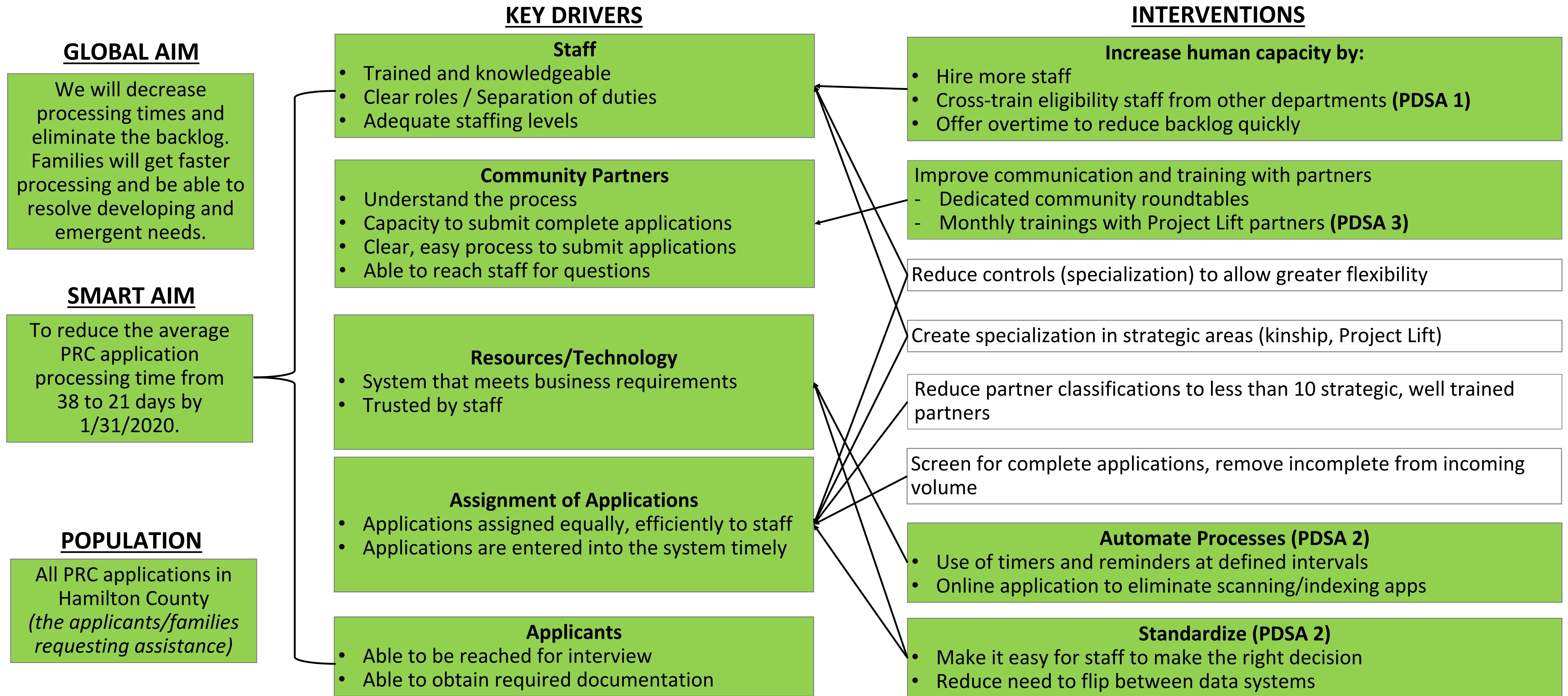all children thrive

PRC
Processing
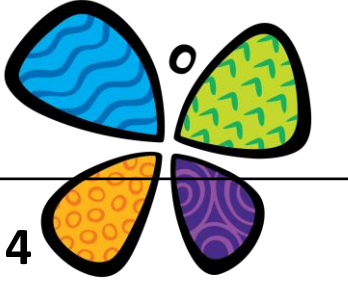Improvement

BACKGROUND

Ohio's Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) program provides work supports and other services to help low-income parents overcome immediate barriers to employment. It is funded through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

Currently, the average PRC application processing time increased to over 30 days and there is a backlog of unprocessed applications.
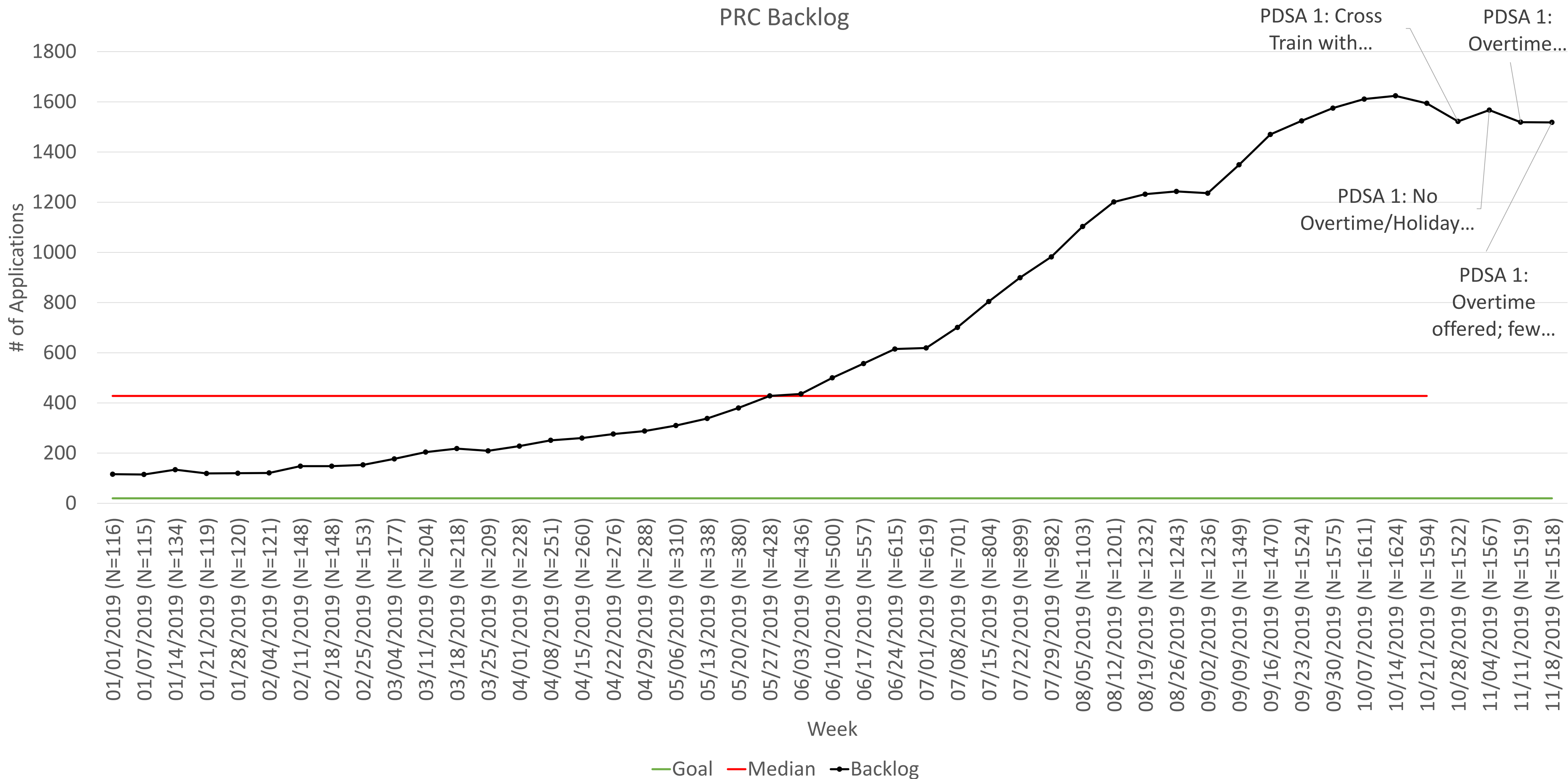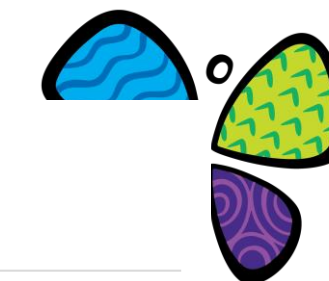
THEORY

GLOBAL AIM

We will decrease processing times and eliminate the backlog. Families will get faster processing and be able to resolve developing and emergent needs.

SMART AIM

To reduce the average PRC application processing time from 38 to 21 days by 1/31/2020.

POPULATION

All PRC applications in Hamilton County
(the applicants/families requesting assistance)

KEY DRIVERS

Staff
- Trained and knowledgeable
- Clear roles / Separation of duties
- Adequate staffing levels

Community Partners
- Understand the process
- Capacity to submit complete applications
- Clear, easy process to submit applications
- Able to reach staff for questions

Resources/Technology
- System that meets business requirements
- Trusted by staff

Assignment of Applications
- Applications assigned equally, efficiently to staff
- Applications are entered into the system timely

Applicants
- Able to be reached for interview
- Able to obtain required documentation

INTERVENTIONS

Increase human capacity by:
- Hire more staff
- Cross-train eligibility staff from other departments **(PDSA 1)**
- Offer overtime to reduce backlog quickly

Improve communication and training with partners
- Dedicated community roundtables
- Monthly trainings with Project Lift partners **(PDSA 3)**

Reduce controls (specialization) to allow greater flexibility

Create specialization in strategic areas (kinship, Project Lift)

Reduce partner classifications to less than 10 strategic, well trained partners

Screen for complete applications, remove incomplete from incoming volume

Automate Processes (PDSA 2)
- Use of timers and reminders at defined intervals
- Online application to eliminate scanning/indexing apps

Standardize (PDSA 2)
- Make it easy for staff to make the right decision
- Reduce need to flip between data systems

LEARNING CYCLES

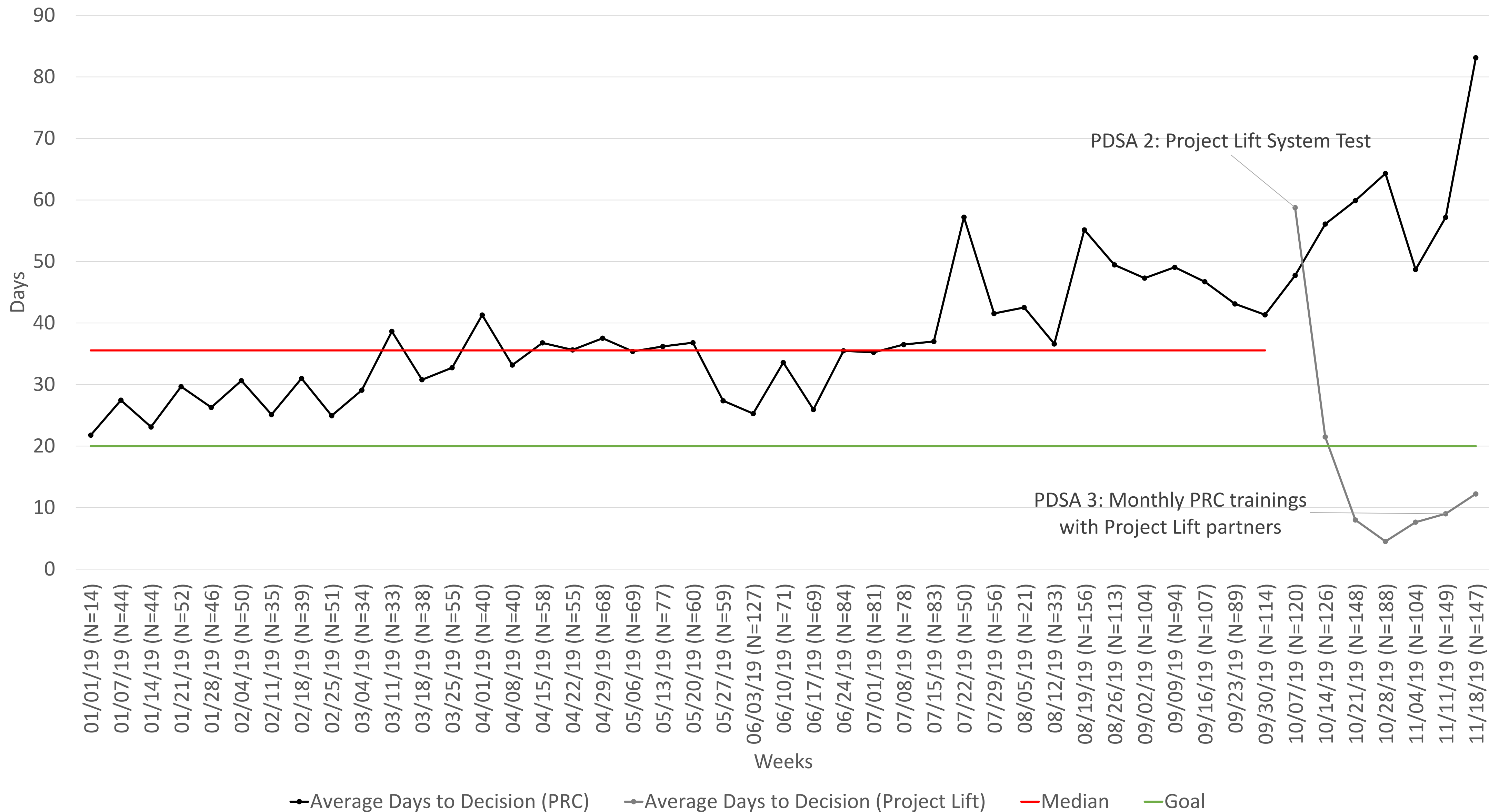| PDSAs		Test Cycle 1	Test Cycle 2	Test Cycle 3	Test Cycle 4
Plan	**Test Description:**	Cross-training and Overtime for Processing	Project Lift Test	Monthly Project Lift Partner Training	Legal Aid Test
	Objective:	Cross train eligibility staff from other departments and offer weekend overtime to process oldest applications	Update the document processing system workflow to meet business needs. Test with Project Lift partners	Ensure Project Lift partners are trained and knowledgeable to submit complete applications	Implement the Project Lift test with Legal Aid
	Prediction:	The backlog will decrease	Staff will be more efficient at processing applications Partners are able to submit applications online	Partners will be more knowledgeable, submit more complete applications HCJFS staff will process faster as a result of fewer, but more complete applications	Increase in application volume Increase in staff use of new system
	How will success of the test be measured?	Decrease in number of unprocessed applications	• Decrease in average processing time between application date and decision date • Decrease in number of unprocessed applications • Decrease in average processing time between received date and storage date		
	Plan details:	11/2/2019: Training staff 11/3/2019: Monitored processing Non-holiday weekends: Independent processing with supervisor on-site	• IS to update business requirements • Test on small scale with Project Lift applicants • Implement online application for strategic partners	• PRC Tech to present topics at monthly sponsor meeting • Topics based on common denial reasons and frequently requested services	• IS: technical changes to workflow learned in Project Lift test • Legal Aid staff to be trained • PRC staff to be trained
Do	**Was the test carried out as planned?**	Yes – in progress	Yes – in progress	Yes – in progress	
	Test Results	First weekend of training showed promise, subsequent weekends shows progress	Project Lift PRC applications are processed within a few days and there is no backlog	Project Lift sponsors are asking more questions before submission, applications are more complete for topics covered	
Study	**Did results match prediction?**	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Learn	Short-term fix to take off pressure, but not sustainable long-term	• While test was successful, the volume is significantly smaller • Scaling test strategically • Some technical changes to the workflow are needed	• Repeat monthly with new topics • Focus on developing needs, anticipate future requests (i.e. at end of heating season, increase in requests for utility assistance)	
Act	**Adapt, Adopt, or Abandon**	Adopt – temporarily	Adapt	Adopt	

RESULTS

PRC Backlog

RESULTS

Average Days Between Application and Decision

PDSA 2: Project Lift System Test

PDSA 3: Monthly PRC trainings
with Project Lift partners

Days

Weeks

— Average Days to Decision (PRC)   — Average Days to Decision (Project Lift)   —Median   —Goal

X-axis labels:
01/01/19 (N=14), 01/07/19 (N=44), 01/14/19 (N=44), 01/21/19 (N=52), 01/28/19 (N=46), 02/04/19 (N=50), 02/11/19 (N=35), 02/18/19 (N=39), 02/25/19 (N=51), 03/04/19 (N=34), 03/11/19 (N=33), 03/18/19 (N=38), 03/25/19 (N=55), 04/01/19 (N=40), 04/08/19 (N=40), 04/15/19 (N=58), 04/22/19 (N=55), 04/29/19 (N=68), 05/06/19 (N=69), 05/13/19 (N=77), 05/20/19 (N=60), 05/27/19 (N=59), 06/03/19 (N=127), 06/10/19 (N=71), 06/17/19 (N=69), 06/24/19 (N=84), 07/01/19 (N=81), 07/08/19 (N=78), 07/15/19 (N=83), 07/22/19 (N=50), 07/29/19 (N=56), 08/05/19 (N=21), 08/12/19 (N=33), 08/19/19 (N=156), 08/26/19 (N=113), 09/02/19 (N=104), 09/09/19 (N=94), 09/16/19 (N=107), 09/23/19 (N=89), 09/30/19 (N=114), 10/07/19 (N=120), 10/14/19 (N=126), 10/21/19 (N=148), 10/28/19 (N=188), 11/04/19 (N=104), 11/11/19 (N=149), 11/18/19 (N=147)

MOST PROUD & WHY

PDSA 2: Project Lift PRC Applications Systems Test

- Immediate, significant improvement in processing times – clients are served faster and better able to meet client needs
- Partners have access to online application
- The system automates much of the process, easy to identify case status
- Required documents are available immediately, staff don't have to search for templates
- Automated data collection; simplified reporting

GREATEST CHALLENGE

PDSA 2: Project Lift PRC Applications Systems Test

- Working on other timelines
- Competing priorities
- Fear of change
- Slow scaling of successful intervention

TEAM MEMBERS

- Lynne Riehle (Project Lead)
- Kevin Holt (Section Chief)
- Vivien Shaw (Programmer)
- Teri Jones-Morris (Project Lift PRC Team Leader)
- Vrai Marrow (Project Lift Eligibility Technician, primary tester)
- Brandy Scott-Herrmann (PRC Team Leader)

All from Hamilton County Job & Family Services

all children thrive