

Overview

On January 8, 2008, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) in partnership with OCSEA, held a State Hearing Statewide Workgroup kick-off meeting. Sixty-four people from 29 counties and ODJFS attended this first meeting. Following a brief presentation outlining due process requirements, the role of hearings, and the rights and responsibilities of the parties at the hearing, the participants received statistics outlining the increase in the number of state hearing requests (see appendix A) and the specific numbers for each county throughout the state over the last eight years. To benefit both CDJFS and ODJFS State Hearings, participants immediately started working on the group's purpose by identifying improvement ideas that would lead to a reduction in state hearing requests, create greater efficiencies within the process, and to increase customer satisfaction at the county and state levels.

From the initial group of 64, 25 people volunteered to continue to be core workgroup members, meeting every other Wednesday for the next three months. The workgroup met a total of seven days from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., for the equivalent of 32 hours.

The workgroup members are:

- Ben Anderson from ODJFS/OCS
- Cami Bergstrom from Ross CDJFS
- Peggy Crowder from Stark CDJFS
- Carmen Duckens from Franklin CDJFS
- Luann Dunham from Columbiana CDJFS
- Anita Fogle from ODJFS/OLS, Workgroup leader
- Daniel George from Union CDJFS
- Anissia Goodwin from OCSEA
- Cindi Green from Hamilton CDJFS
- Brian Horst from ODJFS/OLS, Subject Matter Expert
- Anita Jennings from ODJFS/ORAA, workgroup facilitator
- Beth Kowalczyk from ODJFS/OFS
- Susan Lehman-Sentle from ODJFS/Legal, Subject Matter Expert
- Cathy Loechel from Hamilton CD JFS
- Kevin Manack from Mahoning CDJFS
- Lisa McClure from Summit CDJFS
- Linda Meeks from Franklin County Child Support
- Donyce Montgomery from Montgomery CDJFS
- Kim Orzechowski from Lucas CDJFS
- Joel Potts from ODJFSDA
- Vivian Rice from ODJFS/ORAA, data support
- Beth Rubin from Greene CDJFS
- Linda Seeman from Portage CDJFS
- Caryn Strayer from Allen CDJFS
- Wanda Wilson from ODJFS/OLS, Subject Matter Expert

Adjusting the workgroup’s purpose

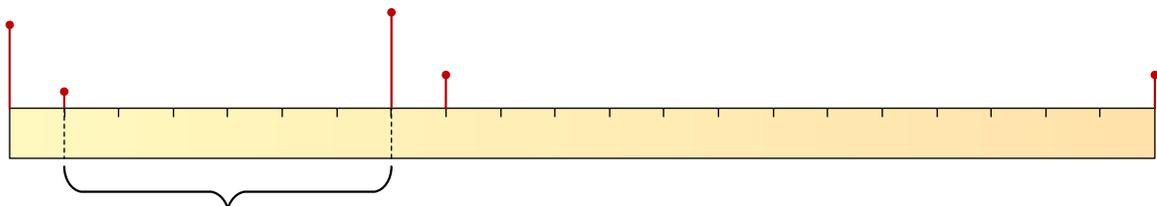
After collecting and analyzing various data, the workgroup decided they needed to revisit the team’s purpose. The original purpose to “develop improvement ideas that would lead to a reduction in the total number of hearing requests sent to the Bureau of State Hearings”, was found to be off base. First, the increase in hearing requests followed the increase in caseloads. Second, neither the CDFJS nor ODJFS wanted to limit an individual’s right to request a state hearing, and risk the possibility of denying an individual’s due process rights. Instead the workgroup brainstormed a list of items they should focus on:

- Streamlining the process
- Using data to identify trends in requests
- Creating synergy between the county and program areas which in turn could reduce hearing requests
- Reducing the volume to ensure a higher quality decision
- Addressing issues that aren’t process issues, such as additional training and hearing officer expertise

The group decided to take a two-pronged approach to the workgroup’s purpose; first, the group would address improving the process, which in turn, would reduce the number of hearing requests that actually go to a hearing, and second, use data to make continuous improvements. This change in purpose was shared with the workgroup sponsor, Legal Deputy Director, Lewis George. He agreed with the changes to the workgroup’s purpose.

Analyzing the current process

The workgroup created a flowchart of the major steps in the State Hearing process and laid each step out on a timeline. The timeline below shows the five major steps in the hearing process and the number of days it takes for the process to go from beginning to end. The current process only allows approximately six days to complete the state hearing appeal summary and shows a 14-day time frame when the appeal summary is not being reviewed or used by the Bureau of State Hearings to prepare for the hearing.



The workgroup created a cause and effect diagram (see appendix B) and identified three potential root causes:

- Automated notices are not effective;
- Too few county conferences; and
- Communication and customer service issues.

The workgroup also conducted a time study to obtain a better understanding of how long the hearing process takes (see appendix C).

Recommendations

When developing its recommendations, the workgroup decided to address all three potential root causes – automated notices are not effective; too few county conferences; and communication and customer service issues.

Recommendation 1: Changes to form JFS ODS8500 and JFS 04059

To address issues surrounding “automated notices are not effective”, the workgroup brainstormed various improvements to the Hearing Request Form, ODS8500. Their suggestions focused on clarifying the reason(s) for the request, making various additions to the form, and ensuring clients understand requesting a hearing is optional. (See appendix D for a complete list of ideas.) These improvement ideas were shared with the CRIS-E Notice Redesign Workgroup. They reviewed the State Hearing Workgroup’s recommendations and adopted the following:

1. Step 1 was changed from "Read, sign, date and fill in phone number" to: "If you would like to ask for a State Hearing, read, sign, date, and fill in your phone number." Change to clarify that this form was to request a state hearing - apparently, people were just signing it, mailing it in, and did not even know why.
2. Opening paragraph is more explanatory as to the purpose of the form.
3. Step 2 was changed to explain more about what the section was for - "to help schedule your State Hearing".
4. Added a line to allow people to explain why they want the state hearing.
5. Added a line to indicate the days and times that the client cannot come to a state hearing.
6. Added a line for a client to request an "interpreter, signer or other assistance".

The new Hearing Request Form will be ready for automated distribution the end of May 2008.

The workgroup also made changes to the Explanation of State Hearing Procedures Form JFS 04059. They recommended the addition of the paragraph below:

"If you cannot attend the hearing at the scheduled location as a result of not having transportation, child care, medical limitations, etc., you can call 1-866-635-3748 and choose to participate by telephone. If you participate by telephone, the hearing officer assigned to your appeal will call you on the day at the scheduled time for your hearing at the telephone number you provide."

This change will:

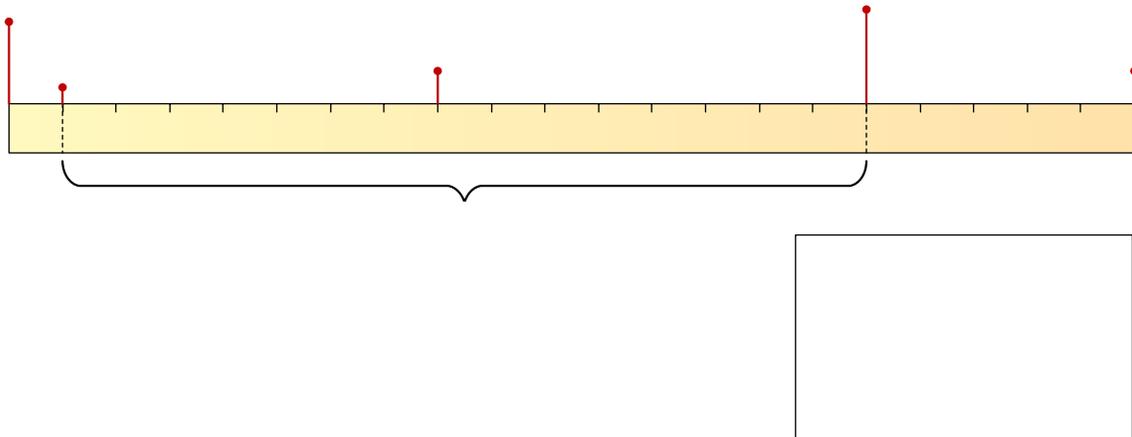
- benefit clients with limited resources;
- reduce client travel, and/or child care costs;
- reduce the number of hearings that are rescheduled;
- allow for a more timely issuance of the hearing decision; and
- In cases when a client is not eligible for benefits but they request a timely hearing and benefits continue pending the outcome of a hearing decision, will reduce benefits overpaid for multiple months while rescheduling.

Recommendation 2: Conciliation Process

The workgroup wanted to address the issue of “too few county conferences” by providing counties with more time at the beginning of the process to contact the client and possibly resolve the issue(s) instead of having to prepare for, and go to a hearing. To do this, the workgroup developed a new timeline that gives counties approximately 17 days to contact the client and create any necessary hearing documentation (See chart below). The workgroup calls this new timeframe the Conciliation Process. During the Conciliation Process the county would contact the client (by phone or in person) to verify the reason for the hearing request, work to resolve any issues, and notify State Hearings of a withdrawal.

The group found that if the county utilized this up front Conciliation Process they would spend less time later in the process:

- completing an appeal summary and gathering all the documentation required to support the agency’s action and forwarding it to the assigned hearing section;
- arranging availability of a county worker to present at the scheduled state hearing; and
- completing the follow-up compliance if it was ordered by a hearing decision.



To test their new timeline the workgroup looked to see if any counties were currently implementing a similar process. They realized Summit County had implemented a process where a unit of three, call each client on the schedule to try to solve their issue prior to hearing. Summit County has seen remarkable results from implementing such an approach, resolving nearly 75 percent of their requested hearings prior to the hearing date (see appendix E).

Recommendation 3: Change to OAC § 5101:6-5-01

To make the changes in the timeline meaningful, the workgroup recommended making two changes to current rules. The first rule change would give counties more time to conduct the Conciliation Process by changing the Ohio Administrative Code § 5101:6-5-01, entitled “Procedures Prior to a State Hearing”. This rule currently requires the county agency to prepare and forward, to the assigned hearing section, a completed appeal summary and attachments to support the action taken by the county within five workdays of the date that the county receives notice of the request for State Hearing. On average, this is six to seven days from the date the hearing is requested. The recommended change to the rule would

require the appeal summary and attachments to support the action be sent to the assigned hearing section three business days prior to the date the state hearing is scheduled. By implementing this rule change, counties would have approximately seven business days extra (approximately 17 total days) to contact the individual that requested the hearing, and if the issue is not resolved, to then complete the appeal summary and gather attachments to support the action.

Recommendation 4: Change to OAC § 5101:6-5-02

However, implementing the rule change above could have a negative effect on counties and clients because the current process requires a written withdrawal notice from the client. After contacting a client, resolving their issue, and obtaining a withdrawal of their hearing request, the client still needed to complete and submit a written withdrawal. To correct this problem, the workgroup recommended changing the Ohio Admin. Code § 5101:6-5-02, entitled “Denial and Dismissal of a State Hearing”. This rule change would allow clients who requested a state hearing to call and dismiss their hearing by withdrawal over the phone. This eliminates the need for the individual to fax or visit the county office to submit their withdrawal, and ensures more accurate disposition reports for the Bureau of State Hearings. This rule change also benefits the county, since it is not necessary to complete an appeal summary for withdrawn cases.

Each of these rule changes clears the way for a the successful implementation of the Conciliation Process; giving counties approximately 17 days to contact the client and create any necessary hearing documentation.

Benefits of all four recommendations

Implementing the changes to the Request for Hearing Form will reduce the number of clients inadvertently requesting a state hearing.

By implementing the Conciliation Process Period and the two rule changes, counties will have more time at the beginning of the process to contact clients and resolve their issues. This in turn will result in less work and time spent preparing for and conducting hearings. Other benefits of the new process include:

- Provides county agencies approximately 17 days to complete the “Conciliation Process”
- Gives county agency increased control over the resolution/outcome of the appealed issue
- Provides case workers additional time to complete resolution activities
- Resolves clients issue(s) more timely
- Promotes agency/client communication
- Improves customer service for the clients
- Builds trust with the clients
- Improves county agency credibility and image
- Reduces overpayments created by timely hearing request benefits issued to clients when ineligible
- Identifies training and staffing needs during the resolution process
- Reduces the number of cases going to a hearing
- Reduces the amount of time the county needs to take to prepare and attend state hearings
- Gives the hearing officer additional time to prepare for hearings because there will be fewer of them
- Give the hearing officer additional time to write hearing decisions because there will be fewer of them

Implementation strategies

The workgroup, having representation from various counties, understood that there would be no one best way to implement the conciliation process in each county. Using the information from the force-field analysis (see appendix F) and their collective understanding of the various county structures, the workgroup developed a list of possible implementation strategies, as well as the major benefits and issues of each strategy.

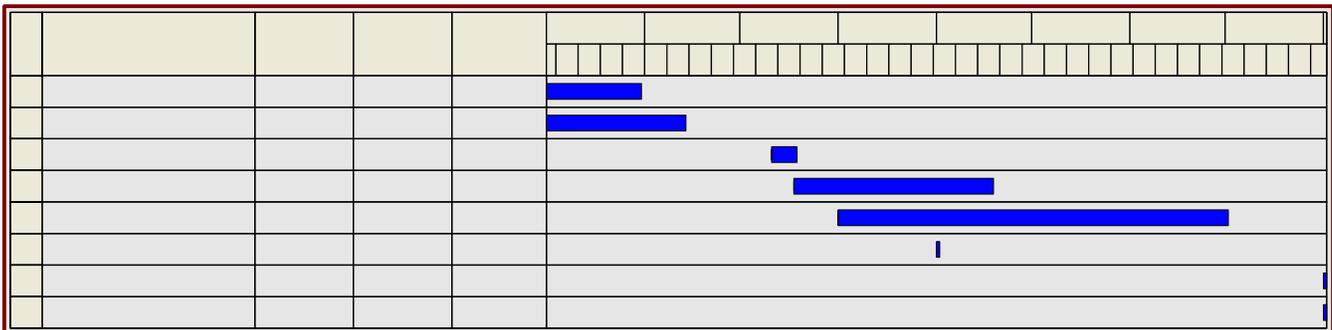
County Implementation Strategy	Possible Issues	Possible Benefits
<p>Caseworker makes the call: Caseworkers could implement the conciliation process on their own work, or they could conduct the process for another caseworker's work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential conflict of interest if making calls concerning their own work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to learn from own mistakes ▪ Develop better client/customer connections ▪ Case workers may learn from each others mistakes or issues
<p>Link conciliation functions to a specialized position: i.e. QA position, Trainer, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In this case a county would need to create backup & redundancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and implement improvement suggestions
<p>Create specialized conciliation function within each unit: State Hearings Coordinator – decentralize the functions - each unit has a person responsible to prepare appeal summaries and attends the hearings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to have some sort of feedback loop, so caseworkers can learn from mistakes, if not in place a caseworker could make the same mistake over and over again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates a point person in each unit that handles all hearing requests; Frees up other staff in the unit ▪ Can identify potential training issues
<p>Create a hearing designee (office, section, unit):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This unit would handle some or all of the following: County & State Hearings, Conciliations, County Conferences, Appeal Summaries ▪ May or may not fix the case – Have authority to fix case/take action ▪ Feedback loop for training opportunities ▪ Most likely to happen in large metro counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could cost \$\$\$ ▪ Need to have some sort of feedback loop, so caseworkers can learn from mistakes, if not in place a caseworker could make the same mistake over and over again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frees up other staff in the agency ▪ Can identify potential training issues

Communication/marketing plan

To ensure that all counties are able to fully implement the workgroup recommendations, the team developed an implementation plan that addresses the needs of the county administration, the county workers, and the state staff affected by this new process.

Audience	Message	Method
County Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General info about the workgroup and the benefits of this solution to the counties, including reducing the amount of work, time savings, improved customer service, and more county control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director's Quarterly meeting Email announcement Summer Conference County Resource Page on the OLS website or on the Program Areas website
County Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed information about how the new process works, the variety of ways they can implement the new process in their county, and the benefits of this new process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video Conference As a part of other training initiatives Desk Aid County Resource Page on the OLS website or on the Program Areas website
State Hearing Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meetings
Other State Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meetings Get on the agenda of any large meeting taking place in a program area, or any regularly scheduled training or video conferences
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General background and info about the process changes Period updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles in News Today Global emails to county administrators Report results to Governor's office via the ART

The workgroup also recommends sharing county success stories and providing counties repetitive training, desk aids, and data that tracks the changes before and after implementation.



Monitoring for results

Once implementation is complete, the workgroup recommends measuring:

- the number of hearing requests heard
- the number of counties using the new process
- the number of telephone withdrawals
- the number hearings the counties did not have to attend
- number of appeal summaries that were avoided

The workgroup also recommends sending a questionnaire to all counties to get feedback on the how the new process is working, how the county handled implementation, etc.

The workgroup recommends reporting on these measures quarterly and sharing the data with the Deputy Director of Legal and all the county directors. The workgroup also recommends conducting the survey every six months or annually and sharing that information with the Deputy Director of Legal.

These measures will monitor the impact this set of process improvements has had on the State Hearings process, and they will indicate what components worked well, and where there may be other process improvement opportunities.

Conclusion

After reviewing the data, researching best practices and evaluating potential solutions, the workgroup has developed four major recommendations to improve the State Hearing process:

- To reduce the number of hearing requests, the workgroup recommends making improvements to the Hearing Request Form. The current form is confusing and can lead an individual to think that the form needs to be signed and returned even though they do not want a hearing.
- To reduce the number of hearing requests that go to hearing, the workgroup recommends implementing the proposed Conciliation Process. During this period, counties would call the individual that requested a hearing to discuss their issue and attempt to fix or resolve their issue prior to the hearing. To aid with the implementation of this recommendation, two State Hearing rules have been changed.
- Change Ohio Admin. Code § 5101:6-5-01, entitled “Procedures Prior to a State Hearing”. This rule currently requires the county agency to prepare and forward to the assigned hearing section a completed appeal summary and attachments to support the action taken by the county within five workdays of the date that the county receives notice of the request for State Hearing. On average, this is six to seven days from the date the hearing is requested. The recommended change to the rule would require the appeal summary and attachments to support the action be sent to the assigned hearing section three business days prior to the date the state hearing is scheduled. By implementing this rule change, counties would have approximately seven more business days to contact the individual that requested the hearing and if the issue is not resolved, to then complete the appeal summary and gather attachments to support the action.
- Change Ohio Admin. Code § 5101:6-5-02, entitled “Denial and Dismissal of a State Hearing”. Currently this rule allows for a dismissal of the state hearing if the individual that requested the hearing signs a written withdrawal of their request for state hearing and that written statement of withdrawal is received by the Bureau of State Hearings prior to or on the date that the hearing is scheduled. The recommended change to the rule would reduce the effort required for the individual that requested a state hearing to call and dismiss their hearing by withdrawal over the

phone. This eliminates the need for the individual to fax or visit the county office to submit their withdrawal, and ensures more accurate disposition reports for the Bureau of State Hearings. This rule change also benefits the county, since it is not necessary to complete an appeal summary for withdrawn cases.

Data from our best practices county, Summit, shows that when they implemented a process similar to the Conciliation Process, they experienced a 75 percent reduction in the number of hearings requiring preparation and going to a hearing (see appendix E). Counties implementing the Conciliation Process should experience a significant reduction in the number of cases that they need to prepare for hearing. This preparation includes completing the appeal summary form, JFS 04069, and attaching all relevant documents used when taking the action being appealed or needed to support the action and sending it either by fax, mail or scanning and e-mailing it to the assigned hearing section.

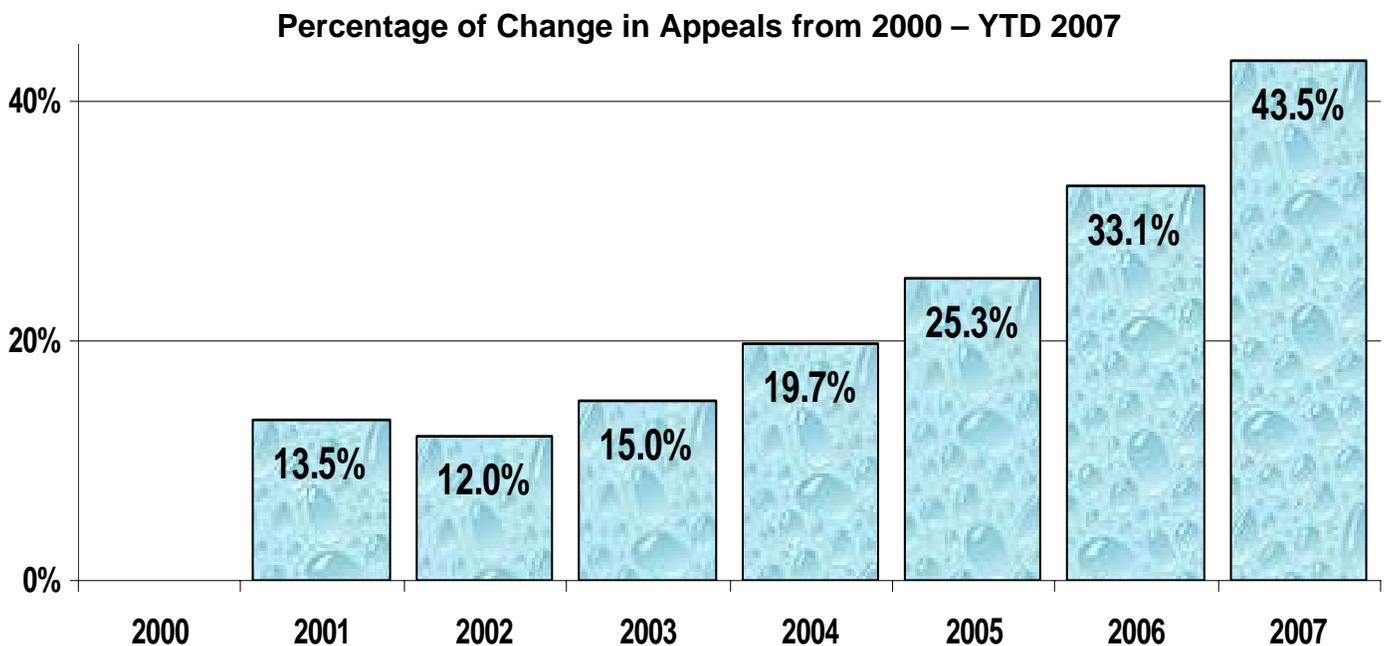
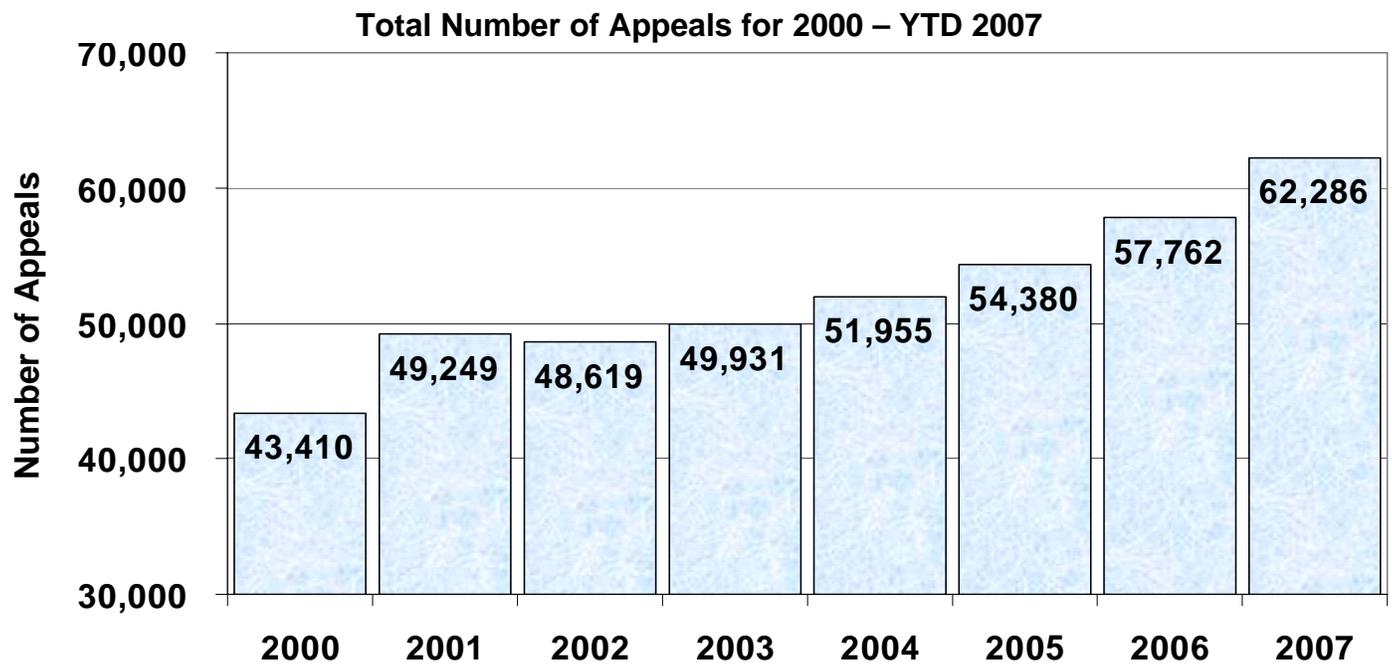
According to the data the workgroup collected (see appendix C), the easiest hearing issue case preparation takes a minimum two hours to complete. If a county had 100 hearing requests a month, and implemented the Conciliation Process as successfully as Summit County, they would reduce the number of hearing requests needing case preparation by 75 percent. This represents a savings of 150 employee-processing hours and the associated costs to copy and supply the appeal summary (see appendix G). While each county is different, implementing the Conciliation Process will decrease the number of cases a county needs to prepare for hearing, resulting in time and cost savings for every county and the Bureau of State Hearings.

Other benefits of this implementing the Conciliation Process include: promoting better agency/client communication, improving customer service, resolving issues sooner, building client trust, providing time for agency workers to complete actual resolution activities and the agency and state conducting fewer hearings.

Appendix A – Baseline data analysis

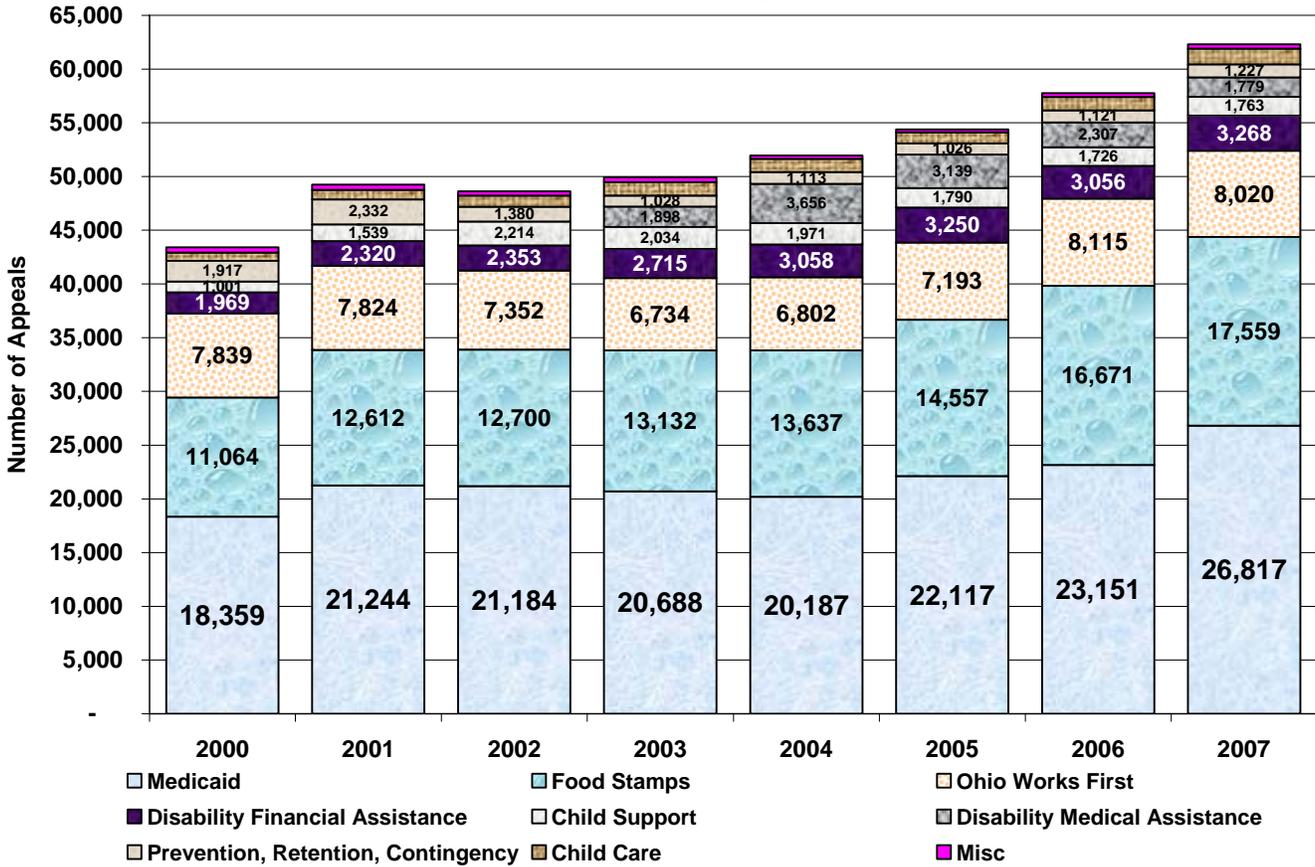
The Bureau of State Hearings shared baseline data concerning the current state of the process at the kickoff meeting. The data pictured below showed:

- Over the last eight years, the number of hearing requests has grown from 43,410 in 2000, to 62,286 in 2007. This represents an increase of 43.5 percent.
- The majority of hearing requests deal with Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Ohio Works First issues.
- While staffing has remained relatively flat, the number of appeals received continued to increase.

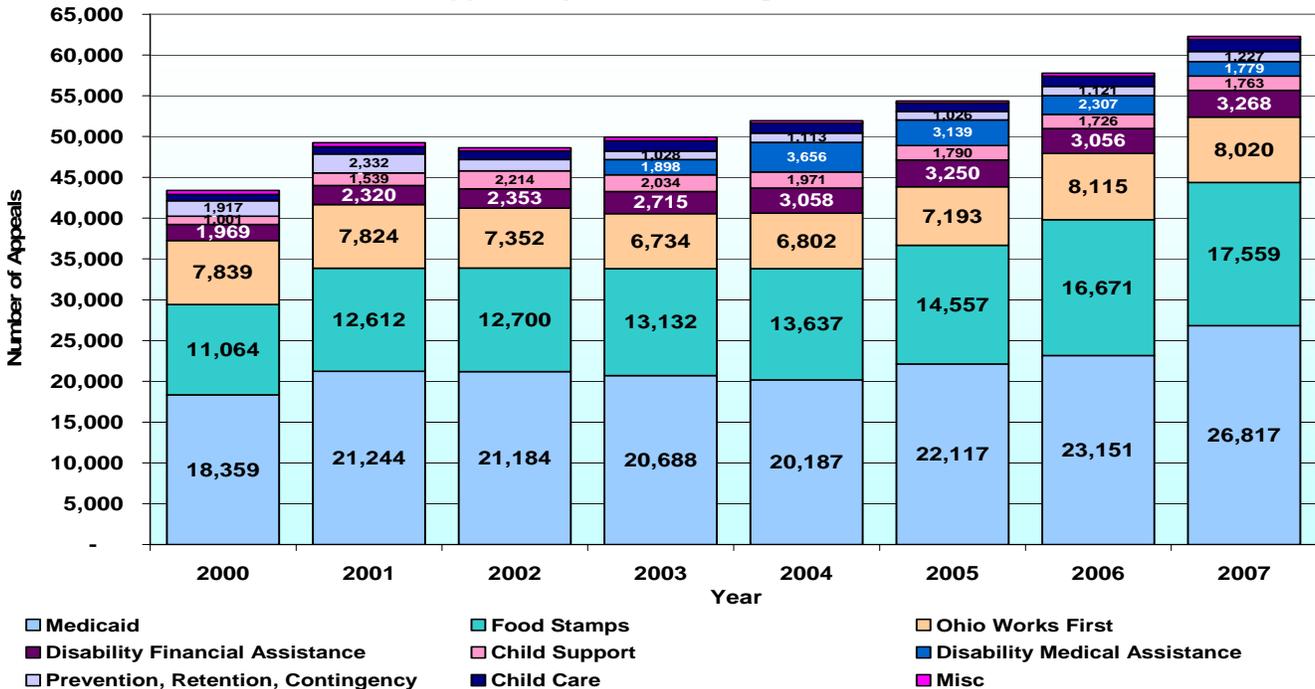


Appendix A – Baseline data analysis – [Pick a color chart to print](#)

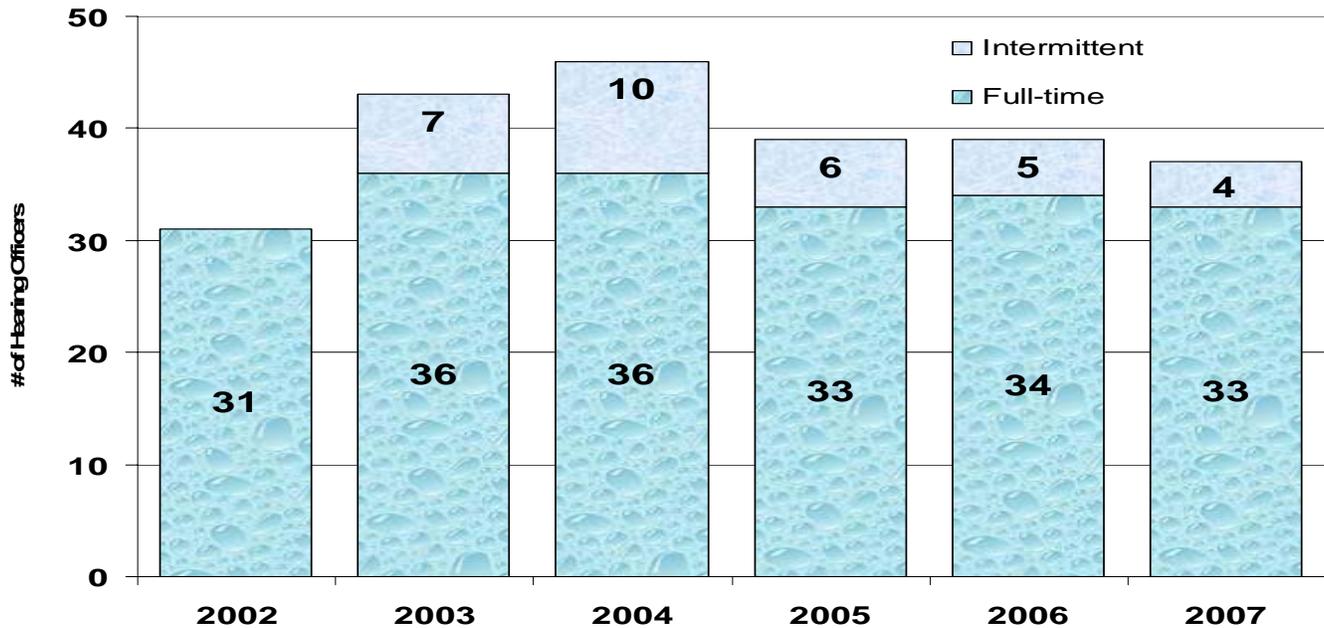
Appeals by Year and Program Area



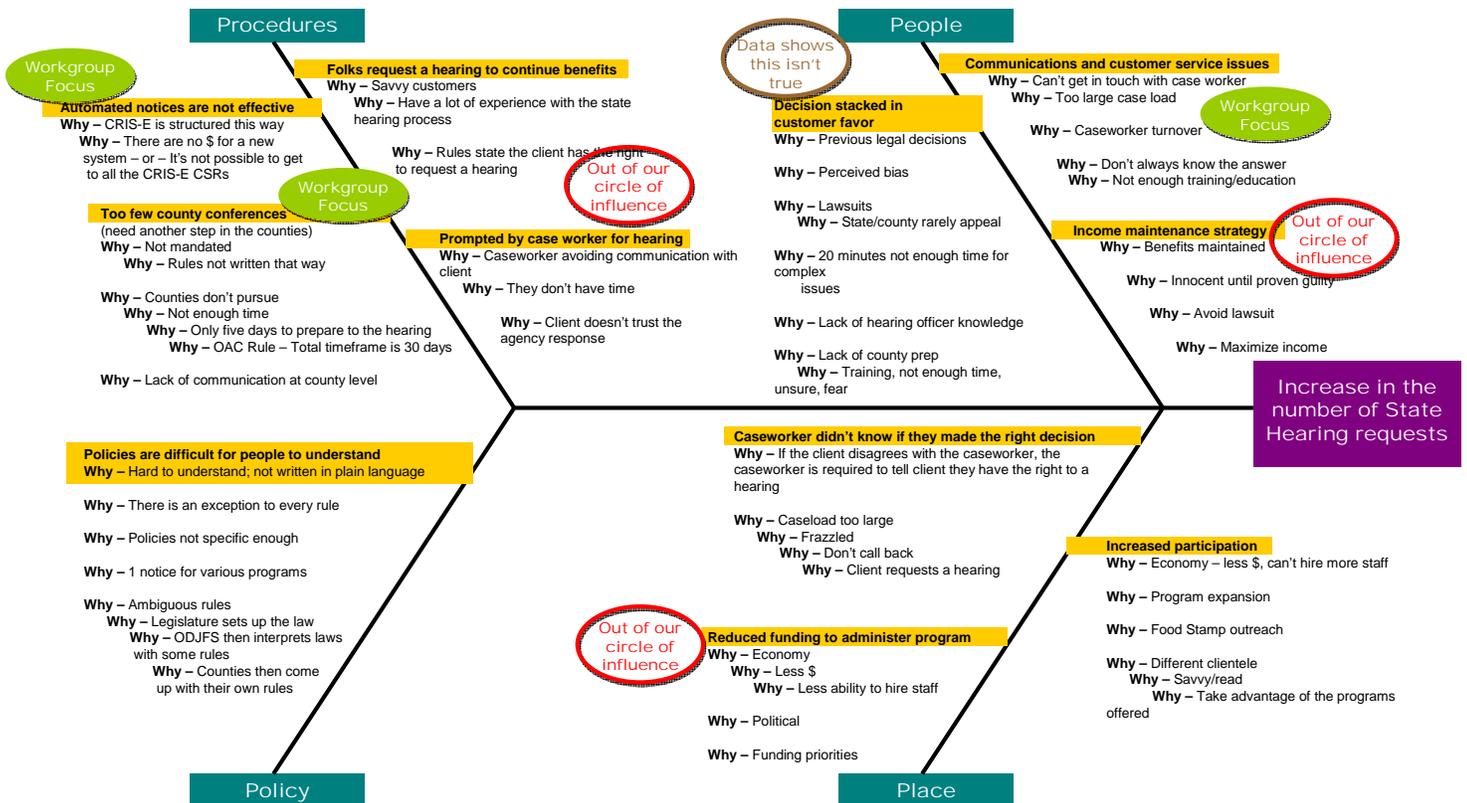
Appeals by Year and Program Area



Hearing Officers for 2000 – YTD 2007



Appendix B – Fishbone/Cause and Effect Diagram



Appendix C – Time Study

The workgroup conducted a time study to find out how much staff time was used to prepare for a hearing. The charts below show that preparing for a basic hearing takes approximately 2.3 hours; preparing for an average hearing takes 3.3 hours; and preparing for a complex hearing takes staff approximately 4.7 hours. The workgroup also listed the various types of hearings and categorized them into basic, average, and complex.

State Hearing Time Study Summary

County Hearing Activities in Minutes	Basic Hearing	Average Hearing	Complex Hearing	Average Total Minutes Per Activity
Assigning Cases	3.0	2.8	3.7	3.2
Taking hearing request	4.9	6.7	7.6	6.4
Tracking hearing request	5.0	5.8	6.0	5.6
Hearing Request Intake Time	12.9	15.3	17.3	15.5
Writing Summary	12.3	25.0	52.8	30.0
Document Search & Copy Time	17.6	26.3	33.8	25.9
Hearing prep time	18.8	30.0	34.2	27.7
Appeal Summary Time	48.7	81.3	120.8	83.6
*Staff Scheduling (Calculated by using the # of minutes needed to schedule divided by the # of hearings per week.)	10.8	11.7	10.8	11.1
Compliance Monitoring	15.8	20.4	28.3	21.5
Minutes for the Hearing	18.3	29.2	50.0	32.5

State Hearings Statewide Workgroup Recommendations

Scanning decision & compliance	3.2	4.0	3.5	3.6
Labeling scan pages	2.1	2.2	4.1	2.8
Writing compliance	14.2	20.5	30.8	21.8
Tracking compliance	9.2	13.3	15.8	12.8
Hearing & Compliance Time	73.6	101.3	143.3	106.1
Total Minutes per Activity	135.2	197.9	281.4	205.2

* Averages were used when ranges were provided

Basic Hearing	Average Hearing	Complex Hearing
2.3 hours	3.3 hours	4.7 hours
Type of Hearings	Type of Hearings	Type of Hearings
Spend down Mass change Rules FS allotment Income change Policy disagreement Reapplication failure Prior authorization OCS case closure	Sanctions Work activity sanction Child support sanction PRC Child care Back dating of Medicaid eligibility Citizenship Child Support AAR admin adjustment review denial	Hardship Long-term care Waiver Transfer of resources Over-payment DDU Resources / trust Child support - arrearages distribution Work activity sanctions Adoption assistance Any case with advocate – attorney Citizenship

Appendix C – Time Study

Basic / Easy Hearing

County Hearing Activities in Minutes	Cleveland	Greene	Lucas	Mont	Portage	Union	Avg Total Minutes
Assigning Cases	5.0	2.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	3.0
Taking hearing request	5.0	3.0	1.0	5.0	7.4	8.0	4.9
Tracking hearing request	5.0	2.0	0.0	10.0	4.8	8.0	5.0
Hearing Request Intake Time	15.0	7.0	2.0	20.0	12.2	21.0	12.9
Writing Summary	10.0	15.0	7.0	4.0	20.0	17.5	12.3
Document Search & Copy Time	45.0	15.0	0.0	10.0	17.8	17.5	17.6
Hearing prep time	45.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	25.2	32.5	18.8
Appeal Summary Time	100.0	40.0	7.0	14.0	63.0	67.5	48.7
*Staff Scheduling (Calculated by using the # of minutes needed to schedule divided by the # of hearings per week.)	5.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	10.8
Compliance Monitoring	30.0	10.0	20.0	5.0	14.8	15.0	15.8
Minutes for the Hearing	15.0	40.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	30.0	18.3
Scanning decision & compliance	5.0	3.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.2
Labeling scan pages	0.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	2.4	0.0	2.1
Writing compliance	20.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	20.0	15.0	14.2
Tracking compliance	10.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	25.0	0.0	9.2
Hearing & Compliance Time	85.0	71.0	50.0	110.0	65.2	60.0	73.6
Total Minutes per Activity	200.0	118.0	59.0	144.0	140.4	148.5	135.2

* Averages were used when ranges were provided

Appendix C – Time Study

Average Hearing

County Hearing Activities in Minutes	Cleveland	Greene	Mont	Portage	Summit	Union	Avg Total Minutes
Assigning Cases	5.0	2.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.8
Taking hearing request	7.0	3.0	5.0	7.4	7.5	10.0	6.7
Tracking hearing request	5.0	2.0	10.0	4.8	5.0	8.0	5.8
Hearing Request Intake Time	17.0	7.0	20.0	12.2	17.5	18.0	15.3
Writing Summary	15.0	20.0	5.0	40.0	32.5	37.5	25.0
Document Search & Copy Time	50.0	20.0	15.0	22.8	20.0	30.0	26.3
Hearing prep time	60.0	20.0	0.0	60.2	7.5	32.5	30.0
Appeal Summary Time	125.0	60.0	20.0	123.0	60.0	100.0	81.3
*Staff Scheduling (Calculated by using the # of minutes needed to schedule divided by the # of hearings per week.)	5.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	11.7
Compliance Monitoring	45.0	20.0	5.0	14.8	22.5	15.0	20.4
Minutes for the Hearing	30.0	60.0	30.0	0.0	25.0	30.0	29.2
Scanning decision & compliance	5.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	10.0	0.0	4.0
Labeling scan pages	0.0	5.0	2.0	2.4	4.0	0.0	2.2
Writing compliance	25.0	15.0	8.0	60.0	0.0	15.0	20.5
Tracking compliance	15.0	5.0	20.0	25.0	0.0	15.0	13.3
Hearing & Compliance Time	125.0	108.0	128.0	105.2	66.5	75.0	101.3
Total Minutes per Activity	267.0	175.0	168.0	240.4	144.0	193.0	197.9

* Averages were used when ranges were provided

Appendix C – Time Study

Complex Hearing

County Hearing Activities in Minutes	Cleveland	Greene	Lucas	Mont	Portage	Union	Avg Total Minutes
Assigning Cases	5.0	2.0	5.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Taking hearing request	10.0	3.0	5.0	10.0	7.4	10.0	7.6
Tracking hearing request	5.0	2.0		10.0	4.8	8.0	6.0
Hearing Request Intake Time	20.0	7.0	10.0	30.0	12.2	18.0	17.3
Writing Summary	20.0	30.0	120.0	7.0	80.0	60.0	52.8
Document Search & Copy Time	60.0	20.0	0.0	30.0	47.8	45.0	33.8
Hearing prep time	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	70.2	35.0	34.2
Appeal Summary Time	155.0	75.0	120.0	37.0	198.0	140.0	120.8
*Staff Scheduling (Calculated by using the # of minutes needed to schedule divided by the # of hearings per week.)	5.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	10.8
Compliance Monitoring	60.0	30.0	45.0	5.0	14.8	15.0	28.3
Minutes for the Hearing	45.0	120.0	60.0	45.0	0.0	30.0	50.0
Scanning decision & compliance	0.0	5.0	10.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.5
Labeling scan pages	0.0	5.0	15.0	2.0	2.4	0.0	4.1
Writing compliance	35.0	20.0	20.0	15.0	80.0	15.0	30.8
Tracking compliance	25.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	25.0	15.0	15.8
Hearing & Compliance Time	170.0	190.0	150.0	150.0	125.2	75.0	143.4
Total Minutes per Activity	345.0	272.0	280.0	217.0	335.4	233.0	281.5

* Averages were used when ranges were provided

Appendix D – Possible changes to the Self-Mailer

Clarifying reason for request

- Some agencies are free standing such as child support. On the mailer, the client marks child support when there is no issue with the child support agency. They confused child support with childcare. Form needs to be redesigned.
- Put program selection box instead of line of why hearing is being requested.
- If boxes are to remain, we would like room for customer's explanation.
- Please have an area where the client must list, even a few words, why they are requesting the state hearing. A lot of times, especially the elderly, it's misunderstood (by check boxes) they must check an area. If there was an area for them to list "why" they are requesting the hearing – once received at the bureau, the bureau could see the client just misunderstood, therefore cutting down on scheduling!
- Self-mailer should include client's written reason for a hearing.
- Add section for why they want the request. If we know, maybe we can avoid the hearing
- Add section for reason for request.
- Rather than check box, put in a text box for an explanation of the reason for the request similar to the hearing request form.
- Something on the self-mailer pre-typed with common reasons for hearings so they can check one or more.
- Specific reason for request and category.
- More specific information as to the reason for the hearing.
- Need specific reason for hearing.
- Space for clients to write the reason for the request.
- Customer to provide specific program and reason for request.

Additions/changes to form

- Reverse the order for county conference request and state hearing request.
- Need box for interpreters (language and deaf).
- The customer should have a way to request a block time and a specific day for a hearing that would be best for them. Example: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. or 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. on M, T, W, R, F.
- Need box for – if action is other than the notice date.
- Add – Have you requested a county conference?

- Need comment box for more detailed information.

Hearings are optional – Are you sure you want one

- Put a disclaimer on the notice that you don't need to return the mailer if you don't want a hearing.
- Make it very clear that this is a state hearing request, and completing this form is OPTIONAL (we have too many people that fill it out because they think they have to).
- Self-mailer should contain instructions to only return self-mailer if they want a hearing. Sometimes clients misunderstand this.
- Are you really going to attend a hearing if it is scheduled? Or are you just calling a hearing to continue benefits?
- Make the notice more "user friendly" so the customer knows what they are doing and what they are asking for. Customers are confused, which causes more appeals than necessary.
- Redesign the self-mailer so that the customer understands what he/she is signing up for. Explain they will be responsible to attend a hearing and provide why they believe the decision was not correct.

Miscellaneous

- For the CRIS-E notice redesign workgroup (I'm sure they already know this): improving the automation of notices and the notices themselves will reduce the number of state hearing requests (i.e. An individual gets, for example, three notices denying three categories of Medicaid along with one approval letter approving one category of Medicaid)
- Why do these mailers come to the county? And when they do, couldn't we email these mailers to BSH? Tried this and the request was never opened! So, trying to reduce paper wouldn't it be beneficial to email these?
- Need a "weeding out" procedure for requests – Identify if a legitimate request or not
- Attach denial to state hearing request. i.e. Denial prints on same page as request
- Have hearing officers by specialized in programs

Appendix E – Benchmark Data

The workgroup was looking for examples of different ways to conduct the hearing process, and were surprised to find a best practice in our own state. Summit County has implemented a process where a unit of three, call each client on the schedule to try to solve their issue prior to hearing. The data below gives a snapshot of the impact this process has on the number of hearing held.

Summit County Hearing Activity Data

Summit County Hearing Activity	Hearings Scheduled (Total Count)	Resolved		Summaries Written		Hearings Held	
		#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
11/12/07-11/16/07	56	44	78.6%	12	21.4%	3	5.4%
1/21/08-1/25/08	46	33	71.7%	13	28.3%	6	13.0%
1/28/08-2/1/08	45	34	75.6%	11	24.4%	4	8.9%
2/4/08-2/8/08	35	29	82.9%	6	17.1%	2	5.7%
2/11/08-2/15/08	55	44	80.0%	8	14.5%	3	5.5%
2/18/08-2/22/08	59	37	62.7%	13	22.0%	9	15.3%
Total # of Hearings	296	221	74.7%	63	21.3%	27	9.1%

Appendix F – Force Field Analysis

The workgroup developed a force-field analysis to identify and address any issues that might hamper the implementation of the new conciliation process, and what issues may positively impact the new process.

(-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of conflict of interest

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential cost to counties • Reviewing the work I think is correct may be hard to do • Confusing to client due to lack of trust • If client shows, the case will still have to be heard to ensure due process rights • Worker not knowing that there was an error and not learning from mistakes
<p>Giving more time for the county to contact the client prior to the hearing (county conference)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings to county with reduced paperwork – save Forest • Reduces error rates • Improves customer service • Improves quality of appeals summaries • Client receives contact/help • Identify trends and training needs • Use issues to improve knowledge of case workers so they do not continue to make the same errors • Increases county control over the outcome/resolution
<p>(+)</p>

Appendix G – Cost Savings

Some counties create paper reports and appeal summaries that need to be sent to their assigned state hearing officer. The average cost to create a file is \$1.23. There may also be the cost of long-distance telephone calls that are made to the client that average \$0.01 per call. All of these costs would be reduced with the implementation of a new process.

Average Statewide Material Cost per Hearing for Calendar Year 2007

Supply Item	Unit Cost	Units per Hearing	Cost per Hearing	Total Number of Hearings in 2007	Total Material Cost for 2007 Hearings	Possible Material Savings with 75%* Less Hearings
Paper	\$ 0.06	21	\$ 1.25	62,286	\$ 77,857.50	\$ 58,393
Avg Long-Distance Calls	\$ 0.01	1	\$ 0.01	62,286	\$ 622.86	\$ 467
Avg Overnight Postage	\$ 1.17	1	\$ 1.17	62,286	\$ 72,874.62	\$ 54,656
Total Cost	\$ 1.24	23	\$ 2.43	62,286	\$ 151,354.98	\$ 113,516

* 75 % of hearings could be avoided by performing the resolution activities identified in the new process