

Modernization Steering Committee
March 3, 2010

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Gary Alexander, Deborah Buffi, Linda Katz, Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Katheryn Tavares, Donna Martin, Linda Ward, Elizabeth Earls, Kathleen Gorman, Bob McDonough, Art Schnure, Gerry Bedrick, George Bowen, Leon Saunders, Kim Merolla-Brito, Elaina Goldstein, Corrine Calise Russo, Craig O'Connor, Sarah Griffen, Judy Taylor, Phil Silva, Stephanie Geller, Bill Flynn, Maureen Maigret, Diana Beaton, Charles Williams, Fred Sneesby, Hector Rivera.

Introductions/ Welcome - Gary Alexander

Reviewed Modernization Initiative effort to date. The priority is to streamline processes for consumers.

Introduced Speakers:

Dottie Rosenbaum, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Budget Priorities and Policy (CBPP)
Stacey, Center for Budget Priorities and Policy (CBPP)
Blake Shaw, Senior Partner with the Change and Innovation Agency

Stacey-

Talked about “cross integration”...how can programs work together. She visited other states that have modernized. You can learn a lot from other states that have modernized.

What is Modernization?

Its starts with the question, “ Do our state processes work as well as they could?”

Elements that all states have undertaken include:

1. Applicants apply for help/assistance program
2. Obtain benefits
3. Retain benefits

There’s always room for improvement. Some state say it’s about saving money (i.e., Florida), or giving customers more options (Washington, Penn. Wisconsin), or managing more efficiently (New Mexico, Idaho)

It’s about Service Delivery.

States want to improve the business process. There are policy changes and technological enhancements. Changing the business process is really “re-engineering”.

Some examples of changed business process or “makeover” include:

At the front end- using a web-based application, or enhanced phone service, pre-populating forms, kiosk check-in, streamlined application.

Florida, Utah, Washington, and New Mexico have done this.

If you break the “business processes” into discreet steps and standardize each part, what you get is an assembly line type of process... □ - □ - □ - □

What’s nice about this is, you can look at the bottlenecks in the process flow. Montana has a system where no workers have cases; they all take a part of the process. This leads to more standardization and less idiosyncratic ways of processing.

Policy changes may include:

1. is the policy complex?; can it be simplified before streamlining processes
2. does the policy need to be reviewed?
3. can you decrease verification needed to apply?
4. can you reduce the number of times the state touches the case
5. can you extend recertification time period

Technology

How can IT support an improved business process- important to do both IT and business process; it doesn’t work as well to just do IT.

Technology changes may include:

1. simplify and streamlined first, before thinking about technology solutions
2. you can use paperless...scanning documents
3. autoverification...you can use DMV to verify address or CSE or DLT
4. telephone based models
5. automated voice response
6. web-based services

Dottie Rosenbaum-

Lessons Learned

- Not a one shot deal; won’t work perfectly the first time; start with incremental change
- All states who have moved in this direction have used incremental change, with continuous improvement.
- Manage the change process (in-house, consultants); Get buy-in from caseworkers, managers, advocates, etc.
- Indiana and Texas has legislature-imposed systems and it didn’t work as well; where change was introduced more collaboratively, it worked better.

There’s a broad range of people you serve. One size does not fit all. You can use online, telephone, and/or in-person for applying. Not everyone has computer skills for online applying. There’s not necessarily a cost savings to these changes too.

Evaluate Progress

How do you measure whether your process is working?

Transparency is better. For assessment, use data dashboards. Give managers good info about what's working.

When assessing process, there's work time (time it takes to actually handle the application) vs. elapsed time (the time it takes from start to finish for client). Usually public assistance delivery takes approximately 2 hrs. work time but 15- 30 days of elapsed, processing time.

Blake Shaw- Change Agents

Worked with New Mexico, Fairfax County VA, Washington

Had fundamental change, not just handing down a new process; engaged staff.

Some of the results: ability to do 40% more caseloads, clients receiving benefits faster, lower error rates, no new technology needed.

Get the process right first.

Moving away from a case management model requires: intrinsic motivation on staff's part; they have more time to connect with clients; less burnout of staff.

We look mostly at the elapsed time (the 30 days it takes to process an application) and try to improve that process. We are asking staff to work smarter, not harder.

We need: Process Management (as opposed to case management). Need to get 30 days down to 2 days. Key people should be working on key processes.

NM went from 20 days down to 10 days

WA went from 17 days to 4 or 7 days. One office had 2.9 days.

This system is more flexible; you can put people where they are needed.

Make sure that technology is enhancing the right business process, not the other way around.

G. Alexander-

Another challenge is that we have multiple programs- mental health, child welfare. A child coming in the system through DCYF doesn't necessarily hooked up with DHS programs. How does the entire system talk to each other.

One facet of this redesign, is that we want a system where people use technology, one-stop shopping, at the point of entrance to the system... get triaged for all of it.

All workers across all agencies need some cross training so that everyone has basic info on those programs. We should be helping people towards economic stability. If worried about supports, can't focus on what you need to do- find a job.

C. Calise Russo-

Described situation with Protective Services workers. They interface with clients and input info into a computer but don't have a laptop. Certain work needs to be done at intake.

(In thinking about business processes and change) You have to know what your goal is- different goals and values pull you in other directions.

Having generalists that know about all programs could really help RI. But generalists can't possibly know about all the programs.

Stacey- There are states where the staff is expected to know about child care, food stamps, health, income supports.

C. Calise Russo- Look at the ADRCs across the country

Blake- (in response to question re: process management)

Not all clients need the same process; often there are 2 interview processes. Not everyone should be treated the same. Through data, find out the reasons and what are the right processes for each.

(see handout from meeting).