



IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Oklahoma Human Services Self-Service Portal

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This project proposes that the State of Oklahoma’s Department of Human Services (OKDHS) build a self-service portal for web and mobile devices that allows current (aged 14–17) and aged-out (aged 18–21) foster children to provide, edit, and continually update their contact information directly. This would increase the ability of agencies who provide services to foster youth to reach those youth reliably and directly, thereby increasing their usage of other government services.

This Implementation Plan provides an overview of how Oklahoma state agencies could build such an app, accompanied by a proposed budget for the project. For more information on this proposal, please see our policy memo [here](#).

HOW THE APP WORKS

1. Caseworkers or other appropriate OKDHS staff members would be responsible for the initial account creation in the portal for foster youth. OKDHS personnel have access to current and vital information, such as case numbers, to verify the information before a portal account is created. They can also prevent duplicate accounts from being created.
2. Once the initial account has been created, a one-time code (OTC) is generated by the portal. Youth are given the code in-person or via phone by their case worker or other OKDHS team members.
3. Using the one-time code, youth log in and complete account setup with their updated email addresses, phone numbers, mailing addresses, and (optionally) social media accounts, which can serve as an alternative contact method.

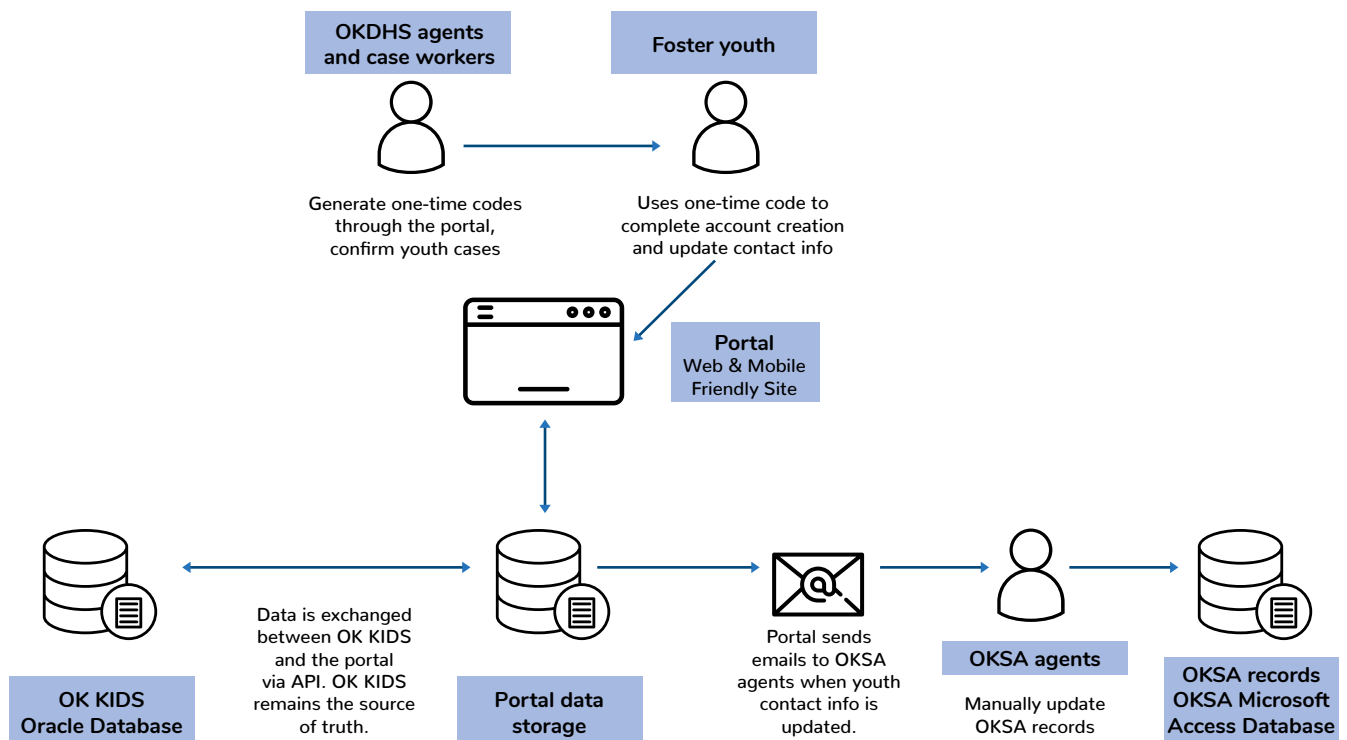
Role-Based Functionality

The portal permits and restricts access to certain functions depending on the type of role in the portal system. See below for examples of portal roles and the associated functions needed.

Role	Functions Needed
<p>System Administrator A member of the business systems team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create accounts for OKDHS workers; ▶ Remove / resolve duplicate records; ▶ Disable accounts for terminated OKDHS members; and ▶ General data and systems maintenance.
<p>Case Workers and Other DHS Employees DHS and Oklahoma Successful Adulthood (OKSA) employees who interact directly with youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create youth accounts based on case data in OK KIDS, the data-base used to store foster youth case information; ▶ Create one-time codes; ▶ Create, read, update, and delete contact info; and ▶ Reset passwords and help youth recover locked-out accounts.
<p>Foster Youth Active youth within Oklahoma (OK) foster care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Complete account creation using one-time codes; and ▶ View and edit their own contact information.

TECHNICAL COMPONENTS AND DATA FLOW

The diagram below illustrates the expected components of the portal and the data flow between the portal, OKDHS KIDS, and OKSA Access systems.¹ The goal is to have a technically simple and low-cost system that meets the needs of OKDHS and foster youth, taking into account the expected volume of records, how often the records would be accessed, and the availability of the OKDHS team members.



The portal contains its own lightweight storage solution to house local data. This is suggested so that the portal can perform quickly. The portal's storage is not expected to be a replacement for OK KIDS. OK KIDS will continue to be the main source of data for OKDHS while youth are in care.

The OKSA database will serve as the canonical data repository for youth who have aged out of care.

The portal should not be integrated directly with the OKSA Microsoft Access database. Updates to youth contact information will be sent by the portal to OKSA team members via email. OKSA team members would then manually update the Access database. Based on the expected volume of youth

records (approximately 600 children age out of the foster care system annually²) and frequency of updates (2 times per year), this manual solution is manageable and more cost-effective than a technical integration.

We are not recommending any kind of technical integration for deduplication of accounts or address validation. Based on the expected volume, these functions can be managed through manual processes.

Data Privacy and Security

The following steps and measures are recommended to ensure the personal information of foster youth is protected.

- ▶ Enable accounts with role-based permissions as described above to ensure that data is only accessible by appropriate, authorized individuals.
- ▶ Incorporate data encryption and account-based access for data storage.
- ▶ Require time-limited one-time codes for account creation. If the code expires, a new code can be generated by OKDHS personnel.
 - ▶ The use of a one-time code, provided directly to the youth (either in-person or over the phone), is intended to prevent unauthorized individuals from impersonating youth at the time of account creation, thereby gaining access to sensitive contact information such as home address.
 - ▶ One-time codes can also be used to unlock and reset accounts that become locked if/when too many login attempts are made with incorrect email and password combinations, or if the email and password combination is forgotten.
 - ▶ The one-time code is not a form of two-factor authentication (2FA), a method commonly used by banks and other institutions to verify identity. 2FA usually requires a consistent phone number or email address to be used for verification. Based on our interviews with OKDHS team members, this information for foster youth changes frequently and would make 2FA unreliable.

This solution does not run afoul of child data privacy laws such as the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA) because those regulations apply to commercial entities, not government entities.

PROMOTION

Based on our research, a social media campaign is the best way to reach youth to educate them about this portal and remind them to keep their contact information up to date. There are numerous examples of effective campaigns, such as the “[Check for Us](#)” campaign run by [Think Of Us](#), which connected over 30,000 current and former foster youth with COVID relief funds. The campaign produced a social media and email [outreach toolkit](#) that could be repurposed.

The portal should also be promoted during OKDHS and OKSA in-person events, which are an opportunity to encourage youth to create accounts. Lastly, the outreach to youth from trusted connections (such as biological connections, foster peers, and community organizations) to raise awareness about the portal is vital to the program’s success.

OPERATIONS

Onboarding

It is recommended that training for new and existing team members be led by the product owners of the chosen business system. Product owners have the required knowledge of system functions and limitations, along with experience with OKDHS members to better understand the cultural norms for the rollout of new products. The product owners can document the workflows for each role noted above, with step-by-step guides and illustrations for each outcome.

Data and Account Management

Maintenance of records and accounts will take some additional time from OKDHS and OKSA team members. See the table below for a summary of tasks required for data and account management, and a proposal for who would be responsible for each task.

Task	Owner	Expected Load
<i>Respond to portal emails and update OKSA Access database</i>	<i>Appropriately permissioned OKSA team members</i>	<i>1-2 hours per week</i>
<i>Periodic clean up of database to remove duplicate records and correct permissions</i>	<i>Systems administrator or OKDHS product owner</i>	<i>1-2 hours per month</i>
<i>Create accounts and generate one-time codes for youth</i>	<i>Appropriately permissioned DHS or OKSA team members</i>	<i>1-2 hours per month per caseworker</i>

BUDGETS AND FUNDING

We estimate that this proposal will cost OKDHS \$32,000 to develop and \$78,000 in annual operational costs. The annual operational costs includes costs for incentives, maintenance, and promotion. Click here for the full [budget line item breakdown](#).

Development

We estimate that the design and development of the portal will require 2 weeks of time from an experienced UI/UX designer and 4 weeks of time from a mid-career/senior web developer. According to the ceiling rates applicable to [GSA's Multiple Award Schedules](#), the average rate for senior web developers and UI/UX designers is \$134 per hour. Using this number, the estimated cost for the portal development is \$32,160 per year.

Incentives

If gift cards are used as the primary incentive, the estimated budget for incentives would be \$50,000 per year (~1,000 foster youth making 2 updates per year). However, funding for incentives can be found through corporate sponsors and foundations such as the [Hilton Foundation](#) or the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). This not only decreases out-of-pocket expenses for the program but also allows for increased promotion of the program through these sponsors. Additional funding could be sourced through humanitarian and nonprofit organizations such as [Start Small](#).

Promotions

Creation of social media campaigns can be done through in-house resources at OKSA, with additional support from nonprofit partners such as [Think Of Us](#).

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Creating a self-service portal is an important step in the development of digital services needed for foster youth as they transition into adulthood. Examples of additional improvements include:

- ▶ Digitization of the [youth-to-adult transition plan](#), a project covered by the other team on this prompt. This project will create a centralized digital portal for foster youth who are aging out so they can keep track of events youth should prepare for, manage documents to collect, and connect with resources available to them. For more information about their proposal, please see their memo [here](#).
- ▶ Enabling access to vital documents (e.g., birth certificates, Social Security cards, etc.) via a digital file locker, similar to the existing [OnBase file cabinet](#), which was deployed and connected to OK KIDS as part of a previous initiative.
- ▶ Providing access to events and seminars on preparing for higher education, workforce development and training, and transitioning into successful adulthood.
- ▶ Creating channels for communication with peers, case workers, and program leaders following separation from the foster youth program.

ENDNOTES

1 The OK KIDS database is an Oracle database maintained by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and is the primary database used to manage data about children in foster care in Oklahoma. The database contains information on a child through the age of 18, including any available contact information, placement information, and more. The Oklahoma Successful Adulthood Program (OKSA) database, or OKSA's database, is a Microsoft Access database that contains contact information for late-stage and aged-out foster youth for the purposes of connecting them with resources as they transition out of the system.

2 Oklahoma Human Services. "Adoption Fact Sheet." Retrieved March 2023. <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/adoption/adoptfacs.html>.

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