

BENEFITS DOCUMENTATION



CW PAYMENT FUNDING REQUEST

Event Id CAF CW 09 1.1

Version No.: 1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE:

Statewide over \$681,856 in discretionary funds is spent on average per month on children and their families involved with child welfare. The process to make payments was not only lengthy, involved several approval processes, difficult forms, but also time consuming and inefficient, as well.

Last fall the team assigned to the Payment Funding Request topic area rolled out the process efficiencies identified during the September RPI to three pilot sites. Findings from the three pilot sites (small/medium/large county representation) have been positive. The new process has reduced the process from twenty steps to nine, and reduced the cycle time from an average of 8 days to an average of 1 to 2 days, and eliminated the need for committee meetings. The resulting annualized savings from the efficiencies is 267 FTE hours per year, which equates to \$8,976.99 annually in salary. The process efficiencies has allowed caseworkers to reinvest their time in performing direct client services, as well as allowed other committee members' who are no longer involved in the process to focus their time on other duties.

IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY

An RPI event that was held in September, 2008 found that the Payment Funding Request process was time consuming, involved several approval processes, difficult forms, and was also inefficient. The key process improvements were:

- A stream-lined electronic funds request process where the caseworker completes an electronic form and emails it to their supervisor or designee for approval. The supervisor or designee reviews the unit budget and determines if the request will be approved. The supervisor or designee familiarizes themselves with the case details and will make the determination based on budget and case circumstances. If the request is approved, the supervisor or designee will complete the supervisor/designee section of form and electronically sign the form. The form is then submitted to support staff that process the payment and document the payment electronically and in FACIS. Documentation of all payments is stored electronically on the shared drive which ensures access by everyone in the branch and allows supervisors to have real-time budget information.
- The elimination of committee meetings for approving requests. The approval of the request now lies with the supervisor or designee who reviews the unit budget and determines if the request will be approved (this process replaces a committee approach that previously owned reviewing and approving requests). In the new process, the supervisor or designee familiarizes themselves with the case details and will make the determination based on budget and case circumstances. This ensures that fund requests are being approved based on best practice and is consistent.

The combination of these two changes has resulted in the reduction of process steps from 20 steps to 9 steps, and the related cycle time reduction from an average of 8 days to 1-2 days.

The revised process has been implemented in three pilot sites since October 2008. It is being targeted for a statewide roll-out in August, 2009. Statewide base line activity by branch is now occurring to ensure

the ability to accurately capture process efficiencies as well as report statewide benefits upon implementation.

BENEFIT/OUTCOME DESCRIPTION

The improved process has brought significant benefits to DHS employees and Oregon citizens. These benefits include reduced cycle time from initial date of request for payments to actual payments being made, improved relationships with clients by more timely decisions on client services, and increased time for more direct client services by caseworkers.

COST SAVINGS:

By eliminating committee, CAF has saved 267 FTE hours per year, which equates to \$8,976.99 annually in salary. This has allowed caseworkers to reinvest their time in performing direct client services, as well as allowed other committee members' to focus their time on other duties. (Note this figure represents data from Gresham Child Welfare Branch).

PEOPLE and SERVICE:

The elimination of committee has also decreased the amount of time a payment request sits waiting for payment approval. Payments are now processed within 1-2 days from the date of request, which improves client and provider relationships, and the ability to access necessary services in a timely manner. These services include, but are not limited to counseling, mentoring, therapeutic support services, and educational costs, all of which are essential to the well being of our children.

QUALITY:

The revised payment authorization form is more simple and easier to use, allowing all staff to feel more confident that they are completing the work correctly the first time, and providing more satisfaction in regard to the end results. Supervisors and caseworkers have access to all payment related data on the shared drive. This information assists in case planning, is easy to access, and prevents redundant work by all staff involved.

LOGIC DESCRIPTION

Discretionary Funds average expenditures from monthly program expenditure report (attached)

Salary Expenditures and Time Savings based on baseline data on time spent in, and preparing for committee by classification (multiplied amount of time spent in meetings (11.25 hrs x \$31.17 for SSS1's, 5.5 hrs each for PEMC and OM x \$41.27 and \$31.07 respectively) associated with employees' classification).

Cycle time from statewide monthly tracking sheets.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Data Spreadsheet
- Reinvestment Plan