

Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) Overview



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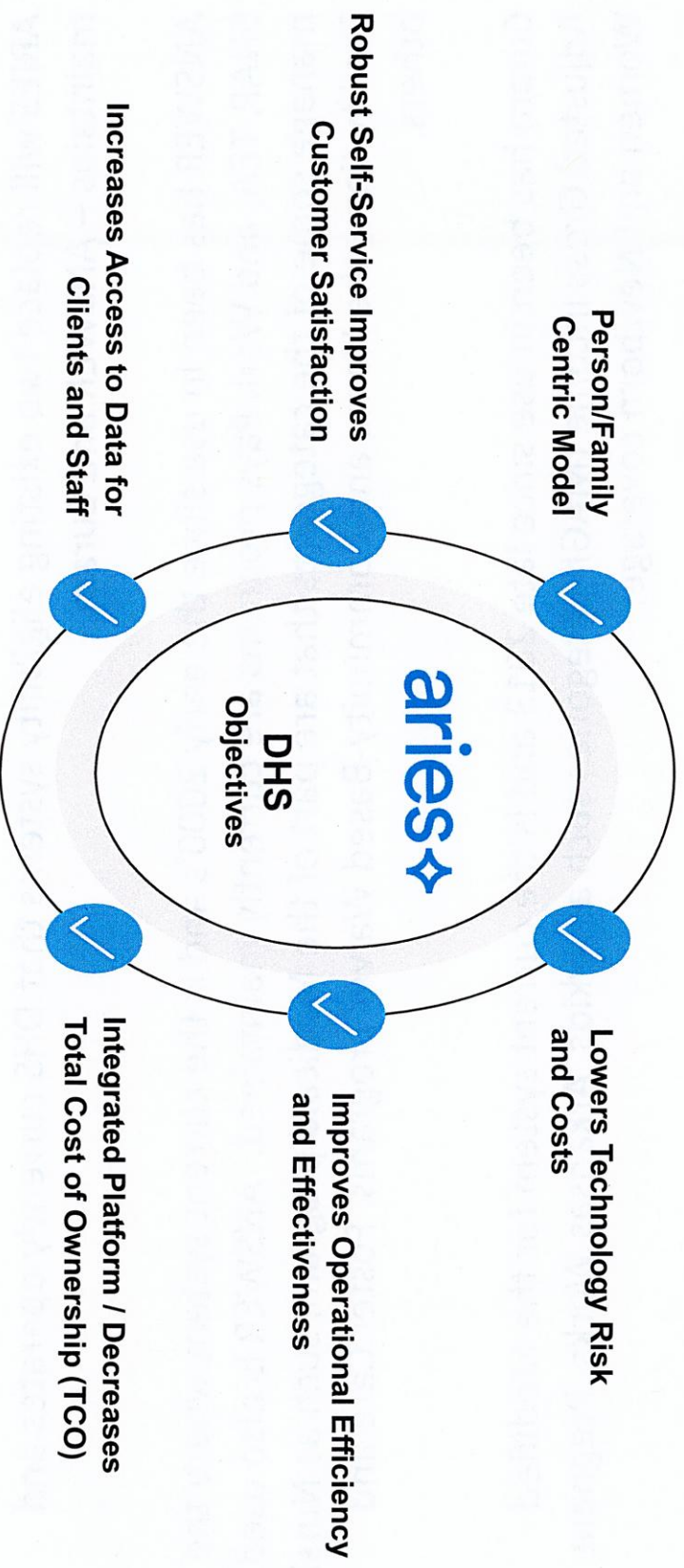
ARIES Overview

What is ARIES?

- The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is launching the Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) in December as a way to streamline and modernize the technologies used to serve Arkansans applying and receiving benefits for: Health Care, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program.
- ARIES is an integrated eligibility system designed to make applying for assistance less complicated and streamline work for DHS staff.
- Teams with representatives across multiple DHS divisions have been working diligently since April 2019 to design, develop, and implement the new system, which will:
 - Be more family-focused, so that clients don't have to put in separate applications for each program or for each family member (There are up to 8 different applications now.)
 - Adapt to any smart device, making it easier for clients who don't have desktop computers to apply using other technologies
 - Offer a new worker portal that makes it easier for employees to assist clients and automatically accepts information a client enters online

ARIES Overview

What is ARIES?



ARIES Overview

What is changing with ARIES?

- ARIES will replace two existing eligibility systems that DHS currently operates and maintains – ANSWER and Curam
- ANSWER has been in use since the early 2000's and is the current system where the SNAP, TEA, and Work Pays programs are currently maintained. ANSWER is also used to manage some of the categories that are part of the Medicaid program, such as Nursing Facility Care, the Home and Community-Based Waiver programs, Foster Care and others.
- Curam has been in use since late 2013 and is the current system for the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) categories such as Arkids, Arkansas Works, Pregnant Women and Newborn coverage.

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What about ARIES cost?

- In SFY 2020, we spent \$111.1 million to support the ARIES project.
- In SFY 2021, we project to spend \$94.6 million to support the ARIES project.
- We are still on budget and within the Total Projected Cost of our original prime contract that was approved by the legislature.

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What will be better with ARIES?

- Access Arkansas website will be upgraded:
 - Mobile friendly across phone, tablet, laptops, and desktop devices
 - English, Spanish, and Marshallese translation on screen
 - 24/7 availability
- In addition to being able to apply online, clients can:
 - Manage their personal information
 - Check the status of their cases
 - Set up email and / or text alert preferences
 - Ability to opt in to electronic rather than traditional paper notices
 - View previous notices
 - Report changes
 - Renew their coverage
- Upload documents directly into their cases



ARIES Overview

What will be better with ARIES?



Citizen Portal

- Prescreen
- Apply for Benefits
- Manage my Account
 - Renew Benefits
 - Report Changes
- Upload Verifications
- View Electronic Notices



Worker Portal

- Application Registration
- Enterprise Master Person Index (EMPI)
- Intake
- Data Collection
- Scheduling
- Correspondence
- Reports
- Referrals
- Interfaces

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When will ARIES be implemented?

ARIES will be implemented carefully with a phased approach, beginning with a pilot before expanding statewide. The goal of pilot is to make sure the system functions as expected before going statewide.

- ARIES Release 1 - Healthcare will be first to be implemented. Pilot is scheduled to begin December 2020 with 5 pilot counties. These counties represent about 6% of total Medicaid cases:
 - Carroll
 - Hot Spring
 - Independence
 - Lafayette
 - Pope
- One half of the remaining counties will be implemented in March 2021
- All remaining counties will be implemented in April 2021

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When will ARIES be implemented?

ARIES Release 2 will include SNAP and TEA will be implemented after the Healthcare implementation is complete. The pilot approach using the same 5 counties will also be used for this implementation.

- Release 2 pilot is scheduled for Summer 2021
- Statewide implementation for Release 2 scheduled to complete Winter 2021.

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What is DHS doing to make sure ARIES implementation goes well?

DHS has several strategies to implement ARIES in a way that will help the new system to be successful long-term, including:

- Ongoing testing, that began in January 2020, to ensure system is ready
- Broad and robust internal training and communication efforts to ensure staff understand what the new system can do and know how to use it. These efforts are monitored and analyzed for lessons learned and potential changes.
- A rollout strategy to carefully implement the system through a series of releases that allows time for feedback and changes
- Simplified language on a fifth to seventh grade reading level used for both Access Arkansas and the new letters that the system will send clients
- Designing the system with helpful guidance for clients throughout the online application, clear direction, and a help section that includes “how-to” videos and answers to frequently asked questions
- Holding focus groups that allow real clients to review our notices and the application and give us real feedback we can implement
- Resources for those who cannot or will not use the online system:
 - A redesigned paper application
 - Ways to get help: DHS helpline, calling a county office, visiting a county office
 - All notices mailed unless the client opts for paperless
 - Information and forms can be mailed, faxed, or delivered to a county office. The notice lists the ways a client can return information.

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