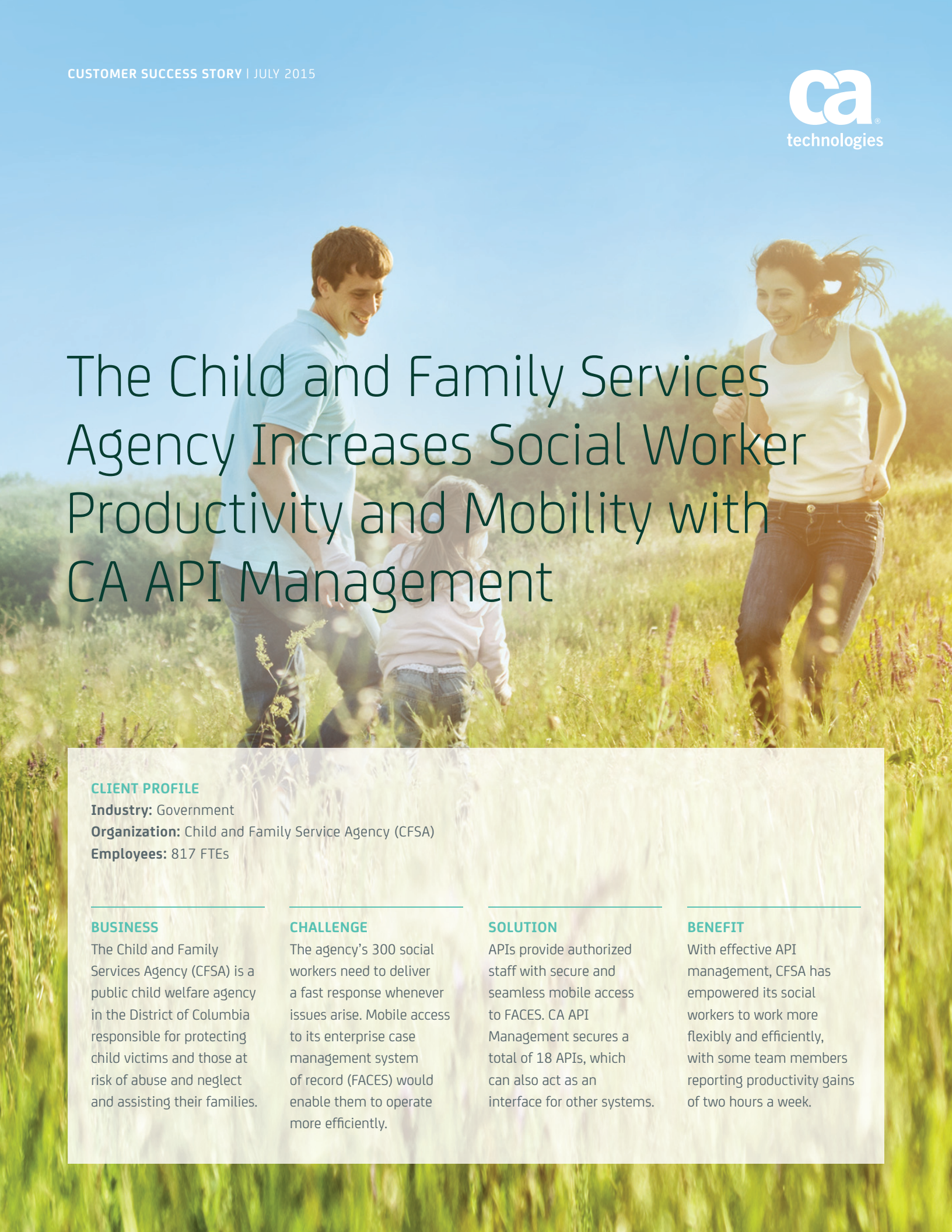




The Child and Family Services Agency Increases Social Worker Productivity and Mobility with CA API Management

CLIENT PROFILE

Industry: Government

Organization: Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA)

Employees: 817 FTEs

BUSINESS

The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is a public child welfare agency in the District of Columbia responsible for protecting child victims and those at risk of abuse and neglect and assisting their families.

CHALLENGE

The agency's 300 social workers need to deliver a fast response whenever issues arise. Mobile access to its enterprise case management system of record (FACES) would enable them to operate more efficiently.

SOLUTION

APIs provide authorized staff with secure and seamless mobile access to FACES. CA API Management secures a total of 18 APIs, which can also act as an interface for other systems.

BENEFIT

With effective API management, CFSA has empowered its social workers to work more flexibly and efficiently, with some team members reporting productivity gains of two hours a week.

Business

Protecting vulnerable children

Child victims and those at risk of abuse and neglect in the District of Columbia depend on the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to ensure their safety and well-being.

CFSA's goal is to improve the outcomes for the children, youths and families it supports. This includes investigating reports of abuse and neglect, providing health, mental and education services as well as accelerating the process for adoption or reintegrating a child into their family.

The public child welfare agency's 815 staff members, including 300 case carrying social workers, are located in six offices throughout the District to ensure a fast response when issues arise and to be in close proximity to the families being served.

When an allegation is made investigations have to be initiated or completed within 48 hours, and in some cases immediately.

Challenge

Empowering social workers through mobility

In 2014, the agency developed a vision of a mobile workforce and embarked on an IT modernization program focused on not only making IT nimble but also helping social workers operate more efficiently.

The agency's IT department had an end goal of creating a more mobile workforce through devices equipped with native apps. With secure access to case management data and electronic forms on their mobile devices social workers would be able to access digital forms remotely rather than having to visit an office to print a copy. This would free them up to spend more time helping vulnerable children and their families.

The modernization program focused on the agency's enterprise case management system of record (FACES), a state-wide automated child information system. CFSA wanted to unlock additional value from this critical system, but its rich web interface was too complex for mobile devices.

Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) provided the answer to the agency's challenge. APIs would enable authorized staff to access or send information to the enterprise case management system whatever their end point – not just for today's mobile devices, but also into the future.

CFSA realized APIs would also reduce the time-to-market for developing new forms and applications by providing a consistent and simplified way for third-party contractors to understand how to interface with the ECMS.

But security and data privacy were paramount and CFSA needed to ensure its APIs were adequately protected. After investigating best practice approaches, it became clear that CFSA needed to deploy an established API management platform instead of writing complex custom code.

Solution

Providing secure access to critical data and apps with effective API management

The agency selected CA API Management because it met its robust requirements. CA Services assisted with the implementation, which took place in October 2014. The first mobile application was rolled out to the agency's social workers the same month.

Today CA API Management secures a total of 18 APIs. The APIs not only enable secure mobile access to the enterprise case management system; they also act as an interface for cloud systems, such as a third-party electronic forms system.

Details about each API are published through CA API Developer Portal, providing a consistent means for external developers to access those APIs, learn how to use them, and generate the code necessary to implement those APIs in their applications.

CA API Management ensures that end users get secured, seamless access to the functionality they need, with the UX they expect from their device.

CA Mobile API Gateway provides the API security layer along with orchestration features. When, for example, a social worker logs into an app on their mobile device a token is requested from an identity management system, then a user token and developer app key are added to the API for authentication by the mobile gateway before making the API through a proxy. The information requested is then sent back to the app on the user's device.

The agency's APIs don't just facilitate data access; they also simplify core processes. For example, one API extracts foster care information so that when a social worker fills in a form this data is automatically populated.

As part of its regulatory obligations, CFSA must report to government on its security approach and show that its information is protected. CA API Portal provides that insight for its APIs.

With CA API Developer Portal, the agency can demonstrate who has been granted access to the case management system APIs from a mobile device and pull up the transaction history. The report is high fidelity as it is generated by the system, which is important for meeting auditory requirements.

Benefit

Improving child welfare outcomes through mobility

Thanks to CA API Management, CFSA has provided its social workers with the mobile case management application they need to deliver timely child protection services.

If a social worker receives an urgent request for help they can log into the app and see the reason for referral, previous history and any other information in the enterprise case management system.

With CA API Management, CFSA accelerated its time-to-market

The IT team can also be more responsive to the agency's evolving needs. New functionality that previously might have taken days or even weeks to complete can now be turned around in a matter of hours.

API Academy ensures the team keeps abreast of API best practice to continue to evolve apps portfolio and tap into the value of existing systems.

By using APIs as part of its modernization agenda, CFSA has been able to:

- Enhance the services it delivers to its vulnerable clients
- Increase productivity; with some social workers reporting gains of around two hours a week
- Safeguard the privacy of data around vulnerable children.

With CA API Management, CFSA accelerated its time-to-market for the new apps, helping social workers better serve the vulnerable children of the District of Columbia.



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