

Offering More Choices Through The Strategic Use of Technology

The panel of John Atherton, Assistant Secretary, Economic Services Administration; Phyllis Lowe, Director, Division of Employment and Assistance Programs; Arlene Trimble, Program Administrator for Washington Dept. of Social and Health Services Washington; Suzanne Bierman, Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Evaluation and Project Management and Kirsten E. Jumper, Manager, Policy Implementation for Texas Dept. of Human Services presented how technology is being used in the states of Texas and Washington to provide services delivery to their citizens.

John, Phyllis and Arlene represented Washington, the first state to introduce an on line application through the Internet. The system allows full range of services and information available at their Community Services Offices (CSO). The system allows individuals to electronically check their eligibility, including a trial calculation to see if their own income, expenses, and family circumstances potentially qualify them for various programs. The On Line CSO is located at www.wa.gov/dshs.

Suzanne and Kirsten representing Texas, demonstrated State of Texas Assistance and Referral System (STARS). STARS is a self-screening mechanism to determine what human services benefits an individual or family may qualify to receive. The systems screens for eligibility, covers over 50 programs and is used by by 13 Texas Health and Human Services agencies. The goal of STARS is easier access to information about programs, how health and human services can help, and better informed individuals about what to expect from the eligibility process. STARS is intended to be used by the general public, community organizations and other state agencies. STARS is located at www.txstars.net