



— are facing legislative pressure through the [Continuum of Care Reform](#) effort to find more foster families. That will mean improving recruitment, and quickly.

It also helps that Binti's use-based pricing has come in under the threshold required for governments to go out to a competitive bid for all but its largest customers. That's how the company has signed on so many counties so quickly — by bypassing the traditional procurement process. For the nation's largest county, Los Angeles County, it had to go through a competitive bid process, and Binti won it.

"We're really busy right now," said Felicia Curcuru, Binti's chief executive officer.

Before the new software, the status quo in San Francisco was cobbling together spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel to track completion of each step in the process of becoming a foster family. For each applicant, there were perhaps 70 columns to track.

"It was really hard to see at a glance where the applicant is in the process and what's missing ... it's prone to human error," Curcuru said.

On top of that, many forms asked for redundant information. So the [Web portal](#) Binti built aims to only ask those questions once and take care of the redundancy on the back end.

"Even though there are 10 forms that ask your name, it won't ask you for your name 10 times," Curcuru said. "It'll ask you once and then autopopulate it."

The website also allows people to upload necessary documentation such as drivers' licenses online instead of bringing them into the office, and lets applicants sign forms with a digital signature. It streamlined the process of checking in with references by sending out emails and letting references complete forms online. It will send out automatic reminders to complete steps in the process.

Now, when potential foster families come into the office, it can be with paperwork completed instead of coming in to do the paperwork.

"(The old process) was taking a really long time, and our staff was confused about the process, our applicants were confused about where they were in the process ... so that caused delays, which costs money because you have to get approved before the federal money kicks in," said Barrett Johnson, a program director within the department.

The process overhaul means a big difference for the staff managing those applications, according to Johnson. Each worker might be juggling anywhere from 30 to 60 cases at any given moment, and that opens up doors for priority-based work — meaning some cases get delayed to accommodate others.

With the new system, application tracking is simplified, and the software automates pieces of their work as well. And the website doubles as a recruitment tool.

It was all based on the department's experience. The STiR program is set up to allow for a close working relationship between startups and the government agencies they hope to serve. Binti used that to sit down with HSA staff and walk through every step of the process, looking for opportunities to make it easier.

“They mapped out the whole process of what we were doing and we found a lot of things that weren’t necessary and that we were wasting time doing. So some of these things we eliminated and some of those things they automated through the portal they created,” Johnson said.

There is still plenty of room for Binti to expand. There are 58 counties in California, and 13 other states that delegate foster care authority to counties according to Curcuru. For the rest of the states, Binti would have to start working at the state government level.

“We haven’t really started talking to other states yet, but we plan to soon,” she said.

<http://www.govtech.com/civic/STiR-Startup-Binti-Rapidly-Signs-California-Clients-with-Foster-Care-Software.html>