

Human Services System Modernization

THE PROBLEM

Minnesota human services programs, processes and technology are complex, severely outdated and burdensome. Counties, which deliver these services, need a new system to best serve people in need.

Minnesota's system is not only archaic but also unusual. It is one of only three states in the country that pay for non-federal economic support administrative costs.

THE SOLUTION

Improving system modernization requires a state-county partnership. Counties are already heavily invested in this work. They are committed to developing a solution that benefits clients, counties and the state.

The solution should streamline access to client data and cut wait times for clients. It should also reduce data entry for county workers and simplify procedures. The solution is a three-legged stool of modernization:



Immediate requirements:

The state should provide short-term funding and system fixes while also pursuing long-term modernization. Without immediate improvements, state systems that counties rely on now will crash due to new program requirements and other factors.

Bridging relief: Counties will work together to develop solutions that will serve as a bridge to long-term modernization. These bridging tools will reduce data errors, speed up application processing and improve program integrity. Counties are best-suited to bridge

existing technology and processes to long-term modernization. They are already working individually to find solutions, but the efforts are not organized across Minnesota, and the state is not supporting those efforts.

Long-term modernization: The state should lead on the rollout of a new, long-term modernization system that benefits clients in all counties. It should create a system where core functions work together — client data should be entered once and accessible for different program applications.

CLIENTS ARE WAITING

The status quo is unacceptable. Our clients are waiting for services they desperately need. Our public servants are spending jaw-dropping amounts of time on duplicative and head-pounding data entry tasks, which lead to high turnover. Our taxpayers are paying for an inefficient system with no end in sight.

NO, IT'S NOT FIXED ALREADY

False assumption:

The Minnesota Legislature approved \$200 million for human service system modernization, so the problem got fixed.

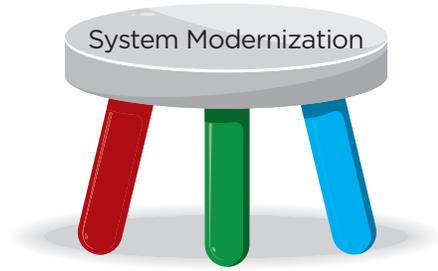
Fact:

The problem is not fixed. Much of the funding has not been spent. Most of what has been spent has not resulted in improvements to the work carried out by counties on behalf of the state.

WHAT COULD BE FIXED

Here are just some of the types of problems that modernization could address:

- The current system lacks tools to detect potential over-billing by providers.
- Four inefficiencies in state public assistance programs alone require a total of 227 county positions across the state. This wastes 453,000 staff hours and costs \$23 million annually.
- Seemingly simple data changes require time-intensive workarounds from staff. Changing an address can take 9 minutes, and adding a pregnancy or birth can take 45 minutes.
- Counties may be financially penalized based on the statewide SNAP error rate. However, counties lack the data and system capabilities needed to improve their error rates.



IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS

Use existing DHS funding to make immediate system fixes, improve service delivery, reduce errors, cut waste and prevent fraud.

Solutions

1. Authorize use and maintain funding to support income and asset verification tools across all public assistance programs.
2. Expand the functions provided in MNBenefits.

3. Provide full access to case management tools for MAXIS secondary workers when needed.
4. Complete items on the MNIT, DHS, DCYF "Systems Fix it List"

BRIDGING RELIEF

Support county modernization efforts through funding new tools and improved data sharing.

Solutions

1. Amend 2023 modernization legislation making it more prescriptive. Integrate immediate, bridging and long-term solutions. Add goals and benchmarks.
2. Fund the Data Depot project to become statewide to provide counties access to human service program data for reporting, program integrity, and developing common tools.

3. Develop funding for counties to incorporate Artificial Intelligence tools to answer phones, complete forms, and access to processes.
4. Support and assist counties' expanded use of BlueZone Scripting Collaborative, a tool to complete tasks such as populating client MNBen application data into MAXIS.
5. Fund the expansion of Rocket Modern Experience software across the state.

LONG-TERM MODERNIZATION

Create and fully fund an integrated, person centered, service delivery platform with a single point of resident entry to all secure, modularized and streamlined systems with shared common data. This will improve program efficiency and integrity while reducing staff time and costs.

Solutions

1. Single, user-friendly client portal with access to all human service applications.

2. Core data is entered once and shared widely.
3. Reports/dashboards use single tool and able to report across all programs (de-duplicated client count, average household program counts).
4. Common documents turned in once and used by all programs as required.

