

Case Study:

How Arizona Built an Online Application Portal to Reduce Client and Case Manager Burden

In 2012, the Arizona Department of Health Services Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) sought feedback from clients about their eligibility experiences. They found that clients were frustrated about the need to complete two separate—but nearly identical—paper applications for enrollment into RWHAP Part A and RWHAP Part B AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).

In response, the Arizona RWHAP Part A and Part B compared their applications and determined that the core portions of the application (i.e., eligibility requirements and their accepted documentation) were the same. Upon this realization, they worked together to combine their applications into a single, paper-based form in 2015. The team collaborated with a vendor (TriYoung) to move to an online system that they launched in 2017. Together, they created RWISE (Ryan White Integrated Statewide Eligibility), a web-based system that streamlines the client eligibility, enrollment, and service tracking processes for RWHAP recipients. Implementing RWISE allows all staff across the jurisdiction to access a single, unified system with a common application.

Building a Portal for Online Applications

Arizona Department of Health Services further streamlined their eligibility process by creating a client-facing portal. The information technology (IT) department at Arizona Department of Health Services built the custom portal to allow clients to directly access and submit their application for RWHAP services and eligibility determination documents into one streamlined, online application.

Building the portal took six years from start to finish. In the first 18 months of the process, the team made key decisions about the portal's design and function to set the stage for its development. Arizona Department of Health Services' IT team led portal development and onboarded two coders (one newly hired) and a project manager for the project. It also took about 24 months to reconcile different data sharing rules and finalize all data sharing agreements. Once development began and gained momentum, the team was able to make adjustments and resolve issues as they arose, such as disagreements about the types of documents to accept as proof of income, through a series of standing meetings for both

RWHAP Parts. When there was no clear path to complete alignment between parts on a certain decision, staff would acknowledge these differences and find common ground.

The Arizona Department of Health Services kept clients and case managers at the center of their process. Throughout development, they held several regular, public-facing meetings, where clients and case managers received updates on the portal development and could provide feedback. They also presented the portal at a joint meeting with the RWHAP Part A planning council and a statewide advisory group for their input. Additionally, prior to launching the portal, Arizona piloted it with RWHAP Part A central eligibility office staff and two different RWHAP Part B contractors who tested and helped fix issues.

Arizona Department of Health Services built the portal to be:

- **Easy to use.** The application maintains the familiar layout of the paper form while being optimized for desktop and mobile use. In addition, clients can take pictures of their documents (like proof of residency) and upload them to the portal.
- **Mobile-friendly.** The portal is optimized for mobile phones, which adjusts the layout automatically to fit within a smartphone screen. This makes it easier for clients to use on the go and when they don't have access to a computer.
- **Responsive to input.** Depending on what information clients enter in the system, the portal will ask follow-up questions. For example, if a client notes that they're married and don't have health care coverage in the application, the portal will ask them, "Can you be covered by your spouse's health care coverage?"
- **Supplemented by support.** The portal has several options for assistance, including in-app support services and additional video tutorials.

Clients are sent an email or a letter through the mail with an invitation to access the portal, a brief description of the convenience it offers, and a link to sign up. Clients can engage with the system to their level of comfort and have many resources for help available. In other cases, case managers introduce the portal to clients during a regularly scheduled visit and are on hand to provide the amount of assistance needed to complete the application. While the portal was designed to be accessible even for clients with limited digital literacy, paper applications remain available for those who prefer them.

Example page for the Arizona client portal

Client Summary: AZ1016144



First Name Test

Birth Date 3/4/1960

Agency Care Directions

Middle Name

Gender Male

Last Name Client

Sex At Birth Male

Eligibility Status Not Eligible - Disenroll

Effective Date 8/7/2024

End Date 8/7/2024

Preferred language: English

Client Data

Applications

Client Record Notes

Lab Upload

Client Lab Upload

* Only 1 document can be uploaded

Click here to upload document and select save.



* Lab Type

Select

* Test Operator

Select

* Value

Enter VL/CD4 Value

* Draw/Collection Date

MM/DD/YYYY

Result Date

MM/DD/YYYY

Report Date

MM/DD/YYYY

+ Additional Lab

Save

Show 10 entries

Search:

Lab Type

Value

Draw/Collection Date

Result Date

Report Date

FileName & Download

Edit or Delete

No data available in table

Showing 0 to 0 of 0 entries

Previous

Next

Streamlining Eligibility for Clients and Case Managers

Client feedback on the portal has been almost unanimously positive. The portal has streamlined the application process for both clients and case managers. Clients now have the option to independently complete a single application without traveling or scheduling appointments. The portal also freed up eligibility staff to work on making processes more efficient so that they can focus on other ways to better engage clients in care. For example, around four out of 10 RWHAP clients in Maricopa County weren't submitting their documents on time to confirm their RWHAP eligibility. Arizona Department of Health Services staff can now work on engaging those clients sooner so that they don't lose access to services. Furthermore, they can spend more time tracking down clients that may be at risk of falling out of care; by identifying returned mail, they are able to more quickly locate clients who have moved to get them back into the clinic. Case managers are also able to use the saved time to help clients access other basic needs like assistance with

transportation and housing.

“It’s allowed eligibility [staff] to focus on eligibility,” said Jimmy Borders, ADAP Medication Access Manager at Arizona Department of Health Services. “It’s taken the case managers out of most of the paperwork, so it’s made it better. It’s definitely better than when I started, and we had a fax machine that never stopped.”

Planning for the Future

The Arizona Department of Health Services is leveraging additional partnerships to confirm clients’ eligibility information. They recently signed a contract with Equifax, a consumer credit reporting agency, that enables them to cross-check the income data that clients report with what is on file in Equifax’s database. Arizona’s Medicaid program has also been using Equifax data for several years to confirm income data. The Arizona Department of Health Services is also exploring an application programming interface (API) to cross-check client residency information with Arizona’s motor vehicle authority. This API would enable automatic residency verification. When a client updates their address with the motor vehicle authority, it would automatically update in RWHAP as well, benefiting both agencies. Through exploring these and other opportunities, Arizona Department of Health Services continues planning for the future by maintaining an adaptable system that can respond to eligibility updates or other data sharing opportunities.