

What is the main thing you got out of the Design team?

Taking more time to complete cases results in saving us all more time in the long run. For ETs, we will be doing more, such as registering cases and scheduling interviews when cold calls are unsuccessful. We also learned that to process more cases timely, it doesn't mean that we need to work faster. We need to focus on completing all case actions, therefore, pending only as a last resort.

DPA proportionally has more ETS than OA's. As such, we must prioritize our OA work AND put the case work into the hands of the ETs as quickly as possible, allowing the ETs to do more so we can move to a determination quickly.

We need more people! What are they going to do about that?

It is very unlikely that the legislature will approve more positions for the Division. So, depending upon hiring more staff is not an option. In fact, for all Divisions in the state, budget cuts are a possible result of the current economic climate and are not within our control. What we can control is process; we must attempt to make it as efficient and effective as possible, thereby eliminating the multiple touches of work per client. Taking the time to complete all case actions will help us eliminate unnecessary or multiple client interactions. This is where our focus must be. The longer cases stay in pend status, the longer we will have contact with the client and changes within their circumstances occur.

In the new model, it seems like OAs' skills aren't being used like they used to be.

"It feels like my skills aren't being utilized as they were prior..." This was a big discussion during the design session. There are not enough clerks in the Division. As a result, they unintentionally become a bottleneck, impacting the work of the ETs. In the proposed model, even though OAs won't be registering the clients, they will be triaging the client and determining which pathway the client will go for faster service. Additional in depth program training for the OA's will be provided.

ETs will be registering? How can we do that when we don't have time to finish our work as it is right now?

Registration will add another 5-10 min per case. All ETs will receive refresher training for registering cases. As a result, yes, you will spend more time per case. However, many times the ET can determine gaps in the application before it's registered, and can avoid sending in a help desk ticket to delete the registration.

We added different work and the work is changing, it is streamlined, and the tasks are different. It is not about quantity per se; it is about completing cases, thereby eliminating unnecessary client contacts and pends. Completing cases immediately also reduces the amount ROC's that can greatly impact the time to process a case. If you work 10

cases and finish 8 of them, that is fantastic. But if you work 10 and pend 6, this does not benefit the agency as a whole. Every time we pend a case we are adding 45 min of work time plus an additional work because the client will be contacting the agency three to five times asking about their case. Staff will be allowed to interview completely without the pressure of an interview schedule (no time slots with limits) that forces workers to stop and set aside the work to complete at a later time.

What about a call center? How do we handle the phones?

We understand that the phones are overwhelming in every location right now. If a new process is successfully launched, most of these calls will be eliminated. The primary reason people are calling the agency is because we are in a backlog situation and their case has been delayed in process; the majority of the time, the clients are simply asking where their determination is in the process. This will be worked through, and as backlog is reduced, our phone pressure will diminish. In addition, the amount of Urgent cases needing to be worked as a priority will also decrease, adding time back into your day and clients receiving benefits before it becomes a crisis for them.

How will scheduled interviews work? I've heard that we are trying to eliminate them.

For Intake, here is how the proposed process will work:

For example, in the current intake process, the first thing we do is attempt is to schedule an interview. In the proposed process: We need to Cold-Call all of them. If we are diligent, we should reach about 60% of them, so now we are down to 40% to whom we send interview appointment notices. The new notice will indicate a scheduled date for an interview, and the client will have the option to show up and interview ahead of time. About half of those will call in or walk in, leaving only about 20% of the original intake interviews in the original cycle for scheduling.

I've heard about PathOS. It sounds like micro-managing. What is it?

PathOs is neither confusing nor micromanaging; you're going to need to wait until you see it. PathOS is a simply a workload management tool-- the primary use of the tool is to quantify the work coming into DPA, work going out, and how much we are sitting on at any moment. The good news is workers will no longer need to complete a production log! YEAHH! . PathOS will provide that information, and will give us the proper data to actually manage the work in real time, allowing supervisors to fluidly move staff to appropriate pathways to assist when needed. For ETs, most cases in PathOS require three key strokes: (1) claim the case, (2) dispose as complete/ pend/no-contact, and (3) confirm.

What will OAs do in the new process?

Some OA functions will no longer be their responsibility--they will no longer schedule and register, and the process has simplified the role in the lobby. OAs will be taught how to research the case that comes in only as far as is needed to triage the work. OAs will triage the mail, the lobby clients and the phone calls messages. Every clerical team in every region is overworked now, and currently we are pulling ETs to do the work anyway. In the future, OAs will have other duties on their plates as we implement a statewide Electronic Document Management system (EDM) and Call center/system.

What is the difference between this new plan and LEAN or KAIZEN from before?

There are four major differences between this time and last time.

Previous perceptions were of DPA taking a Gambell process and making the other offices fit within it are partially true, although the first time also included ET's, OA's and support units and the design process is different this time around.

- We have again used a statewide design team. Consisting of only ET's and OA's. There were no support units, regional managers or upper management involved on a daily basis. This statewide design team began looking at how to form consistency statewide to gain efficiencies. We all have a hand in the design and success of the new model.
- Second, we have a workload management tool with PathOS. This is critical for success.
- Third, we have more time with the contractor—training, preparing and assisting us in formulating a plan on processing the backlog, helping us through the go-live process which includes monitoring and coaching staff to sustain beneficial outcomes after go-live.
- Extensive training for the leadership, to include OA IV's, ET III's, IV's, EOM's and Regional Managers.

What happened to First Contact Resolution (FCR)?

FCR was defined in many different ways across the state, and nowhere was it defined correctly. As such, we've scrapped the term and now define it as "One and Done!"

To help us reach "One and Done" several consistency tools will be developed:

1. Reference Verification Matrix
2. Run Electronic Interfaces / Cross-Matches
3. Check System / File
4. Make Collateral and 3-Way Calls
5. Pend when 1,2,3,4 are unsuccessful.
6. Interviewing Scripts
7. New case note structure
8. New SPMG – renamed to HowWe

I've heard that there are no more specialized sites like Gambell, Muldoon, or Wasilla.

The design team is proposing that we eliminate specialty sites, and return all sites to both maintenance and intake. This obviously requires a lot of focus on Gambell and Wasilla. What the team proposes is a very strategic work assignment between sites, rather than scattering the work statewide. Also, we would like to bring much of the local work home, to most regions. One of the advantages of the new processes and using PathOs is the work will be fair and equitable for all sites and ET's, regardless of where they are stationed at.

Case files? Are we going to have them?

Don't know the answer yet. Initially, yes. We are looking at EDM systems currently, as well as policies required by State and Federal governments for records retention.