

Position Statement

2021

Modernization

Proposal

Issue:

Modernization of human services programs, processes, and technology is imperative to effectiveness and sustainability of publicly funded human services. The current system is complex, fragmented, administratively burdensome for all, and doesn't produce the outcomes Minnesotans need from these critical community supports.

A few key goals of Modernization include:

- Provide people with more choice and greater control over their services
- People experience a simplified human services system that proactively addresses individual, family, and community needs, while increasing equity
- Support increased use of data to improve service delivery while putting consumers in the driver's seat as to how their data is used
- Ensure modernized technology tools and supports so staff can focus on supporting individuals and families
- Simplify programs, processes, and reduce administrative costs

Implementation Strategy:

MACSSA, DHS, and tribal nations have jointly developed a Modernization Strategic Plan. The plan consists of three initiatives: Engage; Redesign; and Align. For this biennium, MACSSA supports investing in projects that provide direct client improvements, promotes respectful and inclusive public dialogue, and ensures equity for all persons serviced within our health and human services system. As one example, we recognize that race-based inequities play a significant role in access to services and disparate outcomes and, as such, need to be addressed intentionally and proactively as we modernize the health and human services system. Specific opportunities for the biennium include:

- Efforts to improve client experience and staff tools to provide efficient and culturally aware services.
- Interoperability across state systems and with local systems which is critical for integrated service delivery and administrative efficiency.
- Collaboration and coordination when planning and introducing new technology for county use.
- Support for local county innovation that can scale statewide.

Systemic Priority Alignment (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- Equity
- Integrated Services
- Fiscal Framework

The GARE Toolkit (See www.racialequityalliance.org): Need to assess what are the racial equity impacts of modernization decisions? Who will benefit from or be burdened by it? Are there strategies to mitigate unintended consequences?

Comments:

The DHS Enterprise Architecture Board (EAB), with MACSSA participation, has recently adopted a strategic stance toward modernization that emphasizes direct client improvement with a lens of deconstructing racism. There is a clear desire to take a person-centered approach to modernization that delivers value to the people we serve. This aligns with MACSSA's long-standing interest in achieving better outcomes in the human services system through a combination of technology and administrative simplification.

In recent years, simplification has been focused on self-sufficiency programs including Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Supplemental nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) and Health Care. There are current Federal and State regulations that must be implemented beyond public programs, such as Families First Act, Case Management redesign and Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) that have the potential to allow for integration and create a balance between automation and people resources. MACSSA's desire is that the state will see counties as partners in an extended enterprise architecture framework and allow service (business) needs to drive systems, processes and solutions. Being mindful of the balance between automation and people resources along with program integrity in creating an effective delivery system to the needs of Minnesotans. It is time to move away from only implementing regulatory requirements and start operationalizing solutions that improve county experiences and leverage resources, to provide a better experience to those who utilize Minnesota's services.

MACSSA recognizes and believes that administrative simplification is important, and DHS should continue these efforts, in tandem with operationalizing effective solutions. There is real value in increasing equity and ease of access to services to all Minnesotans. County agencies are innovating and allocating funding along with staff resources to create operational solutions however there is a real concern of interoperability between county agencies and potential state government systems. DHS and counties need to find ways to innovate together.

**Relevant Committee
(highlight all that apply and explain why)**

- Modernization
- Adult Services
- Behavioral Health
- Children's Services
- Policy
- Self-Sufficiency

Why:

The Modernization committee was formed for the express purpose of advancing MACSSA's interests in this topic area. Its membership includes the people who represent MACSSA on DHS modernization governance groups.

Rationale/Background:

Counties have been promoting these principles for many years. The below are historic rationales from MACSSA, though they align with the jointly owned Modernization Strategic Plan.

- Modernization is needed to deconstruct systemic racism within our system and eliminate disparities.
- Form should follow function; design is people-centered. The consolidation and redesign of State information technology organizations should work to maintain and improve the service-orientation of people-serving systems. This "customer-service focus" is balanced with the necessity of ensuring equity of services, maintaining data security, privacy, client safety, reporting accountability and reducing fraud.
- The health and human services system should be architected as a State-County enterprise. Within an enterprise, outcomes are a whole interplay of "policies, processes, and systems throughout the organization"

- Counties are partners in an extended enterprise architecture framework; we are the primary “business owner” of the health and human services delivery system; we are the business customer of the State-County I.T. systems and counties, and our clients and providers are the end-users of state-county enterprise solutions. Counties have representation at many levels within the current governance structure.
- The State and Counties should strategically align; service (business) needs should drive systems, processes and solutions. Business needs and requirements for the state-county enterprise are legislative and policy mandates; strategic missions, visions, strategies and desired outcomes within a performance management architecture, as well as preferred administrative (business) processes, which drive technology infrastructure and solutions.
- Digital era government and governance can be facilitated by direct service. The future state of the system is realized when the public has remote access to self-service by “anyone, anyplace, anytime”; the service provider is enabled at the point of service; the taxpayer sees and understands apparent results; intergovernmental transactions are sleek and unmediated; and people-serving agencies and groups connect to one another to collaborate on their programs and services.
- IT service (business) solutions need to be affordable, effective and sustainable. The current business model for information technology does not meet these criteria. The enterprise architecture should be integrated and interoperable with reusable solutions. The architecture must also be flexible and scalable.



Submitted by: Stephanie Radtke and Chris Lancrete

Approved on: