

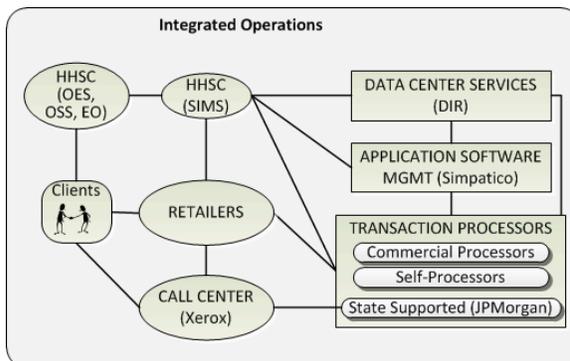
## System Overview - Texas Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

The Texas Health and Human Services Commissions' (HHSC) Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system is composed of tightly integrated processes, communication pathways and data circuit networks between multiple entities including:

- HHSC eligibility system (Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System - TIERS)
- HHSC local offices
- HHSC Lone Star Business Services (LSBS)
- Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)
- Texas EBT application software management
- Texas EBT retailer management
- Texas EBT call center
- Texas EBT certified processors
- United States Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
- Texas certified FNS retailers
- Texas Comptroller's Office

The LSBS Systems Integration Management Services (SIMS) unit manages the integration of vendor service providers into a cohesive, working team. Four primary vendors have the essential role of making the Texas EBT system operate seamlessly and flawlessly:

- **Data Center Services-** Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) inter-agency agreement
- **Application Software Support-** Simpatico Software Systems, Inc. (Simpatico)
- **Retailer Management-** JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA and Xerox State & Local Solutions, Inc.
- **Call Center Services-** Xerox State & Local Solutions, Inc.



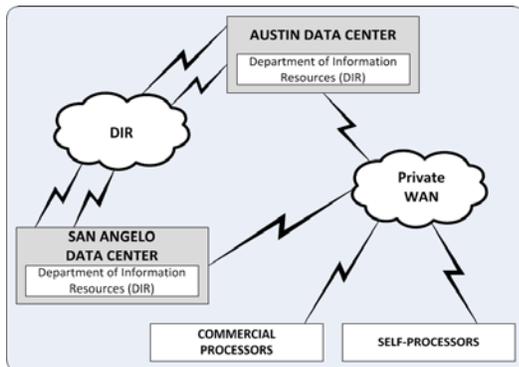
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### DATA CENTER SERVICES

The Data Center Services vendor manages and is responsible for the data center operations for the Texas EBT system which includes:

- 24x7 data center operations support
- batch job processing
- network management
- monitoring EBT transactions
- providing support to third-party processors
- database management and administration
- project management for system enhancements and new features

The Texas EBT system has its primary data center in Austin, Texas at the Austin Data Center (ADC), with a backup data center in San Angelo, Texas at the San Angelo Data Center (SDC). Central processing is supported by a highly redundant network that connects the two data centers, the HHSC eligibility system and the frame relay circuits to the Texas EBT certified third-party processors. The data centers each have 3 primary routers that act as fail-over routers to each other.



### **Triplex System**

The Texas EBT System has 3 host servers that are composed of identical hardware. These servers are configured to be able to perform a "scheduled take-over" in less than 2 seconds. Only one of the servers is designated as the primary server at any given time. In the event of a "scheduled take-over", transaction processing is transferred from the primary server to one of the backup servers. Then the backup server is designated as the primary server and transaction processing continues.

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## **APPLICATION SOFTWARE MANAGEMENT**

The Application Software Support vendor manages and is responsible for supporting the Texas EBT application software which includes:

- 24x7 application software support
- EBT software products support
- project management for EBT software enhancements and new features

The Texas EBT system is built upon an acquired code base that is owned by the state. Ownership of the EBT software provides the state the opportunity to make changes and add new features as needed. This ability to customize the EBT system has been used quite extensively. The Texas EBT system is constantly being reevaluated for possible improvements in performance and stability. Multiple software products support different processes that are occurring simultaneously. The following is a list of some of the primary software components:

- Point-of-Sale (POS) Manager - receives and sends authorization requests and responses between central processing and POS terminals
- GUI Manager - interface to the graphical interface used in the HHSC local offices to review client benefit information
- BATCH Manager - processes batch information to and from the HHSC eligibility system

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## RETAILER MANAGEMENT

The Retailer Management vendors provide retailer management services which include:

- settlement and reconciliation for third-party processors
- deployment of POS terminals to state-supported retailers
- managing the state-supported POS network
- state-supported POS terminal support, repair and replacement services
- managing retailer call centers
- providing card and PIN production and distribution

### ***The Lone Star Card***

The retailer management provider and the state issue magnetic stripe Lone Star cards to clients for benefit account access. HHSC determines client eligibility for benefits monthly and conveys that information to the Texas EBT system. Lone Star Cards are not returned or collected if a client is no longer eligible. Therefore, all Lone Star card usage is validated and updated online, either through terminals connected to the Texas EBT network or through telephonic voucher authorization and manual procedures.



All Lone Star Cards conform to the standards and specifications described in the Lone Star Operating Rules. In addition, each Lone Star Card must have been issued by the retailer management provider or the state in order to access an individual client's benefit account(s).

All Lone Star Cards comply with the International Standards Organization (ISO) standards for the encoding of Track II of the magnetic stripe and the embossing of the face of the card.

All clients holding Lone Star Cards use personal identification numbers (PINs) that meet ISO standards. Each Lone Star card is capable of initiating an electronic funds transfer (as defined in Regulation E, 12 CFR § 205).

### ***State Supplied POS Devices for State-Supported Retailers***

#### **POS Terminal - VeriFone VX520 Features:**

- Exceptional processing for all types of magnetic-stripped credit, debit and EBT cards; optional built-in smart card reader
- Small, sleek and stylish footprint with internal PIN pad and integrated thermal printer occupies minimal counter space
- Large backlit display with exceptional graphics-handling by both display and printer enables in-store marketing, couponing and promotions



- Intuitive ATM-style interface, ergonomic keys and bold, easy-to-read menu prompts reduce entry errors, minimize clerk training, reduces errors and speeds lines
- Intuitive ATM-style interface
- Quiet, integrated high-speed thermal printer with drop-in loading simplifies paper changes and eliminates jams
- Secure Socket Layer (SSL) advanced 3DES encryption with sophisticated VeriShield file authentication and tamper resistance

### **POS Terminal - Usage**

- POS devices are connected to the Central Processor (host processing) environment via an X.25 network, dial-up X.25 connections, and leased lines transmitting X.25 transactions.
- POS support personnel use administrative terminals to access retailer information.
- The POS group receives and handles POS equipment and communications trouble reports from the EBT call center.

### **Reconciliation Interface**

The settlement and reconciliation team works from the vendor (Xerox) facility in Austin, TX with administrative terminal (AT) access to client data, retailer data, and key reports. The settlement and reconciliation team also uses the AT to facilitate settlement operations.

The settlement and reconciliation team handles client and retailer dispute reports from the EBT call center. A dial-up connection is used to access the Food and Nutrition Service Retailer EBT Data Exchange (REDE) system daily for updates to participating retailers.

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## **CALL CENTER SERVICES**

The Call Center Services vendor provides call center services for Texas EBT clients to contact with questions or problems related to the Lone Star Card. The following list provides some of the call center vendor's areas of support and responsibility:

- 24 hour live telephone support
- automated support via the voice response unit (VRU)
- call center software system interface to the Texas EBT system
- ad-hoc software development projects

The Call Center Services vendor maintains a primary call center facility in San Antonio and a backup facility in Sandy, Utah. Both facilities have a frame relay connection to Texas EBT Central Processing for access to client data.

### **Automated Voice Response**

The call center supports Automated Voice Response (AVR) processing for many client calls. The feature most used by clients is the "balance inquiry" function. For calls requiring an associate, a "screen pop" is sent to an associate.

### **Help Desk**

The call center supports the Help Desk for retailers and clients, operating 24 hours per day 7 days per week for most functions.

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