

CWS-CARES Legislative Update

February 2026

Executive Summary

All open milestones remain red for the month of February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines. Test scenarios for EUST 3 were reduced and consolidated to focus on Intake/Screening, Courts, Referrals, Case Management and Ongoing Case Work, expanded Eligibility processes including the CalSAWS/FCED interface, Adoptions, After Care and Re-Entry, Reporting, Financial Management, Resource Management and Resource Family Approval, Administrative Console processing, and Structured Decision Making (SDM) interface, along with the Person-Centered Intelligence Solution (P-CIS) interface which includes the CANS assessment. Milestones that are red in Build and Vendor Testing are related to fixing defects found in EUST 3 and QA through the completion of EUST 3.

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 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%	65%	64%
Milestone 7.1: Case Management Assessment (CMA)	2024-04-15	2025-12-26	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	3%
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%	89%	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%	100%	52%	42%
Milestone 13: Adoption	2024-02-12	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	54%	49%
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%	71%	69%
Milestone 17: Status Reviews	2024-01-02	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	82%	82%

Milestone	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	Business Requirement	Design	Build	Vendor Testing (SIT)	State Testing (QA)	Ready for User Feedback
Milestone 18: Other Hearings	2023-05-22	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	100%	81%	78%
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%	0%	0%
Milestone 23.1: Service Delivery Tracking	2024-03-25	2026-02-20	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%
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%	4%	0%
Milestone 26: Maintain Resource Family Home	2023-12-04	2025-12-30	100%	100%	100%	98%	5%	3%
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%	67%	67%
Milestone 28: Legal Action	2024-02-26	2026-01-23	100%	100%	100%	99%	1%	1%
Milestone 29: Federal Reports	2024-08-28	2026-01-30	100%	100%	72%	72%	72%	72%
Milestone 30: State Reports	2024-09-17	2026-01-27	100%	100%	91%	75%	74%	73%
Milestone 32: Admin Console	2024-08-12	2025-10-31	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	97%

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 February due to the delay in Build Drop 5 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2, a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines, and the seventeen new work items for CalSAWS which have completed Build and are now in Vendor Testing.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2, a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines, and one new work item for Civica which completed Build and is now in Vendor Testing.

Milestone 29 – Federal Reports

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

Description:

Federal Reports - Extends and consolidates metric development completed in previous milestones to generate required Federal Extracts (e.g., National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)) and deliver interactive dashboard views of Federal Statewide Indicators and other required Federal reports, including those required to draw down Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) funds. CWS-CARES dashboards will support pulling multiple populations as appropriate, including entry cohorts, exit cohorts, attribute- defined cohorts and point-in-time snapshots.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of February due to a delay in finalizing the remaining user stories. In alignment with the approved System Change Request, the outstanding tasks are targeted for completion by the end of March. This milestone remains on target for inclusion within EUST 3R scheduled for March 2026.

Milestone 30 – State Reports

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

Description:

State Reports - Extends and consolidates metric development completed in previous milestones to deliver interactive thematic dashboard views of both State and Federal metrics. Thematic dashboards organize process, practice (fidelity) and outcome metrics by themes, such as Prevention, Safety and Permanency.

Current Status:

Progress health remains red for the month of February due to delays in finalizing the remaining user stories. In alignment with the approved System Change Request, the outstanding tasks are targeted for completion by the end of March. This milestone is at risk for inclusion within EUST 3R scheduled for March 2026.

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 February due to the delay in Build Drops 5, 5.1, & 5.2 and a high volume of defects impacting testing timelines.

User Feedback / Usability Testing

EUST 3 General Testing Began on February 2 and will continue until April 3. EUST 3 Reports Testing began on February 23 and will also conclude on April 3. As of the end of February, 994 feedback items have been submitted by 136 unique testers across 30 different counties. 881 feedback items have been preliminarily dispositioned, with the largest category being Defect. A full report on EUST 3 Admin, EUST 3 General, and EUST 3 Reporting 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 preparation is in progress. 880 out of 880 micro conversion scripts have been updated for Mock Cycle 1.

Data Conversion (CWS/CMS Data Elements)

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

Due to delays in the build drops and late changes to data model, the scope of Data Conversion Mock Cycle 1 has been reduced. Certain development and validation activities originally planned for this cycle are being deferred to Mock Cycle 2. The project team is actively implementing mitigation strategies to minimize the impact of this delay and ensure continuity of progress.

The data conversion team also continued to convert documents from CWS/CMS. So far, all the historical documents, roughly 86.2 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

External Communications & Engagement – In February, Implementation Leads (ILs) met with County Child Welfare, Probation, and CDSS Implementation Teams to continue to track completion of Go-Live Readiness tasks focusing on business change activities, technical tasks, and introduce the Go-Live Support Plan.

The Strategic Communications team collaborated with project teams to distribute the CWS-CARES Weekly Digest on February 2, 9 and 23 to child welfare leadership and CARES Points of Contact. This month's updates included attendance metrics for Stakeholder Briefing #5 and a link to the session recording; an announcement that EUST 3 General Began February 2, 2026 with 610 testers and 292 feedback items currently being processed and prioritized; CWS-CARES Core Constituent Demonstrations from the previous and upcoming two weeks; a registration link for Stakeholder Briefing #6; the CARES Explorer Volume 3, Issue 1 (February 2026), awareness of the CWS-CARES Pop-Up Merchandise Shop upcoming dates (March 30-April 17, 2026); an introduction of the CWS-CARES Video #5 and FAQs of the week on document redaction and optimistic concurrency.

The Strategic Communications Team collaborated with project staff to produce the February 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 highlighted the four communications distributed in the reporting month, and Stakeholder Briefing #5 metrics including 485 participants from 41 counties and six partner organizations. The summary includes Core Constituent participation in Prototype and Build Reviews. In the January reporting month, demonstrations were conducted in Case Management & Eligibility, Administrative Services, and Resource Family Approval (RFA), Resource Management, Shared Services, and Courts.

County Child Welfare Engagement – At the end of February, the total number of overdue readiness tasks was 42, a reduction from 49 at the end of January. Delays have been due to several items including but not limited to the following: delays in the forms development environment becoming available to counties, data not available in the environment to support testing of forms, ambiguity related to what forms counties should develop versus what the project will develop; and training provided to counties related to forms and report development. At the end of February, 37 of 2,267 forms have been completed, an increase of 20 from the January update, and 9 of 2,117 reports have been completed, an increase of 0 from the January update.

CDSS Engagement – In addition to what is mentioned in the External Communications & Engagement section, CDSS Implementation Teams continued to make progress on the development of Training Plans and on population of the training curriculum assignments, for the curriculum that is currently available.

Tribes with California Title IV-E Agreements – Yurok and Karuk still have calendar time until Go Live, but the schedule shows limited buffer. The team has initiated a critical path analysis with the goal of understanding how much slack exists within the Tribal readiness schedule to absorb further delays. The team discussed the topic during the February 18 CDSS Title IV-E Working Meeting.

Juvenile Probation – In addition to what is mentioned in the External Communications & Engagement section, the implementation team also provided a business process learning collaborative for the probation audience (Open a Case and Placement).

Training – In February, the training team was focused on delivering EUST 3 trainings as follows: delivered both EUST 3 Admin Console Training and EUST 3 General Training to support EUST 3 readiness and testing preparation. Below is a summary of accomplishments to date.

- EUST 3 Reports Two 2-hour sessions per day; total of 8 sessions delivered
- EUST 3 General Training, finished February 20 2026
- Provided Office Hours Support for Training Curriculum Assignments for Child Welfare Organizations
- Facilitated 2 Training Advisory Workgroup Meetings on February 11 and 26

Organizational Change Management (OCM) – In February, the OCM Team completed Process Information Sessions (PIS) for Financial Management, Resource Management and Resource Family Approval, Adoptions Assistance Program, and California Department of Social Services. These sessions are an opportunity to show the new CWS-CARES functionality, as-is and to-be business process maps, change impacts, terminology changes. For their next steps, the attendees were provided a worksheet. The worksheet is intended to support readiness tasks such as reviewing the change impacts for any service area and drafting the necessary revisions to internal business processes, procedures, documents, and workflows.

ACF Monthly Reporting on User Engagement & Adoption – The Strategic Communications Team submitted the ACF February 2026 monthly report on user engagement and adoption. This report detailed key CWS-CARES project accomplishments, including the completion of planning activities for EUST 3 and the start of EUST 3 to support statewide readiness, hosted Stakeholder Briefing #5 to provide project updates and demonstrate system functionality, and prepared for Communication Effectiveness Survey #3 to evaluate stakeholder engagement and inform communication strategies. 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.

Other Completed Work Products – The Strategic Communications Team completed the following work products and activities: The County Advisory Committees – Initial Outreach Communication, presentations for 2 External Systems county meetings, a communication on EUST 3 Portal Testing and Training Updates, a communication on CWS/CMS Inactive Logins outreach, a refresh of the CWS-CARES Meeting Series & Workgroup Matrix, a Court Reports Development update, and a Mock Cycle 1 and 2 Data Validation survey and outreach.

Budget and Expenditures

2025-26 CWS-CARES Report Summary

OTSI Spending Authority Budget Item	2025/26 Budget¹	2025/26 Expenditures
Personal Services ²	\$13,607,250	\$6,443,045
Other Operating Expenses & Equipment (OE&E) ²	\$63,347,877	\$38,181,722
Data Center Services ²	\$4,019,061	\$1,783,155
Contract Services ²	\$207,951,742	\$69,744,886
Enterprise Services ²	\$5,889,535	\$3,209,450
Legislation ²	\$15,015,000	\$0
OTSI Spending Authority Total	\$309,830,466	\$119,362,258

CDSS Local Assistance Budget Item	2025/26 Budget	2025/26 Expenditures
CDSS Salary & Benefits ³	\$1,866,500	\$880,962
CDSS OE&E (Includes Travel and Training) ³	\$115,500	\$868
Contract Services ³	\$900,000	\$525,600
County Regional Training Academy ³	\$0	\$0
Core Constituent Participation Costs ⁴	\$35,457,147	\$4,626,328
CDSS Local Assistance Total	\$38,339,147	\$6,033,758

Project Totals	2025/26 Budget	2025/26 Expenditures
CWS-CARES Project Total	\$348,169,613	\$125,396,016

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 December 2025 FISCAL reports and approved invoices through March 4, 2026.

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

⁴ CDSS Fiscal Monitoring Unit confirmed one quarter 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 February 18 to discuss status of the FFY 2026 Annual APDU and next steps. On February 24, ACF issued an email with guidance for items that should be included in the next annual APDU. The project plans to begin preparation for the next annual beginning in the month of March.

Subsequent to submitting the As Needed APDU, the project chose to stop negotiations and to move to a competitive procurement in alignment with prior ACF guidance and concerns and the need to reassess next steps regarding these services.

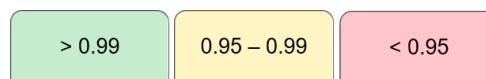
Earned Value Management

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 February 15, 2025.

Metric	2/15/2025	1/15/2025	12/15/2025	Description
Planned V1 Percent Complete	78%	76%	74%	Planned percent complete as of this date.
Actual V1 Percent Complete	75%	74%	72%	Actual percent complete as of this date.
Schedule Performance Index (SPI)	0.955	0.963	0.968	Schedule performance of 1.0 or greater is on track, less than 1.0 is off track.
Cost Performance Index (CPI)	1.154	1.171	1.198	Cost performance of 1.0 or greater is on track, less than 1.0 is off track.
Estimated to Complete (ETC, V1)	\$202,485,805	\$210,529,219	\$219,243,987	Estimated cost to complete the project.
Estimated at Completion (EAC, V1)	\$808,854,484	\$796,560,094	\$779,220,898	Estimated cost at completion of the project.
Forecast V1 Completion	1/13/2027	12/30/2026	12/22/2026	Date V1 is forecasted to complete.
Forecast V2 Completion	8/7/2028	7/20/2028	7/9/2028	Date V2 is forecasted to complete.
Earned Cost (EC)	\$699,538,434	\$686,510,478	\$670,586,409	Budget for work actual completed to date.
Actual Cost (AC)	\$606,368,679	\$586,030,876	\$559,976,911	Actual cost for work completed to date.

Legend



Vendor Contracts

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

Contract	Purpose	Contract Cost	Term	Notes
Accenture	Strategic Communication Support Services	\$8,153,600.00	8/4/23 – 8/3/27	Amendment to change vendor name (The Highlands Consulting Group was acquired by Accenture).

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

High Priority Risks

For the February 2026 reporting period, one high priority risk was opened, zero were closed, and one continuing risk that was previously medium priority was upgraded to high priority. 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 is one (1) new high priority risk for the month of February.

New Risk	Impact	Status
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, the team cannot validate system behavior under production-like load, concurrency, or data volumes. This increases the risk of performance bottlenecks with more than 20,000 users and may lead to slow responses or failed transactions. As a result, confidence in production readiness is reduced and planned performance-simulation testing may be delayed.	The team is evaluating use of the CARES 200 full-copy sandbox for performance testing, as it is already configured for this purpose. With OTSI's support and approval, this environment could be leveraged to run performance tests using production data.

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

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.	Scenarios are being released only after blocking defects are resolved, with daily triage, weekend stabilization work, and user-feedback monitoring in place.

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

High Priority Issues

For the February 2026 reporting period, zero high priority issues were opened, one high priority issue was closed, and 9 high priority issues are continuing, for a total of 9. 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 February.

Continuing High Priority Issues: There are nine (9) continuing high priority issues for the month of February.

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.	BD 5 and 5.1 have been successfully deployed to QA. Close to 880 User Stories were collectively completed Build/SIT and deployed to State QA as part of BD 5 and 5.1.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
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.	The re-evaluation of forms identified a 33% overall pass rate, with defects found in 50 of the 81 forms tested, including many previously marked as complete. The resolution plan has been expanded to include completion of the State's retesting and remediation of defects.
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.	The team is refining the mitigation plan and address county-raised concerns. ELT work sessions are in progress, and a revised plan with updated timelines will be shared soon which will include how the project can leverage the Implementation Services contract to provide additional/more focused support.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
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.	Recent optimization efforts have reduced micro conversion runtimes substantially, with most scripts now tuned and remaining work progressing as planned. The team is refining timelines and validating scope items such as RBAC and framework triggers.
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 been showing a failing trend across majority of the Milestones that have passed a manual validation by state QA.	Successful ART is a prerequisite for going live, there is risk of undiscovered defects unstable baseline code, and delay to implementation date.	Automation pass rates remain stable at approximately 93%. CRT onboarding has begun, and current defects and environment preparations continue to move forward.
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.	Weekly defect deployments to QA continue at an accelerated pace, with prioritization aligned to support completion of older milestones and higher progress items. Residual impacts remain, but throughput has stayed consistent at above 100 defects per week.

Continuing Issue	Impact	Status
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.	Mitigation activities remain on track, with multiple steps finalized and the balance scheduled alongside the 5.2 and early March fixes. The team will rerun quality benchmarks after deployment to confirm expected reductions in defects.
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).	Key metrics, including MTTR and KLOC, show no material change, prompting a reassessment of the resolution approach. The team will conduct a detailed review to analyze MTTR drivers and determine appropriate next steps
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 • Possible data integrity issues or software defects if storage or memory allocations are exceeded without regression testing • Audit and governance risks, such as stakeholder approvals and traceable change records are missing	A March benchmark re run tied to RI 342 is planned to reassess customization levels, with the item staying open until results show a sustained shift toward configuration over customization. Prior reviews, including IV&V and Salesforce assessments, indicated higher than expected customization in several areas.

Closed High Priority Issue: One (1) high priority issue was closed in the month of February.

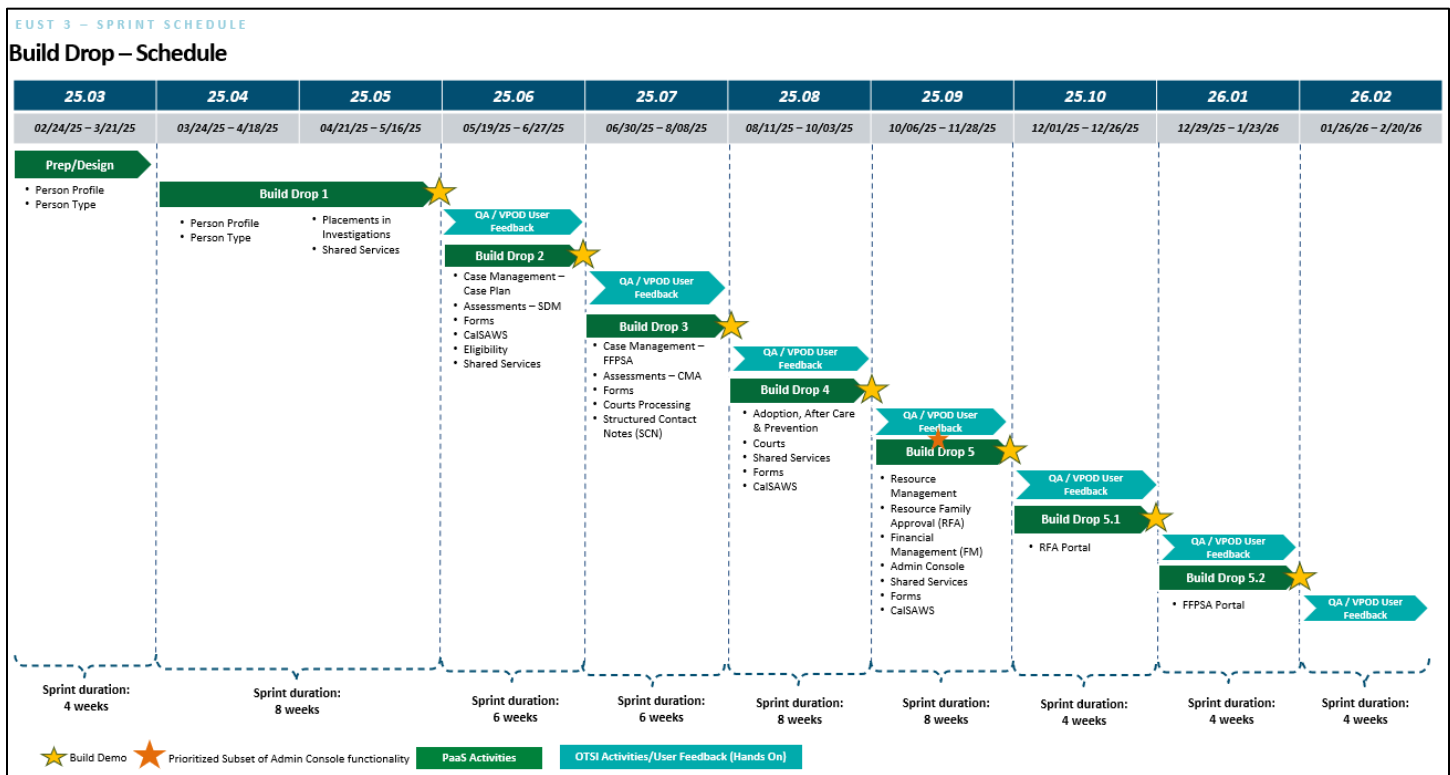
Closed Issue	Impact	Status
RI-350: PaaS SI misalignment creating bottlenecks <u>Description:</u> IV&V observed that nearly 50% of committed stories remain blocked due to unresolved dependencies from prior sprints and persistent test environment issues following the EUST 2. Despite multiple escalations, blockers lack clear ownership and resolution timelines. (Ref: Observation #240, 1.6.12 – PaaS Team Misalignment)	Delayed sprint deliverables, at times lack of clear ownership and resolution of blockers is delaying current and future sprint outcomes.	Underlying concerns are already addressed through other open issues (RI-317 and RI-370) and ongoing QA coordination, and no unique actions remain specific to this item

Appendices

Updated Build Drop Sprint Schedule

To support the delivery of functionality by feature set, the project team revised the Sprint Schedule for the remainder of EUST 3 and realigned user stories into groups referred to as Build Drops. This restructuring is intended to better align the system development lifecycle (SDLC) with the Holistic Design approach for EUST 3. QA testing at the user story level will commence once the complete feature set associated with each Build Drop has been delivered. Business scenario testing is planned to follow the QA phase. The testing scenarios developed for each Build Drop will also serve as inputs for EUST 3, enabling the project teams to better manage EUST preparation in smaller, more achievable increments.

This schedule was later updated to include Build Drop 5.1 and Build Drop 5.2.



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