



# SOUTH CAROLINA

## ***FAST COLLECTION SERVICES***

### *Project Highlight*

*"If you have a talented team who can see beyond the functionality that's there to what can be, you can grow and be so much more successful." – Julia Smith, DORWAY Program Manager*

Columbia, South Carolina—In 2015, the South Carolina Department of Revenue (SCDOR) was thriving. DORWAY, a new tax administration system, had been implemented, breathing new life into the agency's business processes and significantly enhancing their collections capabilities. With collections humming along smoothly, agency personnel might have been content to carry on as they were. Instead, the spark of innovation ignited by DORWAY only made the SCDOR staff eager for further advancements. In the years following DORWAY's implementation, the SCDOR continued to make minor adjustments to their collections processes in a quest to push their system to its full potential. In 2020, challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated staffing shortages pushed the SCDOR to go beyond small adjustments and completely reimagine their collections processes.

Though the path to reinvention wasn't yet clear, the SCDOR understood that analytics and automation were the way forward. This would eventually lead them to implement the analytics-driven, software as a service (SaaS) solution, Fast Collection Services (FCS).



# Reimagining Collections

The South Carolina Department of Revenue (SCDOR) and Fast Enterprises (FAST) were far from strangers when they set out to work together on the first implementation of Fast Collection Services (FCS). The SCDOR and FAST had originally partnered together for the DORWAY implementation in 2015 and remained close collaborators throughout the challenges of 2020.

During that time, FAST was also collaborating with another partner agency to finalize a site-specific collections solution that would become the inspiration for FCS.

By using unique data algorithms to analyze taxpayer data and generate suggested next steps and automated actions, this solution leveraged analytics to streamline collections workflows. Aaron Kinard, Upper State Collections Manager for the SCDOR, had seen real-life applications of analytics in private industries like the NFL and was hopeful that integrating analytics could bring positive change. “There’s a lot of opportunity there, and the world is big when it

comes to analytics. I was optimistic that we could have the technology to be able to find answers more quickly,” Aaron

said. FAST Team Manager Cameron Church said leveraging analytics for collections aligned with the SCDOR’s goals. “They’re constantly looking for ways to improve. Compliance programs are progressing toward relying on data and analytics, and

the collections team knew they wanted to move in that direction,” Cameron said.

The SCDOR agreed to partner with FAST to create and implement FCS. While the new service would be based on the algorithms FAST had already prototyped, there was still much left to be designed and decided upon before the new vision for FCS could be fully realized. As the pilot site for FCS, the SCDOR would have the opportunity to influence the development of the new product and integrate it into the DORWAY tax administration system—all at the same time.

“ *We had created efficient processes, but when we saw what FCS had to offer—it was more.*

—Brian Smith, Collections Administrator

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Front row, left to right: Brian Smith, Lee Moore, Greg Arvidson  
Back row, left to right: Sherrie McTeer, Aaron Kinard, Julia Smith



**In Production**  
February 2022

**Agency Name**  
South Carolina  
Department  
of Revenue

**Project Type**  
Fast Collection  
Services (FCS)

**Local Rivalry**  
USC vs. Clemson

# Benefits



## PERSONALIZED COLLECTIONS APPROACH

FCS enables individualized taxpayer treatment by recommending actions based on the historical behavior of a taxpayer instead of basing actions on collection status alone. For example, a *Self-Cure* recommendation suggests a taxpayer is likely to resolve a collection on their own without intervention.

"Before, everybody was treated the same. Now that we can identify those collections that'll self-cure without our intervention, it makes a big difference in how we do business."

– **Sherrie McTeer, Deputy Director of Taxpayer and Business Services**



## EASILY INCORPORATED RECOMMENDATIONS

FCS analyzes each collection and uses that data to provide revenue officers with a suite of recommended actions tailored to resolving each collection.

"I wanted to put one thing in front of a revenue officer to show, 'this is the most timely action you could take on this collection right now,' and I think we did that."

– **Lee Moore, Collections Training Coordinator**



## INCREASED COLLECTIONS REVENUE

Revenue has increased for the agency, including via fees paid to the SCDOR from organizations that participate in its Governmental Enterprise Accounts Receivable (GEAR) program, which collects taxpayer debts on behalf of other government entities.

"Last year, in 2022, we collected approximately \$3 million in fees. This year, with FCS up and running, our fees collected were at \$6 million."

– **Sherrie McTeer, Deputy Director of Taxpayer and Business Services**

## Jumping in with Both Feet

Implementing FCS while it was still in development might have seemed risky, but Deputy Director of Taxpayer and Business Services Sherrie McTeer said investing in FCS was a calculated, well-researched decision. "My team tells me I'm a risk-taker, but I don't consider myself one because we ask a lot of questions," Sherrie said. Collections Administrator Brian Smith echoed this sentiment. "You have to have doubts, but you also have to ask the right questions on the front end. We did our research, got informed, and felt confident enough that it could be a good option for us—that it could bring things to the table that we weren't doing, and make the things we were doing better," Brian said.

As the SCDOR and FAST brought the vision of FCS to life, there were many more questions. Creating new processes meant the team needed to consider how decisions would play out at implementation. Project members' ability to

dive in kept FCS moving forward. "Once we jumped in with both feet, it was smooth sailing, and the team was good at adjusting," Brian said. This innate adaptability was also critical to the project's success. Julia Smith, DORWAY

Program Manager said, "The key for us was the attitude of our collection staff—being willing to come with an open mind. You need people with ideas, with a willingness to understand and change today's processes to fit into what could be. Shoutout to Brian's team!"

Now that FCS is in production, it's clear that the benefits are well worth all the effort put forth by the team. "I see the benefits of having FCS compared to where we were before. FCS handles a lot of our automated processes, our collectors now have a lot of information at their fingertips, and it improved a lot of systemic pain points," Brian said. Sherrie agreed, "Thinking about where we wanted to be, going with FCS was the right decision for us to make."

“It was great to be given the opportunity to participate in the pilot for FCS. I think it's proven to be a huge benefit for our collections team.”

– **Julia Smith, DORWAY Program Manager**





## A Focal Point for Future Work

By contributing their knowledge to FAST Collection Services (FCS), the SCDOR staff have woven their experiences into a product that has become the baseline of future FCS implementations. Their work will bring lasting change to not only South Carolina, but also to jurisdictions that implement FCS in the future. Collections Training Coordinator Lee Moore views this influence as a point of pride. “My best memory was

going to out-of-state conferences and hearing other states and agencies talk about FCS, saying that they can’t wait to be part of what we helped to develop,” Lee said. He continued, “It’s great to help our people in-house, but that out-of-state impact meant a lot to me.”

That doesn’t mean the SCDOR’s work on collections is done yet. According to Collections Administrator Brian Smith, the efficiencies borne out of the implementation have freed



Left to right: Lee Moore, Aaron Kinard, Julia Smith, Greg Arvidson



the agency to brainstorm other potential improvements. “Now, it’s like what do you do with this time that you have now, where can you grow in other areas?” Brian said. FAST and the SCDOR staff have been busy fine-tuning collections recommendations, implementing regular updates as part of routine system maintenance, and discussing timelines for the next system upgrade. Brian feels the agency is well positioned for further

improvements to collections. “FCS is now front and center and part of the conversation when we’re considering large processes,” Brian said. He continued, “Utilizing data to make decisions is huge, and we want to be able to use FCS as a vehicle to carry us forward.”



Julia Smith



Greg Arvidson



Sherrie McTeer



Brian Smith



Aaron Kinard



Lee Moore



Sarah Meyers



Cameron Church

“

*Our future will change, the industry will change, and we’re going to change—this product can clearly change with us.*

*—Aaron Kinard, Upper State Collections Manager*

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