Brief introduction: BlueZone Scripts PRISM pilot

Frequently-Asked-Questions

What are BlueZone Scripts?

BlueZone Scripts are a simple extension of the BlueZone software that is used to connect to PRISM, and other mainframe systems. These scripts automate repetitive, simple tasks such as adding and updating PRISM screens, CAAD notes, and cleaning up worklists. PRISM is a large warehouse of information, scripts can help to pull together information workers need to manage their caseload efficiently. MAXIS workers, as well as some counties' PRISM workers, are already successfully using scripts for these purposes.

Scripts have the potential to reduce errors and save hundreds of hours of worker time per month. This time savings can allow workers to focus on cases that need work, and spend less time on repetitive maintenance items.

Who is writing BlueZone Scripts?

In addition to the DHS BlueZone Scripts Statewide Coordinator, county Child Support staff have been working collaboratively to create and share individual scripts. Approximately 64% of the code[i] currently in use was built by county staff throughout the state.

Since 2014, the counties of Anoka, Dakota, Mille Lacs, Olmsted, Stearns, and Wright have been sharing their code freely with one another, building and improving a basic toolset of scripts, similar in scope to the well-known MAXIS scripts project. In July 2016, DHS' Child Support Division hired the former MAXIS scripts coordinator (Veronica Cary), and has developed a roadmap to bring these scripts statewide with dedicated support, code and policy review processes, and clear instructions.

Will BlueZone Scripts reduce the need for Child Support officers?

Like everywhere in human services, Child Support officers are swamped with overextended caseloads, changing program and policy rules, and increasing amounts of system updates. The scripts project is designed to augment the existing toolset used by Child Support officers, specialists, and case aides statewide, not to replace county or state staff. Previous MAXIS-based time studies showed scripts were saving approximately 30-45 minutes per worker per day.

What about system modernization? How will that affect the scripts project?

DHS' Child Support Division views the BlueZone Scripts project as informing the ongoing conversation about system modernization. As this project is largely county-worker driven, the BlueZone Scripts reflect how the work is actually done using PRISM, and the scriptwriters themselves are essentially subject matter experts in county processes. The work we're doing with BlueZone Scripts exposes the issues that are lacking in our current workflows and systems, which will provide a useful guide as we explore new technologies for county staff.

You can find out more on DHS-SIR: https://www.dhssir.cty.dhs.state.mn.us/BlueZoneScripting/PRISM/default.aspx.

The PRISM Pilot

At this time, DHS is seeking six agencies to try installing and using the PRISM BlueZone Scripts in the month of October 2016. After that month, if all is going well, the "pilot period" will end and counties will be able to deploy scripts at will. More details will be found on our DHS-SIR page, as well as via our email list. If you are interested in joining the collaborative counties in piloting BlueZone Scripts, please talk to a supervisor and then email veronica.cary@state.mn.us as soon as possible!

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[i] As of 09/16/2016, non-DHS staff had 573 commits (a unit of code measurement), and DHS staff had 314 commits. This number is subject to change, but county-driven development remains a priority.

BlueZone Scripts

Minnesota Family Support & Recovery Council Conference 2016

About the presenter

- Veronica Cary, BlueZone Scripts Statewide Coordinator
- Working with Child Support Division Operations (since July 2016)
- Formerly of the SNAP program in DHS (since May 2014)
- Prior to this, worked with Anoka County Economic Assistance, where she first developed BlueZone Scripts in 2010
- Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us

Introduction to BlueZone Scripts

- BlueZone Scripts are a simple extension of the BlueZone software that counties and the state use to connect to PRISM
- Scripts automate repetitive, simple tasks such as processing worklists, adding/updating PRISM panels, and generating complex DORD documents
- BlueZone Scripts have been used in MAXIS statewide since 2014, and the project is now formally launching in PRISM

...continued introduction

- BlueZone Scripts are written primarily by county workers
  - In PRISM: Child Support Officers, Specialists, and Case Aides
  - In MAXIS: Financial Workers, QC Reviewers, and Mentors
- Several counties are sharing code with the state as-a-whole using GitHub as a storage and collaboration medium
- All scripts are evaluated by state staff prior to deployment
  - For PRISM: Veronica Cary (Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us)
  - For MAXIS: Charles Potter (Charles.D.Potter@state.mn.us)

How did the project start?

- Veronica Cary started writing BlueZone Scripts as a newly-trained Financial Worker at Anoka County back in 2010
- She shared the scripts with her coworkers at Anoka, slowly spreading throughout the county
- Word started spreading to other counties, and eventually the state
- Veronica was hired by DHS in 2014, and started training others to write scripts

EXAMPLES OF BLUEZONE SCRIPTS FOR PRISM

Videos of PRISM-related BlueZone Scripts in action

Examples of PRISM BlueZone Scripts

- Over 60 BlueZone Scripts have been written and deployed for PRISM users
- Unfortunately, video cannot be embedded in a PowerPoint stored on SIR
- DHS staff are planning on providing these videos of BlueZone Scripts on TrainLink

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BlueZone Scripts for PRISM

Question: how do we get scripts?

- Answer:
  - A pilot is being formally launched in October 2016
  - Assuming all goes well, non-pilot counties will be able to begin installing scripts in November 2016
  - If you want your agency to be considered for the PRISM pilot, please email Veronica Cary (Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us) as soon as possible
  - More details about the pilot are included later in this presentation

Question: how many counties are using scripts?

- Answer:
  - Currently, the counties of Anoka, Dakota, Olmsted, Scott, Stearns, and Wright are contributing code directly, with Child Support staff building scripts on a regular basis
  - At least six additional counties are using scripts in their agencies
  - We hope to rapidly expand the amount of counties using BlueZone Scripts in late 2016 and early 2017

Question: how many scripts are there for PRISM?

- Answer:
  - There are over 60 scripts written for PRISM
  - Several more scripts are under development, and may be released between when this presentation was presented and when your agency goes live with scripts
  - Your best bet for finding out more is to check out the script list document on our DHS-SIR page

Question: do we need a scriptwriter to use BlueZone Scripts?

- Answer:
  - No, counties are not required to provide a scriptwriter in order to use these scripts - they are supported regardless of whether-or-not your agency has technically-minded staff
  - Agencies are *encouraged* to identify Child Support staff who may be interested in learning to write scripts, although providing this level of support is not mandatory
  - If you (or someone in your agency) wants to learn to write scripts, please email Veronica Cary (Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us)

Question: is it possible to arrange a site visit?

- Answer:
  - Yes, but we would prefer virtual visits (with WebEx) or regional visits (where we visit one site and multiple counties attend) wherever possible, to save on travel costs
  - Trainings are being developed for TrainLink, so that county staff can learn how to install and use scripts

Question: what does "maintenance" on scripts look like?

- Answer:
  - Scriptwriters maintain an issue/enhancement list at GitHub.com
    - Counties are encouraged to share issues/ideas directly there
  - Counties will rarely need to update their scripts, as we use GitHub's built in storage/collaboration features to manage the project
    - As long as your Child Support staff have an internet connection, they should have the most up-to-date scripts available
  - Occasionally, Power Pads will need to be updated, and a tool will be available to make that easier

Question: where can I find this PowerPoint?

- Answer:
  - We have a tab in DHS-SIR!
  - You can find this PowerPoint ("Script Presentation MFSRC 2016") in the PRISM scripts menu, in the "shared documents" folder

THE CHILD SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE

Our scriptwriting rock-stars in the counties

What is "the collaborative?"

- A collaboration between agencies who write BlueZone Scripts (DHS, and the counties that have trained scriptwriters)
- The Child Support Collaborative has been in existence since mid-2014, coordinating the training and testing of scripts across multiple agencies
- In July 2016, Veronica Cary transferred to Child Support Division and DHS assumed management of the collaborative

When does the collaborative meet?

- The collaborative meets at a "hackathon" four times per month at counties or DHS, on a rotating basis
  - A hackathon is a large collaborative meeting in which code-writers dissect, evaluate, and improve code (the hackathon model is common in multi-agency software developments)
  - "Hack" in this case means to "modify creatively", as the original use of the term (see: "IKEA hack")
- We try to include far-flung agencies using WebEx whenever possible

How much time does it take to write a script?

- County scriptwriters are encouraged to have a day off (of regular Child Support work) each week for all of the pieces of building scripts:
  - Writing actual code
  - Coordinating and evaluating script testing
  - Updating instructions
  - Communicating about policy with DHS staff
- Having recurring time off ensures scriptwriters will keep existing skills and learn new ones

Can I join the collaborative?

- If your agency has scriptwriters, DHS certainly wants you to be a part of the collaborative
- If you do not yet have scriptwriters, but are willing to evaluate scripts, their instructions, or other pieces, you may still be able to join
- Contact Veronica Cary with questions (Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us)

THE PRISM SCRIPTS PILOT

Testing the BlueZone Scripts for PRISM

What is the pilot?

- BlueZone Scripts will need to be tested thoroughly prior to a general release
- Most scripts have been tested for over a year, but several improvements have been recently implemented
- Six brand-new counties (who've never before used our scripts) will deploy our scripts following instructions, and will provide feedback frequently throughout the month

What feedback will we be looking for?

- We are looking for information about:
  - How easy were they to install and use?
  - How many users actively used the BlueZone Scripts?
  - How did users feel about individual scripts?
  - Is there anything that users would change?
  - Were there critical errors or questions about policies (as they relate to scripts)?
  - Does script-related documentation need to be improved?

Why only six counties?

- Several counties are already using BlueZone Scripts in PRISM
- The purpose of the pilot is to evaluate our current offerings, which takes a lot of coordination centrally
- We don't want to expose many counties to a cumbersome new process if they are not prepared for it, and that preparation takes time!

I want to join the pilot!

- If you (or your agency) wants to join the pilot in October 2016, please contact Veronica Cary right away to begin the process
- Demand is expected to be heavy, so please contact her ASAP
- Email: Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us
- Talk to a supervisor and IT before sending Veronica an email

What happens after the pilot?

- After the BlueZone Scripts PRISM pilot wraps up, details about how-to-install-BlueZone-scripts will be made readily available to counties throughout the state
- Counties are asked to email Veronica Cary upon completion of the initial set-up for scripts (Veronica keeps statistics on deployment status statewide)
- If things *do not* go well with the pilot, DHS will extend the pilot until things stabilize

Thank you for attending this presentation!

Contact me with any questions: Veronica.Cary@state.mn.us