



Detailed Lean Improvement Project Rep

For the June 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014, reporting period

Agency name:

Department of Social and Health Services

Improvement project title:

Background Check Central Unit Equivalencies Value Stream Mapping (VSM) Event

Date improvement project initiated:

June 2, 2014

Summary:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) improved the Equivalencies process by eliminating the backlog of requests and reducing the turnaround time for requests from 4-6 weeks to same-day.

Details:Description of the problem:

When the DSHS Background Check Central Unit (BCCU) receives information in which an individual discloses a conviction or pending charge from another state or when the FBI criminal history shows crimes were committed in other states, the Unit requests an equivalency. An equivalency compares the out-of-state crime to a crime in Washington so that BCCU staff can determine if the out-of-state crime is equivalent to a crime on the (DSHS) Secretary's List of Disqualifying Crimes and Negative Actions. Washington State law and regulations require individuals be disqualified from unsupervised access to vulnerable populations if they have been convicted of or have been charged with a crime that is equivalent to a crime on the Secretary's List.

Initially, basic equivalencies were completed in house by BCCU staff and the more complex and complicated equivalencies were sent to the state Attorney General's Office (AGO). Due to increasing complexity, all equivalencies were eventually sent to the AGO. In December 2013, it was determined the equivalency review required a specific legal skill set, expertise, and access to legal websites to complete accurate equivalencies. Due to the volume and backlog of these equivalency requests, the AGO asked BCCU to refrain from sending any additional requests. BCCU then began a review of its process to identify any waste in the procedures, and determine the best party to process the equivalencies.

Description of the improvement:

The backlog as of June 9, 2014, was approximately 120 equivalency analysis requests. While working on the backlog, it was determined that the process, roles, and responsibilities needed clarification. Additionally, the voice of the customer was needed from program recipients to understand expectations and determine value- and non-value-added tasks.

This VSM created standard work that eliminated overproduction and rework loops.

Specific results achieved:

- ▶ 90 percent decrease in the time it takes to conduct one equivalency.
- ▶ Reduction of existing backlog.



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- ▶ Clear and efficient procedures, roles and responsibilities that accommodate customer needs.

Charles Meach, BCCU participant, said: "I think that the VSM was absolutely amazing! Not only did we streamline the background check equivalency process to decrease the turnaround for our customers, but I think we also gained something else. I think that the relationships built between Contracts, BCCU and the program contacts was an excellent outcome of this event and will be an asset in future projects. After participating in this event I think that Lean VSM events are an excellent tool to streamline processes and build relationships that assist our customers, the citizens of Washington State."

- ▶ Cost avoidance by completing equivalency work in-house

BCCU collaborated with DSHS' Central Contracts and Legal Services (CCLS) unit to conduct equivalencies in house. CCLS and BCCU are part of the same division within DSHS. CCLS staff has the legal skillset needed to perform equivalency reviews. BCCU was able to fund one position in CCLS to focus solely on performing the equivalency reviews.

Additionally, the AGO had previously estimated the equivalency workload to require approximately 1.5 to 2.0 FTEs. BCCU avoided these costs by streamlining the process and working with customers to gather more complete information at the beginning of the equivalency process allowing the equivalency workload to be handled by one staff in CCLS.

- ▶ Increase in customer satisfaction and accuracy

Jeannette Childress, participant from Residential Care Services (RCS), said: "RCS is thankful for the opportunity to participate in this project. Streamlining the BCCU business processes, related to background check equivalency reviews and the review of potentially disqualifying crimes that need further documentation, has assisted the RCS program with aligning with the BCCU and AL TSA [Aging and Long Term Support Administration] to improve resident safety, reduce duplicative efforts, and eliminate potentially conflicting outcomes. This Lean Project was priceless!"

- ▶ Increase in general feeling of team synergy

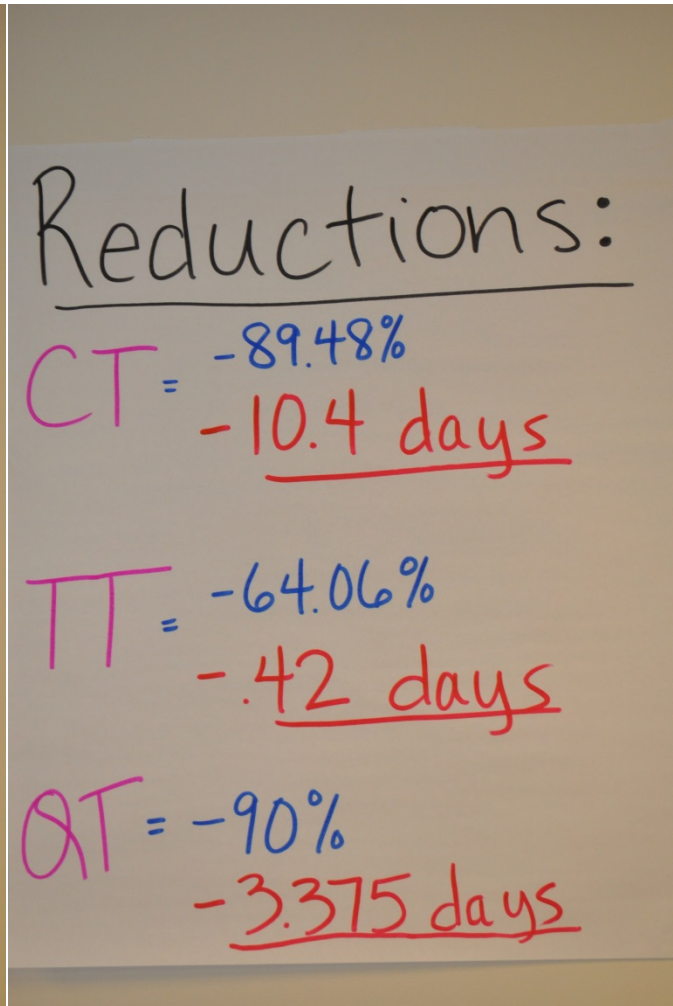
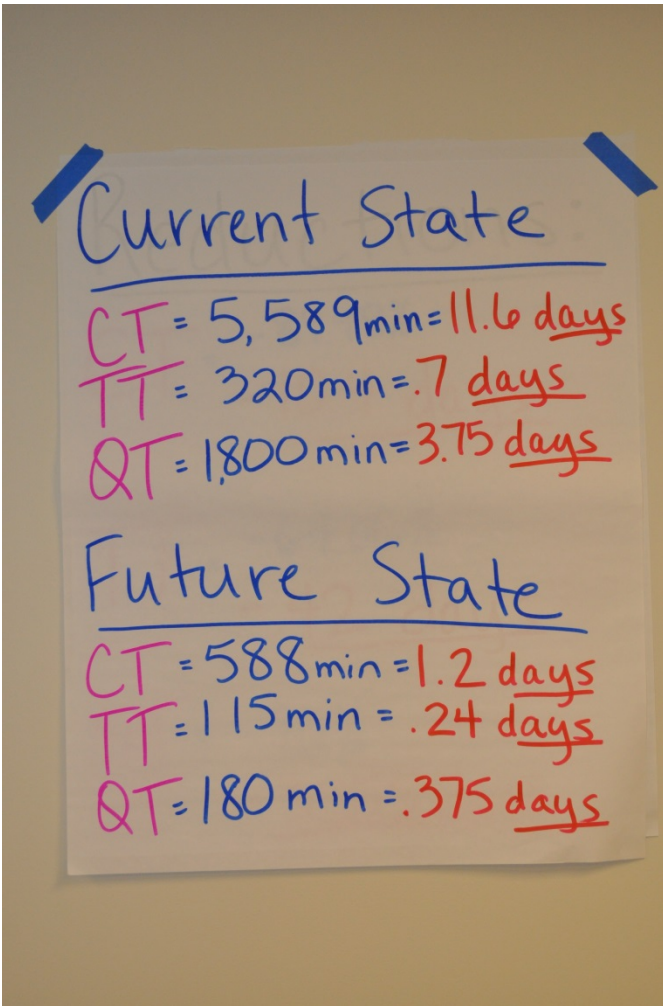
Monika Vasil, CCLS Sponsor, stated: "The good feeling in the room when I returned at the end of the VSM for the report-out was palpable. Never before in my state career have I experienced so many people in one room exuding so much comradery and sense of accomplishment. It was a truly remarkable experience that allowed the folks involved to carry forward their momentum and make real changes that will have a lasting impact for the better."

How we involved customers or stakeholders in this effort:

We involved our customers in the planning and execution of the VSM, including through implementation. This helped build relationships with them and understand their needs. As a result, programs are spending more time educating those using the service to ensure thorough and accurate information is collected up front. This expedites the process for customers and increases accuracy.

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Contact person/s:
 Jennifer Colley (BCCU)
 360.902.7828

or

Stephen Ssemaala (CCLS)
 360.664.6054