accenture | **CalSAWS**

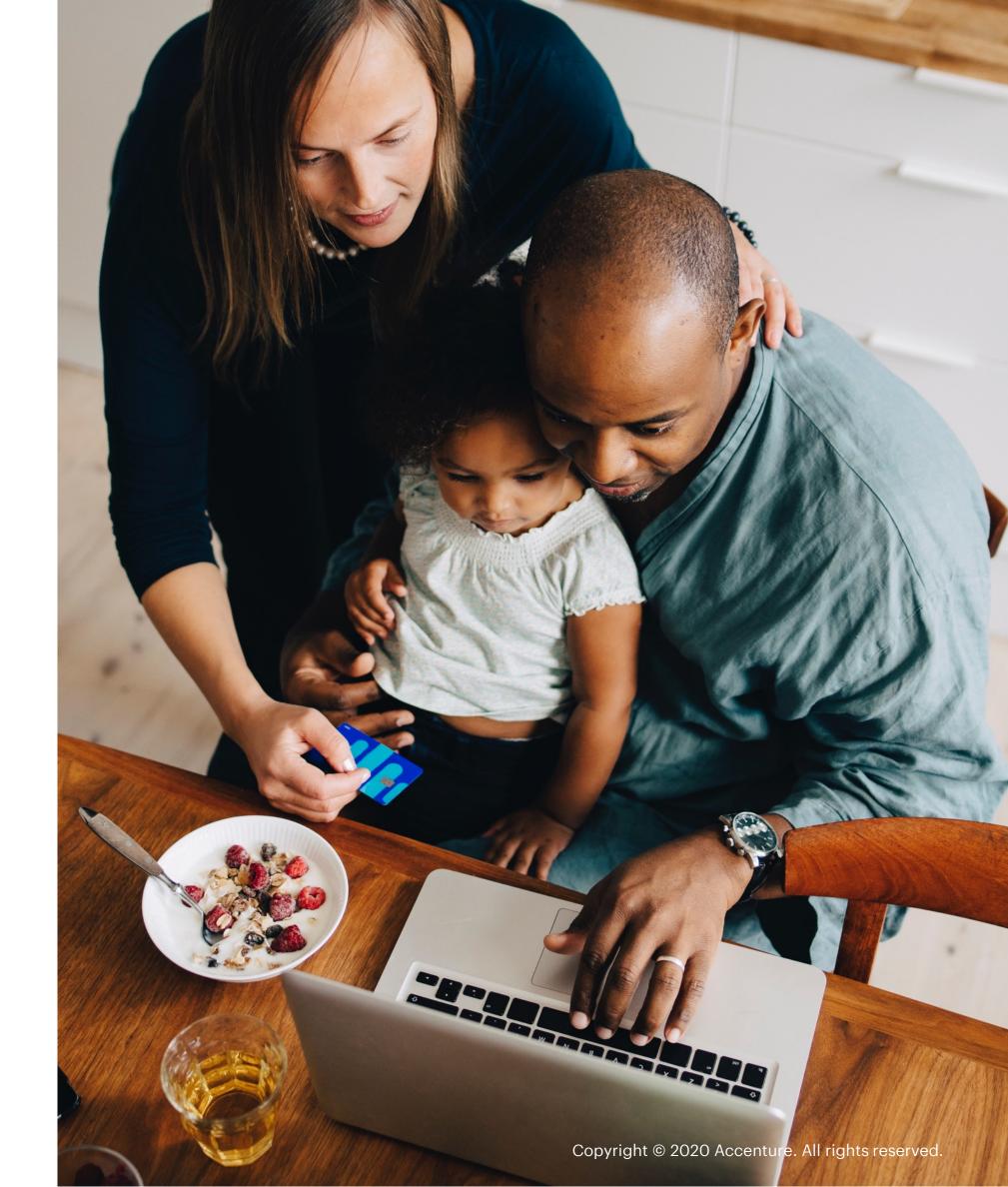# CalSAWS takes first step in cloud journey

CHALLENGE

In 2023, California is slated to complete a single, cloud-based system – known as California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) – to support integrated eligibility statewide.

California's 58 counties will count on CalSAWS when determining who's eligible to receive assistance in the form of cash, food stamps, healthcare coverage and other public benefits.

When the new system is fully implemented – and the three existing, county-based legacy systems are fully decommissioned – the State of California will save as much as $30 million a year.

This effort is significant for both its impact on Californians and the technological innovation it represents.

Millions of individuals and families in California depend on social safety net programs. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, these programs kept an estimated 7.1 percent of Californians out of poverty in 2017.[1] For example, CalFresh, California's main food assistance program, serves nearly 2.5 million households,[2] while CalWORKs provides cash assistance to more than 530,000 families with children.[3] Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program, provides healthcare coverage to nearly one in three Californians.[5] The integrated eligibility system and the business processes it supports are nothing short of mission critical to the people who rely on social safety net programs.

[1] https://www.ppic.org/publication/poverty-in-california/
[2] https://www.cwda.org/calfresh
[3] https://www.cwda.org/calworks

CHALLENGE

CalSAWS marks California's first journey to cloud in integrated eligibility. The new system will replace multiple legacy systems. One of those – Los Angeles County's current system – is serving as the foundation for the new application.

With an aggressive deployment deadline, CalSAWS needed a rapid and fiscally responsible way to accomplish two core goals:

1   **Ensure that LA County can continue using its current system**

2   **Proceed with development and testing for the new version of LA County's system, which will support every county.**

Accenture – which has supported two of California's three integrated eligibility systems since 2001 – demonstrated the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud as the right solution.

WHAT ACCENTURE DID

CalSAWS and Accenture wanted to ensure AWS would be a viable platform for the short-term migration project and for long-term use powering the statewide application.

Could the AWS cloud meet the needs of LA County while enabling longer-term development and testing?

> Accenture quickly performed a cloud proof of concept to assess potential capacity bottlenecks. The tests confirmed that the AWS cloud could support migration and cloud-based use of Los Angeles County's system without significant changes.

It also confirmed that while AWS could host CalSAWS, several changes would be required to deliver the needed capacity.

WHAT ACCENTURE DID

To migrate LA County's system into the AWS cloud, the team:

→ Created a scalable and secure infrastructure for the system

→ Migrated the primary 10-terabyte database and numerous ancillary databases

→ Transitioned interface partners to the new infrastructure

→ Migrated existing 15,000+ county users to the new location, and

→ Switched to cloud-native services where possible.

Because LA County's legacy system went live in the cloud a full month ahead of schedule, the team had extra time for stabilization before the first release.

Accenture is continuing to make changes to the architecture for the system to scale for use by all the counties and will be releasing those changes incrementally. Since this development is being done in the cloud, these incremental architecture changes can take advantage of cloud-native services – an option that would not be possible if all development were being done in traditional datacenters.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

With CalSAWS, California is consolidating three systems into one. It also has merged three county-based consortia into the CalSAWS Consortium – a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of all 58 California counties with the purpose of creating and managing the CalSAWS system.

The CalSAWS consortium is working to create "One Team," and Accenture is assisting with training and implementation support for users migrating to the new statewide system. In addition, Accenture has created a cultural transformation program to help facilitate the vision for a unified CalSAWS culture.

To date, this cultural transformation journey has included an assessment for the organization to understand its goals, values and starting point for change. This program also implemented a cultural ambassador program – providing infrastructure for staff to drive their own initiatives and experiments to unify the CalSAWS culture.

VALUE DELIVERED

This first milestone in the journey to cloud has provided the CalSAWS Consortium a strong start to consolidating all three systems by 2023.

The consortium has reduced capital expenditures by moving Los Angeles County's system to the cloud prior to application development and conversion releases. Using cloud is also reducing risk by having the same type of environments for production, development and testing.

The next phases of the CalSAWS Cloud Migration roadmap include scaling the Los Angeles County system for statewide usage and bringing the other 57 counties into CalSAWS – an undertaking that will occur in seven waves.

In migrating Los Angeles County's application – a large, non-cloud-native system – to the AWS Cloud, Accenture automated as much as possible. That automation is making it faster and easier to spin up environments for development and testing. As those environments are no longer needed, they can be quickly spun down.

That is helping CalSAWS avoid the large capital expenditures required to stand up traditional development and testing environments.

Whenever possible, the team embraced opportunities to switch from legacy applications to cloud-native services that are less expensive and easier to maintain. For example, the team decommissioned a complicated content management system, which had many features going unused. In its place, CalSAWS will rely on Amazon's storage services to organize content. Similarly, CalSAWS has moved from an on-premise to cloud-native approach to forms generation – eliminating the need to maintain dedicated servers and software.

Any journey to cloud begins with a single step. In California, CalSAWS has completed its first leap toward a more unified, cost-efficient approach to managing integrated eligibility.