



**Division of Substance Abuse Services**

### Prospectus

**Contact:**

**Director**

**Patrick Fleming**

**Tel (801)468-2025**

**E-mail:**

**pffleming@slco.org**

**Public Relations**

**Boyd Bastian**

**Tel (801)468-2098**

**Cell (801)386-6780**

**E-mail:**

**bbastian@slco.org**

**Salt Lake County  
Substance Abuse Services**

Salt Lake County  
Government Center  
2001 South State Street S2300  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84190-1001

**Hours:** 8 am - 5 pm  
**Phone:** 801-468-2009  
**Fax:** 801-468-2006

[www.slcosubstanceabuse.org](http://www.slcosubstanceabuse.org)

# Public Software Collaborative

## A Partnership of Public Agencies

### Summary

The Public Software Collaborative is a partnership of public agencies working together in order to re-use public software and reduce the expense of software development.

### Background

Publicly funded substance abuse and mental health services, as well as many other services, are delivered through State and County-based systems within the United States. Their overall mission is to assure that high-quality, competently managed services are delivered in a

manner that guarantees accountability to local, state and federally elected officials and to the public at large. Accountability demands accurate and cost-effective management information systems for administrative and electronic health records (EHR). Col-



**The Public Software Toolbox allows for the members of the collaborative to share software.**

laboration among agencies to share technology and costs enhances both accuracy and cost effectiveness.

### Public Software Toolbox Areas of Use

- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health
- Public Health
- Disability Services
- Child Welfare
- Recording
- Elections
- Jail/Offender Management

## Looking Toward the Future

### Vision

The collaborative seeks to provide a framework for government agencies to share their resources in the enhancement of their systems and to attract new users interested in developing software applications to contribute to the "public software toolbox".

In support of this vision, the collaborative aims to share software packages

and place them in a common "tool box". These shared resources will make improvements to software packages currently in use, as well as allow expansion of the tools in the box beyond substance abuse and mental health to other related public functions such as jail management, state hospitals or other county or state services.

The focus of the development will be on web-based

applications which will allow for universal access. The entire process will be supported by the concept of "open ownership" so that all partners have comprehensive access to and equal ownership of software that is developed through the collaborative.

The collaborative be an open forum for implementation and change processes for consistency in software versions.



Utah participates in WITS—  
Web Infrastructure for Treatment Services

***“Public agencies working together in order to re-use public software and reduce the expense of software development”***



**One Tool, Many Functions**

The Public Software Collaborative is similar to this multi-headed screwdriver; one tool with many functions. Each member of the Collaborative is able to use existing tools and, in turn, contribute tools that they have developed for their own use.

**WITS\*—A Collaborative Case Study**

\*Web Infrastructure for Treatment Services

The WITS project facilitates collaboration among State Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies. Its focus is sharing centrally-hosted web applications that support substance abuse treatment providers offering services supported with State and federal money.

The strategy to promote the collaboration includes creating a web-based computing environment to enable States and the providers they support to share software application modules supporting substance abuse treatment information management.

States participating in the collaboration effort may modify WITS in different ways, including the configuration that is required to make it work for a State’s system.

Through the first few months of the WITS collaborative, participating members have gained many valuable insights into the continuing viability of this project, and extend the lessons learned onto the Public Software Collaborative as a whole.

**Lessons Learned**

The pilot members of the Collaborative listed the following key findings during their testing:

- Stakeholder involvement is crucial
- Significant time and resource commitment
- Pilot testing is helpful
- On-site development is needed
- Local user documentation
- On-going training required
- Data understanding
- Implementation
- Tiered technical support is needed
- Active change management

**Working Together Benefits Each Member**

- Reduced administrative overhead of development and maintenance.
- Reduction of licensing costs of proprietary software.
- Allows members to keep their software “current” while not having to make major out-

- lays for new versions.
- Assists members in maintaining compliance with federal regulations
- Offers potential for continuous quality improvements at the clinical and administrative levels through open discussion and coop-

- erative development of standards.
- Eases procurement and contract issues that delay development
- Offers the opportunity for members of the collaborative, as a block, to report to policy makers on areas such as: outcomes

**Becoming Part of the Collaborative**

To date, there are 5 counties and 7 states that participate in the Public Software Collaborative. Work between these organiza-

tions has already begun. The potential time and cost savings from this collaborative are enormous.

To learn more and become a part of the collaborative, please contact your NACO representative.