Overview

Penny May, Manager of Denver Human Services (DHS) led the first Peak Performance Review. The agenda included:

1. Agency’s alignment with the Mayor’s vision.
2. How the agency’s mission fulfills the Mayor’s priorities (broadly defined as Kids, Jobs, Safety Net and supported by the foundation of Sustainability and Customer Experience). Note: Vision metrics are currently under development with an anticipated draft release timing of late March 2012.
3. Strategic plan overview (visual): How our tactics, strategies, and goals support our mission. Note: DHS tactics are under development so the focus was on strategies and goals at meeting #1.
4. Convey the importance of performance on each of these components in graphical form. Depict trends, context (e.g. performance versus other cities, etc.), and goals (where applicable). Include meaningfulness of each (e.g. a strategic metric improved when our agency implemented a particular tactic, a metric driven by the number of customers and not our staffing, etc.).
5. Articulate areas of improvement, both potential and current initiatives.
6. Next steps: expectations for coming months, target date for next performance review, proposed agenda for next performance review (note: subsequent reviews should isolate chosen strategies in greater detail and do not need to broadly cover the entire strategic plan, although mission- and/or goal-level metrics should always be reported).

Participants:

Stephanie Adams, Manager of Performance Initiatives (Budget & Management Office)
June Allen, Deputy Director (Denver Human Services)
Lance Benninghoff, Senior Policy Analyst (Mayor’s Office)
Valerie Brooks, Deputy Director (Denver Human Services)
Catherine Dockery, Sr Financial Mgmt Analyst (Budget & Management Office)
Brendan Hanlon, Budget Director (Budget Management Office)
Michelle Harper, Division Director (Denver Human Services)
Dave Edinger, Chief Performance Officer (Mayor’s Office)
Aaron Gabler, IT Applications Supervisor (Denver Human Services)
Scotty Martin, Manager of Process Improvement (Budget & Management Office)
Penny May, Manager (Denver Human Services)
Chiquita McGowin, Manager of Finance and Information (Office of Economic Development)
Lindsay Neil, Manager of Children’s Initiatives (Mayor’s Office of Education and Children)
Erika Reyes, Communications Manager (Denver Human Services)
Janice Sinden, Chief of Staff (Denver Mayor’s Office)
Laura Wachter, Deputy Manager of Safety
Michele Weingarden, Manager of Greenprint Denver (Mayor’s Office)
Discussion

The strategic plan was created in 2007 and updated in 2012. The vision is the future ‘hoped for’ goal. It includes “all people in need,” which means those eligible per Federal and State criteria. The focus of the agency’s vision is to create a “proven, timely path to safety and self-sufficiency.” By moving closer to this agency vision, DHS is:

- Working with our citizens and community partners such as non-profits to strengthen our community (“We”),
- A better and faster delivery of human services (“will deliver”)
- Meeting citizen expectations and outperforming peer institutions (“a world-class city”)
- For our most vulnerable population (“where everyone matters”)
Discussion
DHS’ mission directly impacts all five priorities of the Hancock administration. Selected examples:

1. **Kids**: DHS assists and/or protects children through a variety of services such as child care assistance, child support enforcement and child welfare. We identify sound alternatives.

2. **Jobs**: We link working families to child care assistance, which enables parents to continue employment and provide workforce development that helps move our clients into self-sufficiency.

3. **Safety Net**: We are a safety net for those who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and provide protection and prevention. DHS also distributes food assistance to meet one of the most basic and immediate needs.

4. **Sustainability**: We are implementing the Lean process improvement methodology to increase service delivery by reducing wasteful processes.

5. **Customer Experience**: We are constantly looking for ways to shorten our turnaround time to provide basic needs to clients. Example: Processing food stamps applications went from a period of several weeks to an average of less than two days (State guidelines suggest a goal of seven days).
Discussion

The two primary DHS goals are Assistance and Protection & Prevention. Everything we do is aimed at providing services under these two goals. We also look at how we can improve performance in these areas. We do this through five strategies that cut across both goals:

1. **Cutting Edge Practice**: The implementation of LEAN is one tool that will improve decision making. We are training several facilitators to lead this effort internally so we can build a culture of continuous process improvement. Denver Health is a partner in this initiative, helping transfer their knowledge and experience to DHS.

2. **Customer Service**: DHS is constantly searching for ways to improve customer service internally and externally. For example, the Child Support Call Center was previously managed by an outside contractor. However, the center was moved in-house this year which has helped provide quicker responses by having all resources and support onsite.

3. **Collaborative Community Partnerships**: We understand we can’t do our work without the partnership of our community. Most recently, DHS worked with the State on Child Care Assistance Program and timely provider payments. In addition, City partnerships include: Office of Economic Development, Denver Health, Denver’s Road Home and Department of Environmental Health. The new Mayor’s Office of Education & Children (MOEC) initiatives brings together all agencies with child-related initiatives.

4. **Responsible Financial Management**: DHS will maintain a balanced budget and work to build a fund balance.

5. **Superior Workforce Development**: DHS will support the development of our staff in order to arm our workforce with the tools they need to better serve our clients, internally and externally. DHS is launching the Ascend Leadership Academy in March, which is a 6 month internal program that focuses on personal and professional growth. Workshops are presented by local community leaders and will include a community graduation ceremony to highlight the participants’ commitment to leadership.

DHS will be developing a list of tactics over next several months that will address each strategy. Each tactic will have business-oriented success metrics.

One of the limitations of the former strategic plan that was created in 2007 was it was silo based and didn’t take into consideration cross-divisional collaboration; the new plan has a different approach highlighting resources used across the agency. With this new strategic plan, everyone at DHS will work toward two common goals regardless of divisions.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

**Q: How do you do accountability in a non-silo environment?**
First, there are regulations to meet; second, performance measures cross all areas will drive up to higher level measures. Also, DHS re-structured the organizational layout to support the overarching goals. Employees already know their PEPS are tied to performance because DHS has been tying performance measures to PEPS for several years. To keep everyone involved and accountable, top management is on a presentation tour presenting to all employees regarding the strategic plan updates, goals, Peak initiative and LEAN.

**Q: Does the agency have internal meetings to hold employees accountability on a more direct level.**
Yes, DHS has been conducting these as part of the Performance and Accountability Initiative.

**Q: Sustainability is about quality of life and can be applied to many of DHS activities: mitigating effects of poverty, abuse, as well as reducing internal inefficiencies, etc.**
One of the areas DHS has addressed inefficiencies is throughout our assistance divisions. Improved businesses processes have been implemented to improve timely processing of applications.
Discussion

To better understand the following slides, a legend has been created that highlights our current progress with colors and our trends using arrows.
Discussion

As mentioned, DHS has two overarching goals: Assistance and Protection & Prevention. We have identified five measures to report on the first goal of assistance. Standards are set by federal and state guidelines and in some cases, DHS set its guidelines. In addition, we’ve added measures we feel are important in serving our clients.

This slide provides a general overview. The following slides will provide more in-depth information relative to the measurement, goal and progress.

### Mission-Level Metrics

**Goal 1 – Assistance**

Assure that people’s basic needs are met through the provision of timely, integrated financial assistance with comprehensive service that helps individuals and families meet self-sufficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Measure</th>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Last Measured</th>
<th>Standard/Goal Set by</th>
<th>Standard/Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>Timeliness: Of assistance applications across all programs are processed within federal timeliness guidelines</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>4th Quarter 2010</td>
<td>Federal Guideline</td>
<td>≥95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>Penetration: Of the potentially eligible 167,610 Denver residents receive food assistance</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4th Quarter 2010</td>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>Of the potentially eligible 167,610 Denver residents (as defined by Federal Poverty Level(s)) receive family medical assistance</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4th Quarter 2010</td>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>Administrative Efficiency: Dollars distributed to families and children through financial assistance (administrative cost per client benefits distributed)</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4th Quarter 2010</td>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>≤13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58%*</td>
<td>Of the $45.9 million owed in court ordered child support, was collected and distributed to families in 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>4th Quarter 2011</td>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td>2010-2011 Calendar Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Measure reflects data collected for 4th Quarter 2011. Data is for calendar year 2011.

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*Current Measure reflects data collected for 4th Quarter 2011. Data is for calendar year 2011.
Discussion

Timeliness: The goal is to complete 95% of all applications received (excluding Child Support Enforcement) on a timely basis as defined by federal guidelines for each program.

DHS has made tremendous strides to improve application timeliness over the past year. The increase is primarily due to the FAD Recovery Process, which has streamlined the way DHS processes applications.

Timeliness is important because it means DHS is providing good customer service and because it helps DHS meet State and Federal processing guidelines that are tied to funding. It's also critical to making sure that Denver’s most vulnerable population are connected to food, medical and cash benefits in a timely manner.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

**Q: Would DHS ever want to be better than Fed guideline?**
Yes, and in some cases we are. Time guidelines are different for various programs. The measurement is based on approval of application.

**Q: If they improve processing, other areas of the system may get bottlenecked if they are not aware to keep up as well.**
The metric shows a slowdown in timeliness in 2010 and this is where they introduced mitigation measures to create significant improvements.

**Q: There is a drop in the number of applicants; is that contributing to timeliness? We need more information around this.**
Yes, that’s the case; however the improvement is so significant due to improved efficiencies as well. We went to a team-based philosophy to figure out processing solutions. Also, some of the old data includes duplicate applications for the same household. Due to timeliness of processing applicants, this may have contributed to reduction in duplications.

**Q: Did the number of applicants per employee go up?**
Yes, and we track individual outcomes and give them goals. Now they are being proactive and looking at the incoming volume and modifying the work program to keep up to date with the incoming applications.

**Q: Are you tracking error rates?**
Yes, the new work management system helps standardize work processes. DHS is in the process of creating an auditing tool that will help track errors. DHS also has in-house audits as well as BKD and state audits. However, there is a need for more supervisor reviews. This is the next progression.

**Q: Why are applications going down?**
There is less duplication and the economy is also starting to get better. This metrics highlights new applicants; we still have a large on-going base of clients that we are serving.
Discussion

Food Assistance Population Penetration: The goal of DHS is to serve 90% of all eligible residents in food assistance. Our penetration rates have improved dramatically since 2010 thanks to partnerships with several community organizations that help provide outreach to vulnerable groups. Working together with our community helps cast a wide net to help those in need and ensure that any child, senior, person or family do not go hungry. Some of our partnerships include Hunger Free Colorado, Health Families Collaborative, Colorado Health Foundation, Mile High United Way, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver Health and Colorado Access.

Increasing caseload correlate with increasing percent of population served. DHS has increased outreach efforts to reach as many individuals and families as possible. This program is federal funded and pays for these benefits. DHS sees this as a benefit to Denver because it’s more money being pumped into our economy.

It’s important to note that the eligible group is at 130% of poverty. The economy drove the increase, primarily. Recipients are at a case level that includes all groups including singles, families, children, etc.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: MOEC would like to know the number households with children receiving food stamps.

55,337 of the active Food Assistance clients (131,561) are ages 18 and under.

Q: Does Farmers Markets accept food stamps? That may help low-income folks have access to healthy foods.

Currently, 29 of the 110 Farmer’s Markets accept SNAP. They are hoping to expand this number and are also starting to provide PEAK access at some of the sites. In addition, Denver Urban Gardens runs youth Farmer’s Markets that accept SNAP benefits. Current Youth Farmer’s market sites that have access to an EBT machine include the following DPS schools: Johnson Elementary, Fairview Elementary, Fairmont Elementary, Swansea Elementary and Harrington Elementary.

Q: What is the relationship between need and eligibility?

We know that 129,915 households currently receive SNAP in Denver. But, yet there over 37,000 households in Denver that are eligible for the program but who have not applied. We know that only families at 130% of federal poverty level or less are eligible for assistance, but project the need is even greater for households that are just over the income guidelines. DHS will request this information from Hunger Free Colorado or one of our other partners.

Q: Can we break down food assistance by zip codes to evaluate areas of need, areas of use—so we can determine areas to conduct more outreach.

DHS can pull the zip codes using CBMS, the state operated computer system that holds customer information. We would need to cross-reference and analyze that data against another data-set that tells us where there are high poverty neighborhoods. There is a possibility DHS can cross-reference data from the Piton Foundation, which has good data regarding poverty in Denver.
Discussion

Family Medical Population Penetration: Our goal is to provide family medical assistance to 90% of the eligible population. Access to medical service benefits is critical for many people Denver Human Services serves. The number of Medicaid clients is increasing while percent served is slightly increasing. We understand that penetration depends on partnerships that we create and grow. DHS is currently working on a plan focused on educating the community organizations about access to services through the new PEAK application system and general education on various medical programs such as Medicaid, Long Term Care, Medicare Part D, etc. This training philosophy will broaden our approach and will help improve client self-sufficiency and program access.

In addition, DHS and community partners are applying for a grant that will allow clients to apply for benefits at self-service kiosks. This will improve benefit access to Denver’s most vulnerable population.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: Why is the percent served so much lower?
Some families have their own sources of insurance. Also, some populations eligible for food stamps are not eligible for Medicaid because of different eligibility requirements.

DHS intends to examine the denominator and possibly exclude those not eligible.
Discussion

Administrative Efficiency: This is a new metric for DHS. DHS understands the importance of measuring administrative costs to monies distributed. Our process improvement efforts will help progression in this area.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: How have you achieved efficiencies?

Personnel costs have held constant, but the number of individuals needing assistance has grown. This is what drives this metrics. If case volume should drop, this metric would go in the wrong direction. LEAN rapid improvement events will help lead DHS in improving this metric provided that case volume remains constant. DHS is looking at other counties to see if they are capturing data related to administrative efficiencies. In November of 2011, Jefferson County Human Services calculated this ratio at 12.1%.
Discussion
Child Support Collection Efficiency: DHS made improvements to the way Child Support collects money for children in 2010. Since this time, we’ve made steady progress. Our goal is to collect and distribute more than or equal to 61% of potential collections. This is one metric where DHS has a higher goal than the federal goal. Measuring the progress of our child support collection efficiency is very difficult for many reasons:

- Incarcerated parents
- Lack of contact information,
- Loss of unemployment benefits
- Disabled parents – many with mental illness
- Chemical dependency
- 10% of our cases are referred to other State’s so we are dependent on them to collect support or establish orders to enforce
- Parents go underground – they work under the table

DHS has several strategies in place that will improve collection efficiency. Strategies include linking individuals to workforce development to help find a job, working with parolees to examine how to make payments manageable, early intervention techniques that help build personal relationships with both the custodial and non-custodial parent, etc.

Child support payments can offset other benefits provided by DHS which provides funds to serve other clients.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: Do you have the number of kids in the program who have an incarcerated parent?
Yes. About 10% of caseload has an incarcerated parent. This population tends to be a group where it is difficult to collect payment. To address this issue, DHS has targeted and assigned specific caseworkers to work with this population.
Discussion

As mentioned, DHS has two overarching goals: Assistance and Protection & Prevention. We have identified five measures to report on the second goal of Protection & Prevention. Standards are set by federal and state guidelines and in some cases, DHS has set our own guidelines. In addition, we’ve added measures we feel are important in serving our clients.

Protecting children and adults from abuse is critical to ensuring our community has a strong safety net. While our number one priority is the SAFETY of a child and adult, we also focus on keeping families together.

Three core areas that we are looking at in Child Welfare include:

• Safety
• Permanency
• Well-Being

This slide provides a general overview. The following slides will provide more in-depth information relative to the measurement, goal and progress.
Discussion

Re-abuse: Re-abuse is very telling. It shows whether or not our initial assessments with a child are working. DHS wants children to be SAFE and that is why we have surpassed our goal of more than or equal to 94.6%. This number shows that children have not experienced repeated abuse within the previous 6 months.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: What strategies did you use to improve this measure? What is driving the improvement?

A few years ago, there were several child deaths, resulting from abuse and neglect, throughout the State that prompted human service agencies to examine processes. During this time, DHS closely examined our processes and made permanent changes. Due to those changes, response times and outcomes have improved. DHS continues to monitor these processes. Our priority is the safety of children.

Q: How do you know that no re-abuse has occurred? Is it self-reporting or does DHS go out and affirm?

We would have to ask the child welfare division and we will do that when we begin to report in more detail in this area.
Discussion

Family Preservation: When it’s safe, DHS tries to keep children and families together by providing wrap around support services to a family. Our goal is to keep more than or equal to 85% of children at home during case involvement. If DHS must remove a child from their home, we seek family or family friends that we can place the child with. The last option is finding a foster family that lives nearby to keep the child connected to their school and peers. We are investing in more services to keep children in home and also teaching and training parents how to parent differently.

This goal is based on best practices that have better long term outcomes correlated with keeping the family intact. This measure counts those kids who start treatment and remain in the home and stay in the home over the entire treatment time. The measure reports the number of kids released in that time period who fit this category.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock's senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

**Q:** Could we count as a sustainability factor the number of sustained families?
When we are able to keep children and families together, we don’t view this as a sustainability factor in its traditional form.

**Q:** What causes the month to month variability?
There is no predictive factor because this depends on the individual families’ lives. However, we do see an increase in calls to our hotline at the beginning and end of the school year due to teachers’ concerns for the children. They often hear comments from the students when they return from summer break that raises concern or they are worried about the summer months away from school.

**Q:** If you knew, it might help with your tactic.
Often impacted by school year, holidays, etc.

**Q:** Is this strategy more cost effective?
Not necessarily. Our values for our Child Welfare division are Safe Children; Strong Families; Strong Resource Families; Strong Effective Workforce; and Supportive Communities. DHS is committed to providing a safe and strong environment for the children and this practice is in the best interest of the child and their family.

**Q:** This measure is after the fact. Do you have measures that report on current activity?
Yes. These metrics represent the federal outcomes required but they keep workload measures as well.
Discussion
Responsiveness: This metrics measures our responsiveness to calls of child abuse and neglect. DHS is committed to reaching our goal of 90% response within federal guidelines. DHS must respond immediately or within 3-5 days per federal guidelines, depending on the circumstances and what kind of information is received on the initial contact. One of the items DHS continues to focus on is working with staff to ensure they are making every effort to provide this initial response. We focus on:
- Raising awareness amongst staff
- Being more diligent in our supervision meetings with supervisors and discussing the importance

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: Why are we doing better? Is the improvement due to drop in cases?
We are doing better for several reasons. First, we have made responsiveness a top priority. In addition to that, we have implemented a retention based project that teaches staff to find their voice and contribute to informing agency decisions. We are using a reality based video to help applicants understand what the work really looks like. Also, we participate in a disparities action committee which is action based planning using disparities data to inform Child Welfare partners on how the system is creating disparate outcomes. All of these internal efforts have helped create an environment of responsiveness where everyone is accountable. However, we cannot impact who calls the hotline, except to teach the mandated reporters when to call.

The drop in cases is a result of the drop of the number of calls that move to a formal investigation.
Discussion

Well Being: The Administrative Review Division (ARD) is the body within the State that reviews out of home placements for kids every six months. This is a federally required activity and our goal is at 95% of reaching our monthly contact expectations.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock’s senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: Is there a standard level of error.
Not necessarily. We have a process in place that makes our supervisors accountable for input. Supervisors check to see if our staff has done input on the 15th of each month after the month of the entry.

Q: What happens when you don’t meet goal? This is a CRFS goal. The state is audited on this which without compliance results in a program improvement plan (PIP) between the state and federal. We get an audit finding and go on a PIP.

Q: Are individual employees held accountable?
Yes, it’s on their PEPRs. This is the most critical work of child welfare; the number one activity.

Q: Is the message to employees strong enough to reinforce performance? Would more money come to DHS with better improvement?
Outcomes are hard to show. We want to use data to inform actions. Our team understands that our success is based on contact with our clients. Making contact helps us understand the needs of our client and the family which will help us connect them to other services needed.

In addition, our quality assurance team does random sampling to make sure these monthly meetings are taking place.

Q: The City is planning to have a sustainability report card. Could we track how we are delivering to our community with number of services in this area?
This is our hardest area. We can track our Assistance services to the community, but protection is harder to make the connections to services to the community. We don’t believe this is the best indicator of sustainability.
Discussion

Responsiveness: Adult protection (abuse, neglect, financial, etc.) is hard to determine because they are adults, which means they have the right to accept or reject services. The state guideline for responsiveness is at 75%. DHS receives this data annually only.

Within three days, DHS makes at least three attempts to make contact. APS staff has transitioned to become generalists. As a generalist, they evaluate and monitor both initial cases and ongoing cases. DHS has provided intensive cross-training to all-staff to continue improving in this area.
Improvement Efforts

Opportunity:

- **Bringing LEAN to Denver Human Services**
  - Members of Executive Management attended Executive LEAN training in December, 2011
  - Communication to staff in meetings to be followed by email updates
  - Two staff will be trained as facilitators (Jan. 2012). BMO staff will be “on loan” to DHS as additional facilitators
  - Identification of Value Streams (Feb 2012)
  - Establish Value Stream Steering Committees
  - Conduct six Rapid Improvement Events (RIE’s) by end of June 2012
  - Current Peak Performance meetings held weekly by Family & Adult Division

- **Goals:**
  - Increased Efficiencies
  - Create sustainable DHS LEAN structure
Next review

- Next Performance Review: End of second quarter
- Goal 1: Assistance
  - Strategies and Tactics
- LEAN update

Discussion

Next Review: The date and timing of the next review will be discussed with the Chief Performance Officer. At this time, DHS will report on strategies and tactics for the Assistance goal. In addition, a progress update on LEAN will be provided.

The following questions and comments were made by Mayor Hancock's senior team and other agency leaders in attendance:

Q: What are you most concerned about with all the looming financial struggles.
Financial struggles are not new to DHS and we are confident that efficiencies created with LEAN will help pick up some of the projected funding decreases. We are closely monitoring Federal and State allocations, as there is a possibility Denver's allocation will decrease.

Q: Is there a way to show the difference between basic services and treatment programs?
This question needs additional clarification from the review committee by what is meant by 'basic' services and 'treatment' programs.

Q: What services are you providing in the area of workforce? Are you helping them build a career instead of just putting them where we want them? Is there a change in strategy? What is end goal: job or career?
DHS works closely with the Office of Economic Development to connect TANF recipients to job training and employment. Many of the services provided are primarily funded by TANF dollars. DHS is concerned that additional TANF cuts from the Federal or State will have a direct impact on the level of service provided in this particular area. The goal is to partner with OED to connect people to employment, so they can be self-sufficient and not be reliant on government assistance.

Q: Can we get the number of people who reach self-sufficiency? Can we come up with something to define this?
Defining self-sufficiency is very difficult because it means different things to different people and we would not want to have a restrictive definition. We can certainly measure program participation and success. We will look at Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute to gather ideas on how we can look at this as a metric.