



# Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society

## *Altus Client Success Story*

### *At a Glance*

Location: Windsor, ON

Industry: NFP, Children's Aid Society

The Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society is dedicated to the well-being and safety of every child by advocating for, and partnering with children, families and communities in the Windsor-Essex area.

### Challenges

- **Disparate Systems:**  
Difficult to reconcile data between different functional areas
- **Lack of financial controls:**  
No automated budget checking or approval processing
- **Time consuming reporting**

### Benefits

- **Automated budget checking and workflow**
- **Improved reporting and analysis**
- **Improved user experience**
- **Better visibility operational performance**
- **Advanced drill down to detailed transactions**
- **Advanced budgeting**

*“We now get to the detail much easier which means more questions are answered efficiently and in a timely manner. Altus Dynamics for Children Aid Societies enables our staff to focus on more meaningful tasks including the powerful operational financial analysis we dreamed of.”*

*Kelly Gherasim, Director of Finance,  
Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society*

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS) was first established in 1899, and is dedicated to the well-being and safety of every child by advocating for, and partnering with children, families and communities in the Windsor-Essex area. WECAS is the third Children's Aid Society in Ontario to implement Altus Dynamics for Children's Aid Societies, a complete business solution powered by Microsoft Dynamics® NAV.

### Challenges

WECAS had been using a myriad of software that resulted in bulky, cumbersome operational processes. There was minimal financial control or ability to analyze data as required. Sharing data was difficult without a central repository for their operational and financial information. Analyzing key performance indicators such as cost per child, expenditures by service group, and detailed reporting to Foster Parents was impossible due to the amount of work involved.

### Altus Solution Benefits

WECAS began their implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV using a phased approach with a goal of having truly integrated financial and foster pay by April 2008.

Having established an ambitious schedule for implementation, management at WECAS ensured that the accounting department was well supported by scheduling mandatory training for staff and limiting access to the finance department during the implementation and training phases.

The implementation of Altus Dynamics for Children Aid Societies included the use of a NAV feature called dimensions. NAV dimensions gave WECAS powerful reporting capabilities, a more streamlined chart of accounts and significant maintenance improvement in the general ledger – shifting the financial staff's focus from clerical to analytical. For example, with NAV dimensions, WECAS can view account transactions by child file no. and then simply drill down to actual purchase invoices. In addition, WECAS can instantly view financial reports and online screens on accounting activities by section, department, programs, and placements.



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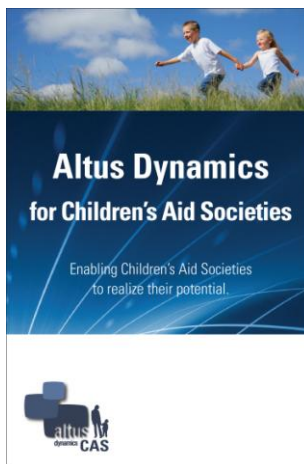
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Children's Aid Societies  
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Budgeting - once a cumbersome process at WECAS - is now much easier and more streamlined. WECAS can now manage an unlimited number of budgets by any kind of categorization (like department, program, placement and even child).

When asked what some of the other key benefits gained at WECAS were, Kelly cited the integration to Microsoft Office applications like Excel and Word. Each employee can now have their own views and screens when using Altus Dynamics for Children Aid Societies. This makes it much easier for staff to navigate through their functions.

WECAS continues to implement additional components of their solution in a phased approach, with a Payroll and Human Resources phase currently in the implementation stage and projects for Altus Employee Portals, Donor Management on the horizon. WECAS has initiated the process of forming a partnership with Altus to evangelize the entire Ontario Children's Aid Society community with news of the resounding success of their project.

Manager of Finance Kelly Gherasim provided the leadership that ensured her organization approached the implementation as a cohesive unit. She recognized that true success required the WECAS team to take ownership of the project and act as their organization's experts while keeping an open mind about new processes and approaches suggested by their Altus Project Manager. She took unprecedented steps to make certain that users were well trained and familiar with the agency's planned use of the system to the point where her staff could appropriately instruct others.

## Results Achieved

*"The improved access to information has resulted in better cost control and better visibility into the effectiveness of programs and in terms of cost per child analysis. Most importantly of all, better cost control is resulting in improved service to the children that need it most."*

*Kelly Gherasim, Director of Finance,  
Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society*

Before the implementation of Altus Dynamics for Children Aid Societies, accounting staff at WECAS were plagued with inefficiency and time-consuming manual work. Tasks like pulling the hard copy of invoices and cheques to answer questions on processed payments consumed inordinate amounts of time. Today, personnel are more analytical and are able to easily get to the bottom of information. The reporting capabilities and the potential for analysis are very powerful features for WECAS.