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	92%	92%

Milestone	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	Business Requirement	Design	Build	Vendor Testing (SIT)	State Testing (QA)	Ready for User Feedback
Milestone 17: Status Reviews	2024-01-02	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	84%	84%
Milestone 18: Other Hearings	2023-05-22	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	85%	84%
Milestone 20.1: Foster Care Eligibility Determination (FCED)	2023-01-30	2025-12-26	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 21: Eligibility Programs	2023-04-24	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 23: Track Administrative Costs	2024-03-25	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	0%
Milestone 23.1: Service Delivery Tracking	2024-03-25	2026-02-20	100%	100%	100%	100%	5%	2%
Milestone 23.2: County Expense Claim Reporting Information System (CECRIS)	2024-06-17	2025-10-31	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%
Milestone 24: Track Assistance Costs	2024-01-01	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	88%	38%	2%
Milestone 26: Maintain Resource Family Home	2023-12-04	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	96%	28%	15%
Milestone 26.1: Facility Management System (FMS)	2024-03-25	2025-11-28	100%	100%	100%	100%	14%	14%
Milestone 27: Complaints	2023-06-19	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	71%	68%
Milestone 28: Legal Action	2024-02-26	2026-01-23	100%	100%	100%	99%	31%	10%
Milestone 29: Federal Reports	2024-08-28	2026-01-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 30: State Reports	2024-09-17	2026-01-27	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Milestone 32: Admin Console	2024-08-12	2025-10-31	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	98%

Milestone 7 – Case Plan

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Case Plan establishes the foundation and central unifying tool in child welfare services. The milestone equips the worker to partner with the child, family, and care team to develop, monitor, and provide services and case management to assure the child's best interest is met through the provision of a safe environment. Concurrent planning is accommodated to bolster the expediency of a permanent arrangement for the child if the maintenance or reunification efforts with the family of origin fail. Automation of central safety and risk assessment findings (i.e., CANS and SDM) facilitates the monitoring of the case plan and its impact on the child's safety. Other key plans include the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP), the 90-Day Transition Plan, the Plan of Safe Care, and the Shared Responsibility Plan are also included.

This milestone seeks to unify all the plans into one Universal Case Plan, allowing the worker to provide more client-friendly, meaningful action items from one central document. To align with program readiness this milestone also covers Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), including both the Community and Title IV-E Pathways, originally scheduled for Prevention Services.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drop 5 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 7.1 – Case Management Assessment (CMA)

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Case Management Assessment will provide information on completed Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessments, National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Survey, Child, and Family Teams (CFT) Survey, Independent Living Plan (ILP), and Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) using the Person-Centered Intelligence System (P-CIS) with our partner Opeeka. This interface will be accessed using a Single Sign-On (SSO) method where the worker in CWS-CARES will not need to use different credentials to log in and will rather be directed from CWS-CARES into the P-CIS tool to complete the necessary assessment.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 10 - Case Closure

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Case Closure provides social workers with the ability to assess cases for closure, finalize and close a case, and support any other areas of practice related to the ending of a child welfare case. This ultimately equips the social worker with the best practices for family engagement in transition and aftercare planning, with the goal of helping families prepare for their exit from Child Welfare and reduce the likelihood they will need services in the future.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 10.1 - Structured Decision Making (SDM)

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

This milestone is a suite of decision-support tools that promotes safety and well-being for children and adults. The SDM model combines research with best practices, offering workers a framework for consistent decision making and offering agencies a way to target in-demand resources toward those who can benefit most. The SDM Assessment Tools that will be in CWS-CARES are Hotline Assessment, Risk Assessment, Risk Re-Assessment, Substitute Care Safety Assessment, Congregate Care Safety Assessment, In-Home Safety Assessment, and Reunification Assessment.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 11 – Aftercare and Re-Entry

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Aftercare & Re-Entry equips the worker with a platform for intentional planning for aftercare services as a family, child, or youth approaches case closure. The structured format for capturing this planning process (e.g., CFT, case plan, family preservation,) assures that those exiting child welfare case management services are doing so with services, people, and resources in place to provide ongoing support. This is inclusive of informing the family, child, or youth about re-entry should their needs in the future warrant even more support.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to defect fixes still in vendor testing. Once these are verified they will return to QA for state retesting.

Milestone 13 – Adoptions

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Adoption improves monitoring of the adoption processes and activities, including document preparation and tracking for adoption finalization. Increases compliance with State rule for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) and other adoption-related requirements. Increases visibility in the adoption process, including adoption stability, re-entry following adoption, and post-adoption services support.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 16 – Jurisdiction and Disposition

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	▼ Red	▼ Small	Medium	Large	▼ Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	▼ Long

Description:

Jurisdiction and Disposition Hearings equips workers to complete the noticing process, prepare for disposition hearings for both detained and non-detained youth, and conduct the necessary preparations for jurisdiction hearings of all petition types. The noticing capabilities in this milestone will overlap with many of the hearing types from Warrants, Court Hearing Framework, and Other Hearings, and ensure proper documentation for hearings are received by the relevant parties. This milestone enables workers to identify parties to send a notice to, complete a diligent search to locate the absent parent, and notice appropriate parties. The milestone also equips workers to gather and document all evidence to support the Jurisdiction hearing petition allegations, and to obtain a social history from the parents for Disposition hearings.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 17 – Status Reviews

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	▼ Red	▼ Small	Medium	Large	▼ Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	▼ Long

Description:

Status Reviews equips workers to prepare for a wide variety of status review hearings. This milestone supports the reporting and the documentation outputs from Family Reunification, Family Maintenance, Non-Minor Dependent, and Permanent Plan hearings. Workers will be able to capture all findings and orders from the Court, and store information regarding the court results. This milestone also enables workers to submit case plans for a variety of review hearings, evaluate case progress and conduct Safety Assessments, create and submit Permanency Plans, and create and file letters of Guardianship.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 18 - Other Hearings

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Other Hearings extends the Court Hearing Framework to cover additional hearing types, including:

366.26 Selection and Implementation. This type of hearing is set after reunification services are terminated or not offered to parents. The purpose of this hearing is to determine and order the Permanent Plan for the child, which may include a plan of Adoption, plan of Tribal Customary Adoption, plan of Legal Guardianship or plan of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA).

Special or Interim Review. Examples of special/interim hearing topics include Case Plan Compliance, Placement Update, Psychotropic Medication Review, and 15-Day Review Hearing. This milestone also covers hearings related to Nonminor Dependent Re-entry into Extended Foster Care, the 241.1 Joint Assessment with Juvenile Probation, and the Adoption Finalization Hearing. While it will equip social workers to create an Adoption Court Case separate from the Juvenile Court case, it does not cover the filing of Adoption or Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) forms.

Ex Parte Court Filings and Requests for Special Orders. Ad hoc filings may include requests for psychotropic medication, surgical procedures, other invasive medical treatment, use of general anesthesia, travel orders, paternity testing, psychological evaluation orders and requests for Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children placement. This milestone also includes processing records requests and requests for discovery in preparation for court.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 23 – Track Administrative Costs

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

This milestone covers the process of creating a directory for child welfare-related program codes. This directory will enable the tracking of costs within the system and establish a foundation for financial management tracking in CWS-CARES. With this milestone, state fiscal users will have the ability to add and update Program Codes (PCs), Allocations, and Ledger pages through the County Expense Claim (CEC) interface in the County Expense Claim Reporting Information System (CECRIS). This functionality will allow fiscal workers to summarize all available funding sources, which can then be used to better support child welfare programs by leveraging existing funding streams.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 23.1 – Service Delivery Tracking

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

This milestone enables county workers to draft correspondence to the service providers in CWS-CARES. Using the CWS-CARES portal, service providers can log in and conveniently update their provider profile and contract information. The milestone also serves as a platform for service providers to access individual information and family prevention services plan directly and efficiently. Additionally, service providers can utilize the portal to submit cost-tracking information for the services they have provided. The milestone allows various state and county users to generate reports that aggregate service costs by program code, services, and provider. This data will help counties track and analyze spending patterns, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 23.2 – County Expense Claim Reporting Information System (CECRIS)

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

This milestone will allow users to view county-specific administrative claim information from the County Expense Claim (CEC) in CECRIS in a centralized area for financial management in CWS-CARES. This information will be fed from a unidirectional data exchange with CECRIS. This information will be read-only to CWS-CARES users. State fiscal users will have the ability to generate report(s) by program code in CWS-CARES to support accurate reporting on state and federal reports, including the Title IV-E Programs Quarterly Financial Report (CB-496).

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 24 – Track Assistance Costs

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

Assistance Costs covers the process of gathering child-specific assistance cost information from the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) including information on aid codes, supplemental rates, dates of payment, level of care, educational travel, and any specialized care increments. The purpose of gathering this child-specific assistance cost information is to aggregate the data in a format that can be used to

validate the CA-800 assistance claims. This milestone aims to facilitate the process of tracking and reporting child-specific costs that are required for state and federal reporting (such as CB 496 report). By efficiently aggregating and organizing this information, it enables users to generate accurate and comprehensive reports that meet the reporting standards mandated by CWS-CARES.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to delays in CalSAWS finalizing the Tiered Rate Structure updates on their end. Still waiting for a date for completion of this work so that end-to-end testing can begin.

Milestone 26 – Maintain Resource Family Home

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

This milestone covers the maintenance and support of the Resource Family Home. This milestone equips Resource Family Approval (RFA) workers to monitor Resource Family Homes while increasing engagement with families to help and retain qualified Resource Families. In instances where the Resource Family Home does not meet the standards, the RFA Worker will be able to document what needs to be corrected or follow the process to close the home. The milestone equips the RFA Worker with the tools to maintain the home by contact logs, training updates, and utilizing automated form generation with e-signatures.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to a dependency on Civica updates. Civica software ensures data is accurate and complete via matching and merging data. The current completion estimate is late April at which time SIT activities will be completed.

Milestone 26.1 – Facility Management System (FMS)

Dev Progress Health			Size			Complexity					Time		
Green	Yellow	Red	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme	Short	Average	Long

Description:

The delivery of this interface will populate placement providers from the Licensing Information System-Facility Automation System (LIS-FAS) into the CWS-CARES provider directory. An accurate provider profile with confirmed licensure information from Community Care Licensing in the CWS-CARES provider directory will allow case workers to make better placement decisions. The provider directory will also organize data and track placements and the associated costs of those placements, as well as tie outcomes to the provider. The scope of the FMS Interface for CWS-CARES Version 1 (V1) is limited to LIS and FAS data only.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 27 - Complaints

Dev Progress Health	Size	Complexity	Time
Green Yellow Red	Small Medium Large	Low Moderate High Very High Extreme	Short Average Long

Description:

Complaint milestone covers the process of screening a complaint and investigating a complaint against a Resource Family Home. The milestone equips the RFA Worker with the ability to review the complaint, add allegations as necessary, and access RFH home information in CWS-CARES. This allows the RFA Worker to make an informed decision on the best pathway for a complaint. In instances when a complaint warrants an investigation, the milestone equips the RFA Investigator with the tools to complete a thorough and timely investigation by utilizing contact logs, complaint history, allegation updates, and automated form generation with e-signature capabilities.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

Milestone 28 – Legal Action

Dev Progress Health	Size	Complexity	Time
Green Yellow Red	Small Medium Large	Low Moderate High Very High Extreme	Short Average Long

Description:

Legal Action covers the legal consultation to Resource Family Homes and handles the outcomes in a confidential manner. The RFA Worker will be equipped to schedule legal consult when there are administrative action requests. The RFA Worker will aid in the process of Legal Action with the Resource Family Home by providing resources and monitoring the legal consults. The milestone equips the RFA Worker with the tools to provide timely legal consultation through contact logs, permission sets, child welfare history, and utilizing automated form generation with e-signatures.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to a dependency on Civica updates. The current completion estimate is late April at which time SIT activities will be completed.

Milestone 32 – Admin Console

Dev Progress Health	Size	Complexity	Time
Green Yellow Red	Small Medium Large	Low Moderate High Very High Extreme	Short Average Long

Description:

The Admin Console will give county and state administrators of CWS-CARES access to configuration features to meet county-specific needs and to maintain CWS-CARES for new programs and policies. These Administrative Services include identity and access management to create and update user accounts and permissions, create and update county-specific forms templates, and configure workflows for assignment and supervisor reviews and approvals.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of March due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. A recovery plan has been implemented including increased QA resources and expanded vendor testing.

User Feedback / Usability Testing

EUST 3 General Testing Began on February 2 and will conclude on April 3. EUST 3 Reports Testing began on February 23 and will also conclude on April 3. As of the end of March, 2,155 feedback items have been submitted by 187 unique testers across 35 different counties. 1,842 feedback items have been preliminarily dispositioned, with the largest category being Defect. EUST 3 Portals will begin testing on April 6 and will conclude on April 17.

A full report on EUST 3 Admin, EUST 3 General, EUST 3 Reports, and EUST 3 Portals will be published at the conclusion of the EUST 3 testing period in April 2026.

Data / Document Conversion

The data conversion team completed mapping of 251 out of 251 source tables from CWS/CMS to CWS-CARES. Data mapping is complete for 3,058 CWS/CMS data elements with 0 data elements still in progress. 955 CWS/CMS data elements are not expected to convert to CWS-CARES because they are from system specific tables or otherwise identified as not needed in the new system. Fields identified as likely not needed for CWS-CARES are still under review and confirmation. Full data loads have been completed for all CWS-CARES objects. Mock Cycle 1 Data Validation began in March. During Mock 1 Data Validation, all organizations are invited to validate production data in the CARES DCVAL environment.

Data Conversion (CWS/CMS Data Elements)

Mapping Complete	Mapping In Progress	Likely Not Needed
3,058 (76%)	0 (0%)	955 (24%)

The data conversion team also continued to convert documents from CWS/CMS. So far, all the historical documents, roughly 87 million have been converted. Newly added/changed documents continue to be converted from CWS/CMS at a rate of approximately 100,000 per week.

User Adoption Summary

Due to the recent onboarding of the Implementation Services Team, updates on topics typically included in this section (e.g., County Child Welfare Engagement, CDSS Engagement, Training and OCM) will be resumed in next month's report.

External Communications & Engagement – In March, The Strategic Communications team conducted Stakeholder Briefing #6 on March 25, 2026. The two-hour session included updates on Production Simulation, Forms and Reports, a demonstration on the Health and Education Passport, and interactive Q&A time. This Stakeholder Briefing had the highest attendance of all sessions to date with 623 attendees. This session featured stakeholders from 51 California counties and state organizations, including the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Welfare Digital Services (CWDS), and County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA). The participation was led by high representation from Orange, Santa Clara, and Los Angeles counties. The Strategic Communications team collaborated with project teams to distribute the CWS-CARES Weekly Digest on March 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 to child welfare leadership and CARES Points of Contact. This month's updates included the February 2026 Progress and Engagement Summary, CWS-CARES Data Dictionary Version 0.09 now available, an updated CWS-CARES Meeting & Workgroup Matrix now available on the CWDS User Resources Webpage (login required), CWS-CARES Product Demonstrations, the third annual CWS-CARES Communications Effectiveness Survey, and reminders about Stakeholder Briefing #6 conducted on March 25, 2026. The Weekly Digest also includes an FAQ of the week where each week, a common question from counties and partners is highlighted along with a clear, practical answer to help readers better understand CWS-CARES functionality. The Strategic Communications Team collaborated with project staff to produce the March 2026 CWS-CARES Progress & Engagement Summary. This communication tool gives stakeholders a clear, concise overview of our shared progress and accomplishments. The summary highlighted key activities and fosters transparency in areas like prototype reviews, forms, reports, data conversion, and training. The summary included the twelve communications distributed in the reporting month including Weekly Digests, individual communications, and CWDS webpage updates. The summary included Core Constituent participation in Prototype and Build Reviews. In the February reporting month, five demonstrations were conducted in Resource Management, 2 in Financial Management, Resource Family Approval, and Eligibility.

ACF Monthly Reporting on User Engagement & Adoption – The Strategic Communications Team submitted the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) March 2026 monthly report on user engagement and adoption. This report detailed key CWS-CARES project accomplishments, including continued EUST 3 to support statewide system validation and readiness, completed External Systems data mapping validation activities to support upcoming Binti data conversion, and advanced data conversion readiness activities in preparation for upcoming validation mock cycles. The report also highlighted the county participation at monthly stakeholder and user engagement meetings led and facilitated by CWS-CARES project staff, recurring meetings, and process information sessions, and summarizes the total communications were sent to CWS-CARES leaders and users during the reporting period. The types of communications varied from user feedback information, organizational change management, and technical/system information.

Other Completed Work Products – The Strategic Communications Team completed the following work products and activities: Mock Cycle 1 and 2 Data Validation Communication and Survey, CWS-CARES Implementation Activities Update, a Child Welfare Council Presentation for the March 2026 meeting, the Salesforce Platform Training Preview Session outreach, RFA and FFPSA Portal Training Registration outreach, County Advisory Committees (CACs) March presentations, presentations for 2 External Systems county meetings, a communication on EUST 3 Portal Testing and Training Updates, Communication Effective Survey #3 for external stakeholders, and the Implementation Services Vendor selection announcement.

Budget and Expenditures

2024-25 CWS-CARES Report Summary

OTSI Spending Authority Budget Item	2024/25 Budget ¹	2024/25 Expenditures
Personal Services ²	\$14,237,657	\$11,892,935
Other Operating Expenses & Equipment (OE&E) ²	\$19,223,537	\$15,512,789
Data Center Services ²	\$3,349,028	\$3,058,708
Contract Services ^{2 5}	\$133,673,182	\$115,174,529
Enterprise Services ^{2 6}	\$6,069,496	\$6,450,901
OTSI Spending Authority Total	\$176,552,900	\$152,089,862

CDSS Local Assistance Budget Item	2024/25 Budget	2024/25 Expenditures
CDSS Salary & Benefits ³	\$1,520,000	\$1,344,935
CDSS OE&E (Includes Travel and Training) ³	\$462,000	\$652
Contract Services ³	\$981,000	\$883,685
County Regional Training Academy ³	\$306,251	\$0
Core Constituent Participation Costs ⁴	\$30,822,770	\$8,457,059
CDSS Local Assistance Total	\$34,092,021	\$10,686,331

Project Totals	2024/25 Budget	2024/25 Expenditures
CWS-CARES Project Total	\$210,644,921	\$162,776,193

¹ 2024/25 budget aligns with SPR 6 plus BL 24-27 and BL 24-28 and is inclusive of CWS-CARES only costs. CARES-Live costs are not included.

² Actual expenditures through February 2026 FISCAL reports and approved invoices through April 3, 2026.

³ CDSS Local Assistance expenditures through June 2025. CDSS Salary & Benefits and OE&E expenditures through June 2025.

⁴ CDSS Fiscal Monitoring Unit confirmed four quarters of expenditures for Core Constituent Participation.

⁵ FY 2024/25 contract withholds are included.

⁶ Enterprise Services Direct and Indirect costs were higher than originally estimated.

Budget and Expenditures

2025-26 CWS-CARES Report Summary

OTSI Spending Authority Budget Item	2025/26 Budget ¹	2025/26 Expenditures
Personal Services ²	\$13,607,250	\$8,709,178
Other Operating Expenses & Equipment (OE&E) ²	\$63,347,877	\$38,232,587
Data Center Services ²	\$4,019,061	\$2,135,974
Contract Services ²	\$207,951,742	\$70,045,476
Enterprise Services ²	\$5,889,535	\$4,359,085
Legislation ²	\$15,015,000	\$0
OTSI Spending Authority Total	\$309,830,466	\$123,482,300

CDSS Local Assistance Budget Item	2025/26 Budget	2025/26 Expenditures
CDSS Salary & Benefits ³	\$1,866,500	\$1,024,653
CDSS OE&E (Includes Travel and Training) ³	\$115,500	\$1,016
Contract Services ³	\$900,000	\$589,191
County Regional Training Academy ³	\$0	\$0
Core Constituent Participation Costs ⁴	\$35,457,147	\$9,100,978
CDSS Local Assistance Total	\$38,339,147	\$10,715,838

Project Totals	2025/26 Budget	2025/26 Expenditures
CWS-CARES Project Total	\$348,169,613	\$134,198,138

¹ 2025/26 budget aligns with SPR 6 plus Budget Letter adjustments 25-21 and 25-23 and is inclusive of CWS-CARES only costs. CARES-Live costs are not included.

² Actual expenditures through February 2026 FISCAL reports and approved invoices through April 3, 2026.

³ CDSS Local Assistance expenditures through February 2026. CDSS Salary & Benefits and OE&E expenditures through February 2026.

⁴ CDSS Fiscal Monitoring Unit confirmed two quarters of data for Core Constituent Participation and no data for Tribal Core Constituents.

CWS-CARES Annual Planning Document

The project leadership met with ACF on March 30 to discuss status of the FFY 2026 Annual Advanced Planning Document Update (APDU) and next steps. The ACF shared that response to the state was in review and we would hear back from them shortly. The project plans to begin preparation for the FFY 2027 Annual APDU in April. The project completed a competitive procurement for Implementation Services in alignment with prior ACF guidance and started onboarding the vendor resources in March.

Earned Value Management

CWS-CARES uses Earned Value Management (EVM), in compliance with SPR 6, to measure project progress and forecast project completion in terms of budget and schedule. Each month, a Schedule Performance Index (SPI) and a Cost Performance Index (CPI) is calculated using data sets provided by the project. An SPI of 1.0 indicates that the project is on schedule per the plan. Similarly, a CPI of 1.0 indicates that the project is on budget related to the work performed.

The EVM dashboard below is being provided in compliance with the SPR 6 approval condition. The project has provided data in the dashboard for schedule, cost, and scope as of March 15, 2026.

Metric	3/15/2026	2/15/2026	1/15/2026	Description
Planned V1 Percent Complete	80%	78%	76%	Planned percent complete as of this date.
Actual V1 Percent Complete	76%	75%	74%	Actual percent complete as of this date.
Schedule Performance Index (SPI)	0.952	0.955	0.963	Schedule performance of 1.0 or greater is on track, less than 1.0 is off track.
Cost Performance Index (CPI)	1.134	1.154	1.171	Cost performance of 1.0 or greater is on track, less than 1.0 is off track.
Estimated to Complete (ETC, V1)	\$193,487,061	\$202,485,805	\$210,529,219	Estimated cost to complete the project.
Estimated at Completion (EAC, V1)	\$822,586,067	\$808,854,484	\$796,560,094	Estimated cost at completion of the project.
Forecast V1 Completion	1/19/2027	1/13/2027	12/30/2026	Date V1 is forecasted to complete.
Forecast V2 Completion	8/15/2028	8/7/2028	7/20/2028	Date V2 is forecasted to complete.
Earned Cost (EC)	\$713,646,052	\$699,538,434	\$686,510,478	Budget for work actual completed to date.
Actual Cost (AC)	\$629,099,006	\$606,368,679	\$586,030,876	Actual cost for work completed to date.

Legend

> 0.99	0.95 – 0.99	< 0.95
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Vendor Contracts

The following contracts or contract amendments were executed during the month of March 2026:

Contract	Purpose	Contract Cost	Term	Notes
KPMG LLP	Implementation Services	\$70,000,000.00	3/24/26 – 6/30/27	New agreement
KPMG LLP	Financial Management Services	\$3,500,000.00	8/1/22 – 5/31/26	Amendment to extend for time only

There were no contracts or contract amendments submitted to the ACF during the month of March 2026.

High Priority Risks

For the March 2026 reporting period, zero high priority risks were opened, zero were closed, and one high priority risk is a continuing risk. The PMO continues to actively mitigate the project's medium and low priority risks in the bi-weekly Risk and Issues Forum and performs ongoing follow-up for risk mitigation with assigned owners.

New High Priority Risks: There are zero (0) new high priority issues for the month of March.

Continuing High Priority Risks: There is one (1) continuing high priority risk for the month of March.

Continuing Risk	Impact	Status
RI-365: User Experience in EUST 3 may impact user confidence <u>Description:</u> Poor user experience for more than 1,200 testers during EUST 3 may erode confidence in CARES and lead to future adoption issues.	The delay in Build Drop 5 and the high number of open defects have put the completion of the 38 prioritized EUST 3 scenarios at risk. Early release of scenarios may expose users to excessive defects, while limiting the number of scenarios reduces testers' ability to validate full CARES V1 functionality. This may affect the overall user experience and the effectiveness of EUST 3 business testing.	County feedback reflected mixed sentiment, with confidence depending largely on how identified issues will be addressed prior to go-live. Portal and training concerns continue to be reviewed with the appropriate teams. Ongoing monitoring is supported by daily feedback review and upcoming milestone checkpoints.

Closed High Priority Risks: There were zero (0) high priority risks closed during the month of March.

High Priority Issues

For the March 2026 reporting period, zero high priority issues were opened, zero high priority issues were closed, and 10 high priority issues are continuing, for a total of 10. The PMO continues to actively resolve the project's medium and low priority issues in the bi-weekly Risk and Issues Forum and performs ongoing follow-up for issue resolution with assigned owners.

New High Priority Issues: There are zero (0) new high priority issues for the month of March.

Continuing High Priority Issues: There are ten (10) continuing high priority issues for the month of March.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
RI-260: Sprint velocity is inadequate to achieve approved SPR 6 milestone schedule <u>Description:</u> Per SPR 6 approval condition #7, a 3-month delay to V1 would require a new SPR. Delays may trigger secondary risks including compressed user testing, reduced defect resolution, poor quality, de-scoping, and team burnout. EUST 3 testing is scheduled for Jan–Feb 2026 and depends on completing all SDLC milestones by end of 2025.	Impacts of Delayed SDLC for EUST 3 Milestones: 1. Compressed Testing – Shortened vendor testing, QA, and User Testing may increase undetected defects. 2. Limited Defect Resolution – QA overload and rising defects may lead to unresolved issues at Go-Live. 3. System Instability – Incomplete testing may disrupt operations and reduce stakeholder confidence. 4. Team Burnout – Overtime pressure may cause fatigue, errors, and resource shortages. 5. De-scoping – To stay on schedule, features may be deferred, reducing V1 value and missing dependencies.	There is a need to distinguish build user-story velocity, which supports completion of coding, from defect-resolution velocity, which drives QA progress. PMO and product teams will provide updated QA percentages and projected closure timelines, and recent indicators show QA activity trending upward.
RI-308: Delays in delivery of CARES V1 State forms <u>Description:</u> Approximately 310 forms have been identified for CARES V1 based on the current Requirements and User Stories, but about 117 of these have not yet been fully defined and their templates have not been provided.	If the remaining 117 forms and approved mockups are not provided by the end of October 2024, delivery of form designs and integration with the CARES application will be delayed, impacting the baseline project schedule.	Approximately 81 forms were tested, with about a 33 percent pass rate and many previously completed forms showing defects. Workgroup guidance continues to refine taxonomy, standardize AEM templates, and address WOPI-related limitations.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
RI-321: Insufficient time and resources to complete the development of County forms needed for CARES V1 Go-Live <u>Description:</u> Some Counties have not started developing required forms for CARES V1 Go-Live due to the following delays: • High number of forms • Long development time per form • Delays in data dictionary and forms data dictionary • Delays in forms training for the counties along with environment readiness • Training schedule extending through Feb 2026 • Overall time needed to complete each form These factors put readiness of forms for EUST 3 and Production Simulation at risk.	Some counties have begun development, while others report delays in early tasks such as form identification and prioritization. If this issue is not resolved it will negatively impact the testing efforts in EUST 3 and Production Simulation.	Ownership will be reassigned and the wording updated to reflect project side solution constraints rather than county resourcing. Document Taxonomy - Project proposed an approach to simplify Document Taxonomy and counties approved the new proposal. The solution was reviewed and are in the process of logging a decision to baseline this. This will help alleviate county concerns involving taxonomy. Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) / Web Application Open Platform Interface (WOPI) / Environment - Forms Workgroup provided instructions/guidance to County Form Authors on all three areas and project continues to support them through weekly Office Hour sessions to bridge the gap and provide technical support to counties.
RI-327: Long processing time for Micro-conversion may impact Cutover and Pilot planning and implementation <u>Description:</u> If Micro-conversion cannot complete within 48 hours, CWS/CMS will need to be frozen longer than one weekend for the final delta load prior to pilot. For pilot to begin using forward and backward event-based syncing between the CWS CARES and legacy CWS/CMS, the data in the two systems must be fully synchronized. The estimated processing time is approximately 72 hours.	Final conversion load would require a 72-hour freeze period for CWS/CMS.	Several micro-conversion scripts were reported as optimized, with some runtimes reduced significantly and additional improvements underway. The overall micro-conversion duration will be assessed at the end of Mock Cycle 2.
RI-339: Automation Regression Test (ART) execution failures are poor and not showing an improvement or improving trend <u>Description:</u> The Automation Regression Test (ART) results have	Successful ART is a prerequisite for going live, there is risk of undiscovered defects unstable baseline code, and delay to implementation date.	Earlier updates indicated that most automation scripts have been delivered and regression runs reached approximately a 70 percent pass rate, though some scripts continued to require

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
been showing a failing trend across majority of the Milestones that have passed a manual validation by state QA.		updates due to application changes. Currently, several milestone scripts did not meet entrance criteria, with execution showing a 55 percent pass rate across 15 runnable milestones.
RI-341: Impact from scope delays in Build Drops 1, 2, 4 and 5 <u>Description:</u> The compounded deferment of numerous stories from previous build drops causes downstream delays to State QA and EUST 3 preparation, posing risk to completion of development in line with baselined project schedule.	Delays to State QA, PDL reviews, user feedback sessions, EUST 3 preparation and development of training. Stories are not complete until state QA is finished, and story is moved to done.	QA is prioritizing retesting milestones that can be completed quickly, while PaaS SI continues focused defect retesting and resolution to reduce reopens and improve pass rates. A steady defect-to-QA deployment cadence is being maintained to address the backlog. Efforts remain aligned with the May 4 QA consolidation for RI 339 and RI 345.
RI-342: Issues identified by Salesforce Code Quality Review <u>Description:</u> The independent analysis of the code by Salesforce has identified quality issues such as high percentage of custom code, API versions being out of date, Apex code length and code commenting, among others.	The code quality issues must be resolved before CWS-CARES can be implemented.	Salesforce Analyzer report was received and shows an early positive improvement trend, with additional runs needed for confirmation.
RI-345: Insufficient QA capacity to support Build Drop volumes <u>Description:</u> The current QA velocity of moving 26 stories per week to Joint Review, is not sufficient to complete testing of all stories and retest corrected defects in time for EUST 3 that begins on 1/20/2026 for Admin Console and on 2/2/2026 for functional milestones.	If QA capacity is not increased, there is a high likelihood of schedule delays, impacting the planned start dates of January 20, 2026 (Admin Console), and February 2, 2026 (functional milestones).	Corrective actions are underway, including a shift from an EUST testing scenario focus back to product milestone and story closure, increased QA resourcing with extended overtime, and continued Weekly Project Reporting dashboard reporting for leadership visibility, where early indicators show upward trends. QA continues to identify defects and provide tracking and executive reporting while underlying code quality issues are addressed, with alignment toward the May 4 checkpoint for RI 339 and RI 341.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
RI-354: Non-Adherence to Best Practices in APEX Custom Code Management <u>Description:</u> The PaaS SI is not following an established, traceable process for requesting and procuring increases in Salesforce governor limits.	The absence of a structured and approved approach to requesting governor limit increases may lead to several operational, financial, and technical risks, including: • Uncontrolled cost escalation due to unapproved or unanticipated resource increases • Potential performance or stability issues if the platform limits are exceeded or adjusted without proper validation. • Risk of non-compliance with vendor/platform policies if maximum or frequency limits are violated • Delays in delivery or downstream project phases due to lack of visibility on Salesforce support's turnaround time for such changes	Reviews show early improvement, with custom code utilization trending from roughly 86 percent toward 80 percent and continued refactoring targeting approximately 72 percent. Quarterly custom code reporting remains on track, with further updates planned for April.
RI-371: Performance testing environment Not Available <u>Description:</u> OTSI is unable to provision an environment with production data to conduct end-to-end performance testing for the CARES solution. Impacting CARES V1 Project schedule and may further impact planned production simulation activities.	Without the required environments, we cannot validate system behavior under production-like load, concurrency, and data volumes. This limits our ability to meet production simulation objectives (scalability, stability, and response-time targets), increases the likelihood of performance bottleneck with 20K + users, and could result in slow responses, timeouts, or failed transactions—reducing confidence in production readiness and potentially delaying planned testing and validation for production simulation.	Performance testing requires a dedicated, isolated environment with full-volume production-like data and a defined DevOps pipeline to generate reliable metrics; using environments shared with county activities risks skewing results and disrupting scenario execution. Teams are coordinating to validate environment options, including prior proposals involving the CARES 200 and CARES 105 environments, and a meeting will be scheduled to identify all concurrent activities and confirm long-term feasibility.

Closed High Priority Issue: Zero (0) high priority issues were closed in the month of March.

Appendices

EUST and Production Simulation Schedule

Below is a list of all milestones, their respective scheduled EUST session and the duration of each phase. In addition, we have renamed EUST 4 to Production Simulation and added the 6 month duration.

EUST	Milestones		Duration
EUST 3	06.1 – Prevention Services 07 – Case Plan 07.1 – Interface – CMA 09 – Case Management: Engagement & Services 10 – Case Closure 10.1 – Interface - SDM 11 – Aftercare & Re-entry 13 – Adoption 14 – Warrants 16 – Jurisdiction and Disposition Hearing 17 – Status Reviews	18 – Other Hearings 20.1 – Interface – FCED (remaining) 21 – Eligibility Programs 23 – Track Administrative Costs 23.1 – Service Delivery Tracking 23.2 – Interface – CECRIS 24 – Track Assistance Costs 26 – Maintain Resource Family Home 26.1 – Interface – FMS (LIS-FAS data) 27 – Complaints 28 – Legal Action	6 weeks Feb – Apr 2026
EUST 3R	29 – Federal Reports 30 – State Reports		6 weeks Mar – Apr 2026
EUST 3 Portals	Resource Family Approval (RFA) Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)		2 weeks Apr 2026
Production Simulation	End-to-End Validation of all Product and Interface Milestones		6 months May – Oct 2026