



Governor's Sterling Award & Sustained Best Practices



Performance Improvement through Data Selection, Analysis, and Review

Description of Best Practice:

In light of a multitude of competing priorities within the Department of Children and Families – from state and federal requirements, customer needs, and multiple programmatic areas – the Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) systematically prioritizes performance measures, and ensures that the analysis and review of performance data captures actionable information to be used to improve the level of service provided to our customers. Big picture measures are pulled from the Department's overall scorecard and include state, federal, and customer requirements. Of those measures, specific emphasis is placed on the interrelation between measures, and how end-of-process results such as timeliness and accuracy can affect customer service and program accessibility.

With an average of nearly 3 million calls received monthly, the Department's ESS call center is a primary customer contact mechanism for recipients of public assistance and, with record high demand for services, consistently faces demands in relation to its capacity and capability to handle the volume. Although analysis of call center-specific metrics has proven valuable in understanding call patterns and customer behavior, it is only through an analysis of more traditional timeliness measures that the Department has been able to understand and get a handle on call volume. For example, an analysis of the 'Days to Process' an application for assistance showed that each day that passed between the receipt of verification from a customer and the day the case was completed resulted in an exponential increase in the number of calls to the call center. Resources were assigned to reduce this number, and call volume and blockage rates decreased almost immediately.

In addition, the ESS program places significant emphasis on workload production metrics and the analysis of in-process measures to ensure timeliness and accuracy. In this way, data is used to support organizational decision making and allow for agility in workload manipulation, by providing managers with key daily information necessary to shift resources to meet changing demands. An ancillary benefit was the ability for us to use this individualized worker performance data to support high performance work through our performance management system.

Results:

As a result of these practices, the Department's ESS program saw a significant decrease in the percentage of applications completed outside of time standards and the variation of this metric between different regions statewide. For example, within the first year after implementing some of these best practices, backlog was reduced from as high as 8.0% to less than 1%, with variance between regions decreasing from around 4% to less than 0.5%. Similarly, average days to process an application decreased from approximately 16 days to just over 10 days, with some regions as low as 8 days!



Call Center volume and performance also showed meaningful improvements, with the blockage rate going from 84% - meaning that on average two out of every ten callers were able to get through – to 38% between August 2012 and June 2013.

The Department's ESS program continues to excel in the areas of application timeliness, with nearly 98% of all applications completed within federal time standards. This assures that the neediest residents of our community are able to access services such as food assistance and Medicaid quickly. In addition, the State of Florida received a \$7 million accuracy bonus from the federal Food and Nutrition Services for its error rate of only 0.81%, second in the nation. This is the seventh year in a row that the ESS program's improvements and accuracy in correctly processing food assistance applications has received accolades and bonus money from the federal government, now totaling more than \$54 million.

Application:

DCF's Economic Self-Sufficiency program utilizes a 'Critical Few' methodology to prioritize measures based on criteria such as impact on call volume and customer requirements. It also provides staff at all levels with dashboards and other tools designed to assist with the review of in-process measures, with "trigger points" set to encourage resource allocation to meet daily workload demands. Daily, weekly, and monthly reports are generated by the call center to allow local operations managers to understand the interrelation between the workload at the local service center and the call center. These metrics include measures such as call volume compared to caseload size, call escalations by region, and port utilization.

