



Enhancing state government support for the most vulnerable in society

Department of Human Services in a US State | Government



Business opportunity

When food, shelter and medical care are not available, one's very life is at risk. So, when the US federal government began to wind down universal welfare programs introduced during the pandemic, one state government had to ask more than 1.5 million existing recipients to reapply for benefits to ensure continued aid. Recognizing that its contact centers would struggle to handle the likely rise in call volumes, the state's Department of Human Services (DHS) decided to modernize its operations.

In addition to ensuring that the most vulnerable people would not lose their safety net, optimizing the contact centers was an opportunity to reduce caller waiting times, boost agent efficiency, answer common inquiries faster and introduce new digital services such as chatbots.

Technical challenge

Older technologies and working practices in the state's contact centers had led to unacceptably long waiting times. Citizens would sometimes need to spend as much as 2 hours on the phone before getting the information or services they needed.

Post-call wrap-ups took as long as 25 minutes to complete – versus the industry standard of 45 seconds – which meant that some agents had a daily capacity of only 4 or 5 calls.

Budgetary constraints made it impractical to hire additional agents. Instead, the DHS engaged Kyndryl to help them work smarter by combining new technology with their existing resources.

Our solution

Within a state-wide consolidation and modernization program, Kyndryl helped the DHS to replace their interactive voice response (IVR) and call-center solutions.

Kyndryl is redesigning workflows to route callers more accurately and to save time by pre-identifying them to agents. The nearly 3,900 agents now automatically receive information on past conversations with each caller and can transfer calls to relevant community partners. A new voice signature application from Kyndryl authenticates callers to help combat fraud.

New call management solutions from Kyndryl are helping the DHS to optimize customer experience. Finally, a Kyndryl chatbot will provide fast responses to common inquiries.

What progress looks like

Following the modernization work by Kyndryl, the DHS is resolving citizen issues faster and giving peace of mind to some of the state's most vulnerable people, ensuring that they will continue to receive critically important services.

- Kyndryl helped onboard around 30 community partners to the contact center, broadening the pool of resources.
- Improved reporting and controls give both the public and the legislature better visibility of operations and performance.
- The new platform will support the introduction of generative AI, enabling automated responses to common questions.
- Based on real-world experience Kyndryl anticipates 40% of calls can be resolved before even reaching an agent.
- The state's unemployment and retirement agencies are actively considering a similar solution.

About the Department of Human Services

This Department of Human Services is the state's principal agency for helping citizens achieve well-being and independence by providing economic, nutrition and medical assistance.

Meet the team

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