

*To provide timely, accurate and uninterrupted service to its members, Community Action Agency of St. Louis County implements DocuWare to shorten processing time and enable employees to work remotely.*



### **Georgie Donahue, Programs Director Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, MI**



“When our staff had to work from home due to COVID-19, DocuWare allowed us to process applications remotely without an interruption in the service to our customers. Now we can pull up any file when we need it, from any location.”



- Location:** USA
- Industry:** Non-Profit
- Deployment:** On-premises
- Department:** Program Administration

**Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC) helps over 44,000 low-income community members a year to pay energy bills, apply for food stamps and attain employment.**

Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC) assists low-income community members via assessment and referral services, serving 44,000 customers each year. CAASTLC runs a community supported agriculture program, a drug and alcohol education program, plus employment development and energy services. CAASTLC runs Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, which helps qualified community members pay electricity, heating or gas bills in times of need. LIHEAP and other programs require vigorous record keeping, which was done manually.

**Buried in paper becomes a burden**

A paper-intensive program, LIHEAP receives up to 500 applications during peak times, generating about 20,000 paper files. Every application requires proof of income, a utility bill and other personal information, rarely submitted together. As bills and other documentation arrived, staffers used to retrieve the physical files and add new information. When the state's requirements for LIHEAP grew stricter while the number of applicants

increased, CAASTLC became buried in paper. Another challenge was CAASTLC's drug and alcohol education program that stored some older offsite, which cost money to retrieve.

**Selecting DocuWare was the logical choice**

Installing DocuWare allowed digitizing and automating manual processes. Missouri law requires registering applications within three days of receipt. Without automation, registering the file took 24 to 48 hours. Now it takes less than 24 hours. Document retrieval and automated workflows saves time—CAASTLC staff scans multiple applications and uses barcode separation to route them to the right staff member's inbox. They no longer search for files manually to add new documents. "Before DocuWare, we might receive an electric bill and file it," says programs director Georgie Donahue. "Then we'd pull the file again when we received the additional documentation needed to complete the request for funds." When applicants call, the staff no longer has to look through physical files, but search in DocuWare. "Now we can report on the status of their application immediately," says Donahue. The files previously kept offsite are now stored in DocuWare and can be found instantly without incurring extra fees.

*"We're so happy with how efficiently DocuWare works for us that we have recommended the solution to several other agencies."*

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Donahue adds that CAASTLC chose DocuWare because of its broad-based capabilities and cost-effectiveness. "We recognized the advantage of the lower cost for the DocuWare installation and configuration. We also wanted to use our current copiers and scanners without purchasing a scanning license for each device. DocuWare was the logical choice."

### Meeting the needs of a remote workforce

When the agency had to shift to telecommuting, instant access to documents and automated workflow allowed CAASTLC continue serving community members. The staffers were able to administer LIHEAP and other programs remotely. "When our staff had to work from home due to COVID-19, DocuWare allowed us to process applications remotely without an interruption in the service to our customers. Now we can pull up any file when we need it, from any location," says Donahue. "We are so happy with how efficiently DocuWare works for us that we have recommended the solution to several other agencies."

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