

Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS)

November 2006

The Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) is an integral part of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's efforts to modernize its eligibility system. TIERS has issued \$400 million in benefits to Texans and will serve as the technological foundation for a more integrated health and human services system.

Cutting-edge technology

TIERS is as modern as today's Internet technology. This browser-based system will integrate the application process for more than 50 health and human services programs. TIERS will replace several outdated systems, including the 30-year-old System of Application, Verification, Eligibility, Referral and Reporting system (SAVERR), with a single integrated system. SAVERR, which was designed in the '60s and launched in the '70s, is built on technology that is out of date and difficult to service.

- The state began a TIERS pilot in June 2003 in eligibility offices in Travis and Hays counties. In November 2006, all Williamson County cases were converted to TIERS.
- At a cost of approximately \$300 million, TIERS does more and costs less than similar systems in other large states. For example, California introduced four separate systems with price tags exceeding \$400 million each, and New York's system cost nearly \$330 million. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Nutrition and Consumer Services Division estimates that Texas has one of the lowest per-case implementation costs in the country.
- The TIERS online query system was the first in the nation to receive permission to connect with the Social Security Administration using a secure Internet line. This allows caseworkers to instantly verify information rather than the overnight verification method used with SAVERR.
- TIERS will link to two dozen government agencies to enhance data collection and save time. These interfaces will allow TIERS to retrieve extensive data, including birth certificates, credit information, number of school-age children in the household, and information indicating if an applicant may have been sanctioned in the past for welfare fraud or may owe child support. The bottom line will be better matching of consumer needs with state programs, less repetitious work for employees – because they will retrieve and enter information just once – and reduced fraud.

More logical system for caseworkers

TIERS leads caseworkers through a process that applies the rules consistently across the state. In the current system, applications and eligibility processes vary from one office to another.

- TIERS leads eligibility employees through the intricacies of finding a full menu of services geared for the consumer's needs, based on the information gathered.
- TIERS gives caseworkers immediate feedback if there are data entry errors or conflicting data. That allows them to get immediate feedback from the consumer. SAVERR doesn't show errors till a day later, which adds to the employee's workload and the consumer's frustration.
- TIERS has the ability to work multiple budgets for additional adults in a household – eliminating the need to do cumbersome budget work by hand.
- TIERS allows employees to “point and click” on a screen, as most modern computer users do. There is no need to learn multiple keystrokes, as with SAVERR and its low-tech cousins.

One state employee, who recently began using TIERS said: “TIERS helps new workers. We don't have to have all the answers. The system has the answers. It helps us get organized, not vice versa.”