

# Santa Cruz County Human Services Department

The Employment and Benefit Services Division of the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department uses Kofax solutions to streamline the capture and processing of hundreds of thousands of case-related documents. By speeding digitization processes from weeks to one business day, the agency can put vital information in the hands of caseworkers faster than ever before. Improved efficiency has helped the agency handle a 37% increase in workload, while allowing individual staff to process more documents in less time.

## Challenge

The Employment and Benefit Services Division of the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department oversees a range of assistance programs for low-income adults and families, including food assistance, job training, health insurance, and subsidized child care.

Every year, the Employment and Benefit Services Division handles tens of thousands of financial assistance cases. For years the organization relied on paper-based methods to manage and store case-related information. As its collections of paper files grew over time, teams found it increasingly difficult to access and work with this information.

"There is a lot of cross-sharing of information in the Human Services Department as staff within and across divisions frequently collaborate on cases," said Todd Estabrooks, Senior Departmental Information Systems Analyst at Santa Cruz County. "And, as many of our clients have a long history with us, we work with some very extensive case files.

"In the past, it took significant time and effort for our people to track down the documents they needed, before they even got started on their actual work. We knew there had to be a better way to manage information, one that would allow staff to work more productively."

## Meet Santa Cruz County Human Services Department

The Human Services Department offers a wide range of programs and services to the Santa Cruz County community. The department provides safety net services to meet the basic needs of individuals and families, ensures the protection of children, the elderly and dependent adults, and provides job search assistance and job training opportunities.

### Products in use:

Kofax Capture™

Kofax Transformation™

Kofax VirtualReScan® Elite

**Focus:** Customer onboarding

**Partner:** Western Integrated Systems

## Solution

With its caseload growing—and budget pressures intensifying—the Employment and Benefit Services Division urgently needed to find ways to do more with less. In 2006, this led the agency to take first steps towards digitization, introducing Kofax Capture solutions to transform mountains of paper files into electronic content.

The move to digital content made it much quicker and easier for caseworkers to access the information they needed. With business volumes continuing to grow, in 2013 the Employment and Benefit Services Division decided to go a step further, redesigning capture processes and introducing advanced document imaging and classification capabilities.

"Our workload was so heavy that imaging technicians regularly had a two to three week backlog of case files to scan," Estabrooks recalled. "We decided that instead of operating a central scanning center, it would be more efficient to capture all documents at their point of entry—whether they were brought in by a client, sent by mail or faxed to us. We also looked to streamline back-end processes in order to shorten the time that elapsed between receiving original documents and scanning and entering them into our electronic repository."

The Employment and Benefit Services Division introduced Kofax VirtualReScan (VRS) Elite to improve the quality of scanned document images. The solution dynamically evaluates each page and automatically applies the relevant image-quality enhancements and corrections, enabling better recognition and extraction rates to increase scanning accuracy.

The agency also selected Kofax Transformation™ to enhance its existing Capture environment with automatic document classification, page separation and data validation capabilities. Western Integrated Systems, a Kofax Platinum Partner, provided support as the Employment and Benefit Services Division worked to design its new imaging process, and configure the Transformation solution.

"Western Integrated Systems has proven to be a valuable partner," Estabrooks said. "In addition to helping with our initial Kofax Transformation deployment, the team provides ongoing guidance and technical support. They have always been readily available to assist when we have questions or run into any roadblocks."

Today the Employment and Benefit Services Division has replaced manual document sorting, filing, and data-entry processes with a highly automated and efficient approach to information capture and processing. On average, the agency processes between 20,000 to 30,000 document pages a week using Kofax solutions.

"We have trained Transformation to automatically recognize around 400 different types of forms used in connection with County and State assistance programs," Estabrooks said. "On top of that, the solution also recognizes some 600 different document types, such as birth certificates, tax forms, drivers licenses, and insurance cards."

*"We worked to refine and customize the Kofax solutions so that they really fit with our unique ways of working, and we have been very impressed by the degree of sophistication and flexibility offered by Kofax Transformation in particular."*

**Todd Estabrooks**

Senior Departmental Information Systems Analyst, Santa Cruz County

*"With Kofax solutions automating many processes, our people can focus on higher-value tasks, helping us optimize operations and boosting employee satisfaction."*

**Todd Estabrooks**

"Everyone in the agency, from imaging technicians to caseworkers, loves the new model. It took some time for us to get to where we are today. We worked to refine and customize the Kofax solutions so that they really fit with our unique ways of working, and we have been very impressed by the degree of sophistication and flexibility offered by Kofax Transformation in particular."

*"Today, the majority of files pass through our system with minimal human intervention. We have achieved full straight-through processing for 30 percent of all documents, while another 50 percent go through with minimal touch."*

**Todd Estabrooks**

Senior Departmental Information Systems Analyst, Santa Cruz County

*"As a government agency, we are constantly being asked to do more with less. Kofax solutions play a vital role in helping us to achieve this—allowing our teams to work more efficiently to keep costs down while delivering better service to citizens."*

**Todd Estabrooks**

## Results

With an upgraded document imaging model in place, the Employment and Benefit Services Division at Santa Cruz County's Human Services Department can capture and process information more efficiently and accurately than ever before.

"Relying on manual document preparation and classification processes inevitably introduces a certain degree of error. By automating these processes, we have considerably improved the accuracy and quality of document images," Estabrooks said. "Today the majority of files pass through our system with minimal human intervention. We have achieved full straight-through processing for 30 percent of all documents, while another 50 percent go through with minimal touch."

"Now our imaging team spends most of their time verifying information as it enters our system, instead of dealing with tedious document sorting, separation and classification work. With Kofax solutions automating many processes, our people can focus on higher-value tasks, helping us optimize operations and boosting employee satisfaction."

The efficiency gains have had a major impact on document processing times, allowing the Employment and Benefit Services Division to stay on top of a rising workload and help caseworkers serve clients more effectively.

"In the past, it could take two to three weeks for us to scan documents and get them into our system. Today, there is no more than one business day of delay between our receiving a document and entering it into our electronic repository," Estabrooks added. "The result is that our caseworkers have near-immediate access to the information they need. This has eliminated delays in processing emergency needs cases, and prevented the accidental loss or destruction of documents."

"Our client base and business volumes are growing all the time. Whereas in the past it was a challenge to keep pace with this growth, with Kofax solutions we can stay one step ahead. Since we moved to the new imaging model in 2013 we have been able to absorb a 37 percent increase in imaging workload while keeping staff levels completely flat. As a government agency, we are constantly being asked to do more with less. Kofax solutions play a vital role in helping us to achieve this—allowing our teams to work more efficiently to keep costs down while delivering better service to citizens."

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