

## DWP/MFIP ES MEMO

**DATE ISSUED:** July 20, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Continuous Process Improvement at Staff Level

**BACKGROUND:** Continuous process improvement (CPI) has been described as the “intentional transformation of the current situation toward the ideal state.” WFS defines it as a process linked to an intervention, resulting in improvement at the staff and agency level.

**PURPOSE:** WFS is adapting part of a traditional CPI process. Through CPI, our efforts will aim at front-line and agency improvement in engagement, education, employment, and employment retention. Using report card related outcomes and targets, CPI will make visible trends and shifts at the individual counselor level.

This information (data and provided graphs) is ***not*** intended as a tool for individual performance review; there are simply too many variables in caseload creation for that to be practical. It is at the staff’s front-line level that we can understand and intervene upon outcome trends. Nor is this data provided to compare counselor caseloads or agency to agency comparisons.

CPI information will assist us to identify and understand the reasons for increased or decreased performance – trends – in engagement, education, and employment measures. Improvement in results is possible by identifying and improving the processes that create results.

While individual-to-individual or agency-to-agency comparisons are discouraged, the comparisons that should be made are the trends within each counselor’s caseload overtime.

For example, if 35% of a caseload did not have a HS diploma or GED in October, 2016, what is the trend for the ensuing months? Is it increasing or decreasing? What is the reason for the change or the lack of change? Has there been a formal or informal intervention? If not, what might be done to guide the trend in the desired direction? In some cases, the answer will be – “nothing” because the factors affecting the data are not within the counselor or system control. The true benefit is having examined the data over time and gaining a better understanding of how 4E’s are being used. Again comparisons with other agencies will not provide that benefit given that agencies and counselors do not randomly receive nearly identical types of participants.

Expanding the example of the October, 2016 caseload with 35% of the participants not having a HS diploma or GED, we also see that no participant in that group had any education activities. Assuming that one will benefit from

acquiring such a certificate or credential (HS Diploma or GED), how does one acquire it without educational activities? For the sake of making a point, examination of the data shows that all 35% are working. For the time being the absence of the educational credential does not seem to be limiting the ability to work but will that always be the case? Is there an intervention possible to support their continued employment and to advance towards educational credential by taking small goal-action-planned related steps?

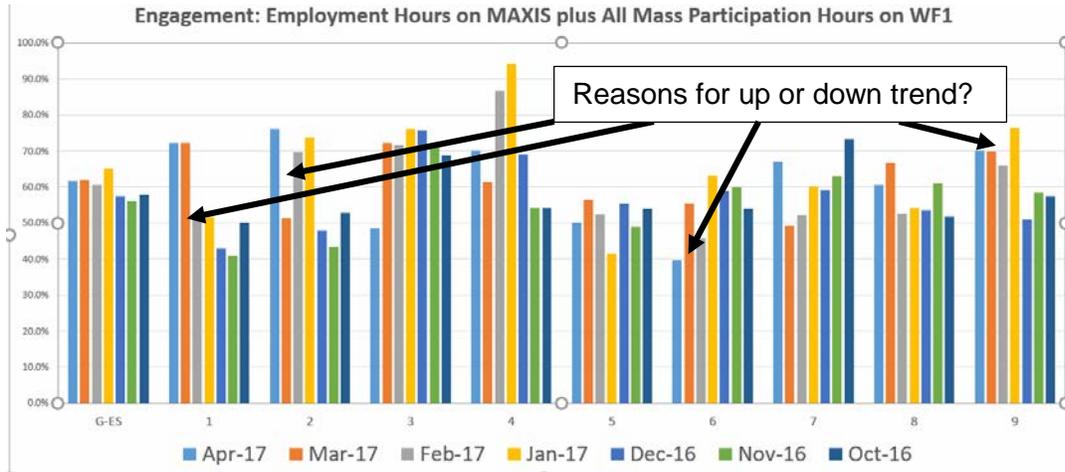
**PROCEDURES:**

WFS CPI data will break selected report card outcome related information down to the individual caseload level, thus illustrating trends within the caseload. WFS CPI uses its own version of a control chart, a graph representation of the process performance per individual over time.

1. Monthly, WFS Evaluators will provide a spreadsheet (and graphs) to Planners, who forward Agency specific data to Agency Managers/Supervisors (and/or Data Specialists). Graphs do not disclose individual staff names.
2. At monthly meeting, Planners and Agencies will review the information and identify trends within each caseload, and which areas to focus upon for that month. Hypothesizing the system causes for achieving or not achieving the targeted performance is encouraged.
3. Planner or agency use of the raw data to produce additional control-chart like graphs is encouraged.
4. It is to be understood that missing the CPI focused performance target (if set) is a systems issue and not an individual performance issue. Taking steps to understand the system issues is imperative.
5. The Planner and Manager/Supervisor discussion might include:
  - a. In which direction (getting better, getting worse, staying level) are the data trending for each measure and each staff?
  - b. If there is a target, what degree of variation per individual do we consider acceptable? What variation is too great?
  - c. What tactics might reduce the variation and exceed the target achievement?
  - d. What steps will we take to identify the process and process fixes needed?
  - e. What do we want to do about it?
6. Agency Manager/Supervisor then identify a strategy to maintain or improve counselor outcomes on CPI focused outcomes over time.
7. WFS will facilitate the summation of Agency efforts and successes; WFS encourages Agencies to share with WFS and the county's employment services system their interpretations of the data and strategies that led to improved results.

**CHART USE:**

Examine graphs. Engagement, education, employment and employment retention activities should, on the whole, trend up for the most part. If not, seek to learn and understand the reason for decline or status quo.



**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 20, 2017 – SNAP/DWP/MFIP ES Division Manager

**CONTACT PERSON:** Agency Lead Planner