Build versus Buy: Advantages and Disadvantages of Case Management Data Systems

Developed by MDC

Develop System In-house

Pros:
- Allows for full integration with existing student data system
- Flexibility in design of indicators and outcome measures
- Full IT expense for development and maintenance can be spread across the institution
- Typically requires minimal staff training to implement

Cons:
- True cost of case management system is not realized by CWF program
- Cross-organization data sharing is often not possible
- Opportunity cost of IT staff time

Buy Vendor System

Pros:
- Better understanding of the true cost of data system
- Vendor is responsible for upgrades and maintenance
- Software purchase often comes with access to learning communities and best practice materials
- Allows for sharing across organizations

Cons:
- Staff has to manage and use multiple data systems to track individuals and outcomes
- Cost may be prohibitive
- Lack of flexibility in design; may not capture specific outcomes important to your institution
- Training and implementation may require significant staff time