



Richmond County Improves Customer Care with Lean

In 2015, Richmond County was invited to participate in the Department of Health and Human Services sponsored Lean Improvement Initiative. Within the Richmond County Department of Social Services (DSS), all customer inquiry calls are routed to the Customer Care Center (CCU). Richmond County DSS signed on with the goal of improving its customer inquiry resolution and response time.

DSS's improvement goals were:

- › Customers will have their issue resolved within 48 hours
- › Customers will have their needs met by a single staff member

Trained Lean Facilitators from NC State Industry Expansion Solutions collaborated with people working to respond to customer inquiries in the CCU. Together, the group completed a Value Stream Map—a visualization tool used to document processes—to outline the current state of the inquiry process and collect baseline measures of customer response time. The group found that the baseline average response time for inquiries was six days. During the exercise, the team identified non-value added activities (waste) in the process, as well as variation in process among individuals, which contributed to the long response time.

The team then conducted a rapid improvement event in which the group identified and prioritized improvement opportunities which could impact customer response time. The team created standard work documents, which clarified the role of each staff member in resolving inquiries and created a

Richmond County Challenge

Richmond County's Department of Social Services had an average inquiry response time of six days

IES Solution

Lean Government

Benefits

After deploying Lean tools including value stream mapping and standard work documents, the inquiry response time was cut to one day, and the inquiry backlog was eliminated

uniform practice. In addition, the team identified that inquiries referred to the Recertification Team were being resolved and returned to the CCU to be communicated to the client. The standard work document eliminated the referral back to CCU by the Recertification Team and charged the Recertification Team with calling the client directly to communicate the resolution to their inquiry.

Training on the effective use of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services Through Technology (NC FAST) system was also part of the improvement initiative.

DSS's improvement goals were to have customer issues resolved within 48 hours as well as have their needs met by a single staff member.

These changes resulted in customer inquiries being resolved within one day.

The cumulative impact of these changes resulted in customer inquiries being resolved within one day, and the inquiry backlog being eliminated.

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