

Texas Juvenile Justice Department



A state government agency takes action to protect youth data, using Accellion to safely share confidential files with parents, medical staff members, and legal counsel.

Background

Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) is a state agency created to provide a cost-effective continuum of youth services that focus on keeping individuals within their home communities while balancing rehabilitative needs with public safety. Headquartered in Austin, TX, TJJD has 2,500 employees and operates dozens of treatment facilities, correctional institutions, and halfway houses throughout the state.

Challenges

Due to the nature of its operations, TJJD regularly handles highly confidential data relating to the youth that come in contact with the organization. New legislation, including Texas Family Code, Chapter 58, mandates that TJJD take the proper measures to maintain the integrity of all juvenile justice information, including any references to individuals within TJJD's various facilities.

The organization originally had a dedicated TLS link to support confidential communications, but was met with a barrier on the recipients' end, as most did not have a full-blown encryption solution that would sync with TJJD's. This led staff members to mail hard copies of files, burn documents to CDs or encrypt emails individually – all very cumbersome procedures. The bottom line: TJJD didn't have a good file transfer mechanism in place and needed a better option, quickly.

TJJD knew exactly what it wanted out of an enterprise file transfer solution: 1) a physical appliance – to maintain management control and minimize ongoing maintenance costs; 2) rock-solid security; and 3) ease of use. The organization looked at several vendors and Accellion was the only provider that offered an enterprise-class physical and virtual appliance, with significant, successful deployments in the government sector.

"95 percent of our data must be kept confidential for one reason or another, driving us to find a secure mode to exchange information with parents, between staff members, and with the community at large," said Josh Kuntz, ISO with TJJD. "Accellion was the only solution that met our strict security guidelines, yet made it easy for non-technical individuals to use."

Solution

Working with Accellion VAR, SolidBorder – an approved HUB vendor for Texas government and public education entities – the first step was to deploy the appliance and put it through rigorous testing.

"When Accellion was tested, deployed, and ready for use, we announced availability to our executive management team," said Kuntz. "Our general counsel used the solution that afternoon to communicate with the Department of Justice – showcasing Accellion's immediate value."

Accellion File Transfer is integrated with Active Directory, allowing TJJD employees to use existing log-in credentials to send confidential files. That's the beauty of Accellion -- it's a robust system, yet doesn't

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require users to jump through hoops, serving as a seamless extension to users' everyday communications.

"We started with 100 Accellion licenses and that number quickly grew to 600," said Kuntz. "Adoption of Accellion has taken off because it allows users to work as they always have – it looks like email and acts like email, making it a no-brainer to use."

Accellion was initially used among TJJD's medical services group, but rapidly grew to include the organization's legal counsel and extensive roster of case workers. The solution has been particularly valuable for ongoing community interactions – allowing TJJD employees to securely communicate with parents at home, who only need to click on a link to access files relating to their family member.

"As new education and youth services initiatives are rolled out, we're ahead of the curve with communications," said Kuntz. "With Accellion, we have the technology foundation in place to support important information exchanges and simply need to add more licensed users to accommodate our growing needs – it's as simple as that."

BENEFITS

- Enabled case workers, medical services teams, and legal counsel to share confidential youth services data with outside constituents
- Allowed users to work exactly as they were used to working – spurring adoption of Accellion organization-wide
- Provided a scalable communications solution to support any number of internal and external users – cost effectively
- Enabled ongoing compliance with new state security regulations Allowed IT support group to quickly distribute troubleshooting documents

SPECIFICATIONS

Texas Juvenile Justice Department	
Deployed since	2011
# of Internal and External Users	600 Unlimited External
LDAP/AD directory integration	Yes
Custom Web Interface	Yes
Email integration	Yes