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Health and Wellness Administrative Division: Evaluation Plan for Service Centers and Navigator Project

Program Description

In 2018, Ramsey County began the work to define and describe the provision of county services in a way which centered the resident and their experience. This launched the strategic priority of Residents First which has brought forward concepts and plans such as Residents First: Effective, Efficient, and Accessible Operations. This challenges the county to create service centers in which a variety of resident needs can be addressed in one location, anchoring our services to the resident needs rather than department specific buildings. In March 2020, Ramsey County identified the need to expedite these changes to the resident experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and our rapid redesign effort to serve our residents during this time.

The goals of the project are that:

- Residents are easily connected to needed services.
- Service delivery is centered on resident needs, rather than policies, rules, budgets, or building locations. The service delivery system is invisible to residents.
- Establish a "one door" system where there is parity in services and quality of services regardless of how a resident contacts the county.

The major components in the next six months, which set the stage for future changes over the next two to three years, are:
- Establish five services center hubs which will offer comprehensive services in person. Initially these service centers will include Workforce Solutions, Financial Assistance Services, Social Services, and Property Tax services.
- Staff service centers with navigators which will act as a guide to county services, connecting people to needed services and ensure people get the services they need.
- Provide technology access at service centers so that residents can connect online to services, access technology for other things like completing applications, job searches and applications, and other things that require the internet.

The target population are residents seeking services at the five service centers, via telephone, and online.

The initial phase of this long-term project will begin in July 2020. The evaluation will focus on July 2020 to January 2021 and will be used to inform phase two.

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

- What have we learned in the first six months to inform and improve practices in the next two years?
- What is the resident experience of service centers, technology access, and navigators?
  - How does this compare to other ways of accessing services?

- What are the training and support needs of navigators to successfully serve residents?

The evaluation will use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methods are meant to supply context and greater understanding of the quantitative data around use of the service centers, navigators, and technology resources.

Two pop-up events will be held at each of the service centers. Evaluation staff with conduct short interviews with users of the centers as well as have a short paper survey available for those without time or interest in a longer interview. The first pop-up events will be held in September and October to gather first impressions and improve service before second events are held in December and January. These events will answer questions about how well we are providing services and whether visitors are better off. People participating in the interview will be given a gift card to Target or Cub. There will be surveys and questions specific to the site itself, navigators, and technology access.

Interviews will be completed with the navigators, as well as library and other key stakeholders in the East Building and Plato. These interviews will be conducted in November to allow time for the project to take shape. Navigator interviews will focus on how useful their training was for their role, suggestions for new navigators, and process improvement. Stakeholder interviews will focus on shared space, communication, and coordination with service redesign leadership and staff.

Navigators will track quantitative data on service center use:

- Number of visitors by site by date
- Interaction by type (review and modify types on open data portal)
- Services requested
- Services accessed
- Referrals to community providers
- Demographics (zip code, race/ethnicity, age, gender, language)
- Time stamps to calculate wait times

A system for collecting data will need to be developed but could be incorporated in customer service data bases or other case management software or tools.

Additionally, computer use data will be gathered from IS. Evaluation staff will work with IS to understand what data are available and what else may be necessary, but are likely to include:

- Unique users or log-ins
- Session length
- Usage by site

Race Equity and Community Engagement

In addition to looking at data by zip code, race/ethnicity, and language to identify communities being served by site compared to need, work already done on community engagement on this topic will be reviewed and incorporated into this evaluation. It is also recommended that the Service Redesign workgroup connect with RECERT and the Equity Action Circle to understand what success looks like from a community perspective and how community would know we were successful. This feedback will be incorporated into interview and survey questions.

Budget
The budget for this project will include $2,500 for 100 gift cards with a $25 value. We expect to do 10 interviews at each of the five sites, or 50 interviews in the first round and 50 in the second round. We should consider a smaller gift card for people who complete the shorter surveys. If we gather 15 surveys at each site and provide a $5 gift card and hold events in two time periods, the total for these would be $750. The total amount including the $5 gift cards is $3,250.

Staffing for the pop-ups will require at least two people at each service center event. This will depend on traffic, but we will need one evaluator to conduct the interviews and one additional person to direct people to the interviews and hand-out short surveys.

Timeline and Deliverables

Month	Activity
July	Draft evaluation plan Plan community engagement, feedback Develop plan for collecting quantitative data and coordinate with open data portal
August	Meet with community about vision of success Draft surveys and interviews
September	Start first pop-up events
October	Finish first pop-up events
November	Initial report on pop-up events Navigator interviews Key stakeholder interviews Revise pop-up event survey and interviews based on the first events
December	Start second pop-up events
January	Finish second pop-up events
February	Final report

Communication Plan
The primary audiences for this evaluation are the Service Redesign Planning and Operations teams within the county's Incident Management Team, the County Incident Managers, and the Policy and Partnership Team. The secondary audiences are the board of commissioners, department leadership, and impacted communities. Evaluators will present interim results to the Service Redesign Workgroup and others as requested after the initial pop-ups. The final report will be presented to those groups and other groups as identified. The evaluation should be shared on the public Ramsey County website for access by community and other stakeholders.

The Service Redesign Workgroups is responsible for responding to and acting on recommendations.