Quality Associates Creates Accessible Digital Archive for Bucks County Domestic Relations Office

Challenges

Tasked with handling cases for more than 38,000 families, the County processes massive volumes of information—including millions of hard-copy pages and several types of electronic documents, such as PDFs, e-mails and computer files. To accurately track and process all case files—from the initial filing and docketing to the court hearing and intake into the County system—the Domestic Relations Office relied on an outdated paper-based process.

As Thomas Stoehr, Deputy Director, Office of Domestic Relations, Bucks County, explained, "We relied on dozens of employees to spend the majority of their day physically moving paperwork. As a result, large amounts of information were missing and misfiled. In addition, with a satellite facility 25 miles away in Bristol, we relied on a courier and the fax to deliver needed information to the appropriate location at great effort and expense."

Often, dozens of County employees may need to be involved in a single case and this presented a logistical challenge for the agency. Sharing information often required hand-delivering files to the caseworker who required them—whether the employee was on another floor in the same building or working from the satellite facility in Bristol. This constant movement of files increased the possibility that paperwork could be damaged or even lost permanently.

Solution

Bucks County turned to Quality Associates Inc. (QAI), a systems integrator with a strong track record in developing customized electronic document management (ECM) systems for numerous counties and government agencies. QAI worked directly with County staff to develop a hardware and software solution to meet its specific requirements. Accuracy and quality were major factors. *(continued on back)*

Based in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the Domestic Relations Office of Bucks County assists the public to administer, collect, and enforce court orders to establish child and spousal support obligations. The County must track thousands of cases to ensure fulfillment of all court-ordered obligations. In 2007, the Domestic Relations Office collected more than $81 million and had more than 16,000 open cases.

QUALITY ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED

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QAI — QUALITY ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED

About QAI ■ QAI's Information Systems Division specializes in the conversion of documents and other media to electronic formats. We offer a full range of document scanning/imaging products and services. These include hardware, software, optical technologies, storage systems, conversion applications, integration and training.

Solution *(continued)*

Implementation followed a four-step process:

■ **Step 1: Pilot Phase** – QAI worked with the County to ensure that all images, indexing and search criteria met requirements.

■ **Step 2: Hardware and Software Installation** – QAI provided advanced storage, document imaging hardware and software that included Dell servers, Kofax Ascent Capture software, Captaris Alchemy software and Fujitsu high-volume scanners.

■ **Step 3: Training** – After implementation, QAI worked on-site to provide hands-on training in the proper use of all hardware and software included in the new system.

■ **Step 4: Maintenance and Support** – QAI provided ongoing maintenance and support for all installed software. QAI also remained available to resolve technical issues.

Results

"Across the U.S., county domestic relations offices are tasked with managing what typically amounts to millions of hard-copy pages, e-mails and computer files related to thousands of distinct cases. These files must be accurately and appropriately tracked from the time they are initially filed and docketed to caseworker assignment. Potentially dozens of county employees can be involved in a single case, which clearly demonstrates the need for a centralized document management system."

Scott Swidersky, *Director, Information Systems Division, Quality Associates*

Now, the Domestic Relations Office of Bucks County has an electronic content management system capable of holding tens of millions of records.

To add documents to the system, Bucks County staff members first scan all needed hard-copy documents on site. The main Doylestown office is equipped with six Fujitsu scanners, while the Bristol satellite facility is equipped with a remote "thin client" scanning system that sends images directly the Doylestown servers.

Authorized staff can then use their desktop computers to access the password-protected system. Once logged in, staff can search for, view, and print needed documents that were previously available only in hard-copy format. Notably, e-mails and other electronic files can be added to the system and amended as needed by County staff. This new system has increased the productivity of Bucks County staff, equipping the agency to better serve its constituents.

The County is realizing other benefits as well. For example, the County is no longer vulnerable to losing or misplacing paper files. Further, steps have been taken to improve business continuity. Summarized Stoehr, "Quality Associates provided a secure, centralized document management system so that staff can easily access the information required to do their jobs. We now have a totally integrated, scalable system to accommodate the County's increasing case load."

Summary

Challenges:

■ County domestic relations office handles cases for more than 38,000 families

■ Caseload management required manually tracking and accessing millions of hard-copy documents, PDFs, e-mails and computer files

■ Outdated paper-based system made work more complex and time-consuming

Solution:

■ QAI ensured that all images, indexing and search criteria met requirements

■ QAI implemented a customized system utilizing Dell servers, Kofax Ascent Capture software, Captaris Alchemy software and Fujitsu scanners

■ QAI trained County staff in the proper use of hardware and software

■ QAI provided ongoing maintenance and support for all installed software

Results

■ A secure, centralized document management system

■ Scalable system capable of holding tens of millions of records

■ Increased staff productivity

■ Assured business continuity: Staff no longer worries about lost or misplaced paper files

■ Improved file accessibility: Authorized staff can access, search for, view and print needed documents