

# Children's Bureau relies on cloud services to help ensure HIPAA compliance and more



Since 1904, [Children's Bureau of Southern California](#) has been a leader in child abuse prevention and treatment. Its staff of 315 serves more than 28,000 children and parents annually as it strives to create a world where every child grows up with endless possibilities and potential.

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SARU RAMANAN  
FAF Project Lead, Children's  
Bureau of Southern California

In a unique development, the nonprofit organization created a family assessment software tool in support of its services. Children's Bureau sells the tool to other family support providers and the generated revenue supports the agency's programs. In 2010, a web-based version was introduced. The tool uses software as a service (SaaS), a software distribution model in which applications are hosted by a service provider – usually in the Cloud – and made available to customers.

Social workers and home visitors use the Family Assessment Form® (FAF) to help family support practitioners standardize their evaluations of family functioning and service planning. It is

ideal for families receiving family support, preservation, and home-based services, as well as for agencies tasked with measuring program effectiveness. The newest version, FAF Web, possesses all the features of the original FAF Pro software, and is integrated into a platform that users can connect with any time, from anywhere.

Previously, Children's Bureau retained a third-party vendor for hosting services and experienced acceptable performance, says Saru Ramanan, project coordinator for the FAF software product. But for its web-based tool, the agency sought a vendor with a full and diverse suite of products with which it could grow.

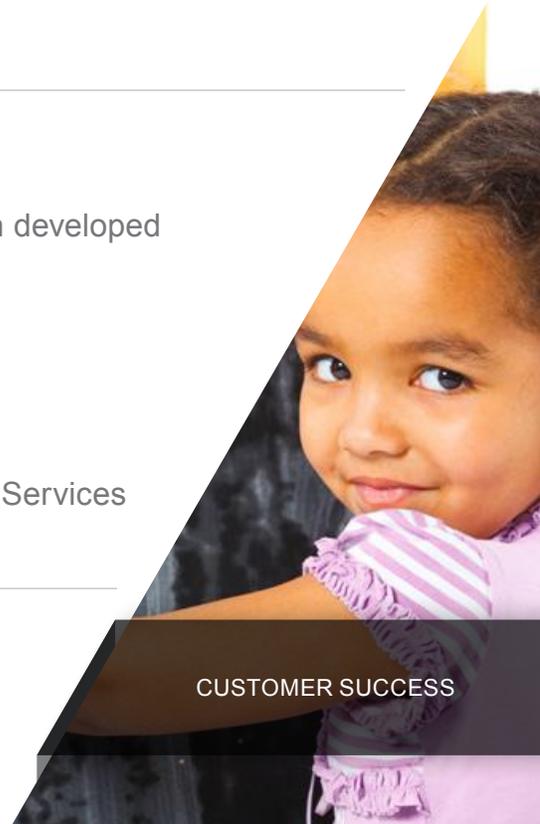
## About Children's Bureau of Southern California

- Headquarters: Los Angeles
- Nonprofit organization serving children and families, which developed a software product to support the nonprofit business.
- CEO: Alex Ben Morales
- FAF Project Lead: Saru Ramanan
- Employees: 315
- 2013-14 Budget: \$31.4 M
- More than 28,000 children, parents served annually
- Uses Enterprise Cloud Services from Sungard Availability Services for SaaS hosting



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Critically important, the agency needed a vendor who could help it address HIPAA and other critical regulatory requirements. HIPAA is the Congressional act that, among other things, requires the protection and confidential handling of protected health information, including that of patients.

Children’s Bureau initially considered Sungard Availability Services, but ultimately went with a smaller host server. Soon, however, technical issues proved troubling and performance became inconsistent. The vendor believed the problem was a code issue with developers, but it was soon identified as a problem with the hosting environment.

What finally advanced the change in vendors was Children’s Bureau’s growth of business in Alberta, Canada. While the agency’s primary environment is hosted at Sungard AS’ Colorado data center, it now has the ability to host data in regional data centers if needed.

**Partnering for business results**  
Ramanan calls the results with Sungard AS “fabulous,” including improved performance for one of its larger clients – the State of New Hampshire – which provides services across 11 counties via a central agency. In addition, Children’s Bureau’s partnership with Sungard AS provides better cost points for rural areas, where costs associated with transportation, technology, and communication make a difference. For Canadian customers, the ability to meet provincial requirements around outcomes reporting and data security is encouraging continued growth. Business in Canada is “taking off,” she notes.

For Children’s Bureau, a key element of its satisfaction with Sungard AS reflects the company’s broad expertise in the healthcare and financial services arenas as well as the support in complying with Canadian regulations. “We simply follow the HIPAA checklist and it’s a no brainer with Sungard AS,” she says. “Our largest competitors are mostly with Sungard AS, and that also gives us confidence with compliance in our hosting environment.”



**80%**  
Using the FAF software system, this program was able to demonstrate – to funders and the public – statistically significant and meaningful improvement for 80 percent of the families served.



**Strategic partners**

Ramanan says that Sungard AS provides the “best environment” for government clients to feel confident about the protection and security of data.

“We’re very happy with Sungard AS’ attention to detail, quick response time, and consistency,” she adds. Recently, her team wanted to add more memory to its capabilities within a tight timeframe. “The response was thorough and quick, and the Sungard AS team provided exceptional customer service and detailed documentation of the process. That level of service, often reserved for very large clients by vendors, was directed to us – not as a courtesy but as sound professional practice.”

Ramanan says Children’s Bureau is handling more client-facing work as customers seek to build out new features, including more sophisticated statistical analysis functions. The nonprofit had initially put some of these on hold, but with Sungard AS, the FAF team is allowing feature requests to move forward while exploring new system offerings.

**Conclusion**

Ramanan emphasizes that because Sungard AS focuses on keeping the backend infrastructure up and running, Children’s Bureau has confidence in its service provider. “That takes a huge stress off of us and lets us handle the business side – the structural work required for operations.”

What does that enable the organization to do, specifically? “It’s important for us to acknowledge that our work goes beyond the realm of health and human services, and that it plays a pivotal role in the prevention of child abuse and maltreatment,” Ramanan says.

And the FAF software helps immensely. One Los Angeles program using the tool has collected six years of program evaluation data. Using the FAF software system, this program was able to demonstrate – to funders and the public – statistically significant and meaningful improvement for 80 percent of the families served.

What does this mean? “Parents are becoming more empathetic communicators, children are spending more time in the home, and families are learning to connect in a more meaningful way,” she explains.

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**Benefits for Children’s Bureau of Southern California**

- Exceptional service that improves performance and gives agency officials peace of mind in meeting client needs and specifications
- Speedy responsiveness and dedicated support
- Ability to meet data privacy and security (HIPAA) requirements
- Flexibility in service
- Abundance of geographic locations and multiple services to support its operations
- Reliable execution
- Willingness to work with agency and its customer base
- Superior security



## Partnering with Sungard AS

Working with industry-leading technology partners, we are able to provide proven availability solutions tailored to the unique needs of your business. Unlike other companies offering individual technology services, Sungard AS is focused on providing responsive and integrated Cloud, managed services and disaster recovery, IT consulting and business continuity management software solutions to keep you and your information connected. Sungard AS provides for application availability using end-to-end data protection solutions to help you manage your data more efficiently, effectively and securely. The result is a flexible, cost-effective way to help ensure your data is there when you need it: **Always.**

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### About Sungard Availability Services

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