



Reimagining Services Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

What are the State Service Centers? Who do they serve?

The [Division of State Service Centers](#) (DSSC) serves as a one-stop-shop housing a diverse array of public/private health and social service partners. The goal of DSSC is to promote access to Delaware's health and human service system and serve all Delawareans in need of them. There are 15 State Service Centers in Delaware. Each center provides a mix of services based on the needs of its community. Services include general assistance, emergency assistance services, food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), emergency housing, mental health support, Medicaid, and more.

The highest areas of need met by the State Service Centers are Medicaid and medical assistance, food benefits, housing, childcare, transportation and home health care.

What is the Reimagining Services Initiative?

We understand that services can be difficult to access and navigate, often requiring a long process of several steps to receive the service. In 2021, DHSS launched the "Reimagining Service Delivery" initiative to research, create, and implement improvements on how services are delivered. The goal of this initiative is to make services at State Service Centers more accessible and streamlined for the client. This effort is part of Governor Carney's Family Services Cabinet Council (FSCC).

How long will this project take? When will you start actually making changes?

The timeline for this initiative involved three phases.

Phase 1 (December 2021 - May 2022)

Gathering State Service Center staff input and researching internal practices.

Phase 2 (June 2022 - January 2023)

Interviews and focus groups with users, staff, service providers, community partners, and mystery shoppers.

Phase 3 (February 2023 - January 2025)

Test appropriate solutions for Improvement based on Phase 2 findings.

What's next? We want to be thorough when reviewing feedback so we can ensure meaningful, lasting change. Because of the importance of this work and our intention of reaching as many different groups as possible, we are taking time to do this right. There is already work that's been completed and some changes have been made, we are focused on the high feasibility and high priority areas. Overall, this project is closely mirrored off of the Department of Motor Vehicles Reimagining, which was based on a five year timeline.



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What are the key focus areas?

There are 5 focus areas for improvement.

- Client Service Delivery:** Ensure universal processes across all State Service Centers; create an easier Intake and application process; combine and simplify front desk services.
- Employees:** Deliver services through a trauma-informed lens; train staff on services available and eligibility; create a new onboarding and performance management program.
- Technology:** Create an electronic check-in system; use lobby screens to share service information; ensure staff access to updated technology.
- Facilities:** Upgrade lobbies with new furniture and amenities; conduct an ADA review of all facilities; change the flow so Interviews are held privately.
- Meeting Evolving Client Needs:** Conduct annual assessments to understand needs; consider a base set of services across all State Service Centers; create an awareness and education campaign.

I didn't know about this initiative or the focus groups/surveys. Can I still share my experience?

We have engaged with service users, DSSC staff and other stakeholders throughout the process utilizing town halls, surveys and focus groups. However, we are not done listening! There will be additional opportunities to participate or share your voice. Email StateServiceCommunity@delaware.gov with any questions/comments or check <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/admin/communityengagement> for updates on future opportunities.

Are you planning to use technology to improve service delivery? How?

With the goal of improving access to services for all Delawareans, we recognize the importance of technology. Additionally, any technology adoption should be in service of improving the user experience. Several vendors offer these services, and we are meeting with them to explore how we can work together. For example, a key recommendation is to develop a mobile application so that service users can understand their eligibility for services, sign up and track their service applications, and receive timely updates—all in their preferred language. This is just one example of how we intend to incorporate technology into reimagining service delivery. We expect this will happen during the latter half of the solutions implementation because we need to learn more from the community about what the mobile app should look like.

Many community-based organizations offer services and make referrals to State Service Centers. How are you going to partner with them?

Community resources have been part of the heartbeat of State Service Centers. At DHSS, we believe in connecting with our community partners to meet the needs of the community. We do this by facilitating community/area meetings at State Service Centers. The Community Partner Support Unit is also available to support community partners. There is also the community partner portal - where you can help people apply for services. We are currently doing a reset after Covid, and hope to reestablish resources such as the clergy groups.



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How are you going to ensure these changes last?

We started this process by talking to staff, a critical element of our reimagining work. They are the face of this initiative as they are who you see when you enter a State Service Center. We will update trainings for frontline staff, managers, and supervisors on topics such as trauma-informed customer service, service navigation and cultural sensitivity. DHSS understands that it is not just how employees process documents, but how they engage with clients. We hope to increase morale, employee pay, and make improvements in workload. What we are speaking about here is a culture of quality service delivery and it starts with our staff. This is how we make the change sustainable. We would also want to socialize the community on State Service Centers—the services offered, what to expect, and how to provide feedback. We want to ensure a culture of learning and awareness so that even when we do make mistakes, we have open lines of communication that hold us accountable.

What is the *reimagined* experience for someone using a State Service Center?

We expect anyone choosing to use a State Service Center for their needs to be treated with dignity and respect. A human-centered and trauma-informed approach is what will guide our reimagined service delivery. Specifically, what we envision is a check-in queuing system that collects only the necessary data. We hope to minimize redundancy and improve accessibility. We don't want the process to be lengthy and we want social workers to actually be social workers. People in need should be able to go to a social worker and get immediate referrals. When clients have a question about their case, all employees should have access to specific case updates. People should not be retraumatized and forced to retell their stories to get help. After receiving your service and/or getting answers to any questions, we would want to know how we did. This is critical as it will allow us to continuously improve our customer service and overall service delivery. We want someone's time in a State Service Center to be a great experience and there should be consistent quality regardless of which center is visited.

How much did it cost to do this project? Why weren't those funds spent directly on services or service centers?

It's less about the money and more about why it's important that it's happening. DHSS wants services to be more efficient, more accessible, more streamlined. We're listening to the community in order to truly understand your experiences with State Service Centers. As for right now, we have received funding to begin updating lobby waiting areas and to pursue a new queuing system.

More Questions?

For additional information about the Reimagining Service Delivery initiative, please email stateservicecommunity@delaware.gov.