Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

John R. Kasich
Governor
Kevin L. Miller
Executive Director

Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation
Division of Disability Determination

Green Belt Six Sigma Project Report Out

Derek Willer – Team Lead

Jeannette Bostelman, Andrew Meador, Hope Sweeney, Jennifer Wells

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities - OOD

December 2, 2014

VR CASE ASSIGNMENT & BALANCING

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TEAM MEMBERS:

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)

- **Sponsor:** Susan Pugh
- **Mentor:** Raivo Murnieks
- **Subject Matter Experts:** Tabitha Nelson, Douglas Mohr, Omoteji Adeyemon, Michael Tudor, Cynthia Jackson-Glenn, Amber Coates, Michelle Steinke, Phyllis Slosser, Nick McDowell, Nicole Miraglia, Kelly Rodriquez, Kristin Butts, Michelle Loveland
- **IT Support:** Steve Trammell, Pamela Laing

STAKEHOLDERS

- **Consumers** – Individuals seeking and receiving services from BVR/BSVI
- **OOD Staff**– All Counselors, CA's, and Supervisors
- **OOD Administration –** Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Deputy Directors
- **Employers** – All who employ customers through VR services

BACKGROUND

- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) needs to insure a consistent and equitable process for onboarding consumers onto caseloads for Vocational Rehabilitation.

- Metrics:
  - The waiting list will be significantly decreased or eliminated
  - Cases coming in the door will be assigned with 2-3 business days to a Counselor's caseload
  - Caseloads from one part of the state to another will be balanced.
  - There will be a written process for equitable case assignment.

- Data indicates that the decision making process when assigning cases is not consistent throughout the state. This creates unbalanced caseloads on both the team and bureau levels. There is currently no written policy or procedure for how cases should be quickly, consistently, and fairly assigned to a Counselor's caseload.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

- The scope of this project includes general Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and transition cases and excludes contracts and Employment First. Historically it appears that the front door process created by the previous Kaizen approximately a year and a half ago was a success in its scope but beyond the reduction of timelines, each office and even each team has a differing approach to the case assignment process.

PROJECT GOALS

- GOALS:
  - *Balanced caseloads
  - *Consistent onboarding of new cases
  - *Fair and equitable distribution of cases to counselor caseloads
  - *Consistent experience/timeline for consumers regardless of the area of the state in which they receive services.
  - *Prevent a recurrence of the waitlist in Ohio.

- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) needs to insure a consistent and equitable process for onboarding consumers onto caseloads for Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Set all staff up for success by providing the opportunity to create **J**obs, being **A**ccountable for job expectations, taking **C**ost-effective measures, and taking **E**fficient actions to provide optimal customer service.

CHARTER

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LEANOhio Project Charter

Project/Event Title	VR Case Assign
Project Facilitator	Derek Willer
Facilitator Agency	DDD
Project Mentor	Raivo Murnieks
Project Type:	Green Belt
Project Champion/Sponsor:	Susan Pugh
Project Agency	OOD
Charter Last Updated Date:	5/28/2014

What is the Process this Project is intended to Improve?

Standardization of the process by which cases are assigned to VRC staff in each OOD office in the state of Ohio.

Business Case

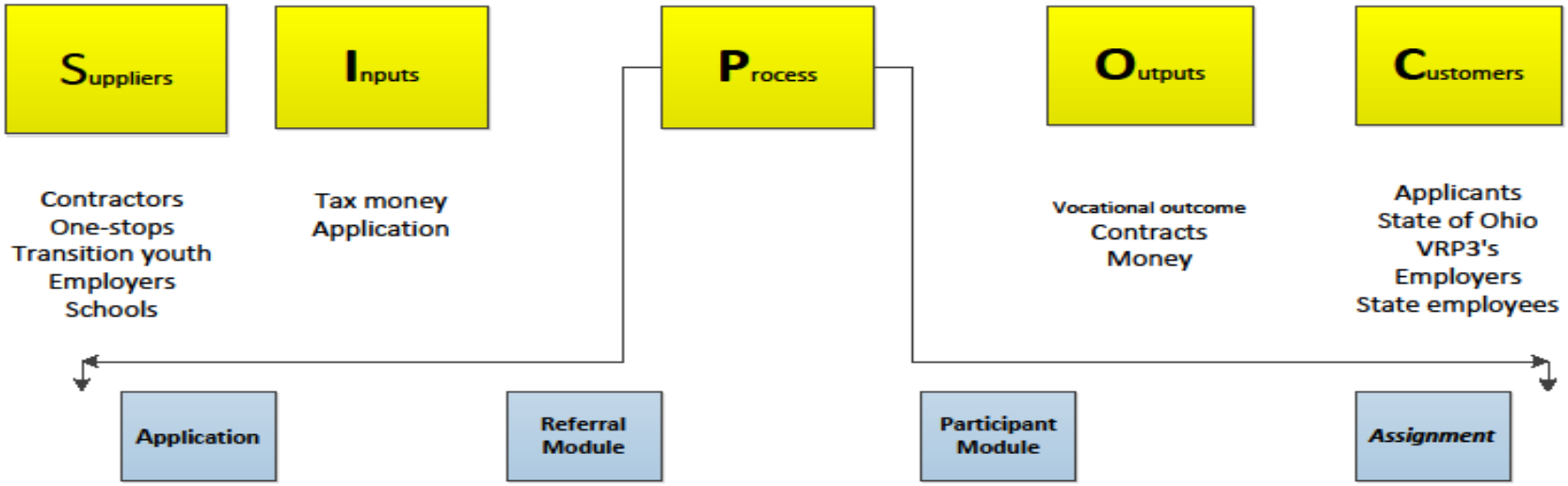
This project is important in order to maintain immediate service and fully utilize counselor capacity while assuring that individuals requiring service in each area of the state are treated in a fair and equitable manner regardless of the OOD office in which they intend to receive those services. The consistent and steady influx of cases by the defined process to counselors will have a dynamic effect on case progression, work flow, and services provided.

Problem/Opportunity Statement:

In order to accomplish the desired results of this project, OOD needs to assure a consistent process for onboarding individuals seeking service to caseloads for general VR. The inputs into the system target these four areas: general BVR, BSVI, RCD and transition cases. Employment First (EF) is not included in the scope of this project. Internal cases to OOD will also need to utilize and maximize the use of contract services. Historically it appears that the front door process created by the previous Kaizen was successful in its scope, but beyond the reduction of timelines, each office and even each team has a differing approach to the case assignment process.

SCOPE (DEFINE BOUNDARIES)	First step in the process:
	Application
	Last step in the process:
	Case Assignment

HIGH LEVEL PROCESS - SIPOC



DATA COLLECTION PLAN

- We collected data from the last three fiscal years
- Only used the data for FY 2014 because it was after the implementation of a prior Front Door Kaizen
- We looked at applications received per counselor
- We filtered out employees who had special projects and had only been with the agency for less than the full year

SURVEY COLLECTION – MULTIPLE PROCESSES

- A survey of the VRS and CA positions throughout the state was completed to determine what processes were currently being used to assign VR cases.
- Results showed the Front Door Kaizen process is working better, but there is an opportunity to improve the customer experience by reducing the time even further from referral to application
- Actual assignment is handled nearly equally by VRS and CA depending on the way in which the initial contact is made by the consumer.
- This also indicated that there were multiple hands in the process creating less control and more variation in the assignment process, creating unequal assignment amongst counselors

SURVEY – THE SPRINGBOARD FOR DETERMINING VARIATION IN THE PROCESS

1) What is your job title?
☐CA
☐VRS
☐Other:
2) What team are you on? (Ex: VI-CIN3-1, VR-CIN3-2)

3) My team consists of (check all that apply):

☐General Caseload ☐BSVI ☐Transition ☐RCD
4) How do you define Capacity?

☐80/68 or 90/78 Model ☐Total Active Open ☐Total Open on Hand ☐Number in Service
Other:
5) Check the person responsible for making the assignment in each category as well as prioritize your decision making process for case assignment in each category by providing in number order (1,2,3,….):
A. **From Orientation/Intake/Walk-Ins:**

Person Responsible: ☐CA assigns ☐VRS assigns
Order of priority: #___Capacity
#___Specialty Area (BSVI, RCD, Transition, etc)
#___County/Area Served

B. **From Wait list**:
Person Responsible: ☐CA assigns ☐VRS assigns
Order of priority: #___Capacity
#___Specialty Area (BSVI, RCD, Transition, etc)
#___County/Area Served
#___Assign to VRC that made Eligibility/OOS Determination
C. **Transition Students:**

Person Responsible: ☐CA assigns ☐VRS assigns ☐Direct Assignment
Order of priority: #_____Assigned School
#_____Capacity
#_____County/Area Served
D. **RCD:**

Person Responsible: ☐CA assigns ☐VRS assigns ☐Direct Assignment
Order of priority: #_____Capacity
#_____Area Served
E. **BSVI:**

Person Responsible: ☐CA assigns ☐VRS assigns ☐Direct Assignment
Order of priority: #_____Capacity
#_____Area Served

6) Are there any other factors considered that are not identified above?

Yes☐ No☐
If Yes, Please indicate what those factors are:

TEAM MEMBERS: WHY WERE THEY CHOSEN?

Subject Matter Experts

- Survey identified variance in case assignment processes throughout the state
- Team members selected based on variance throughout the state
- CA's, Contractors, and Supervisors selected
- Urban and rural counties included, as well as individuals from all areas of the state
- SME's were a fair representation and addressed the needs throughout the state

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- Capacity- per the survey completed, most teams define this as the total open active or the 80/68 model.
- Open House
- Orientation

BASELINE DATA

- Significant disparities were noted in assignment levels, both between and within teams
- Counselors who cleared more tended to receive more assignment than those who did not
- Some teams were more consistent than others

OUR MANTRA – VARIATION IS EVIL!

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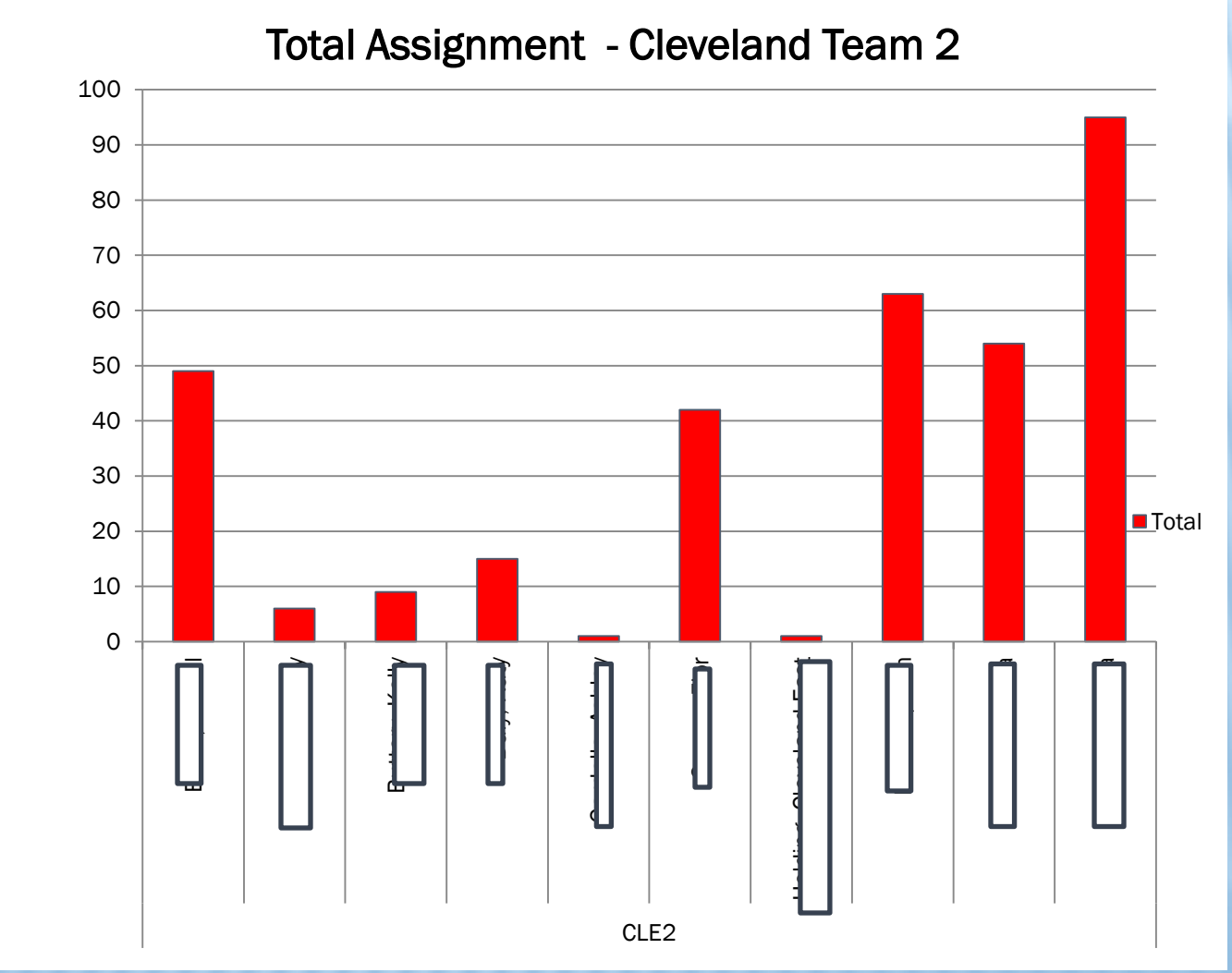
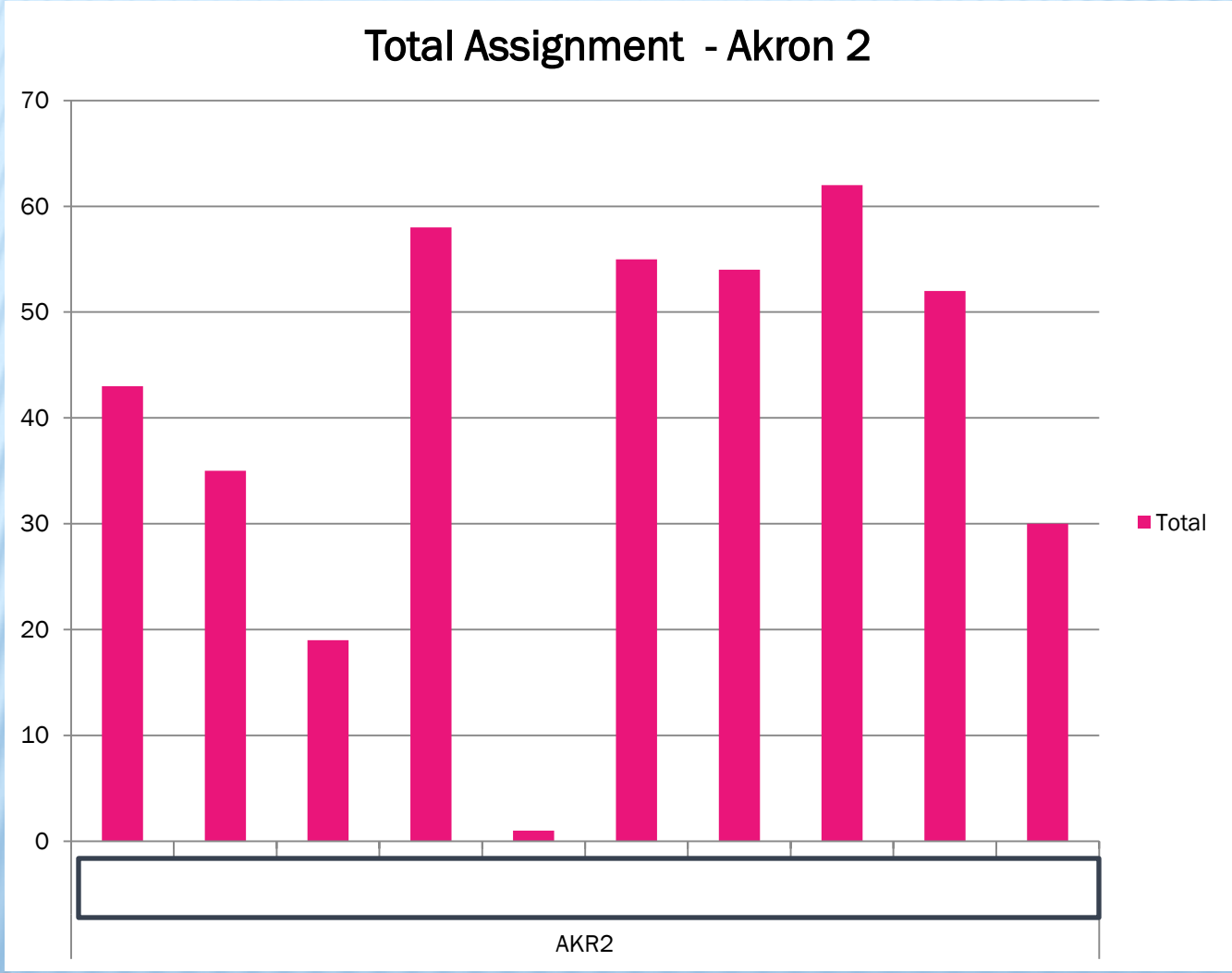
BASELINE DATA



BASELINE DATA



PROJECT METRICS

Measure	Result		
Waste	Reduced the number of wasteful steps and handoffs; created one unified process		
Measure	Before	After	Difference
[Process Steps]	20	8	12
[Handoffs]	4-6 (varied)	1	3-5
[Decisions]	16	6	10
[Waste Points]	7	0	7
[Processes]	42 (one per team)	1	N/A

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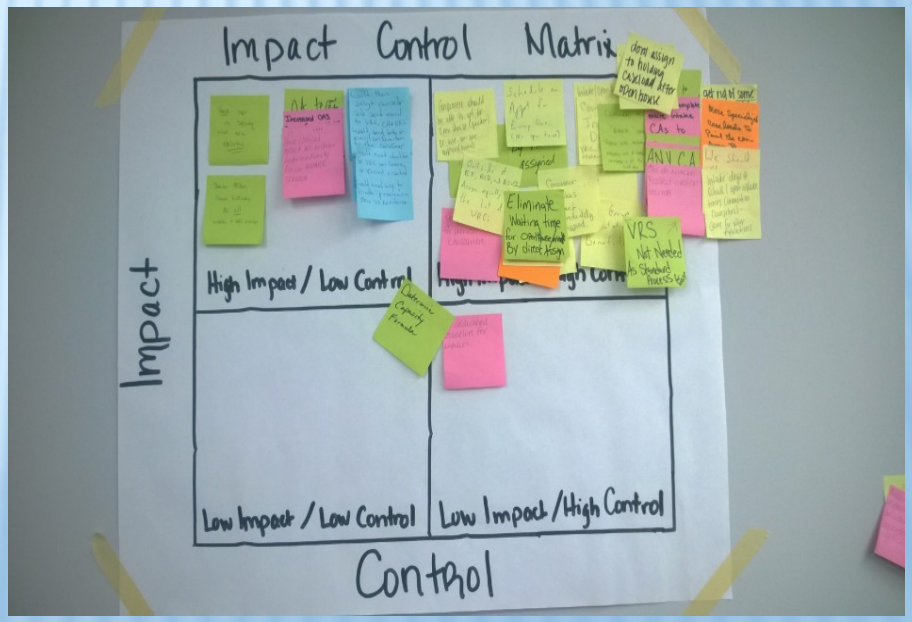
DETAILED PROCESS MAP

PROCESS MAPPING

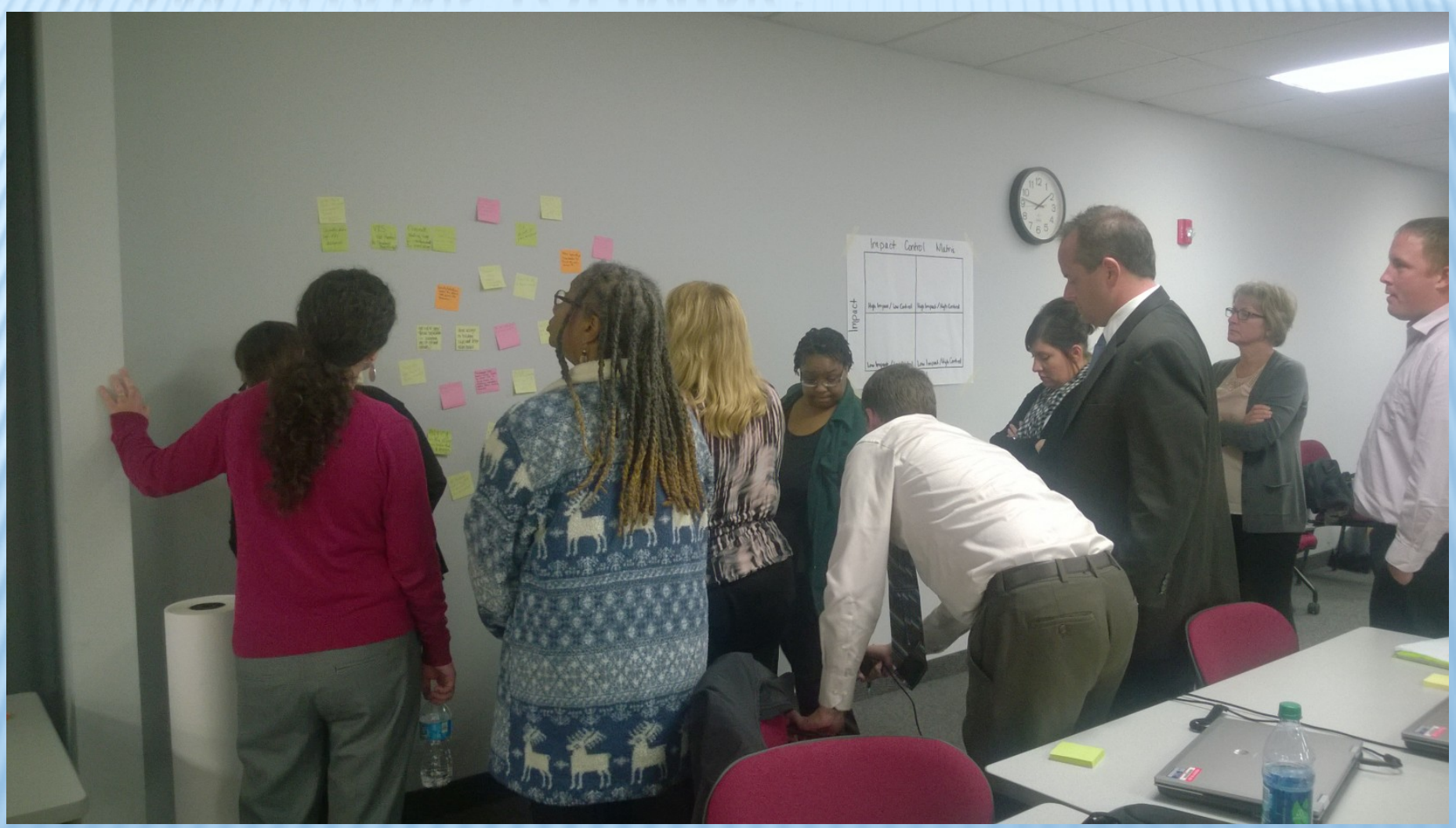
- Over-processing and waiting were two glaring results of the number of people involved in the assignment process
- Survey results were supported, as multiple case assignment processes were identified during the current state mapping session, resulting in high variance amongst the teams and even within a single team

OTHER TOOLS – TO HELP TELL OUR STORY

- TIM U WOOD
- Brainstorming
- Impact Control Matrix



TEAM BRAINSTORMING



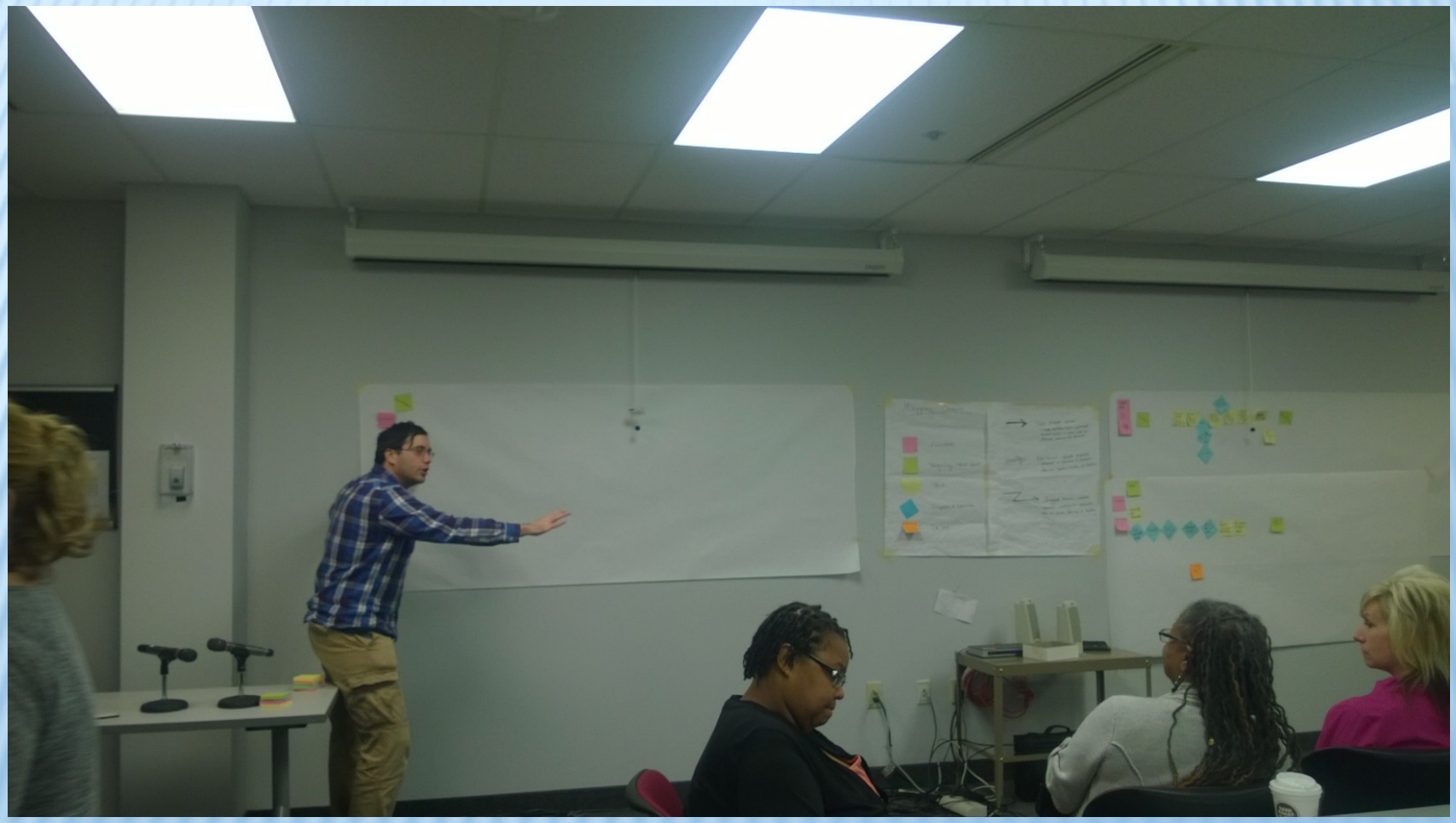
IMPACT CONTROL MATRIX

- Team came up with multiple ways to reduce waiting and over-processing such as no longer using holding caseloads, streamlining the process by standardizing, and eliminating unnecessary case movement between staff
- Even resulted in an idea of eventually automating at least some of the process

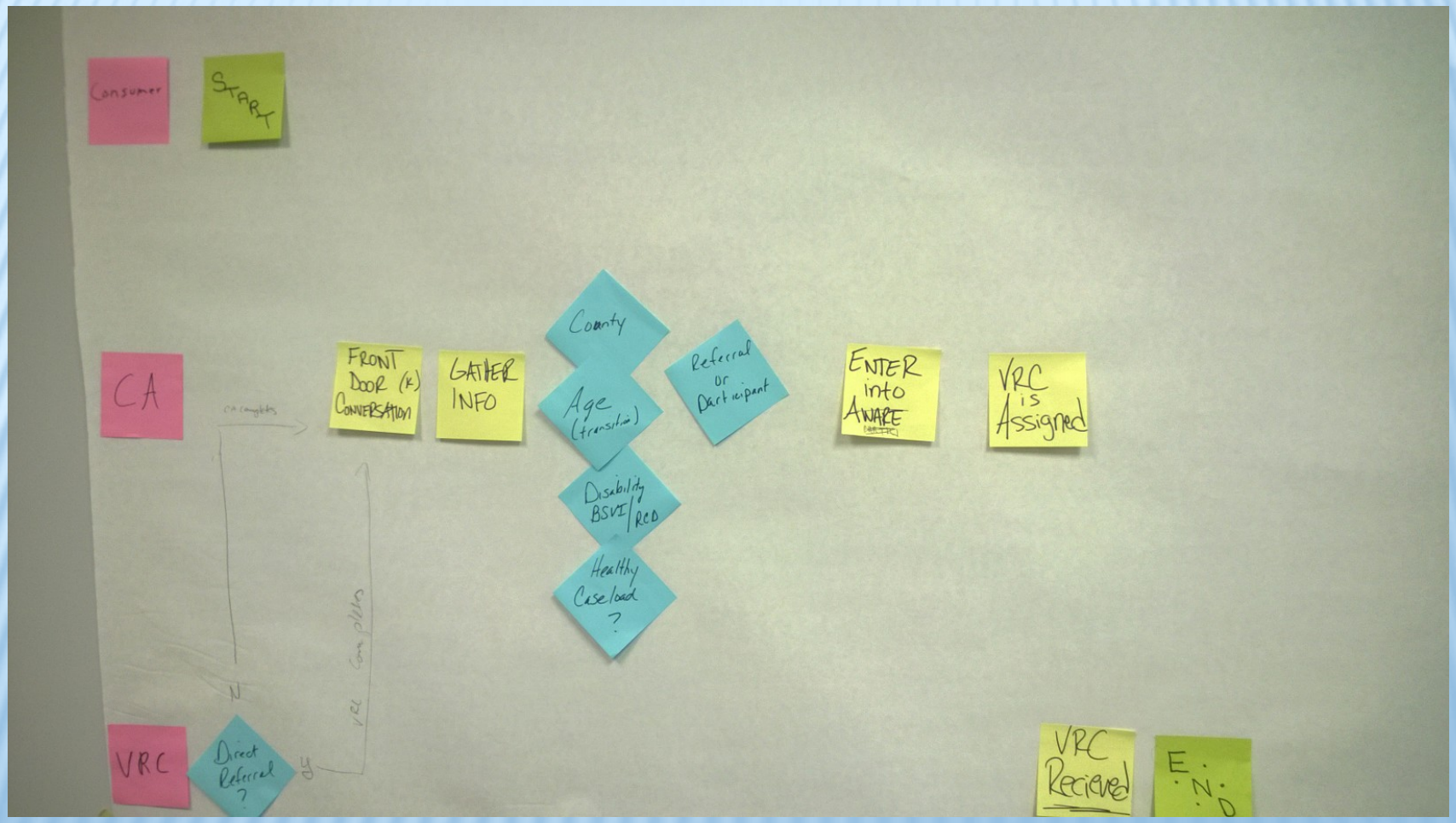
CLEAN SHEET REDESIGN

- The large group was split into two small groups, then each reported out on their redesign.

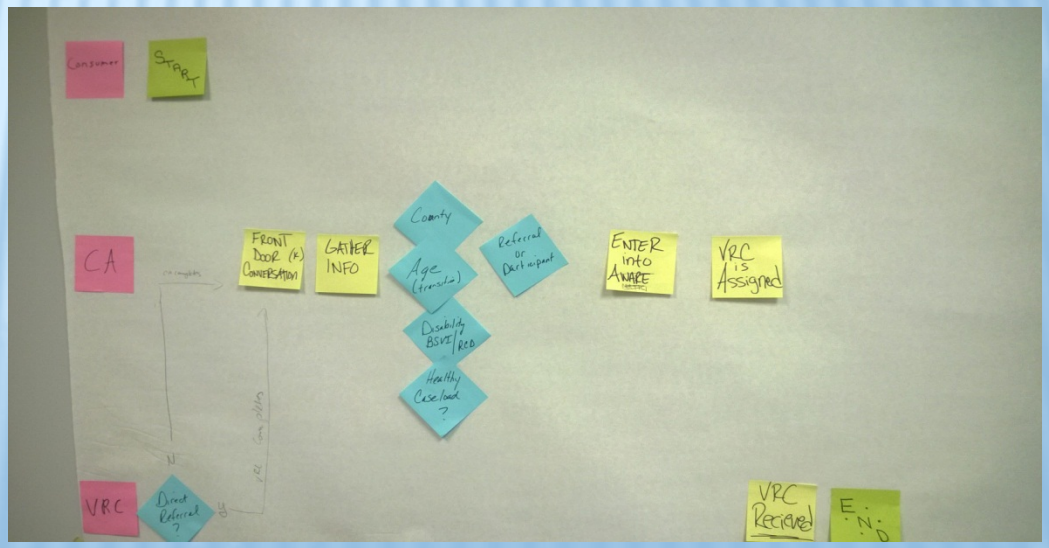
FUTURE STATE MAPPING



FINAL MAP


Consumer
START
CA
FRONT DOOR (K) CONVERSATION
GATHER INFO
County
Age (transition)
Disability BSVI/RCD
Healthy Caseload ?
Referral or Part ipant
ENTER into AWARE
VRC is Assigned
N
Y
VRC
Direct Referral ?
VRC Recieved
END

SIDE BY SIDE COMPARISON



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THE NEW VR ASSIGNMENT PROCESS!

- In most cases, CA will now complete the referral from the customer, unless a direct referral to the counselor – Supervisor will assist when business needs dictate
- Front Door conversation and information obtained
- Decision Tree – which counselor should receive the claim, input into either Referral or Participant Module
- Entered into AWARE
- VRC is then assigned the case

PROJECT BENEFITS - TANGIBLE

- ✓ Process helps reduce the number of days for eligibility decisions
- ✓ The outcome of an improved case assignment process will assist in meeting the new federal requirements such as plan writing (FY '14 over 120 Days, new WIOA regulations will require plan writing within 90 Days)
- ✓ Elimination of holding caseloads to ensure more efficient and timely assignment of cases to counselors
- ✓ A single, standard process that can be implemented to all offices throughout the state

PROJECT BENEFITS - INTANGIBLE

- More efficient and timely service for customers, providing an overall better experience
- Increased ownership and empowerment among the VRC's, including holding agency stakeholders accountable for the process
- Improved agency reputation
- Operation within RSA recommendations for elimination of waitlist
- Consistent, fair and equitable distribution to counselor caseloads
- Better monitoring of caseloads by counselors
- New assignment process will directly impact other VR processes, which ultimately benefits all stakeholders in the process

IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY

Current Key Issues	How We Improved
No written process defining how cases are assigned.	Defined case assignment process in writing.
Cases currently being assigned up to a "capacity" number.	Discussions support development of a healthy caseload dashboard.
Ohio is currently operating under Order of Selection.	Identified waste and eliminated steps to provide more efficient assignment

ACTION REGISTER

Task	Who	When	Status
Healthy Caseload Dashboard	P. Laing & C. Hauck	dashboard early December, training to follow – mid-January completion	on-going
Balancing Caseloads	Area Mgrs & team supervisors	contingent upon dashboard training	

ACTION REGISTER – CON'T

Task	Who	When	Status
Performance Policy & Training	Darin McCoy & Greg Dormer		on-going
Decision Tree for Equitable Distribution of cases	TBD by mgmt – to include team members	contingent upon action register items	
Staffing Level Needs	VR Administration	contingent upon action register items	

IMPLEMENTATION

- New Case Assignment Process will be implemented in all offices throughout the state, contingent on the action register items being completed.
- VR Leadership will embark on an aggressive communication plan to ensure compliance with the process in relation to creating **J**obs, being **A**ccountable, taking **C**ost-effective measures, and taking **E**fficient actions to provide optimal customer service.

SPECIAL *THANKS* TO…

Senior Leadership:

Kevin Miller, Executive Director, OOD

Bill Bishilany, Assistant Executive Director, OOD

Erik Williamson, Deputy Director DDD/OOD

Darin McCoy, Assistant Deputy Director

Greg Dormer, Assistant Deputy Director

Sponsor: Susan Pugh

Mentor: Raivo Murnieks

Black Belt: Tom Melfo

Wave VII GB Candidates for all of their support!