Improving business processes for delivering work supports for low-income families: Lessons from the Work Support Strategies Initiative

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WHAT IS WSS?

Improve families' well-being by increasing enrollment in the full package of work supports.

Help states deliver benefits more effectively and efficiently

Share lessons learned to inform state and federal policies.
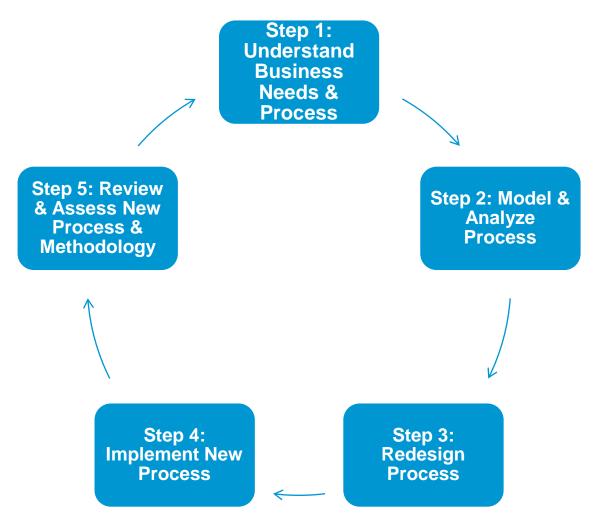
Contents

- What are business processes?

- Why did states want to improve business processes?

- What changes did WSS states make?

- Challenges and facilitators

- Results

What is Business Process?

- Work flow

- Physical layout

- Use of technology

What is Business Process Re-engineering?

Step 1: Understand Business Needs & Process

Step 2: Model & Analyze Process

Step 3: Redesign Process

Step 4: Implement New Process

Step 5: Review & Assess New Process & Methodology

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Why did WSS states change business processes?

Goals:

- Deliver services efficiently and accurately
- Minimize burden on clients and workers

Pressures and Opportunities:

- Economic downturn: More clients, fewer staff
- ACA
- Existing systems outdated and burdensome
- WSS inspiration and resources; peer learning

What Changes Did WSS States Make?

- **Expectations for processing time and place**

- **Cross-program integration**

- **Lobby changes**

- **Work flow**
  - Task-based; universal workers; shared caseload
  - Management software; align with technology

- **Other changes to reduce workload**
  - Electronic documents; policy alignment

Challenges to the change process

- Competing priorities and goals across agencies

- Ability and willingness to change

  o Local differences (e.g. office size)

  o Staff capacity

- Mismatch with technology

- Logistics

  o Time pressure and ongoing workload

  o Staff roles defined in union contracts

Facilitators of the change process

- **Commitment and dedication**
  - leadership, workgroups, third party support
- **Communication**
  - cross-agency relationships and collaboration
  - engagement at all levels, including external
- **Staff training on process and management**
- **Gradual implementation**
- **Using data**

Results in WSS States

Anecdotal evidence of improvements
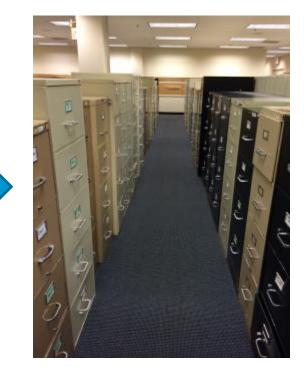
- Staff morale

- Customer experience

"I use to have to carry a caseload. I had to do all the [assistance] programs, before there was separate teams for anything. I used to have to do everything. We don't have to do that anymore. It's like [we're] this one big team. We just go wherever we're needed" - Worker

"The fact that you can walk in within two hours and within two days you have food stamps. It's pretty amazing that they can do that!" - Client
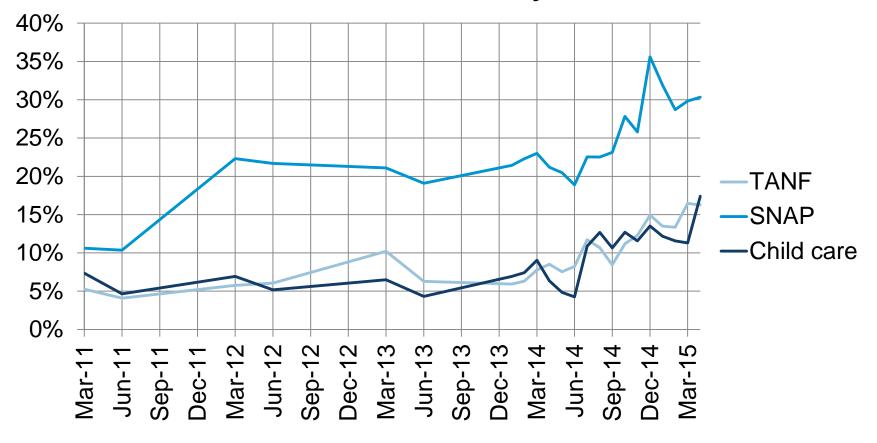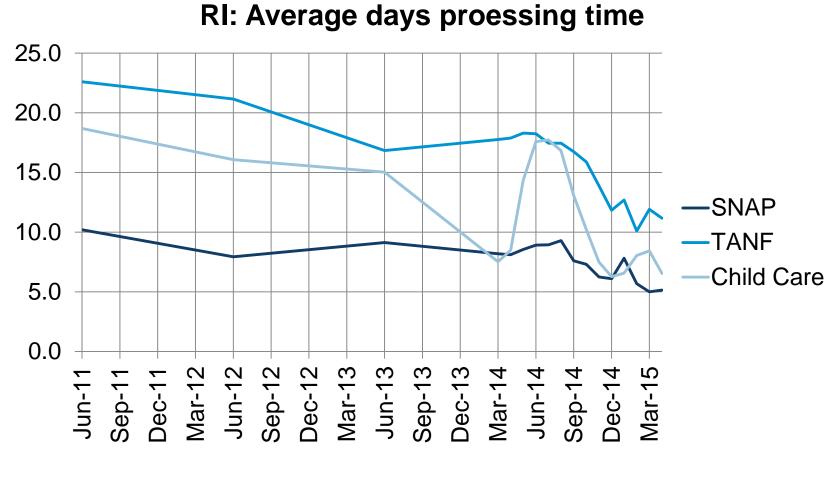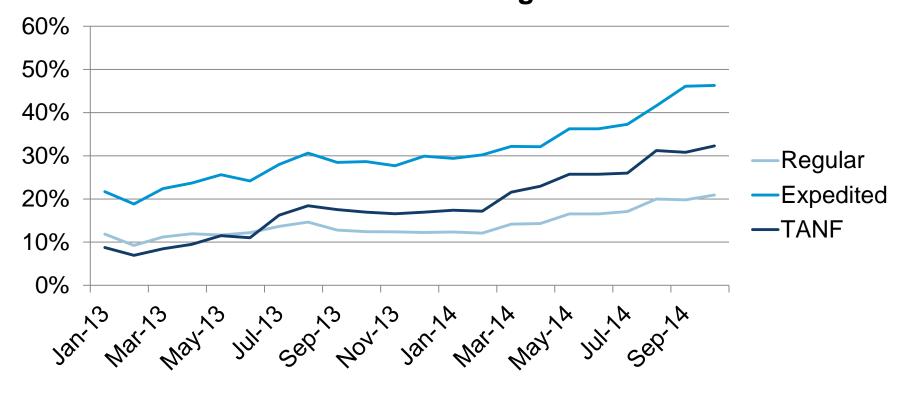
Results in WSS States

Visible results in Illinois

Results in WSS States

Quantitative data

RI: % Same Day

Results in WSS States

Quantitative data

RI: Average days proessing time

Results in WSS States

Quantitative data

CO SNAP (Regular & Expedited), TANF: Same Day Processing

Conclusions

Business process changes…

- Involve a long, iterative effort

- Require trust, collaboration, and
    communication

- Are inseparable from technology and policy