BUSINESS PROCESS REDESIGN (BPR) FAQS

What exactly is BPR?

Business Process Redesign (BPR) is a broad concept describing the effort of capturing an organization's hidden capacity, reducing activities that do not add value, and decreasing cycle times required to determine eligibility. This is accomplished by changing eligibility practices based on process management principles that are reality-based:

- Eliminate repeat visits by applying First Contact Resolution (one and done) to every customer interaction. This means doing everything within our control to complete the eligibility determination at first contact with the customer. Every time an office pends a case, we are likely adding 10 to 14 days to the eligibility process.
- Reduce rework through the consistent use of eligibility tools and standard business practices – tools that encourage people to do the eligibility work more consistently and make eligibility determinations more efficiently. For example, identifying the very specific questions everyone should be asking of like cases; ensuring all families are subject to a consistent set of verification requirements; and documenting cases in the same manner to eliminate having to re-interview or re-work cases.
- Clients have different needs; therefore, we should first identify what brings the customer to the office so that we can triage their case and link them to the team best qualified to handle their case (triage).
- Collecting and using real-time data enables offices to respond to an ever-changing environment more rapidly and effectively. Many agencies' ability to impact change is severely limited without real-time data. This lack of data is akin to flying a plane through a storm without instruments and relying on yesterday's weather forecast – guessing what the next move should be.

Why do we need to change processes?

Staff cannot work any harder than they do today. While things are going well, human services agencies are stretched too thin to handle major policy changes that impact workload, or any other unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, we needed to proactively develop a plan to help manage existing challenges.
The goal of BPR is to remove unnecessary or non-value added tasks that waste time and resources.
The end result will free up staff to focus on work that is truly meaningful and important to the agency mission.
We need to increase staff capacity and their ability to serve clients faster, more efficiently.

Won't a new eligibility system eliminate our problems?

This is the largest, most expensive misconception in government – that new eligibility systems will handle the increased demand for services and make work time more efficient. New application and technology solutions play a role in assisting with the automation of work and making reporting and data collection easier, but they do not, on their own, make significant strides in helping offices increase efficiency and serve more clients.

Technology automates our work, but the work is not always where we struggle. To complete an eligibility determination, staff require about 30 to 60 minutes of "work time," but it takes several weeks for customers to receive a final determination. The total time from first interaction to determination is what we call "elapsed time." The gap between that elapsed time and work time is typically between 95% and 99%; that is where the opportunity really lies. Automation tends to focus only on the work time, which is such a small percentage because we lose the majority of our time in the gap. BPR solutions focus on why we struggle to find the time to do the 30 to 60 minutes of work.

The struggle to get to a faster determination often begins with the pressure to find that 30 to 60 minutes you need when the lobby is full of clients hoping to get help that day. When this happens, many organizations favor doing a smaller portion of the 30 minutes of work and pending the remaining work for a later date in order to get to the next client. These "pends" require additional work to track, manage, and eventually complete. Many IT solutions make doing this extra work easier by allowing for sophisticated pend queues, the electronic transfer of applications, client appointment scheduling solutions, and access to data needed to manage the pended applications and backlog. All of these attempts are, at best, helping us manage the problem, but they miss helping offices address the real issues that caused the problem originally. The root cause of the problem is that the vast majority of clients are in the lobby because their applications are in the pend queue and the client is trying to move it along.