



success stories

Client: Mecklenburg County
Department of Social Services
Partner: Docufree

Challenges

Mecklenburg DSS provides public assistance to 223,512 residents by processing 8,846 applications and 18,291 re-certifications each month.

In 2009, Mecklenburg DSS case workers began single-page, document imaging using lightweight, low-capacity scanners due to an initially limited financial investment in scanning technology. These scanners were placed strategically throughout office buildings to allow access for multiple users. Unfortunately, the case workers were buried in over 900 applications every day with anywhere from 35-100 pages per application file. The short supply of scanners and the growing demand for scanning due to the high volume of work created a “perfect storm” of technology, human resource, financial, and customer service problems, including scanner breakdowns, case workers diverted from core service provision, additional paid overtime for case workers to close the backlog of applications, and increasing complaints from customers without their public assistance benefits.

To compensate for this perfect storm of challenges, Mecklenburg DSS expended more financial resources to expand document imaging to the mail room in an effort to assist case workers and close the supply gap for scanners.

“Docufree helped us Streamline our processes, enabling our team to provide better service to our customers”

Men Tchaas Ari, Deputy Department Director Adult and Economic Services Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

However, the use of single-page scanning with low-capacity scanners could not keep up with demand due to the volume spikes that occurred each month. On average each month, mailroom staff only had the capacity to capture 50% of the incoming client mail. These spikes created a backlog of mail, which ensured that client applications and supporting documents could not get routed electronically to the appropriate case worker in a timely fashion. Oftentimes, incoming client mail took weeks to get to the appropriate case worker in order for them to make critical business decisions such as approving or denying specific benefits to residents in need.

Typically, the incoming client mail contains confidential case information. Thus, client mail records must be physically secure to maintain client privacy. Due to the growing backlog of client mail, case workers constantly entered the mail room to attempt to locate the necessary documents to process their clients’ applications, which caused client mail records to be difficult to find. The lack of physical security created by the growing backlog exacerbated the existing problems.

Solution

The Docufree Business Process Outsourced Solution (BPO): Docufree receives incoming mail from Mecklenburg DSS daily as well as secure uploads of their

multiple database files containing client demographic information. Docufree prepares each case file for scanning, identifies the critical document types (over 100 total doc types), collects available demographic info, digitally captures the case file data at the highest quality level, perform 100% quality control on all scanned data, data mines the available demographic info from the case file with the county databases, and securely delivers the data to be uploaded to the county’s OnBase document management software within 24 hours.

Docufree has assigned a specific production team to manage each phase of the BPO process to maintain continuity and quality, while gaining efficiency. The team is staggered in 2 shifts to manage volume fluctuations within the project. Outsourcing the scanning and data mining process to Docufree allows Mecklenburg DSS the flexibility to grow without adding staff and infrastructure. Docufree processes and uploads 100% of what is picked up within a 24 hour period. The chain of custody is secure. No more mail being hand delivered to case worker’s office. Expedited scanning is the core business of Docufree. Data mining process ensures that each piece of mail is securely routed to each case worker within 24 hrs. Docufree gives Mecklenburg DSS Unlimited Scanning Capacity.



“Docufree has helped us realize a greater level of accountability with our mail services, while freeing up our resources to tackle other pressing projects within the department”

**- Audrea Caesar,
Business Affairs Mgr.**

About Docufree

Docufree is a business process services provider of large-volume document scanning, cloud-based document management, and intelligent process automation. Since 1999, Docufree has securely managed and modernized how people and the systems they use every day interact with data and each other, driving measurable outcomes for both clients and their customers—from providing an on-ramp to digital transformation to automated invoice processing, human resources and customer communications.

About Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

Programs and services provided by the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services are funded through federal, state and county revenues, in addition to grants and other donations, to meet the community's priorities as defined by the Board of County Commissioners.

Mecklenburg County Social Services Mission:
To provide economic and social services to sustain and/or improve the quality of life for Mecklenburg County citizens

Mecklenburg County Social Services Vision:
To be an involved and recognized leader in human services, valued by our stakeholders because of our needs-based customer focus in the delivery of services. We will help create a resilient community by proactively investing in our employees, operations and services, and by developing impactful relationships for the benefit of our customers.

Key Benefits:

- Decreased document processing time from two weeks to 24 hours
- Redirected \$322,455 in annual labor costs to direct client services
- Saved \$71,236 in annual labor and paper supply costs
- Reclaimed 1,248 square feet of storage space to be used for office space
- Ensure security of documents and data from receipt through delivery
- Reduced customer complaints by 23%
- Improved productivity by 139%
- Reduced requests for hard copy files from case workers by 37%