

All Hands on Deck Public Assistance Services



Workshop Agenda

- Background
 - Ling Becker, County Manager
- Leadership and Workgroup Structure
 - Ali Ali, Director of Financial Assistance Services
 - Katrina Mosser, Director of Enterprise and Administrative Services
- Workgroups - Work Completed and Work in Progress
 - Ali Ali, Director of Financial Assistance Services
 - Katrina Mosser, Director of Enterprise and Administrative Services
 - Dana DeMaster, Director of Innovation and Strategy
 - Carissa Dillon, Planning Manager, Food Security Coordinator
- What's Next
 - Ling Becker, County Manager

Background

Current Critical Issue: Public Assistance Application Backlogs

- Backlog of financial and medical assistance applications since late 2020.
- These delays negatively impact our most vulnerable residents.

All Hands on Deck Call to Action

- All Hands on Deck (AHOD) framework centers agility, collaboration, and shared accountability to address urgent needs.
- Pulling together staff from all areas of the county as needed.
- Ensuring staff have access to resources, leadership support, and momentum needed to solve critical problems.

With a strong focus and commitment, remarkable change is possible.

A Shift in Organizational Direction – AHOD

From Reactive to Proactive

- AHOD means not waiting for a crisis to collaborate. If we know residents are experiencing delays, confusion, or frustration, we don't just respond—we anticipate and solve.

From System-First to Human-First

- “What residents first need” keeps us grounded. The system should serve people, not the other way around.

From Departmental to Cross-Functional Thinking

- AHOD pushes us to break down internal barriers. Resident needs don't fit neatly into departments—and neither should our solutions.

From Compliance to Compassion

- We still uphold standards and policies, but we do so with empathy. That means listening more, assuming good intent, and seeking creative ways to say “yes.”

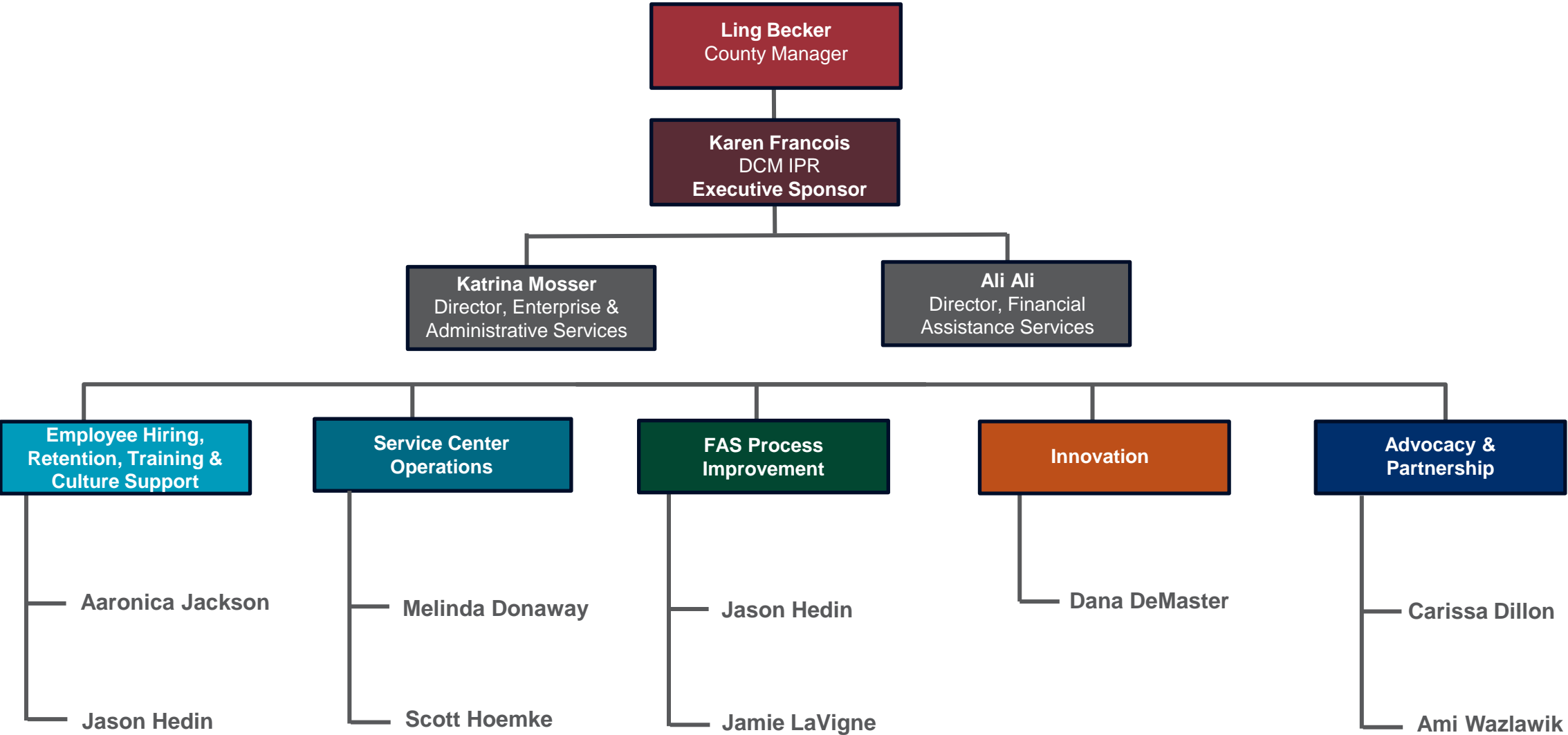
From Incrementalism to Bold, Visible Action

- Small changes matter, but residents will feel the difference when we act boldly—especially in service delivery, equity, and access.



- Effective April 15th, the decision was made to have Financial Assistance Services (FAS) move to the Information & Public Records (IPR) Service Team to better align resident services.
- This alignment will allow for integration between FAS and Enterprise and Administrative Services (EAS), creating a more cohesive and supportive operational environment to ensure residents receive their public assistance.

All Hands on Deck: Leadership and Workgroup Teams



Pilot: Operation Return Call

Objective: Maximize Eligibility Specialists' time for complex processing by shifting delayed return calls and case status inquiries to trained temporary staff as a 90-Day pilot.

Pilot Strategy:

- Deploy temporary staff to manage status inquiry calls and voicemails.
- Focus on reducing barriers for residents, and ensuring staff can dedicate more time to case management.
- Does not replace call responsibilities of existing staff.



Defining Success:

- **Resident Responsiveness:** 90% of calls returned within 3 business days.
- **Staff Efficiency:** Increasing capacity to maintain effective case management.
- **Workforce Wellbeing:** Eligibility Specialists improved focus for complex cases.
- **Resident Satisfaction:** Fewer communication gaps and reduced response time.

Supports *resident-centered service, equity, and One County* goals through focused, collaborative problem-solving.



- **Continued Staffing Efforts**

Financial Assistance Services is posting vacant positions and hiring quarterly, at minimum.

- **Leadership Training**

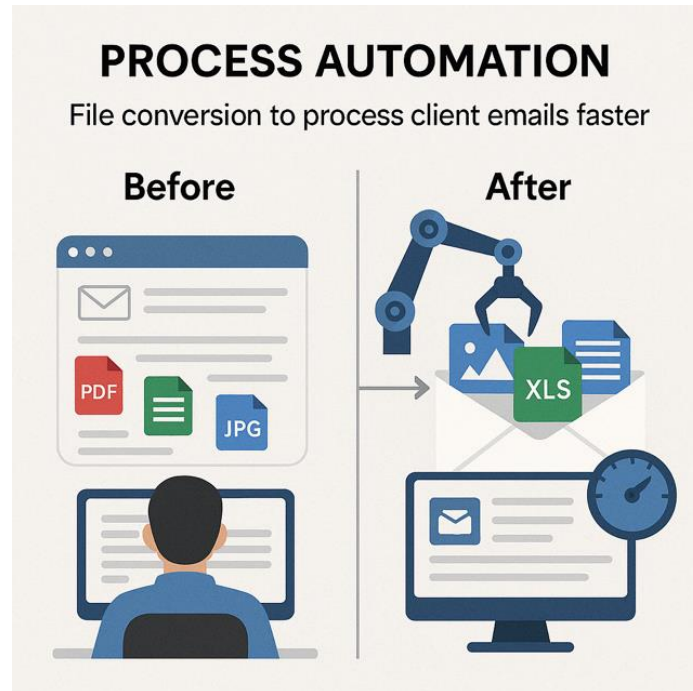
Providing **structured and strategic training** for FAS leaders to establish, build, and expand on existing leadership skills.

- **Staff Training**

FAS Customer Service Training is being formalized to roll out with the upcoming June hire group.

Process Automation: Email-to-Case File Conversion

Objective: To reduce manual workload and accelerate document processing, a Power Automate solution was implemented that converts resident-submitted emails, images and attachments into PDF files and uploads directly into CaseWorks case file management system.



Benefits:

- **Saves over 16 staff hours per day, over 80 staff hours per week!**
- **Faster routing** of documents to the right Eligibility Specialist for processing.
- **Minimized manual efforts** reformatting files and toggling between systems.
- **Accelerated service delivery** for residents during critical times. **Improves timeliness by 3 days!**

This is a powerful example of meaningful capacity gains through automation, resulting in improved timeliness.

Process Improvement: Streamlining constituent communication

Objective: To reduce fragmentation and improve responsiveness, we implemented a shared email inbox for constituents. Previously, messages were routed through several different channels, leading to duplication of efforts and timely responses.

With the Constituent email inbox:


- Inquiries are centrally received, tracked, and responded to by assigned staff.
- The right leaders have real-time visibility into issues.
- **Improved accountability, faster response times, and more consistent follow-through.**


Benefits:

This change eliminates confusion, ensures no message is lost, and enables us to **respond to residents more efficiently and equitably** — especially during periods of high need. As a result of this change, the Commissioners' aides have reported a decrease in constituent complaints.


Wait Times


Child Support - Metro

 Customers Waiting: 1


 Estimated Wait Time: 5 minutes


Financial Assistance Services - Metro

 Customers Waiting: 5

 Estimated Wait Time: 25 minutes

Navigator - Metro

 Customers Waiting: 2

 Estimated Wait Time: 10 minutes

We look forward to serving you.

Objective: To improve accessibility, efficiency and equity in service delivery at Service Center locations through enhanced tools, streamlined operations and resident-focused innovations.

Reduced Wait Times and improved transparency

- Wait times available online and displayed at all Service Centers.

Enhanced Resident Communications

- Through Text message updates, digital displays.

Greater Access and Equity

- Resident scanning stations to upload documents at all Service Centers.

Improved Navigation

- Increased signage and communication (parking, scanning, wayfinding).

Service Lanes & Mobile triage

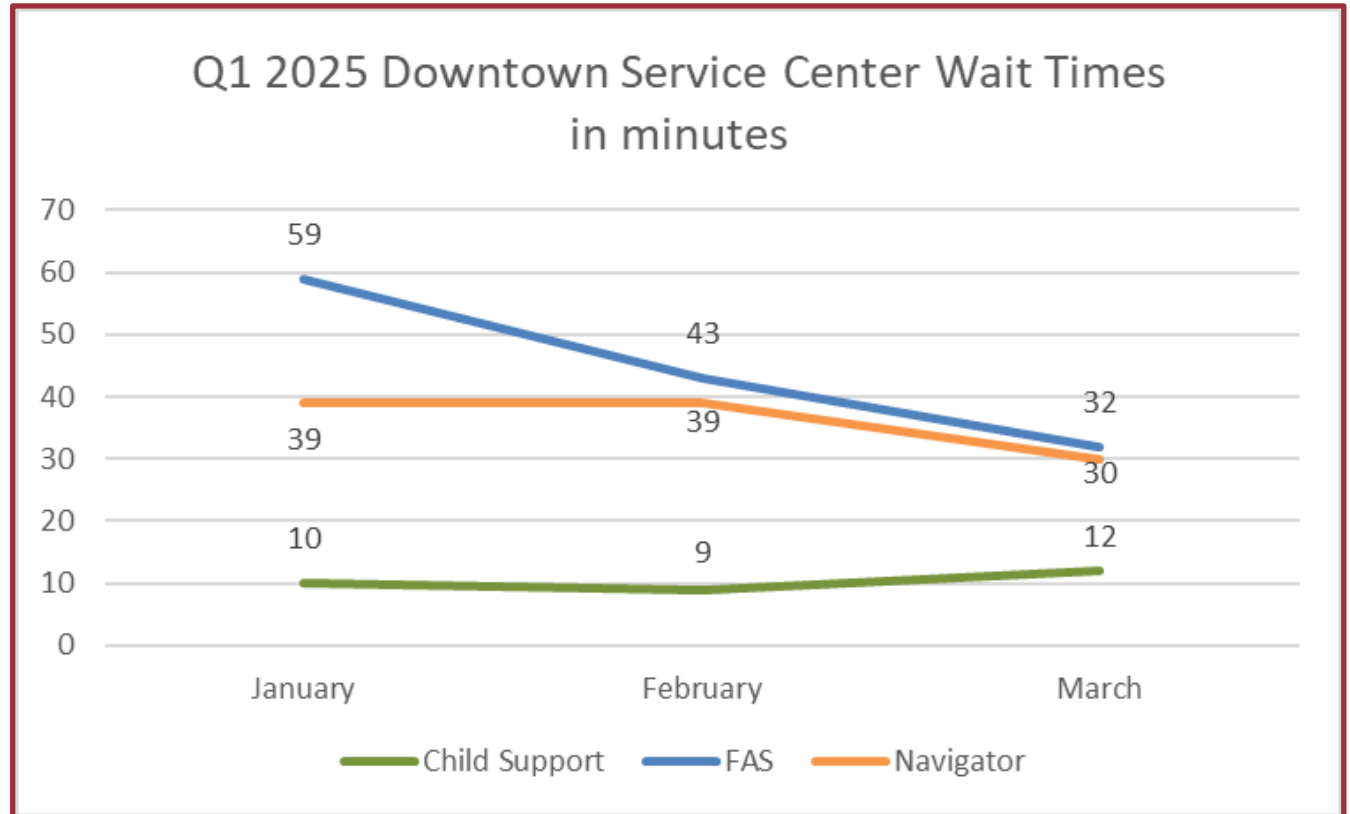
- New quick support lanes for fast service needs or questions.

Modernized Contact Option by phone using AI and virtual agent

- Streamlines phone support and directs residents efficiently.

Progress over the last Sprint: Metro Square Wait Time Trends

- Wait times **decreased** for most service areas.
- **Significant decrease** in **resident demand** for onsite support across most FAS programs.





- **AI-Powered Language Access**

Partnering with Information Services to pilot an AI translation tool to improve real-time, onsite language support for residents

- **Virtual Services**

Designing processes and tech infrastructure at Service Centers to connect residents onsite virtually with internal county services and community partners

- **Metro Square Service Center 3.0**

Applying AHOD learning and operational improvements to prepare for the renovated Downtown Service Center, opening in summer 2025.

Objective: Ensure staff, managers, and director have the right information to better manage their work and the public has information needed for accountability and transparency. Previously, we have relied on hand-counting of some data, multiple emailed spreadsheets, and old data visualization technology.

Easier data access through:

- Automating Operational Statistics Dashboard.
- Collaborating with Minnesota Counties Computing Collaborative (MnCCC) and Information Services to build a shared data model and PowerBi reporting framework.
- Updating supervisor dashboards for consistent team management.

Benefits:

These changes will bring uniformity and consistent data quality across counties and within our own departments. It will reduce staff time developing reports, while making data more accessible and understandable to users.

Automated Application Status Tracker

MAXIS

MEC²

MNbenefits

METS

CaseWorks



SNAP Outreach Expansion

Celebrating newly approved SNAP Outreach Grantees who will help residents with SNAP applications, enrollment, and renewals.



This amplifies our collective impact and builds a culture of partnership and shared purpose.

Improved Communication & Transparency

- Regular **communication updates** are being shared with community partners, long-term care centers and SNAP grantees.
- Building **trust** and **alignment** across programs.

Collaborative Problem Solving

- A new **co-sharing partner committee** is in development to deepen collaboration and address shared challenges

Statewide Alignment

- **Stronger voice through partnership** with Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) and Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).



What's Next

- Operationalize All Hands on Deck.
 - Identify outcomes that were fully achieved.
 - Develop a plan and accountability structure for outcomes still in progress.
 - Embed learnings in departments and service delivery.
- Use All on Hands on Deck structure to address other critical issues.
 - Build on learnings and experience to improve the All Hands on Deck structure.

