

BUSINESS PROCESS REDESIGN IN KANSAS



70% of customers receive a determination same day



40% to 60% increased speed in processing time (depending on the program)

Client

State of Kansas, Department for Children and Families (DCF)

Timeframe

October 2011 to October 2014

Project Overview

Business Process Redesign (BPR) is a broad concept describing the effort of capturing an organization's hidden capacity, reducing activities that do not add value, and decreasing cycle times required to process work. This is accomplished through exercises and activities focused on process management principles that are reality-based:

- + Eliminate unnecessary customer interaction
- + Reduce rework
- + Customers have different needs (one size does not fit all)
- + Use of real-time data

Beginning in 2011, the Kansas DCF and Change & Innovation Agency (CIA®) embarked on an effort to redesign the agency's business/eligibility processes with the goal of increasing its staffing capacity to withstand workload increases and program complexity. One of the most pressing challenges facing DCF was limited staffing resources to handle the increased demand for services. Economic conditions during the previous five to seven years led to dramatic program growth. For example, from 2009 to 2011, Kansas experienced a 47% growth in SNAP participation/caseload.

The DCF leadership group's primary goals for BPR were to control and reduce fraud, achieve efficiency of service delivery, move towards virtual/online services, and focus on self-sufficiency of DCF clients. Kansas DCF had the foresight to redesign its business processes prior to the implementation of the new eligibility system – Kansas Economic Enforcement System (KEES).

Tasks

In October 2011, Kansas and CIA began to analyze DCFs' most important eligibility practices to determine different strategies for processing the work. A BPR effort consisting of eligibility line staff, team supervisors, office managers, and policy and administrative staff followed a structured approach for identifying opportunities and devising a new set of business practices. Every step and interaction was focused on evaluating the processes and systems in which staff do the eligibility work and developing/implementing a plan to bring improvements and increased efficiency. Between 2011 and 2012, the major tasks performed during the lifecycle of the project included:

- + Assessment of local office operations and staff
- + Strategy sessions with leadership to develop a plan of action and approach

- + Redesign teams to create work processes that are faster, more accurate, flexible, and focused on using precious eligibility worker time only on value-added tasks. As-is process mapping was conducted, barriers and bottlenecks were identified, and new processes were developed.
- + Full implementation planning, preparation, and rollout support to implement the new processes and business model developed by the redesign team in 15 offices across the state
- + Post-implementation reviews, assessment, and consultation

In January 2013, DCF again partnered with C!A to leverage the newly implemented BPR processes, tools, efforts, and lessons learned to continue the implementation effort in the state's 23 remaining local offices. C!A also developed and delivered customized BPR trainings for managers at the local office, regional, and state levels.

Outcomes

Kansas' new processes focus on freeing up administrative capacity and improving quality by streamlining the most important eligibility practices and processes: initial applications and interviews; verification and eligibility decisions; and maintenance and re-certification. Outcomes of the project included:

- + Same-day service and on-demand interviewing/processing is provided at all local offices. Kansas successfully eliminated the practice of scheduling appointments to conduct interviews for all new/initial applications and re-certifications from existing customers (walk-in and telephone). Customers are seen, or interviewed over the phone, as they come in or call. In most cases, the applications and re-certifications are processed same day and customers leave with completed eligibility determinations.
- + Increased the percentage of families receiving benefits on the day of application from 10% to 70%. Seven out of every 10 customers who interact with a DCF local office end their interview with a determination on the day they apply or renew their eligibility.
- + Increased the speed of processing time by 40% to 60%, depending on program
- + Improved SNAP payment accuracy from 94% to 99%
- + Achieved timeliness of 95%, an increase from 85% before the project began
- + Reduced local office call volume by 69%
- + Enabled staff to process 9,000 more applications every month
- + Reduced the average time to process applications and issue benefits from 30 days to ten days
- + Eliminated backlog of pending actions (applications, re-certifications, changes, interim reports). All local offices are processing incoming mail/work within five to six days of receipt.
- + Developed tools to bring consistency to the eligibility determination work
- + Developed standard operating procedures

Additionally, DCF was awarded the USDA High Performance Bonus for FY 2014 of \$621,501 for most improved payment error rate.