



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH  
SECRETARY

March 29, 2018

**SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

The Honorable Louis Pate, Chair  
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on  
Health and Human Services  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Room 311, Legislative Office Building  
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Josh Dobson, Chair  
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on  
Health and Human Services  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Room 301N, Legislative Office Building  
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Donny Lambeth, Chair  
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on  
Health and Human Services  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Room 303, Legislative Office Building  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Chairmen:

Session Law 2017-57, Section 11.C.7.(b), requires the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), to submit a quarterly report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, on the development, implementation and outcomes of the child welfare component of the NC FAST system.

On behalf of Secretary Cohen, the Department of Health and Human Services is notifying you that this report will be delayed as the Department continues to work to finalize the requirements for this report. The report will be submitted on or before May 1, 2018.

Should you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Wayne Black, Director for the Division of Social Services, at 919-527-6335 or [Wayne.Black@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Wayne.Black@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

fw

Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH  
Secretary

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

**Status of the Implementation of the Child Welfare  
Component of the North Carolina Families Accessing  
Services Through Technology (NC FAST) System**

**SL 2017-57, Section 11C.7.(b)**



**Report to the  
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and  
Human Services**

**By  
North Carolina Department of Health and Human  
Services**

**May 1, 2018**

## **Reporting Requirements**

### **SESSION LAW 2017-57 SECTION 11C.7.(b)**

#### **SECTION 11C.7.(b) Child Welfare/NC FAST.**

The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall continue toward completion of the Child Welfare component of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services Through Technology (NC FAST) system to (i) bring the State into compliance with the Statewide Information System systematic factor of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and (ii) ensure that data quality meets federal standards and adequate information is collected and available to counties to assist in tracking children and outcomes across counties.

It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Child Welfare component of the NC FAST system be operational by December 31, 2017. To that end, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall report on the development, implementation, and outcomes of the Child Welfare component of the NC FAST system to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services quarterly through April 1, 2019. The report shall include, at a minimum, each of the following:

- (1) The current time line for development and implementation of the Child Welfare component to NC FAST.
- (2) Any adjustments and justifications for adjustments to the time line.
- (3) Progress on the development and implementation of the system.
- (4) Address any identified issues in developing or implementing the Child Welfare component to NC FAST and solutions to address those issues.
- (5) The level of county participation and involvement in each phase of the project.
- (6) Any budget and expenditure reports, including overall project budget and expenditures, and current fiscal year budget and expenditures.

## **Timeline**

### **1) SECTION 11C.7.(b).1 The current timeline for development and implementation of the Child Welfare component to NC FAST.**

Per the language in Section 12C.1.(c), the initial goal for implementation of the Child Welfare component of NC FAST was that it be operational by December 31, 2017. Section (2) below provides additional details on the project timeline.

#### **1.1 Project Overview**

The NC FAST Child Welfare Services Project (P4), includes the following components:

- Child Protection
- Foster Care Services (Child Placement)
- Adoption
- Youth in Transition
- Provider Management

P4 provides a single, unified process that includes the following Child Welfare services:

- Screening
- Intake
- Licensure
- Assessments (includes optional mobile tablet application, referenced below)
- Service Planning And Provisioning For Child Protective Services
- Child Placement And Foster Care
- Adoption Services

In addition, P4 offers an optional mobility application for case worker assessment.

P4 replaces the siloed legacy systems that often could not communicate with each other or communicate across county lines. In their place, it offers a statewide enterprise system that will promote unified policies and procedures throughout North Carolina.

The Child Welfare component of NC FAST became operational in August of 2017 when it was deployed to the five pilot counties:

- Franklin
- Guilford
- Richmond
- Rockingham
- Sampson

The Child Welfare Services project (P4) continues to operate within its budget.

#### **1.2 Challenges**

- Moving to a statewide, integrated case management system has a major impact on the way social workers document their cases, access information, and complete their required activities.
- Child Welfare operates differently across counties, making unification to a single statewide system and change management difficult.

- P4 is being implemented concurrently with the federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- The 24X7 high availability access to allow Child Welfare workers functionalities identified by the business at all times has created challenges in integration with NCID access.
- 2016 business requirements for Child Welfare System were inadequate, resulting in the need for more development work during roll out.

## Adjustments

### 2) SECTION 11C.7.(b).2 Any adjustments and justifications for adjustments to the timeline

#### 2.1 Deployment to Pilot Counties

The system is being developed in three major releases of system functionality: (Refer to the [Release Breakdown](#) graphic in the “Functional Development by Track” section.)

- July 2017: Release One – Completed; Deployed to Pilot Counties
  - Included Intake, Child Protective Services (CPS) Assessment, and In-Home/Out-of-Home Case Management, Legal Services, Title IV-E Eligibility, ICWA, Financials, Federal Reporting, and supporting functionality; was deployed into the production environment.
  - Pilot counties began using the new system to confirm that user access was properly configured on July 31, 2017.
  - Entry of new cases in Pilot counties commenced on August 7, 2017.

#### 2.2 Pilot Results

The Child Welfare Services Project (P4) is the most complex component of NC FAST and the impact of inadequate business requirements (specifications for how the system needed to work) and the complexity and variety of child welfare practices across the state has resulted in a challenging initial pilot.

In December 2017, the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS) sent a letter to DHHS citing the following concerns:

- Confidentiality between economic services and child welfare services. There was a tab that allowed economic services staff to view some child welfare case information. The issue has been resolved by eliminating the ability of the Economic Services staff to view this information.
- System down time (NCID): DHHS has worked closely with CIO to mitigate system down time related to issues with NCID by implementing a NCID failover solution to redirect logins to an authentication protocol.
- A longer term solution that will ensure true 24X7 access is currently under development.
- The county DSS Director's ability to monitor/assess work: DHSS is working closely with directors on an appropriate set of reports that will provide directors and supervisors with the daily, weekly and monthly information they need to monitor child welfare services. This work was completed in April 2018, A full complement of reports are currently available to counties that are refreshed daily.
- Foster care reimbursement defects: Several county reimbursement defects were identified during the pilot process. DHHS worked with the counties to resolve these issues and is monitoring the technical fixes that have been implemented to resolve the defects. Issues related to county trainings were also identified during the pilot process. The Division of Social Services and NCFASST staff have developed and facilitated financial trainings to

county DSS business office staff members to better understand foster care financials using NCFASST. DHHS continues to work closely with the pilot counties to monitor and resolve issues related to reimbursements and training.

- PIP policy changes have not been incorporated. Refer to [PIP modification section](#).
- Help desk support has not responded to calls for support in a timely manner. Refer to the [Help Desk Improvements](#) section.
- Implementation has created additional workload. Refer to [NC FAST Staffing Strategy](#) section.
- Pilot counties are having difficulty complying with certain state/federal regulations/policies using new system. Refer to [the DSS Assistance to County Child Welfare Staff](#) section.

## **2.3 DHHS Recommendations**

DHHS leadership immediately reviewed the concerns and agreed that NC FAST P4 had critical issues that required system modification to improve functionality.

On January 5, 2018 DHHS leadership sent an email to all county DSS directors informing them of the decision to adjust the roll out schedule and that a meeting would be held with the DSS Director's Association leadership, and the directors of the five pilot counties and Group 1 (the first group of counties after the pilot counties to phase into NCFASST) counties on January 10 to review all critical issues in detail and propose a plan for moving forward. At the January 10 meeting, DHHS leadership and the DSS directors shared detailed lists of critical issues to be addressed and discussed a proposed revised roll out schedule that included fixing all defects and enhancements deemed "critical" by both DHHS leadership and the Directors. DHHS authorized the delayed implementation of NC FAST to the Group 1 counties to provide time for the updates to be made and to provide an opportunity to validate that the updates addressed the identified issues.

The DHHS Secretary and leadership team met with Pilot and Group 1 counties to hear their concerns and agreed that critical issues needed resolution before the next roll out. *Critical Issues* are defined as, *items that, if not corrected, do not allow staff to do their work within the system itself and for which there is no reasonable work around within the system*. All identified critical technical defects have been resolved as of March 2018; however, we are continuing to monitor the results of the system fixes.

### **2.3.1 System Access**

To resolve system access issues, the NC FAST team developed multiple solutions, including the following:

- Implemented NCID failover solution to redirect logins to an authentication protocol.
- Implemented Security Assertion Mark Up Language (SAML) to ensure stable logins.
- Working collaboratively with State CIO to provide a 24X7 high availability second environment.

## 2.4 The Updated Schedule of Software Development Milestones

Changes were made to the development schedule in order to accommodate county requests for changes in deployment. The following reflects the updated planned milestones of software development for P4. For the deployment schedule, refer to the [Deployment Schedule](#) section of this document under “Implementation Strategy.”

- February 26 2018, Release 2:
  - Release 2 is focused on Adoption, Provider Management, Foster Home Licensure, Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP), and other supporting capabilities. For a complete description of Release 2 activities, refer to the [Release 2 Milestones](#) section of this document, under “Implementation Strategy.”
- March 2018
  - Youth in Transition (LINKS)
- April 2018
  - NC FAST upgrades to the Curam Version 7 upgrade
- June 2018:
  - Release 3 (begins in July 2018 and continues through November 2018):
  - Medicaid interface update (NC FAST currently shares information with other states via Medicaid Information Technology Architecture (MITA).
  - Federal Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) requirements implemented (through November 2018)
  - Electronic fund transfers (EFT) for adoption assistance.
  - PIP functionality,
  - Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)
  - National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) interface
- August 2018
  - The GDAC interface is rolled into the latest version of the software.
- September 2018
  - The Education interface is added (Part of CCWIS).
- October 2018
  - The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) interface is added. (Part of CCWIS).
  - Private Agency enhancements added.
- November 2018
  - Additional interfaces are added to the P4 software application as required by any updates in CCWIS.
- January 2019
  - The software application becomes the sole Child Welfare Services software for all state, county, and private agencies.

To view of the timeline of the Project, Refer to [Appendix A](#)

For the documented history of the Pilot County deployment of Release 1, refer to [Appendix H](#).



## Implementation Strategy

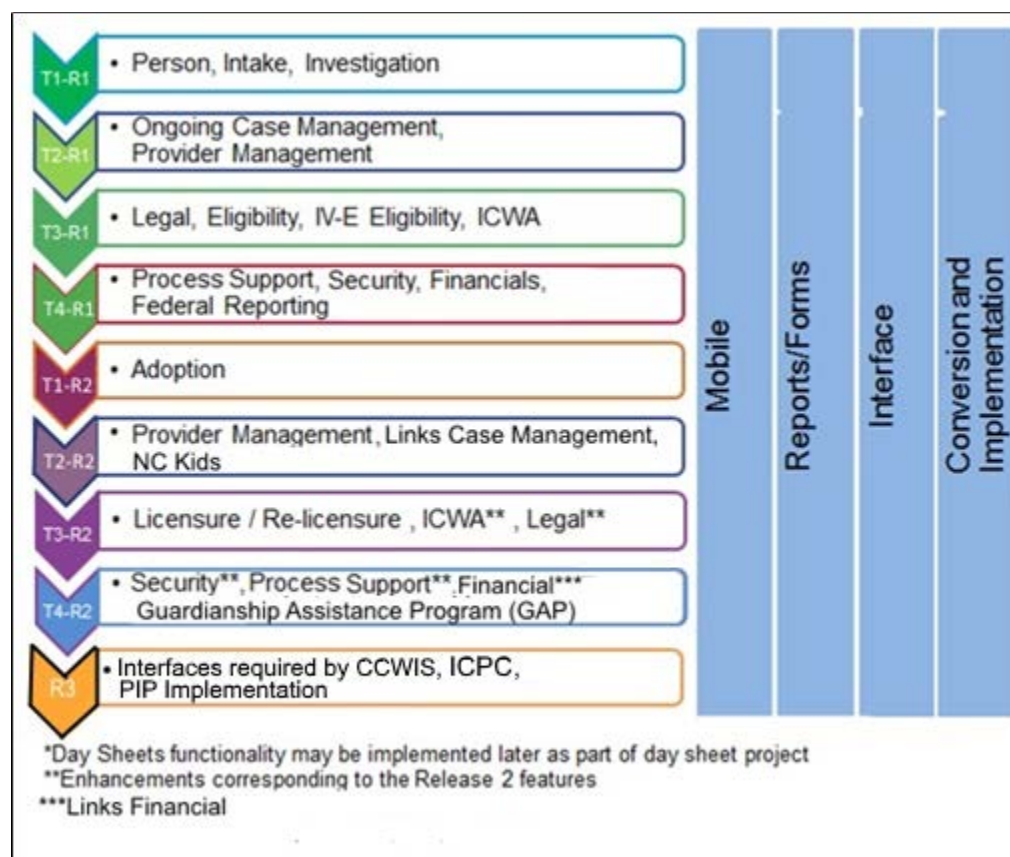
### 3) SECTION 11C.7.(b).3 Progress on the development and implementation of the system

#### 3.1 Agile Development

The P4 Project implementation is being conducted in phases, with three major releases. Development occurs across four parallel tracks, using an Agile Project Management methodology. The Agile methodology engages with county stakeholders very early in the requirements confirmation and system design activities. The software continues to be developed incrementally in four week periods called Sprints, so that functionality is demonstrated to the county representatives as the system is being built. Their feedback helps to shape the design of the system as development and builds continue. This approach is in contrast with the traditional “waterfall” approach to system development, in which county stakeholders were exposed to the system very late in the development process, just prior to go-live. Because of deferred exposure of stakeholders to the new system, a waterfall approach would have allowed the development team only limited capacity to address stakeholder feedback prior to go-live. Using an Agile approach minimizes implementation risks by addressing key user concerns well in advance of go-live.

#### 3.2 Functional Development by Track

The planned high-level functionalities of each release, by track, are listed below:



### **3.3 Current Status and Planned Activities**

The P4 Child Welfare project team has completed the following:

- Fit/Gap Analysis,
- Release 1 and 2 Design,
- Release 1 and 2 Development,
- Release 1 and 2 Test phases,
- Implementation of the software for the five pilot counties.

#### **3.3.1 Release 1 Milestones**

Implementation activities were successfully completed and included the following:

- User Acceptance Testing (UAT) in July 2017. UAT was an opportunity for state office and county staff to test the system prior to pilot county implementations.
- The Help Desk is now supporting pilot counties 24/7. Additional Help Desk staff will be brought onto the project in the coming months as the number of county system users increases and based on an analysis of actual average per-user ticket volumes and trending.
- Software updates (enhancements, financial adjustments) have been deployed on a monthly basis since go-live to the pilot counties.

#### **3.3.2 Ongoing Activities**

- Weekly on-site visits are being made to all five pilot counties by NC FAST County Liaisons and State DSS staff to ensure that the transition to the NC FAST system is going smoothly.
- Readiness efforts for the Group 1 (Extended Pilot Counties) continued through March 2018 (e.g., user training, security set up, legacy data cleaning) as well as planning for go-live.
- Reviewing with Pilot and Group 1 Extended Pilot Counties the list of defects and enhancements to be released after the initial implementation.
- Added an additional six counties to the Group 1 Extended Pilot Counties (Catawba, Chatham, Dare, Macon, Orange, Rowan) to accommodate concerns around geographic dispersion, PIP driven changes, and county readiness.

#### **3.3.3 Release 2 Milestones**

Release 2 is focused on Adoption, Provider Management, Guardianship Assistance, Youth in Transition (LINKS), and other supporting capabilities. Release 2 includes all the functionality of the releases that precede it. Release 2 also includes Releases 2.1 and 2.2.

- User Checkpoint #3 (focused on Release 2 content) took place October 24-26, 2017. See Appendix B for results.
- Regional Leadership Workshops were conducted for planning purposes in all 100 counties and were concluded on November 15, 2017. Refer to the Readiness section in Section 5 of this document for more details.

- User Acceptance Testing for Release 2 was conducted from November 28 to December 8, 2017. The following defect totals were discovered, most of these have been addressed or are scheduled to be fixed before July 23:
  - No critical or major defects
  - 38 high priority defects
  - 26 medium priority defects
  - 3 low priority defects

### **3.4 Deployment Schedule**

Each deployment of the P4 software includes all the releases that preceded it. When the software is deployed for the first time to a county, that county receives the complete latest version that includes all software releases to that point. Counties that have gone live with the P4 software are afterwards updated automatically when new updates are rolled out.

- February 2018
  - Pilot Counties upgraded to the latest version of the P4 software to include Release 2 functionality.
- March 2018
  - Deployment to Expanded Pilot (Group 1) of NC FAST.
- April 2018
  - NC FAST upgrades to the Curam Version 7 upgrade.
- June 2018
  - Deployment to Group 2 counties
- August 2018
  - Deployment to the Group 3 counties
- September 2018
  - Deployment to the Group 4 counties
- November 2018
  - Deployment to the Group 5 counties.
- January 2019
  - All Counties and private agencies are using NC FAST as the sole software application for Child Welfare Services.

### **3.5 Project Management Activities**

- The NCFast Project Management Team is using an Agile Project Management methodology to ensure early county and state stakeholder involvement, adherence to the end users' requirements, and to contain schedule, cost, and scope risks.
- Joint application design (JAD) activities are a collaborative approach to the design of NC FAST Project 4 that promotes buy-in early in the project through the active participation of state office and county stakeholders. JAD activities are continuing with

input from the five pilot counties (Franklin, Guilford, Richmond, Rockingham, and Sampson), the six Group 1 counties (Catawba, Chatham, Dare, Macon, Orange, Rowan), and the State Division of Social Services (DSS).

- Collaborative design webinars and previews of development work with County and State users are continuing for all ongoing design and development work.
- A collaborative web site (the Learning Gateway) serves as a communication hub for all counties during pre-implementation. The Learning Gateway URL is <https://ncfasttraining.nc.gov/>.
- Continuing to post training materials and project status information on the project collaboration site. Continuing to maintain communications via the project email address. Topics have included the County Checklist (Readiness), walk-throughs from the demonstrations, graphic printouts of the webinars, and the User Checkpoint Training Manual. Discussion Boards are offered for each topic.
- Sharing the latest information about the rollout of Child Welfare Services in NC FAST at regional DSS Director meetings, as invited.

### **3.6 Help Desk Improvements**

NC FAST has approved the below options:

- Rotate NC DSS child welfare staff NC FAST subject matter experts to provide CW expertise to the help desk to answer questions on policy and practice to NC FAST.
- The Division of Social Services, Child Welfare Services team is working with the NC FAST Project Management team to improve policy knowledge by planning and facilitating policy trainings to NC FAST staff including trainers, readiness liaisons, and helpdesk staff.
- Build the overall capacity of the Help Desk as more counties come on board in the coming months through November 2018.
- Work on Proof of Concept to provide improved Help Desk services and support:
  - Using the cognitive capabilities of IBM Watson to provide Help Desk staff with an intelligent tool to provide improved predictability.
  - Faster resolutions of end-user Help Desk tickets and reported issues.

### **3.7 NC FAST Staffing Strategy**

NC FAST and NC DSS are coordinating efforts to support next steps based on the February 19, 2018 staffing presentation to the Secretary of DHHS:

- Establish a Business Control Center
  - NC DSS has established a Business Control Center at the NC FAST project, staffed with experienced State DSS Child Welfare officers. These officers serve as an available resource to guide decision making in key areas where NC FAST intersects with State training, policy, and practice. Their guidance helps ensure that the design of the NC FAST system meets both State DSS and county requirements and is aligned with the long-term direction of the State DSS.
    - NC DSS is devoting five positions to NC FAST targeted to the following areas to improving the functionality and coordination across the Division and Counties:
      - Training
      - Help Desk
      - Change Control
      - Conversion
      - PIP Modifications
      - Issue Tracking
      - County Deployment

Additional staff that have a dual expertise in case work and system implementation are being recruited.

### **3.8 Reports Development**

The P4 Reports workgroup has conducted a series of webinars with the pilot counties to review reports and address any comments, questions or concerns as they relate to each field in the report. All currently planned reports are in production for use by the counties.

Report requests for additional daily, weekly or “dashboards” are being reviewed and vetted by NC DSS to compile a complete list.

### **3.9 PIP Modifications**

As identified in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP), NC DSS Child Welfare has revised and updated its policies and practices for Child Protective Services to Children and Families. Ten counties were selected as PIP pilots to implement these improved policies and practices:

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| • Buncombe   | • Craven      |
| • Cumberland | • Durham      |
| • Hoke       | • Mecklenburg |
| • Pitt       | • Scotland    |
| • Wake       | • Wilson      |

As those revised policies and practices have been found to be effective, NC DSS has finalized and published the revisions. Those policy/practice revisions that require changes in the NC

FAST system have been identified and assessed by the NC FAST P4 team for development, testing, and deployment. On February 14, 2018 the 10 PIP pilot counties were engaged in a ‘kick-off’ event to engage them in the work to modify the NC FAST system for Child Welfare. The PIP changes are scheduled to be rolled out as part of the NC FAST system in the update in June 2018.

### **3.10 Business Process Improvement (BPI) Introduced**

The Child Welfare component, also called Project 4 (P4), introduces a significant change to the way county departments of social services operate and manage their Child Welfare programs. Given the limited automation present in support of current Child Welfare operations, it is vital that county Child Welfare leaders and staff have the support required to ensure a smooth transition to NC FAST and reduce the deployment risk. As explained below, the initial project plan did not account for the business process improvement and extended implementation support staffing cost estimates. It is extremely important to provide business process improvement and extended support for the success of the project.

Counties are having difficulty managing changes to their work environment that come with the technical changes brought by the NC FAST system. NC FAST Child Welfare Services pilot has demonstrated that Directors of Social Services and their Child Welfare programs require technical assistance to plan for technical and adaptive workflow changes that accompany system changes.

#### **3.10.1 BPI Strategy**

- Work with pilot counties to help improve perception of NC FAST Project 4 pilot
  - Focus on leadership levels; address concerns
  - Improve county perceptions about the current status and capabilities of the system
- Set the right tone for Group 1-5 counties
  - Seek opportunities to foster collaboration between counties.
  - Improve county perception about the current status and capabilities of the system.
- Collaborate with Division of Social Services staff to standardize workflows where possible;
  - Focus on prompt identification and remediation of issues identified in the counties.

#### **3.10.2 BPI Approach**

Provide additional “boots on the ground” support as part of a County Support Team Structure:

- Increasing staffing of County Support teams for faster analysis of policy and process issues.
- Leveraging experienced State resources into teams to build skills with NC FAST.
- Deploying trainers to the counties when possible so that trainers have experience with real time county operations.
- Improving transparency of existing NC FAST processes to help build confidence in the project (e.g., change control, help desk, overall system/operational performance).

- Initiate a 3-member “SWAT team” to focus on analysis/resolution of high priority issues/opportunities under DHHS and NC FAST leadership guidance.

### **3.11 DSS Assistance to County Child Welfare Staff**

NC DSS is in the process of implementing a technical assistance model to provide multi-level assistance to county child welfare staff regarding the consistent application of policies, practices, and training. This model will adjust training and on-the-ground support to ensure adequate preparation for roll-out counties. This technical assistance model will be developed in concert with the Capacity Building Center. This technical assistance model will include strategies for NC DSS staff to teach, mentor, and coach county child welfare staff on the expected application of policy and practice standards to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children served by county child welfare programs.

### **3.12 NC Child Welfare ASSIST and NC FAST**

NC FAST is coordinating with the Division of Social Services and the Department of Information Technology Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) to assure that, as the Department begins implementation of Project 4 for Child Services, data sharing and integration processes are established between the NC Child Welfare ASSIST initiative and the NC FAST system.

### **3.13 CCWIS (Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System)**

A Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) is a case management information system that states and tribes may develop to support their Child Welfare program needs. If a state or tribe elects to build a CCWIS, the federal government will provide additional funds to help pay for it, as long as the system is designed to support social workers’ automation needs to organize and record quality case information about the children and families receiving Child Welfare services.

- NC FAST already meets more than 50% of the CCWIS requirements with the existing requirements.
- CCWIS compliance will provide federal funding at a 50/50 match rate, as opposed to a match rate that applies a penetration rate.
- In December 2016, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conditionally approved North Carolina's request for CCWIS funding. The conditions of the approval are based upon the submission of additional information regarding the project plan and automated functions that will be included in NC FAST
  - The additional information required by ACF was submitted in March 2017.
  - ACF next requested detailed information before finalizing the approval for CCWIS funding. A detailed report on CCWIS compliance has been appended to the NC FAST Annual Advance Planning Document for 2017.
  - In November 2017, NC FAST Project 4 submitted the mandatory P4 Data Quality Plan to the ACF, fulfilling a crucial part of the requirements for CCWIS compliance. After evaluating the submission, the ACF granted NC FAST P4

conditional CCWIS approval on December 5, 2017 . See the [Budget and Expenditures section \(SECTION 11c.7.\(b\).5\)](#).

### **3.13.1 CCWIS Interfaces**

The CCWIS compliant interfaces will be bi-directional, based on business requirements, technical feasibility, and funding available by the partner agencies:

- Courts
- Education
- Medicaid claims

The following interfaces already exist in NC FAST and will be used by all of the counties after deployment:

- Child placing agencies for foster care and adoption
- Ancillary Child Welfare systems used by agency staff

In addition, as part of Release 3, NC FAST will integrate upgrades to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), in compliance with the federal mandate.

## **3.14 Mobility Update**

### **3.14.1 CPS Assessment Mobile App**

The project includes delivering an optional mobile solution, the CPS Assessment Mobile App, that will support work outside of county DSS offices.

- The optional mobile CPS Assessment Mobile application, exclusively for iPad tablets, supports connected or disconnected use (a consideration for rural counties that choose to use it).
- Design, development, and testing of the app have been completed.
- Sampson, Richmond, and Orange counties were provided with a training version of the CPS Assessment Mobile App to prepare for implementation.
- Sampson and Richmond counties have gone live with the CPS Assessment app as of February 2018.
- Orange County has just implemented the CPS Assessment Mobile App as part of the P4 release to the Group 1 counties.
- Four high criticality defects were reported. Solutions for two passed peer review and were included with the March release. Four low priority defects were identified as well; three of these have been resolved. The remaining two high criticality defects and one low critically defect were not able to be completed by the March release and are scheduled for April release.
- In addition to the defects, there has been slowness in the load times that was not experienced in the testing environments. The NC FAST Mobility team is investigating solutions to improve performance.



### **3.14.2 Mobile Device Management (MDM) Procurement**

Mobile device management (MDM) software is required to control, secure, and enforce policies on smartphones or tablets that access business critical and secured data through the CPS Assessment app and other future mobile applications. Some counties have existing county-level MDM solutions, and NC FAST will work with county-level IT staff to leverage those solutions to support deployment of the CPS Assessment Mobile App to county DSS tablet computers. The State MDM vendor contract will be leveraged to support counties that do not have an in-house MDM solution. To ensure the appropriate safeguarding of sensitive client data, counties will have to use either a county-level MDM solution or the State MDM solution if they wish to use the CPS Assessment Mobile App or any future NC FAST mobile tablet applications.

- Status of State Mobile Device Management procurement:
- The state contract has been awarded to SHI to procure MobileIron as the MDM vendor.
- Currently in the final stages of procurement for NC FAST.
- MobileIron will manage the Training App and the Production App.
- The Training App will be released to counties that have chosen to use a mobile solution.
- After at least two weeks on the Training App, counties can launch the Production version of the App.
- An Invitation for Bid (IFB) has been drafted to procure Help Desk, MDM, and hardware support for mobile devices. NC FAST will support Mobile in the short term until the vendor is able to administer Mobile support.
- NC FAST will continue to provide support for the P4 software itself.

### **3.14.3 RFP for future mobile apps (P4).**

- An RFP designed to broaden the number of mobile apps for P4 has been drafted.
- The RFP is ready to be placed for bid but is currently on hold.

### **3.15 Case Conversion**

The case conversion for Release 1 was completed in August 2017 for the pilot counties. The approach employed this strategy:

- New intake cases created after the go-live date were keyed into NC FAST.
- Open out-of-home (i.e., Foster Care) cases that were created in the legacy system were converted to NC FAST through an automated process and are maintained on a go-forward basis in NC FAST.
- Existing open, non-Foster Care cases at go-live (i.e., Open CPS Assessments and In-Home cases) will continue to be maintained in the legacy system(s) until they are closed or until the start of the 'Read-Only' phase of the Child Services Legacy Systems. The Legacy Systems are expected to be retired approximately one year after the complete roll out of Releases 1 and 2.

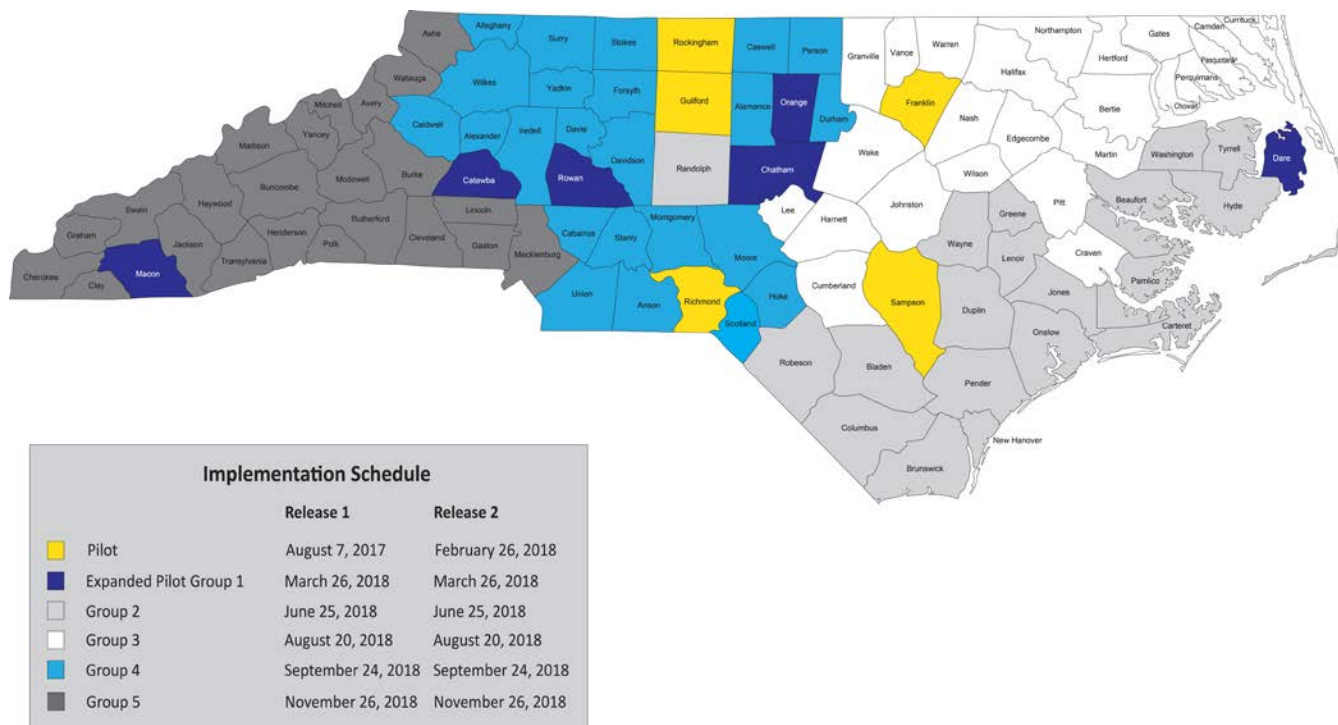
Case conversion occurs for each county as the system is deployed to them. The overall P4 Conversion Strategy was confirmed by EAC on March 2017.

A workgroup composed of County DSS directors, NC DSS stakeholders, and NC FAST members is working to develop further recommendations about the conversion of open Adoption, NC KIDS, LINKS, and ICPC cases into NC FAST. This includes details around pre-conversion data cleanup, post conversion case management, and the data conversion rollout schedule for the related functionality.

The initial conversion strategy was approved in 2017. Any updates to the approved plan will be presented to the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) for final review and approval as required. Refer to [Appendix C](#) for the current Conversion schedule.

### 3.16 Roll Out

During the pilot, Release 1 was rolled out in August 2017 and then Release 2 was developed and rolled out in February 2018. Going forward all functionality will be rolled out together. Below is the implementation schedule by county (as of March, 2018):



## Risks

### 4) SECTION 11C.7.(b).4 Address any identified issues in developing or implementing the Child Welfare component to NC FAST and solutions to address those issues.

The project team maintains a formal “Risk Register” of risks and issues affecting the project and reviews those details along with mitigation plans on an ongoing basis. The key risks are noted below.

The approach is to focus on “Out of the Box” functionality and minimize customizations while trying to achieve a balance between supporting NC specific requirements and minimizing the long-term project cost. We also focus on providing high value functionalities first and minimizing disruption to county operations.

#### 4.1 Risk I:

Implementation of NC FAST P4 will have a significant impact on county processes and the way county Child Welfare Social Workers and Supervisors document their cases and manage their work. This is a significant risk based on the lessons learned from previous NC FAST implementations. Today, many county Child Welfare programs are managed largely from paper case files. Moving to a statewide, integrated case management system will have a major impact on the way social workers document their cases, access information, and complete their required activities. Based on what we learned on previous projects, counties need time to adjust their staff and their processes to the new information system. DHHS and NC FAST need time to work with counties to identify best practices from the pilot county implementation, document these best practices, and share them with other counties before they transition to the new system.

Specific steps to mitigate this risk include having a dedicated team to work with counties to do the following:

- A hands-on test environment was provided to the Pilot counties as of June 1. It will be made available to subsequent groups as they get closer to their implementations.
- Encourage staff to become proficient with typing ahead of NC FAST go-live (if they are primarily reliant on hand-written notes today).
- Assess impact of transition to new to-be process flow.
- With endorsement from the pilot counties, employ a phased rollout approach to deploy the system across the state.
- Review job classifications and standardize pay ranges and hiring profiles.
- Establish a staffing model to identify staffing gaps ahead of go-live.
- Ensure maximum staff availability around key deployment milestone dates.
- Conducted Regional planning workshops with all 100 counties.
- The BPI Team has been established to work with counties and the state DSS office to review and standardize business processes. Refer to the section on [BPI](#).

#### **4.2 Risk II:**

Currently, Child Welfare processes and procedures vary from county to county. Counties may struggle in adapting to the new system unless Child Welfare processes have been standardized and the state Division of Social Services has the resource capacity to support counties on the implementation of policy as recommended by the North Carolina Statewide Child Protective Services Evaluation (March 1, 2016). Mitigation steps include:

- A Simplification workgroup has been established with county representation to review and standardize the forms, notices, and requirements.
- All Simplification workgroup activities have been reported up through the Executive Advisory Subcommittee (EAS) and Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) structure and reviewed during monthly status meetings.
- A decision has been made to implement the Cúram component for Structured Decision Making (SDM). This component provides support to Case Workers in the assessment process to determine outcome plan goals.
- The [BPI Team](#) has been established to work with counties and the state DSS office to review and standardize business processes.

#### **4.3 Risk III:**

Inadequate supply of Business Subject Matter Experts (SME) resources with the required specialized skills may impact the project schedule. NC FAST is proactively identifying other options to mitigate this risk. Mitigation steps include the following initiatives:

- Selecting “alternative” models of employment, such as temporary, part time, using third-party state run “temporary solutions”.
- Re-allocation of expert resources from State DSS and other NC FAST projects.

#### **4.4 Risk IV:**

Policy changes from Federal or State entities may impact the P4 project schedule and budget. Mitigation steps include:

- Assess any policy changes if/when they occur through coordination with the state Division of Social Services (DSS).
- Follow the established Change Request process.
- Changes will be prioritized according to the business objectives of the Project.

#### **4.5 Risk V:**

The vendor procurement process is underway to select a vendor to manage EFT payments to adoption families. The risk is that any delay in the procurement process may impact the timeline established by the project for EFT payments.

- Project management will review the RFP to verify that requirements are precise.
- To mitigate the risk, the project team will closely monitor the procurement process and take actions as necessary.

## **County Participation**

### **5) SECTION 11C.7.(b).5 The level of county participation and involvement in each phase of the project.**

#### **5.1 County Participation and Involvement**

To drive a timely and smooth implementation of NC FAST Project 4, county workers have been involved in planning and readiness preparation from the beginning of the project development lifecycle. This collaborative, transparent approach with county involvement in processes and procedures is based on the Agile Project Management process used commonly in the development of complex information technology systems.

As explained previously, the Agile development approach engages with county stakeholders very early in the requirements confirmation and system design activities. The software is developed incrementally, so that functionality is demonstrated to the county representatives as the system is being built; their feedback helps to shape the design of the system as development and builds continue.

#### **5.2 Readiness**

##### **5.2.1 Regional Leadership Planning Workshops**

A series of Regional Leadership Planning Workshops were held in 2017. All 100 counties of North Carolina were reached. The Regional Workshops accomplished the following:

- A series of software demonstrations was conducted to clearly show how the new system functions.
- After each demonstration, process and operational impacts were discussed to clearly communicate how the system would impact the counties.
- Discussion focused on these preparation topics:
  - Training,
  - Conversion,
  - Security,
  - Hardware,
  - Mobility.
  - Pilot lessons learned were also shared with the participants.
- County-specific action plans for what each county needed to do to get ready for the new system were developed.
  - Each county presented their action plans to the other counties in attendance to share thoughts and perspectives with peers.
  - Coming out of the workshop, each county's leadership team clearly understood specific actions that needed to take place to prepare for a successful go-live.

##### **5.2.2 State DSS Technical Assistance**

State DSS Child Welfare SMEs are partnering with the County Readiness Team to provide technical assistance, as the remaining counties come on board with NC FAST.

### 5.3 Training

Training content has been updated to incorporate feedback from the five pilot counties. The training approach for the rollout of the system to the 95 Group 1-5 counties relies on a multi-faceted approach incorporating the following elements:

- Web-based Training (WBT) – Over 40 hours of web-based training content is hosted in the NC FAST Learning Gateway learning management system (LMS). Training is organized according to a user’s role. County staff can take the training as their schedules permit, and course completion is tracked by the LMS. Tests are administered at the conclusion of each module that must be passed to get credit for the course. Completion reports are made available to county leaders so they can monitor the progress of their staff through the content.
- Sandbox – A live “Sandbox” training environment is available so county staff can practice the concepts covered in the WBTs using a live training version of NC FAST. Training scenarios are provided to help guide county staff in their use of the Sandbox environment. Based on pilot county feedback, the Sandbox environment has been a highly valuable element of the Project 4 training approach.
- Job Aids and Procedures – Over 360 procedures and job aids are available to county staff in the Learning Gateway. These procedures are being continually updated to incorporate feedback from pilot county staff and to remain in sync with enhancements to the system. These job aids and procedures provide step by step instructions for completing various tasks in the system.
- Virtual Instructor-Led Training – Webinars are hosted by NC FAST trainers that county staff can attend to view live system demonstrations. These sessions allow county staff to ask questions about specific system functions and receive ad-hoc demonstrations of system features and capabilities. Counties can also request individually tailored distance learning sessions that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of each county.
- On-Site Support (OSS) Training – Each county is required to identify staff in their county who will serve as a first line of over the shoulder support for their staff as they start using the new system. County staff who are identified to serve in this capacity will receive three days of face-to-face training covering troubleshooting topics that are identified based on input from Project 4 Help Desk staff and NC FAST Readiness Liaisons who have spent considerable time working with in the pilot counties helping their staff through the transition to NC FAST.

Response to training from training participants can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Recent summary training completion reports can be found in [Appendix E](#).

### 5.4 Support

When a county begins using NC FAST Child Welfare functionality, there are many resources available to them:

- A separate NC FAST Help Desk team has been established with agents dedicated to supporting the Child Welfare program area. This Child Welfare Help Desk is available 24/7 to assist county users.
- A core set of project trainers is also available to provide supplemental training to county. This training can be delivered either in-person or via webinar, depending on the expected length of training and audience.
- On-site support (OSS) staff resources are being identified in each county DSS. These county DSS staff receive additional training on troubleshooting for specific scenarios and are kept informed about situations identified during county implementation activities. The OSS resources build a knowledge base that forms a core of system expertise in each county.
- NC FAST Project Readiness Liaisons and state business representatives support the successful transition of the counties to NC FAST. These are state staff who possess expertise in both NC FAST and the business side of Child Welfare Services operations. They can assist new users with real time questions about use of the software.

## **5.5 Communication**

The NC FAST communication approach encourages open, two-way communication. To support this process, the NC FAST County Readiness team includes County Readiness Liaisons who work together with County Champions and Pilot User Group members to do the following:

- Provide consistent and accurate information to targeted audiences at the proper times through engaging communication materials/resources.
- Employ multiple communication channels (e.g., e-newsletters, collaborative site, presentations, webinars, on-site visits) to share information in a timely manner with project stakeholders.
- Foster the establishment of realistic expectations about the system and related county DSS process changes.
- Define specific approaches to inform target audiences of NC FAST project scope, job/process impacts, and implementation activities and timing.
- Prepare county DSS staff for the impact the new system will have on their jobs, and equip them with the required knowledge, skills, and abilities they will need to effectively use the new system.
- Involve DHHS leadership and county DSS leadership and staff in preparation for the NC FAST implementation and related business processes impacts.
- Coordinate with Public Information Office (PIO) resources assigned to the NC FAST project to craft communications at the state and county level.

## **5.6 General County Engagement Activities**

The following activities were performed; they are intended to actively and continuously engage project stakeholders:

- Over 60 staff from eight counties (Buncombe, Carteret, Catawba, Chatham, Cleveland, Richmond, Rowan, and Orange) are involved in the review of business system functions (BSFs) and design activities. Design activities have been expanded to include pilot counties.
- Conducted 154 JAD sessions, 10 User Demos, and sent 7 customer satisfaction surveys to county participants. To see survey results obtained from county participants in on-site JAD sessions, refer to Appendix F.
- Over 70 county staff from 30 counties are involved in eight work groups that report to the Executive Advisory Subcommittee (EAS) and then to the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC).
- In April 2017, seven members of the NC FAST Project 4 leadership team traveled to Buncombe County a demonstration of the Buncombe County legacy case management system addressed 16 specific county questions and concerns about NC FAST. This meeting was viewed as a productive session by all in attendance.
- Leadership Engagement: Project team members continue to take advantage of existing meetings to share important updates on project activities and conduct system demonstrations. Examples include:
  - East Region DSS Directors' Meeting
  - Central Region DSS Directors' Meeting
  - West Region DSS Directors' Meeting
  - Child Services Committee
  - County DSS Executive Committee
  - Joint State/County Relations Committee
  - Statewide DSS Directors Meetings
  - Child Welfare Section Meetings
  - Most Impacted Counties Meetings
- Demos and Communication Resources: As system functions become available, members of the County Readiness team document important information and system demonstrations and make them available via the NC FAST Learning Gateway communication website. Two mobility videos have been made available via the Learning Gateway.
- Three surveys have been conducted with all 100 counties to gather information about their current technology.

The user demonstrations, checkpoints, workshops, and user acceptance testing help the county and state users to have early exposure and hands-on experience with the new NC FAST Child Welfare system.



## 5.7 Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees under the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) have been established and meet at least monthly to focus on addressing specific topics. These are the specific committees and their objectives:

- P4 Conversion – To define a strategy to prepare for the migration of active cases into NC FAST. 15 counties have actively participated in defining the P4 conversion strategy.
- Document Management – To provide an overall framework for the security of and access to documents in NC FAST, a statewide document management solution has been established, leveraging county investments to date. Several meetings and product demonstrations were held with county representatives and the state. We assessed the approach that is in the best interests of the state and counties. A solution was chosen in June 2017.
- Simplification – To develop a consistent and standardized method of operating across counties. With county agreement, the committee achieved approximately a 40% reduction in agency forms as part of standardization.
- Mobility – To establish a statewide mobile policy for the optional use of a mobile application, confirming mobile hardware and software standards, and providing counties with guidance about the future of NC FAST mobile computing.
- Security – To define the user security roles required to support Child Welfare operations in small, medium, and large counties.
- Staffing and Capacity – Developing a tool to help counties forecast staffing and resource needs specific to the NC FAST Project 4 implementation so that they are appropriately staffed once the system goes live.
- SIS Cleanup – In preparation for conversion of Child Welfare service records to NC FAST, this groups helps counties resolve instances of multiple within-county and cross-county SIS client IDs for individual clients, where multiple instances of the SIS IDs exist.

## **5.8 Conversion**

The NC FAST team works closely with the counties that are going live, incorporating lessons learned from prior NC FAST implementations. This approach mitigates deployment risk and allows each county to transition over to use of NC FAST Child Welfare Services without adversely impacting ongoing support of families and children in need. For more details on county participation with NC FAST regarding conversion, refer to Appendix G.

The flip side of this is that as legacy counties continue to use their systems, the counties using NC FAST have to continue to searching the Central Registry to see if updated information is available there.

While this is technically “double work”, the searches can be performed quickly. The need to search both systems will be eliminated when all Child Welfare cases in all 100 counties are being managed in NC FAST. The counties understand this as a way to assure children are protected.

Broader inquiry-only access to Project 4 NC FAST case data can be provided to appropriate legacy county Child Welfare staff at the discretion of their county leaders. Web-based training is available to assist these persons in the use of the system. Special protections are provided for sensitive or conflict of interest cases through special functions in the system. These functions are intended to restrict access and viewing of specific cases.

The Foster Care reimbursements are being processed through NC FAST for those counties that have gone live. Because of software defects that are now fixed in the financial modules, NC FAST has provided additional training and troubleshooting support for the Pilot counties as they transition to this system.

## **5.9 Contingency Planning**

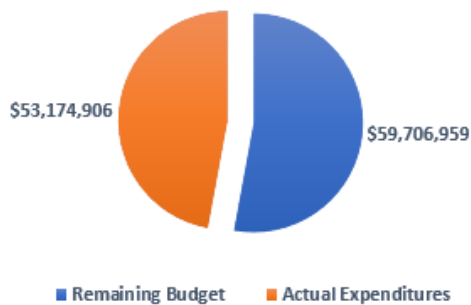
If significant challenges are encountered at go-live, the counties are able to revert to legacy forms, systems, and processes. After go live, daily calls are conducted between the going-live counties and the NC FAST project team so that clear channels of communication are available and questions and concerns are quickly addressed. NC FAST County Readiness liaisons deployed on-site in each county at go-live are able to quickly identify and escalate broad-based issues as soon as they arise – expediting identification and resolution of issues.

## Budget and Expenditures

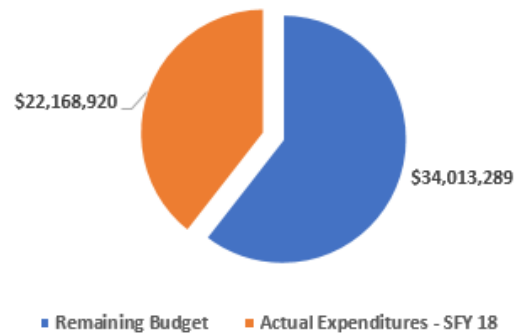
**6) SECTION 11C.7.(b).5** Any budget and expenditure reports, including overall project **budget and expenditures, and current fiscal year budget and expenditures. Overall Budget and Expenditures: Current Fiscal Year (SFY 18) Budget and Expenditures:**

Category	Overall Approved Budget	Remaining Budget	Actual Expenditures	Approved Budget - SFY 18	Remaining Budget	Actual Expenditures - SFY 18
	\$ 112,881,864.91	\$59,706,959	\$53,174,906	\$ 56,182,208.50	\$34,013,289	\$22,168,920

**NC FAST P4 Overall Budget and Expenditures - as of December 2017**



**NC FAST P4 SFY 18 Budget and Actual Expenditures - as of December 2017**

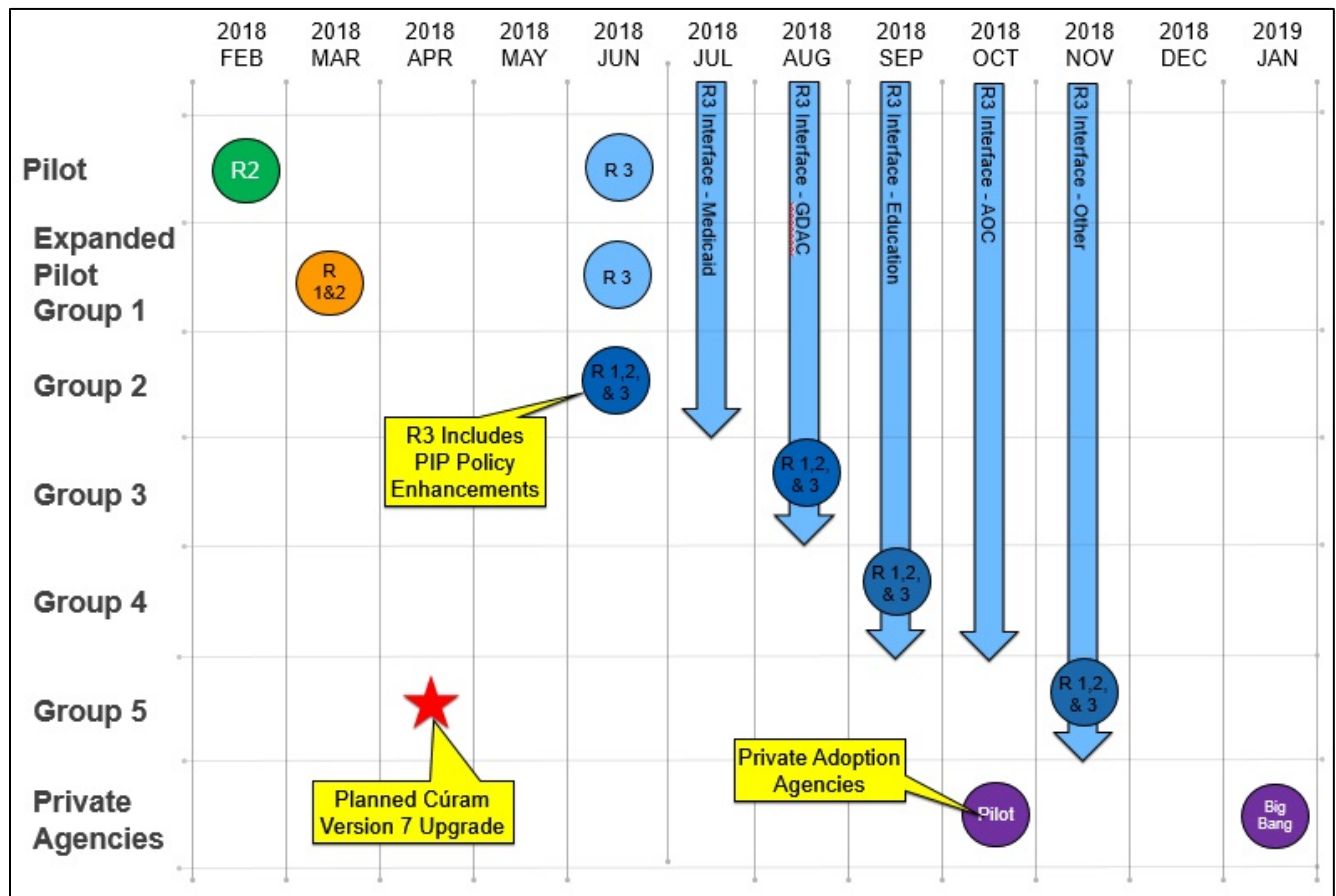


1. Expenditures as of December 2017 are understated because contractor payments are reflected only through October 2017.
2. Annual APDu funding has been conditionally approved by the Federal Partners. They have requested additional documentation to be submitted with the next APDu.

## APPENDIX A

### Project Timeline

The chart below shows the revised timeline of the project:



## APPENDIX B

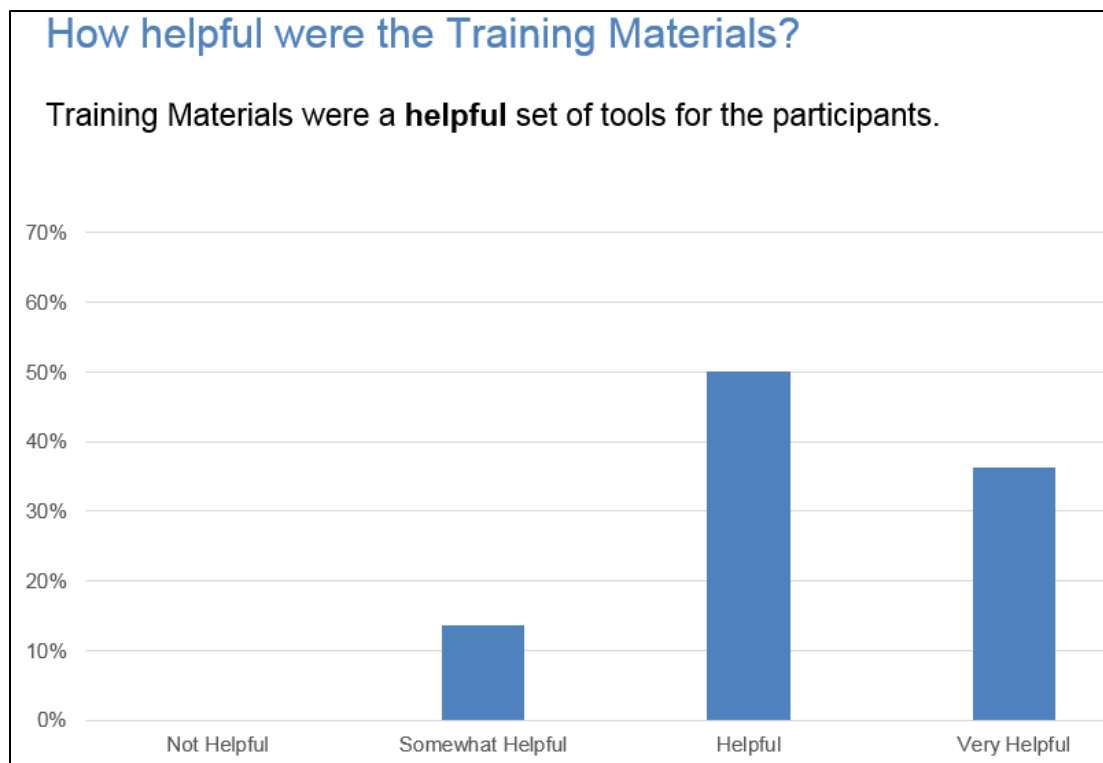
### User Checkpoint 3 Summary (Release 2)

A total of 26 enhancements were identified during User Checkpoint 3. Division of Social Services and county DSS staff members participated in this process and voted on their highest priority enhancement ideas. All enhancements have been provided to the NC FAST Team as part of the backlog of functionality.

A total of 15 defects were identified during User Checkpoint 3. These defects have been documented, including the case information and the detailed steps required to recreate each item. This information has been made available to the NC FAST Team.

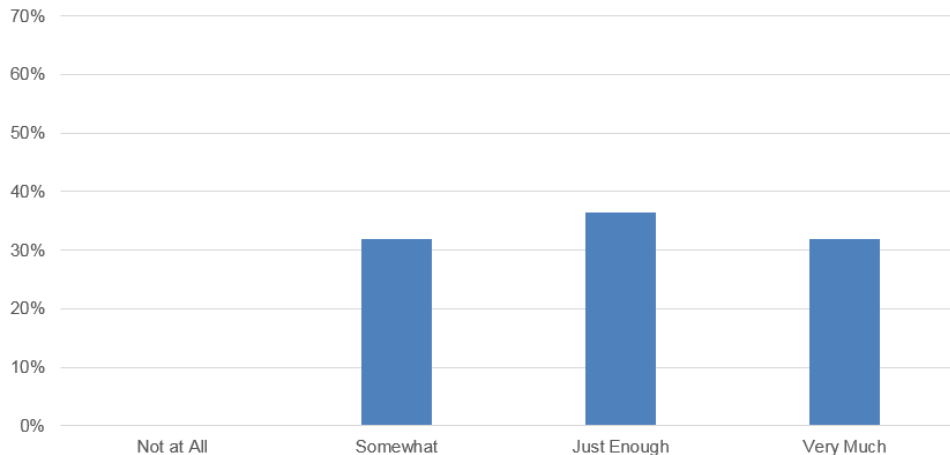
A total of 27 questions were asked by participants during User Checkpoint 3 concerning the use of the NC FAST application. Many of the questions were answered during the session by support staff in the room. Written responses are being developed for all questions and will be posted in the Learning Gateway.

The following graphics show the questions that users were asked and their responses:



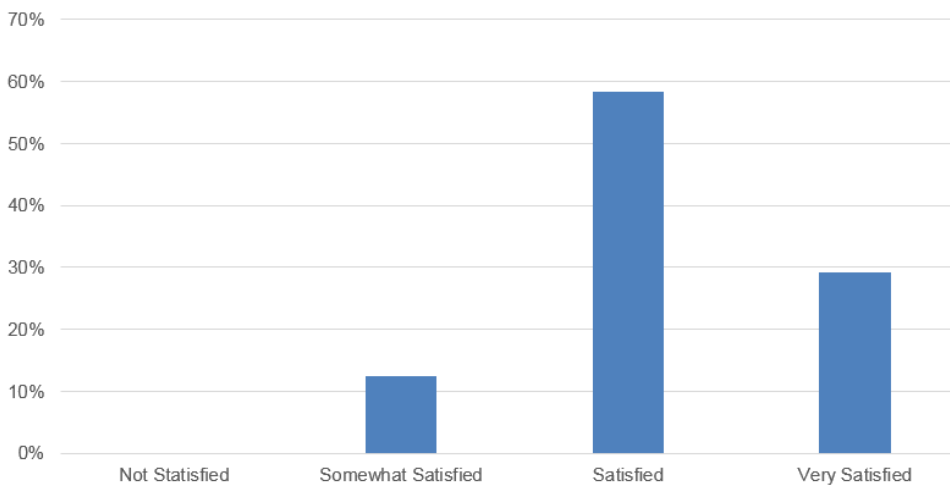
### Did the training materials help you increase your understanding of the system?

Based on the feedback on the Training Materials and the participants' responses, the Checkpoint benefited from draft Training Materials.



### How satisfied were you with the User Checkpoint?

Overall, the respondents seem to be **satisfied** with the third User Checkpoint.



## APPENDIX C

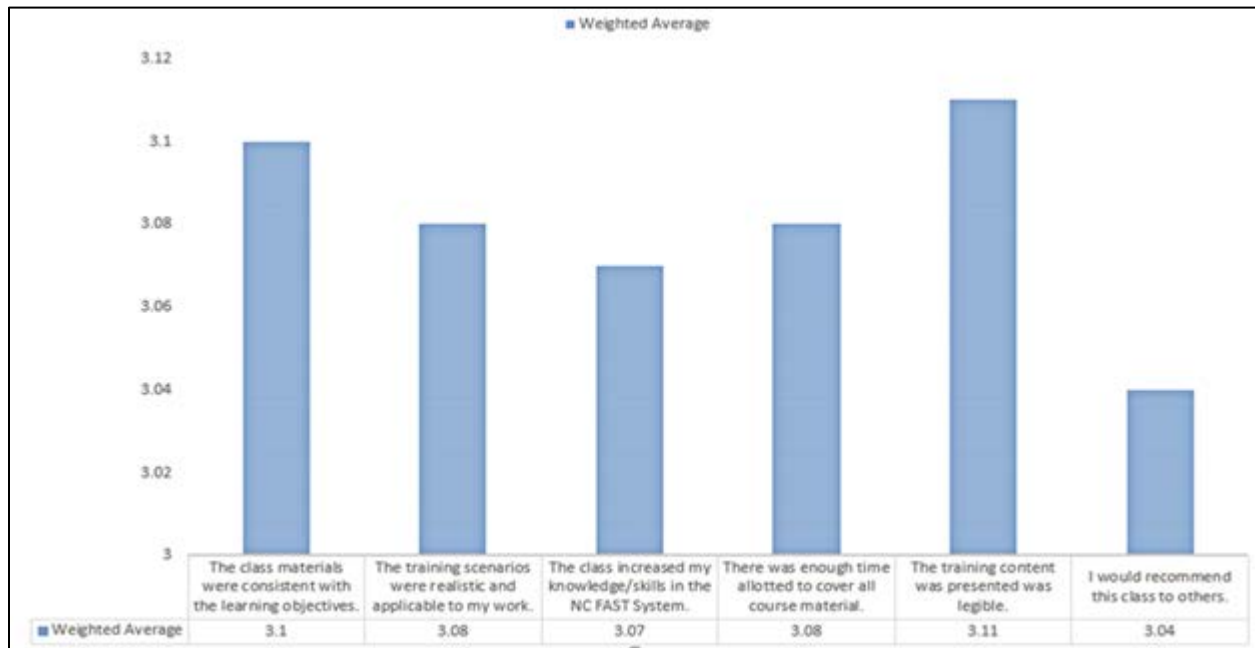
### Conversion Schedule

Functionality	Conversion Strategy	Application Code Release	Planned Conversion Date
<b>LINKS</b>	Manual Conversion	Release 2 – Dec 2017 Release 2.1 (Enhancements) – Jan 2018 Release 2.2 (Enhancements) – Mar 2018	TBD (Need EAS Conversion WG confirmation on LINKS Conv. Timeline)
<b>Pre-Adoption</b>	Before Adoption Committee Approval – Manual Conversion  After Adoption Committee Approval – Complete in Legacy	Release 2 – Dec 2017	Feb 2018 (Manual Conversion)
<b>NC KIDS - Parents</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2 – Dec 2017	May 2018 (Automated Conversion)
<b>NC KIDS - Children</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2 – Dec 2017	Aug 2018 (Automated Conversion)
<b>Adoption Subsidy</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2 – Dec 2017 *Need Interim Payment Process (CPPS)	Sep 2018 (Pilot) Jan 2019 (G1 – G3) Feb 2019 (G4 - G5)
<b>Sealed (Finalized) Adoptions</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2 – Dec 2017	Oct 2018
<b>Confidential Intermediary</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2.2 – Mar 2018	Oct 2018
<b>ICPC</b>	Automated Conversion	Release 2.3 – Jun 2018	Oct 2018 (Pilot) Jan 2019 (G1 - G3) Feb 2019 (G4 - G5)

## APPENDIX D

### Training Feedback from County Participants February 7, 2018

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Weighted Average
The class materials were consistent with the learning objectives.	3.88%	1.88%	74.94%	19.30%	3.1
The training scenarios were realistic and applicable to my work.	4.26%	3.88%	71.43%	20.43%	3.08
The class increased my knowledge/skills in the NC FAST System.	4.01%	5.39%	70.30%	20.30%	3.07
There was enough time allotted to cover all course material.	3.88%	4.26%	71.80%	20.05%	3.08
The training content was presented was legible.	3.51%	3.63%	71.43%	21.43%	3.11
I would recommend this class to others.	4.14%	6.14%	71.80%	17.92%	3.04





## APPENDIX E

### Implementation Pilot/Group 1 Training Completion Status Summary

The following tables show the training completion metrics for the Pilot and Group 1 counties as of March 6, 2018. (Note: Group 1 counties are now limited to Catawba, Chatham, Dare, Macon, Orange, Rowan.)

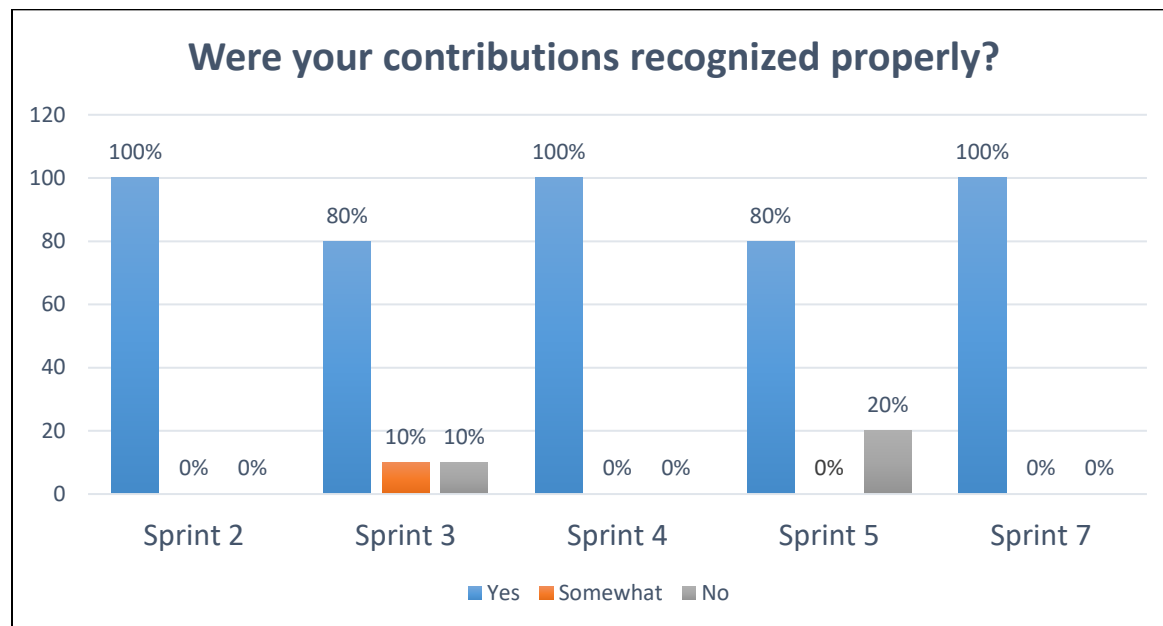
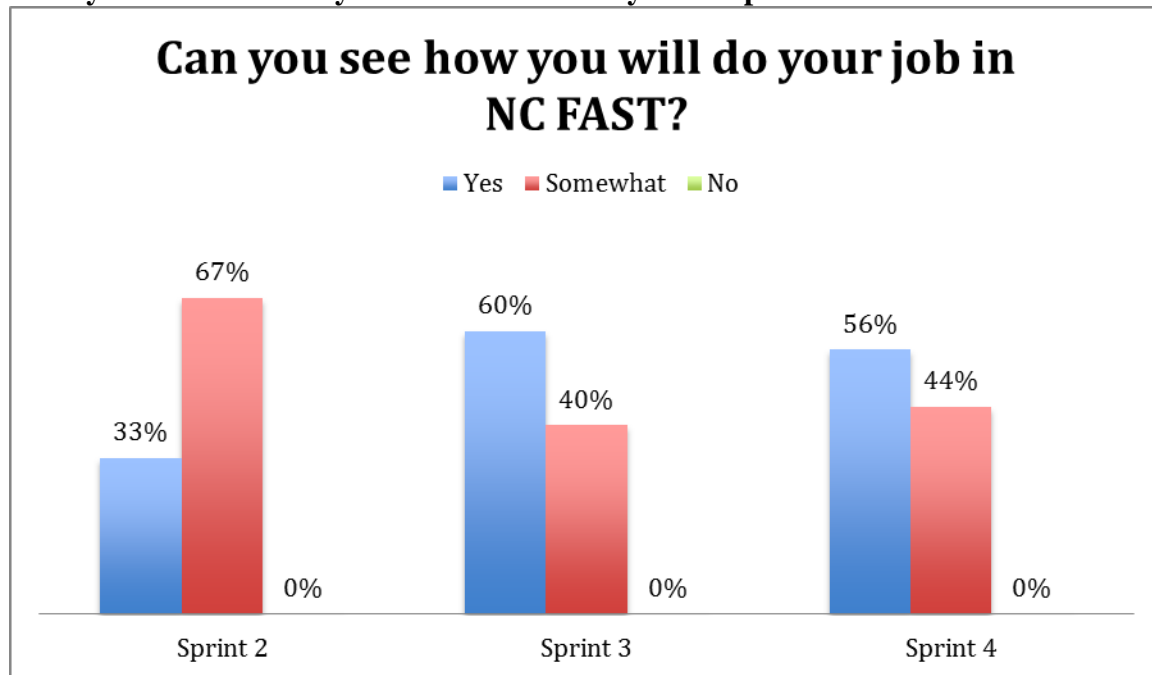
Pilot Counties										
	Franklin		Guilford		Richmond		Rockingham		Sampson	
	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion
Overall Completion	25	74%	173	50%	27	81%	39	62%	48	69%
Basic Navigation	25	92%	123	46%	27	96%	37	92%	43	93%
CPS History	2	100%	13	85%	2	100%	12	92%	11	91%
Conversion	25	28%	173	2%	27	0%	39	13%	48	27%
Intake	20	82%	52	45%	19	84%	30	78%	35	83%
Intake Supervisor	6	72%	30	31%	5	67%	12	35%	7	67%
Assessment	11	88%	100	56%	24	91%	32	86%	25	87%
Assessment Supervisor	4	100%	39	48%	4	100%	8	50%	11	55%
In Home C.M.	16	63%	36	35%	10	77%	29	79%	21	66%
In Home C.M. Supervisor	4	80%	21	25%	5	90%	5	90%	7	39%
Out of Home C.M.	9	79%	42	48%	5	80%	28	63%	19	68%
Out of Home C.M. Supervisor	6	32%	37	18%	3	82%	15	28%	5	33%
Legal	1	100%	2	0%	0	0%	3	100%	14	93%
Ongoing CM Updates	9	67%	4	42%	3	56%	1	0%	13	72%
Licensure	4	25%	15	57%	3	50%	4	44%	3	67%
Adoption	10	66%	8	24%	2	79%	7	65%	4	88%
NC Kids	9	71%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%	13	68%
LINKS (TLC)	9	51%	6	39%	0	0%	2	6%	14	59%

### Expanded Pilot Counties

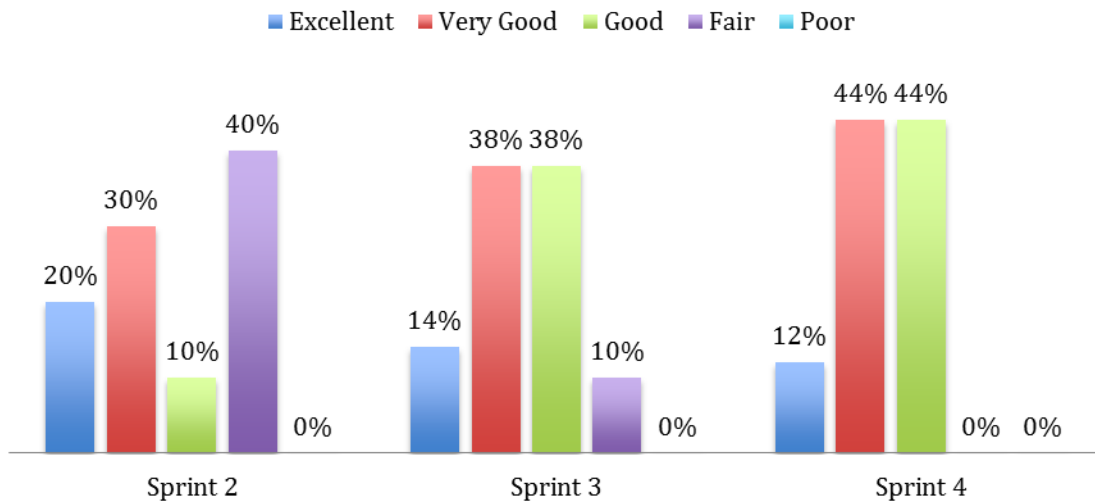
	Catawba		Chatham		Dare		Macon		Orange		Rowan	
	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion	Users	Completion
Overall Completion	119	75%	31	88%	25	85%	16	88%	53	82%	63	87%
Basic Navigation	101	78%	30	100%	25	92%	16	94%	50	100%	61	100%
CPS History	88	92%	29	97%	24	96%	5	100%	38	100%	50	98%
Conversion	120	3%	31	10%	25	12%	16	6%	53	17%	63	22%
Intake	18	80%	25	100%	20	92%	14	94%	38	97%	23	96%
Intake Supervisor	12	75%	6	100%	7	45%	2	100%	8	88%	8	98%
Assessment	36	86%	24	96%	16	95%	5	100%	36	84%	22	86%
Assessment Supervisor	13	71%	5	100%	6	56%	1	100%	8	88%	6	82%
In Home C.M.	18	73%	12	75%	6	68%	3	100%	22	91%	6	92%
In Home C.M. Supervisor	4	95%	3	100%	1	10%	1	100%	6	83%	3	67%
Out of Home C.M.	51	65%	13	87%	5	100%	4	84%	24	72%	15	83%
Out of Home C.M. Supervisor	16	52%	4	89%	1	0%	1	100%	10	49%	6	45%
Legal	1	75%	16	88%	5	80%	4	75%	2	50%	1	100%
Ongoing CM Updates	1	0%	10	50%	0	0%	2	67%	14	81%	1	100%
Licensure VLT	1	25%	2	75%	1	0%	1	0%	5	30%	2	63%
Adoption	1	92%	2	50%	3	67%	0	0%	6	46%	2	92%
NC Kids	0	0%	0	0%	2	86%	0	0%	0	0%	3	58%
LINKS (TLC)	0	0%	3	70%	2	28%	1	56%	2	61%	2	28%

## APPENDIX F

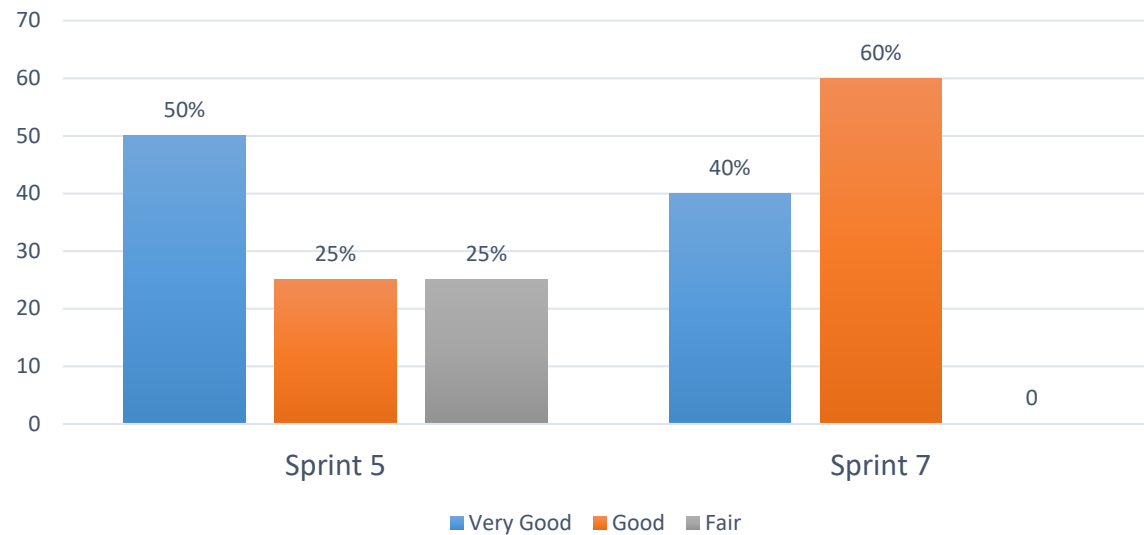
County/State DSS Survey Results from County Participants in JAD sessions:

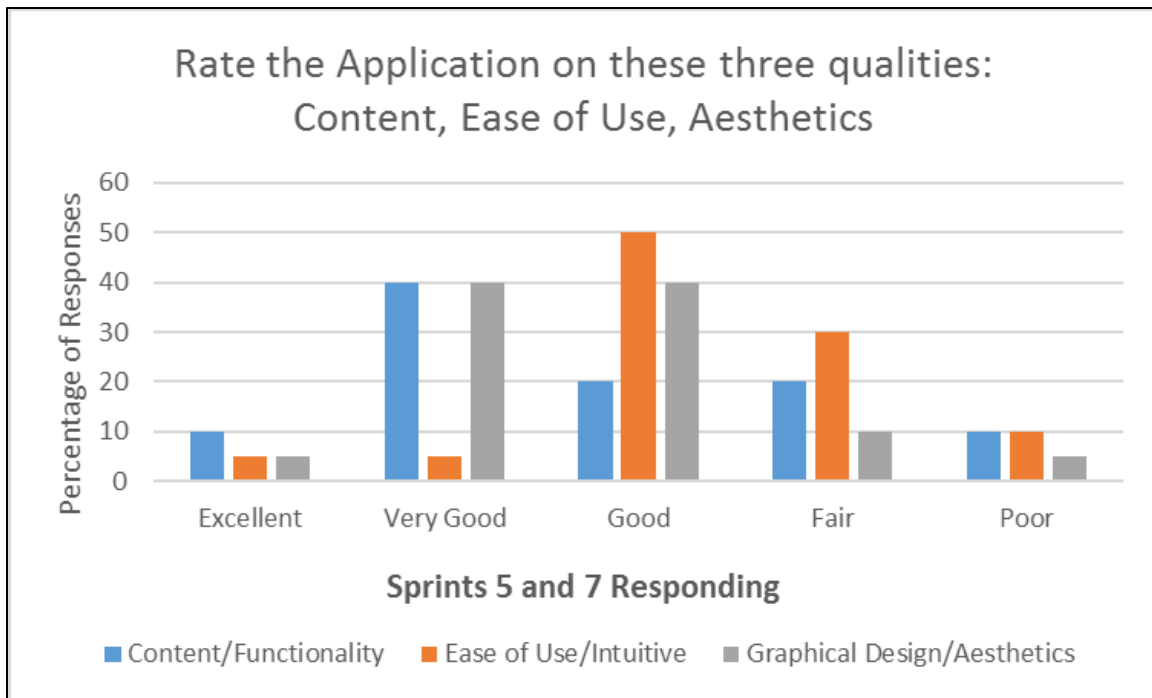


## How would you rate your overall satisfaction?



## Overall, how would you rate the Sprint?





## **APPENDIX G**

### **County Participation in the Conversion Process**

In the period immediately preceding a county's go-live date, their foster care case data is converted to the NC FAST format. At a scheduled point in the go-live preparation cycle, users log into the system and confirm that their security access is functioning as designed.

When a county goes live, for a brief period both the legacy system and NC FAST are used:

- New referrals of child abuse and neglect are entered into the NC FAST system.
- Existing open Intake, Assessment, and In-home Ongoing cases at go-live are processed using legacy processes (i.e., non-NC FAST processes) until these cases close through normal events.

It is expected that most legacy cases will close in approximately four months from go-live.

Under the legacy systems, case participants, such as victims, perpetrators, or responsible individuals, are entered into the Central Registry legacy system. Therefore, as some counties begin to use NC FAST, the legacy counties must train some staff to perform searches in NC FAST so that they can identify any case participant information captured there.

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Project History: The Pilot Process and Results**

#### **Fit/Gap Analysis**

Based on feedback and the results of prior NC FAST deployments, the rollout of a major system requires a carefully planned, phased deployment across all 100 counties in the state. Also, the initial schedule date was subject to completion of the Fit/Gap Analysis Phase. The Fit/Gap Analysis Phase of the project compared state requirements against the capabilities of the IBM base software (i.e., Cúram) and identified which requirements are met with the base software and which requirements require configuration or customization of the base software. This phase facilitated the identification of issues and scope changes required to meet North Carolina requirements.

The Fit/Gap phase was completed in June 2016, and a high-level Deployment Plan was developed. This expanded P4 Deployment Plan was developed based on input from the three county directors (referred to as the Tri-Chairs) leading the Children Services Committee of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS). The Deployment Plan was approved by the NC DHHS Executive Advisory Committee (EAC). This committee serves as a steering committee for NC FAST and comprises county directors, state office representatives, and other key stakeholders. The original deployment schedule was presented to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. Reviewing the deployment schedule with these groups was critical as it promoted buy-in and early identification and resolution of issues and concerns with the approach.

#### **1.0 Pilot Final Preparations**

NC FAST moved the P4 code into production in mid-July 2017 according to schedule. Training materials were made available to the pilots starting in mid-June, and the release of additional content extended into late July. A training “Sandbox” environment was also made available to the pilot counties. This environment proved quite helpful to the counties as they sought to understand how the system would affect their local office procedures. The Sandbox environment was a great complement to the web-based training as it allowed staff to practice in the new system and confirm that they understood how local office business processes would be impacted by the new system.

However, the amount of training and Sandbox practice required placed a burden on the pilot counties, as they needed to get all their staff through the training while still serving families and children in crisis. The project team had a checkpoint call with pilot county leaders on Friday, July 28, 2017. During this call, the pilot directors requested a one week delay in their use of the new system to allow their staff to have additional time for training and Sandbox practice. DHHS and NC FAST Project 4 leadership agreed with this request. The additional week also allowed pilot staff to confirm that they could log into the new production environment (as the code was deployed into production in mid-July). A second checkpoint call was held with pilot county

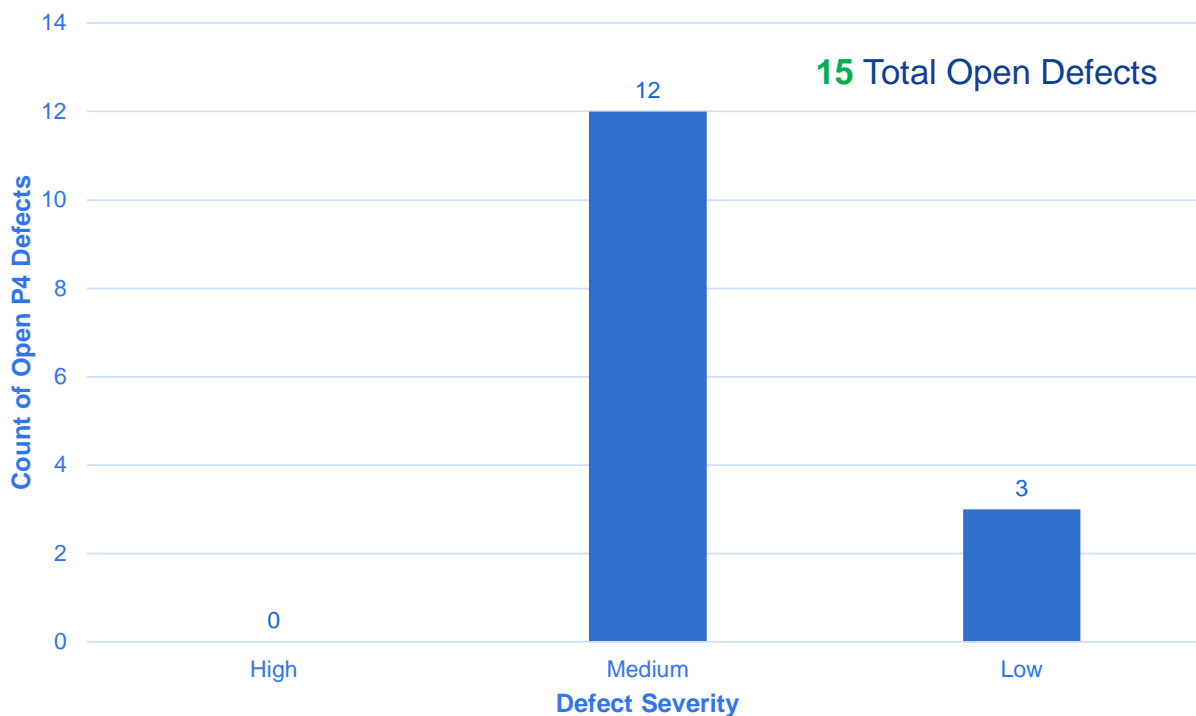
leaders on Thursday, August 3, and a decision was made to start entering cases in the new system on Monday, August 7.

## 2.0 Pilot Results

Overall, to date, the P4 pilot went well. All five counties have completed the transition to the new system and are using the Release 1 functionality to support work in the Intake, Assessment, and Ongoing Case Management areas. The chart below shows the volume of transactions entered into the new system in the first 2 ½ weeks of operation (data as of August 23, 2017).

COUNTY NAME	1.Intake	2.Assessment	3.Ongoing	4.Legal	5.Provider Placement	Grand Total
Franklin	51	24	4		42	121
Guilford	342	199	17	43	53	654
Richmond	60	36	11	12	1	120
Rockingham	78	34	7	8		127
Sampson	54	27	10	47		138
Grand Total	585	320	49	110	96	1160

As expected with large pilot IT implementations, some challenges were encountered, and the project team collaborated with the leadership teams in the five pilot counties to address specific issues. None of the challenges experienced by the pilots had an adverse impact on operations. The success of the pilot can be attributed to the hard work of the county stakeholders in preparing for go-live and the low number of defects present in the system. At go-live, NC FAST P4 had a total of 15 defects, as follows:





The NC FAST P4 help desk has been in operation since August 2017 on a 24/7 basis. New help desk interactive voice response (IVR) menu options have been added to route Child Services calls to a dedicated P4 help desk team. To date, these staff have been able keep up with the pilot call volume and provide prompt creation of tickets and resolutions of questions/issues where possible.

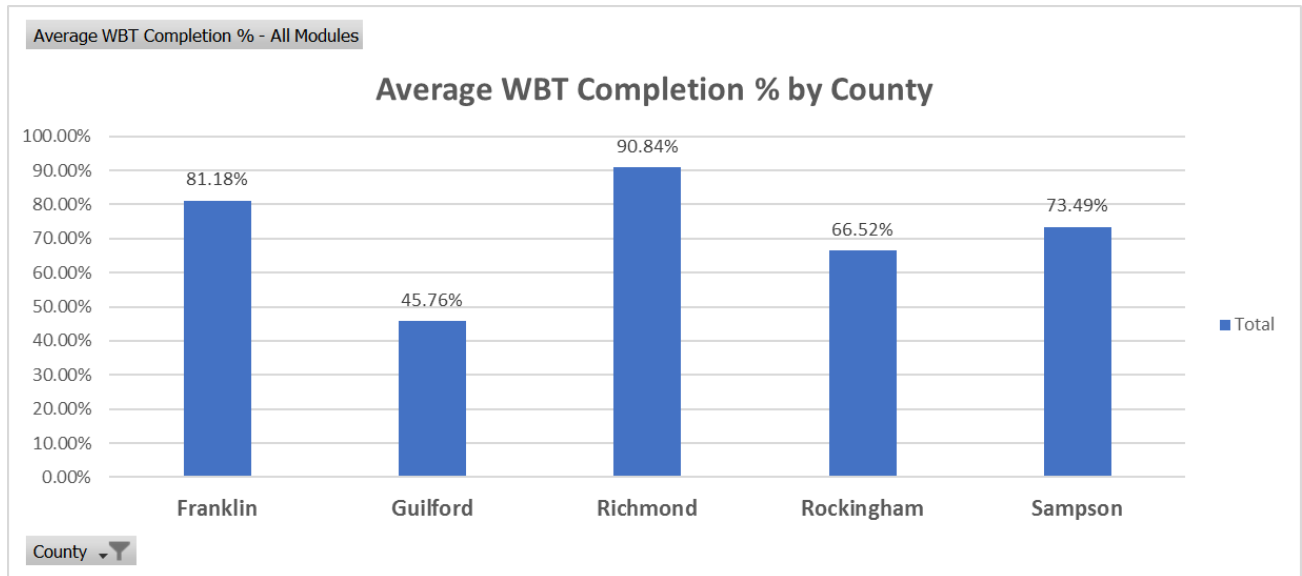
Pilot counties were very supportive of the project. In the weeks leading up to go-live, based on pilot county requests, NC FAST deployed trainers and county readiness liaisons into each of the counties to assist with local training and final readiness activities in each county. After go-live, the project maintained an on-site presence in each county. To foster open communication, the project team established a “war room” at the project site and opened a conference call line that was available to deployed project staff and key points of contact in each county throughout the normal business day. This line provided the project team with early warning of any issues with widespread impact. For the first two weeks of pilot, the project team also held a daily checkpoint call with all the counties in which current status, lessons learned, and daily transaction volumes could be shared and discussed. As the pilot progressed and the number of open items diminished, the project team continued the checkpoint calls with the counties on a less frequent basis.

As defects were identified, the project team assigned resources to address items based on severity and impact on county operations. Several system patches were implemented that have addressed important defects and system enhancements. The speed with which the project team has responded to county feedback has increased confidence in the project and the ability of the system to support county operations. Through daily calls with the counties, seven system issues arose that were of particular importance to the counties. The project team was able to address all seven top priority issues by the end of September 2017.

Additional system enhancements have been identified by the pilot counties. These have been provided to the NC FAST P4 Project team through the change request process to develop a schedule for each approved enhancement request to be incorporated into the system.

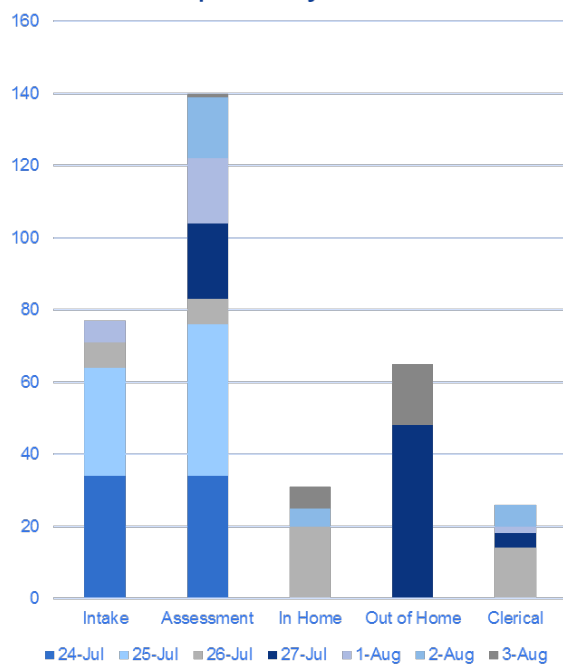
### **3.0 Pilot County Training**

Feedback on the training from the pilot counties has been incorporated into both the eLearning content as well as the job aids. The pilot provided quite a few lessons learned regarding training. One lesson learned was that participant self-registration in the learning management system (i.e., Learning Gateway) did not work as well as anticipated. The reason was that a specific user could register for all available training even though the user needed only to take a portion of the training to perform their assigned job. This situation skewed the training completion reports available from the Learning Gateway. The WBT completion percentage by county appears below. It is followed by additional training completion graphs from the pilot counties.

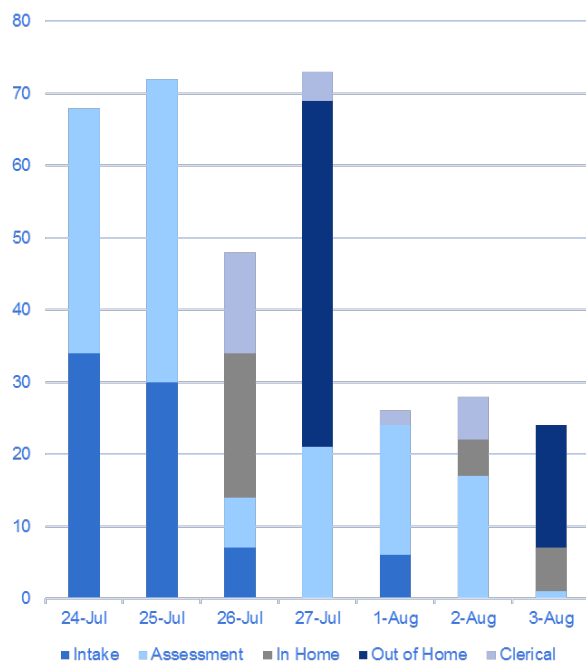


While the above numbers are lower than expected, the following chart shows classroom training participation for Guilford County. This shows that many of Guilford's 160 NC FAST P4 users completed classroom training. All five pilot counties received some form of supplemental training from the onsite resources. This training took the form of learning labs, trainer office hours, and system demonstrations. The specific approach was determined in collaboration with the leadership teams in each county.

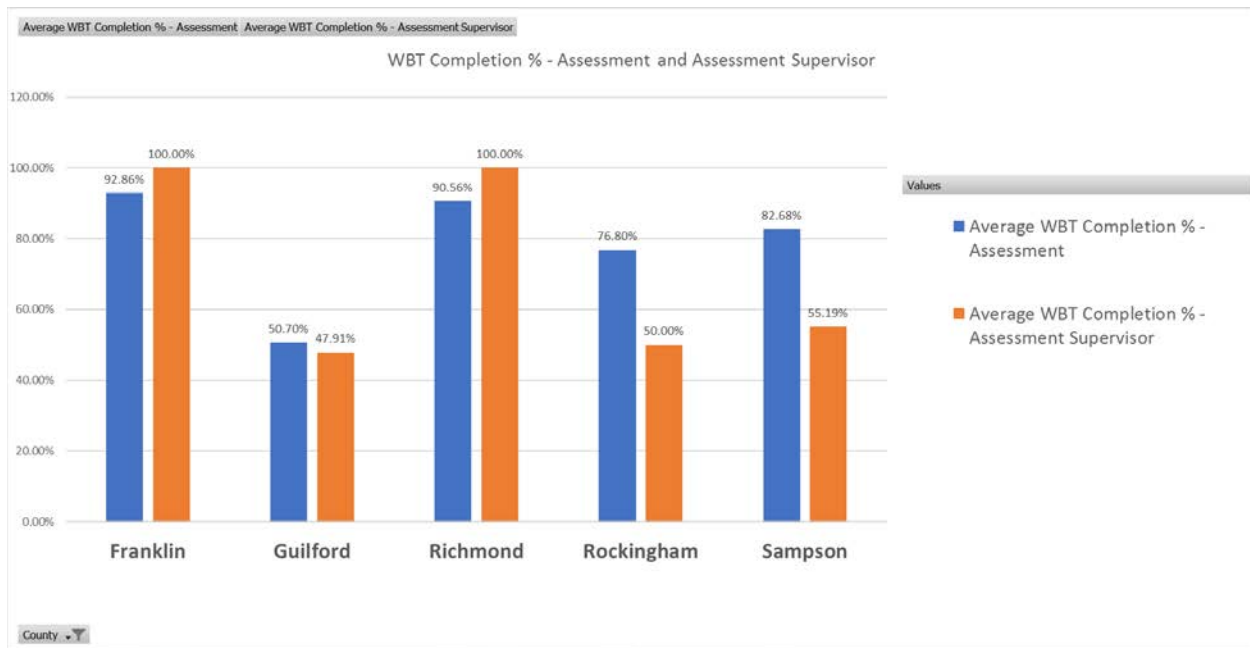
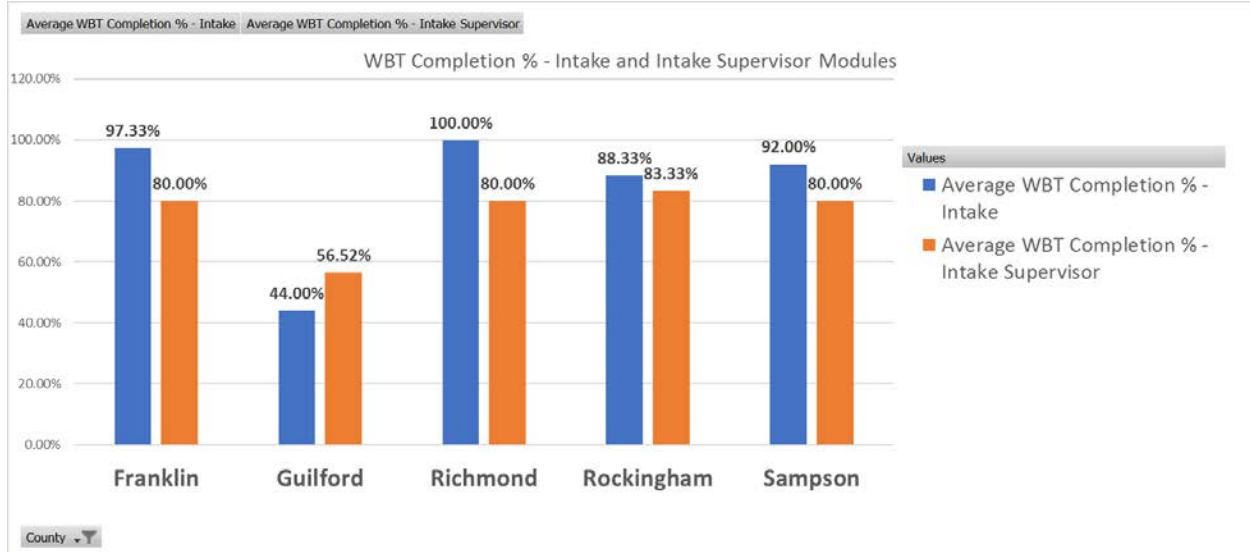
### Total Participants by Content Area View



### Daily Participant Count View



Child Protective Services are concerned primarily with the processes of Intake and Assessment. The Intake and Assessment areas were more directly impacted immediately after go-live than Ongoing Case Management. The following two graphs show that WBT training completion in each county is much higher in the Intake and Assessment areas.



#### 4.0 Pilot Lessons Learned

From the first day of pilot go-live, lessons learned have been identified and discussed on calls with representatives from the pilot counties. In mid-August, representatives from the five pilot

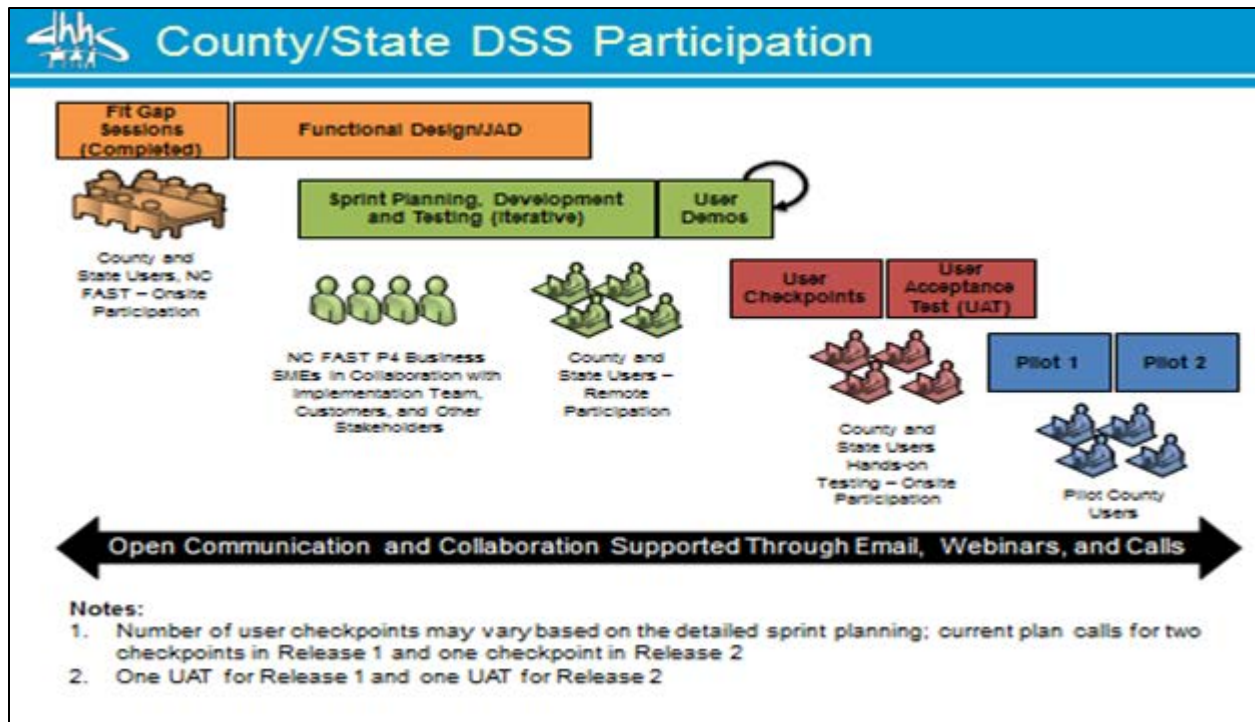
counties conducted a panel discussion at a regional directors' meeting. During this meeting, the representatives shared key lessons learned. A list of key lessons learned to date is presented below.

Pilot Lesson Learned	Implication
Counties needed more time to complete required training and take advantage of the Sandbox environment.	For future implementation groups, training content will be made available at least two months prior to go-live.
NC FAST County Readiness Liaisons were helpful to the county leadership team and staff.	Project team is increasing the size of the Readiness team to be able to provide some level of on-site support in counties during future implementations.
The Sandbox environment was a valuable resource to the counties as it allowed them to assess how local business processes would be impacted by the new system.	Providing accelerated county access to the Sandbox on a deployment group priority basis. The intent is to provide Sandbox access to all users at least two months prior to go-live. A workbook has been developed to guide county practice in using the Sandbox.
Local tracking of training completion performed by supervisors worked well.	Gathering training tracking templates and posting on the Learning Gateway so they are available to all 100 counties. Encouraging county leadership and supervisors to take an active role in ensuring that all staff complete required training.
County clerical staff can be redeployed to help key data into NC FAST that is captured by Social Workers out in the field. Counties can also consider hiring recent retirees to assist with case conversion preparations.	Clerical staff and retirees can help to maximize the use of Social Worker time by eliminating the need to key data captured in the field into NC FAST or organize/scan case records.
Supervisors should complete training ahead of front-line staff where possible.	Will encourage counties to adopt this practice as it enables supervisors to be able to answer staff questions as they go through training and start using the Sandbox.
Regular status calls with the project team are beneficial to share important updates and gather lessons learned.	Project team will conduct checkpoint calls with future implementation groups to promote sharing of important updates.

Pilot Lesson Learned	Implication
System access for front-line staff and supervisors should be tested at least a week prior to go-live in each county.	Testing system access ahead of go-live eliminates issues tied to account setup and passwords on go-live day. Will adopt this as a standard readiness practice.
County on-site support (OSS) resources need to be familiar with all aspects of Child Services.	County in-house support staff need to be readily available to staff in their unit and need to be well versed in the policies and practices associated with each part of the system. Will encourage counties to adopt this approach as they plan towards their go-live.
It is beneficial to take deliberate measures to build up staff excitement and morale ahead of go-live.	Will encourage counties to turn go-live into a celebration so that spirits are high.
Online access to case records can be a significant benefit to supervisors. Being able to review records without having to go meet with a user to access their records or to perform a case review from home is a great benefit of the new system.	Online access to case records will be stressed as a significant benefit of the new system.
Providing iPads to workers ahead of go-live was beneficial. It allowed users to become familiar with the devices. iPads can also be used to access the main NC FAST system (after go-live) as long as connectivity is available.	Will encourage counties to deploy tablets ahead of go-live.

## 5.0 Pilot Go-Live Preparations

A successful Project 4 pilot implementation required considerable planning. The following section provides an overview of preparations for pilot implementation.



The following describes some of the specific activities leading up to the Project 4 go-live in the pilot counties for Release 1. Many of these readiness activities will be repeated with the non-pilot counties. In addition to the specific activities listed below, there are ongoing activities that engage the counties on a regular basis.

- July 2017
  - User Acceptance Testing (UAT) performed between July 5-14 allowed pilot county staff the opportunity to validate that the version of NC FAST that went into production at the end of the month effectively supports Child Welfare operations in the counties. During UAT, pilot county participants used converted data to complete a series of realistic business scenarios in the system. The project team included time in the UAT schedule to address any defects identified by the UAT participants prior to pilot go-live. Pilot county UAT participants signed off on UAT results after each phase of UAT testing.
  - Remaining training materials were made available to pilot county staff in mid-July (see training note in June 2017 section below).
  - A final Readiness Assessment was performed in each of the five pilot counties. Note: Three rounds of Readiness Assessments were performed in each county at approximately 30, 60, and 90 days prior to go-live. Results of the Readiness Assessment reviews are shared with pilot and NC FAST project leadership. The Readiness Assessment process reviews the entire breadth of county preparation activities (e.g., hardware/network, training, data conversion prep, communication, security, local business processes) and helps to identify specific areas of risk. This process will continue for each county as it gets closer to its own go-live date.

- The County Readiness team worked with DHHS and pilot county DSS leadership to confirm NC FAST users. Each user was provided with a security role configured in the system prior to go-live. For a list of county roles that interact with the project, refer to Appendix I.
- Non-pilot counties have identified 2-5 staff who will perform searches for victims, perpetrators, and responsible individuals in NC FAST. Each of these county staff completed a short (<15 minute) eLearning course on performing searches in NC FAST. Each county staff performing these searches also have security access established in NC FAST to allow them to perform these searches now that the pilot counties are live.
- NC FAST project team members gather baseline metrics on pilot county performance that are used to assess their performance once they go live. Variance from baseline transaction volumes after pilot go-live is proactively identified and investigated to determine the root cause of the variance (e.g., normal business cycle variation, adverse system performance impact). This approach is based on lessons learned gained from previous NC FAST implementations. Metrics will eventually be gathered from all 100 counties, and similar monitoring will be performed throughout the statewide deployment to confirm that the system is not having an adverse impact on ongoing county Child Welfare operations.
- June 2017
  - Initial NC FAST Project 4 training content was made available to pilot counties in mid-June. Additional content was made available on a weekly basis through mid-July. This allowed all affected pilot county staff to complete required NC FAST training prior to the August 7 go-live. NC FAST training has been supplemented by a hands-on training environment that allows county staff to explore the new system using a pre-production test environment. Training content will be enhanced based on pilot county feedback and will be kept in sync with changes made to the production system over time. Additional training content will be made available to the counties in late fall 2017 to support implementation of Release 2 system functionality.
  - A “Sandbox” training environment was made available to pilot counties in late June. This non-production system environment allowed pilot county users to practice the concepts learned in formal training in a non-production training environment. Sample training scenarios were provided to pilot counties that helped to direct their use of this environment. Additionally, this environment allowed pilot counties to practice new system work processes (e.g., seeking supervisor approval to screen in new abuse and neglect referrals) prior to their go-live date.
  - Conducted a survey of pilot county leaders to confirm that the initial set of P4 user security roles would not present any operational challenges for the five counties at go-live.
  - NC FAST County Readiness Liaisons completed a 60-day review during June. This was the second of three reviews performed with each county. The table below displays the actual summary results of the 60-day Readiness Assessment in

each pilot county. The Readiness Assessment instrument itself is composed of approximately 70 questions across a variety of topic areas. Responses to each question are captured by the NC FAST Readiness Liaison on the assessment form. Each question is scored “No Concern”, “Requires Attention”, or “Go Live Risk” on a 1-3-5-point scale. For the table below, responses to individual questions in each category were averaged to provide a summary readiness score for each topic area. Color shading is added to provide easier comprehension of the overall results.

As can be seen from the summary results in the table below, the pilot counties were generally in great shape in their readiness for the NC FAST Child Welfare go-live. Areas requiring attention were documented and were then addressed by each county.

Status as of	County	Deployment Phase	Staffing	Security	Training	Communication and Change Management	Conversion	Technical	Post-Launch Support	Forms, Reports, Tracking	Mobile	Other Topics
T-30	FRANKLIN	Pilot	1.29	1.86	2.00	1.40	1.40	1.00	1.00	1.67	1.00	1.00
T-30	GUILFORD	Pilot	1.86	1.29	2.50	1.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.33	1.00	1.00
T-30	RICHMOND	Pilot	1.57	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
T-30	ROCKINGHAM	Pilot	1.29	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.67	1.00	1.00
T-30	SAMPSON	Pilot	1.00	1.86	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00



- May 2017
  - The second of three planned User Checkpoint reviews involved approximately 100 participants from 12 counties plus the state office. Three three-day sessions were held May 2-4, May 9-11, and May 16-18. Survey results from the second User Checkpoint participants indicated that over 90% of participants would recommend the session to their peers. Almost 80% of participants were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the checkpoint.

During the checkpoints, Pilot Counties, JAD Counties, and state Division of Social Services staff were provided with hands-on access to Project 4 functionality in guided training, walkthroughs, and self-paced exploration of the software, using realistic case data. Checkpoints have helped county and state office staff establish or clarify



expectations for how the system will function. The sessions also provided participants with access to sample training materials.

Because of the checkpoints, stakeholders were given an opportunity to provide feedback on system features and functions, training materials, and key operational impacts early in the project development period. Participant requests for enhancements and suggestions for new functionality were collected and prioritized in debriefing sessions and entered into the software development backlog. NC FAST project leadership is working with the project software development team and IBM, the Cúram packaged software vendor, to develop a strategy to address specific enhancement ideas.

Training materials were updated to incorporate feedback from participant questions and observations.

An initial 90-day Readiness Assessment was performed with each pilot county in May. This initial review provided each county with approximately three months of time to address specific areas of concern prior to go-live.

- March - April 2017:
  - In late March and early April, leadership teams from Pilot and Group 1 counties participated in a 3-day Leadership Workshop where detailed information was shared about the system and go-live considerations. Each county developed its own county-specific action plan during the workshop. Counties participating in each session could share thoughts and perspectives on their specific action plans with the other counties in the workshop. This provided an excellent opportunity for cross-county information sharing and collaboration. Ninety-Eight percent of the workshop participants would recommend the session to a peer. Participant satisfaction survey scores from the two Leadership Workshops are found below:

Response	Session 1 (25 responses)	Session 2 (31 responses)
Not Satisfied	0%	0%
Somewhat Satisfied	4%	3%
Satisfied	52%	55%
Very Satisfied	44%	42%

- Town Hall Meetings: After the leadership workshop concluded, County Readiness team members made themselves available to travel to the pilot counties

to conduct system demonstrations and information sharing sessions with front line Child Welfare staff.

- February-March 2017
  - During February and March, pilot counties participated in ongoing design activities and received NC FAST project updates via email messages and briefings at various statewide and regional meetings.
- January 2017
  - The first User Checkpoint involved over 50 participants from 12 counties (including the five pilot counties) plus the state office. Two four-day sessions were held: January 17-20 and January 23-26.
- 2016
  - Visits were made to 14 counties including all five pilot counties to study as-is business processes and practices; a total of 544 business processes have been documented based on these visits. These counties were chosen because of their size (a range of small, medium, and large counties), location (counties in the eastern, western, and central parts of the state), and level of automation (a range of counties from those with no automation, to those with document management only, to those with a county case management system together with a document management system).
  - Introductory Meetings: Between September and November 2016, introductory meetings were held with leaders in each of the five pilot counties to discuss general county readiness activities, roles, and timelines.
- 2015
  - Preliminary week-long visits were made to four counties to gather initial information about the Child Services program. These four counties formed a representative sample of DSS agencies across the state regarding size, current use of automation or paper based processes, existence of a local case management system, and use of the Signs of Safety practice model.

## APPENDIX I

### NC FAST Implementation Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
Project Leadership	DHHS, IBM, Accenture, County Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These team members include: Members of the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) Members of the Executive Advisory Subcommittee (EAS) NC FAST Project Management Office (PMO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for managing required aspects of the Implementation</li> <li>Continually gather status and monitor progress related to Implementation activities</li> <li>Manage issue resolution</li> </ul>
Implementation Team Leadership	DHHS, Accenture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and coordinate overall implementation readiness activities within each county across all system releases</li> <li>Provide assistance in completing readiness assessments and county go-live procedures</li> <li>Provide leadership and assistance to the County Champions and County Readiness Liaisons as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and guide the overall Project 4 implementation in each county</li> <li>Develop and maintain the implementation strategy and associated work products (i.e., County Readiness Presentations, County Readiness Assessment Checklist and Tracking Log)</li> <li>Manage the implementation activities across Architecture &amp; Infrastructure, Application Development, Training, Business, and Conversion teams</li> <li>Confirm integration and synchronization across the project teams</li> <li>Coordinate the resources supporting the deployment of NC FAST at each county DSS office</li> <li>Monitor the completion of activities across the counties Track issues and resolutions</li> </ul>
County Readiness Liaisons	DHHS, Accenture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NC FAST County Readiness team members will be assigned one or more counties from each of the implementation phases</li> <li>They will guide these counties through the readiness process and promote a successful NC FAST implementation in each of their assigned counties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as primary point of contact for County Champions in each county during deployment and funnel status, questions, and issues to the project team</li> <li>Review NC FAST deployment communications and be familiar with deployment schedules</li> <li>Deliver presentations and system demonstrations to county staff</li> <li>Encourage participation in NC FAST activities by all levels of county staff and leadership</li> <li>Work cooperatively with the NC FAST Conversion team to resolve issues as they arise</li> <li>Assume responsibility for an overall successful activation/installation of NC FAST for assigned counties</li> </ul>

Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
County Champions	County DSS Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A County Champion will be identified from each county by the County Director, as a key point of contact with the NC FAST team</li> <li>County Champions are a critical component to the success of NC FAST; the County Readiness team will work with each County Director to confirm County Champions identified have the necessary skills to fulfill the role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as a primary point of contact with NC FAST project team; performs oversight of county specific installation and implementation readiness tasks, participants in issue resolution and coordinates with other appropriate county resources to complete tasks</li> <li>Deliver Implementation communications to the appropriate county staff (prior to, during, and after go-live)</li> <li>Escalate appropriate Implementation risks/issues to County Readiness Liaisons and/or Project County Readiness team</li> <li>Participate in creating and monitoring assigned county's Implementation Readiness Checklist</li> <li>Identify and address gaps resulting from the Implementation Readiness Checklist</li> <li>Participate and complete NC FAST training</li> <li>Assist in identifying training facilities and validating the availability of facilities and equipment</li> <li>Support, monitor, manage, and enforce the NC FAST training requirements in the county</li> <li>Help coordinate and provide on-site support for end users during NC FAST deployment</li> <li>Coordinate county activities identified as a result of Readiness Workshops</li> <li>Be a champion of the NC FAST project and support change within the county</li> </ul>
County Technical Champion	County Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates with County Champion and County Director to confirm that county DSS hardware, network, and software are ready for NC FAST deployment to the county</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as technical point of contact to the NC FAST Implementation team; performs oversight of county technical readiness tasks, participates in issue resolution and coordinates with other appropriate county resources to complete tasks</li> <li>Escalate appropriate technical readiness risks/issues to County Champion and County Readiness Liaison</li> <li>Identify and address gaps resulting from the Implementation Readiness Checklist review meetings</li> <li>Be a champion of the NC FAST project and support change within the county</li> </ul>

Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
NC FAST Help Desk	O&M - Help Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Help Desk to support pilot and phased roll-outs of NC FAST</li> <li>Will have a dedicated team of NC FAST Help Desk agents for Project 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide ongoing technical support, troubleshooting steps, fixes, and enhancements as needed for the county users</li> <li>Participate in NC FAST testing activities, as appropriate Investigate and resolve issues within the NC FAST application as they are identified</li> <li>Escalate issues as needed to Level 3 Help Desk for support and resolution</li> <li>Escalate appropriate issues to Project Management</li> </ul>
Pilot User Group	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A group of five counties who provide input to the NC FAST project team on a variety of items based on their experience with the new system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize defects and system enhancements</li> <li>Review and comment on project approaches</li> <li>Serve as a communication conduit to the counties (both disseminating information and soliciting input from non-pilot counties) where appropriate</li> </ul>