Process Mapping Exercise Instructions

A complete process map is a visual depiction of a process, from beginning to end. Since we are almost always very intuitively familiar with our processes, they can sometimes begin to seem linear even though they never are. Additionally, there are often multiple processes imbedded within a larger process. A process map helps reveal the many points where a process may become complex, where another process begins, where decision points lead to an alternate process, and where there are handoffs between people and/or departments.

Creating a process map can be extremely helpful during many phases of a program's existence. They can be used during the program design phase to help think through and reach agreement about the most effective and efficient way to reach outcomes, for orienting both staff and clients to "how things work", and during the CQI process for identifying process indicators and determining where process changes could be made to affect any goals and outcomes in need of improvement.

To create a process map, use the symbols below to depict your process. Things to consider:

- Think of the client's journey through your program. What are his/her experiences?
- What happens first? What is the first step toward each client achieving the program's goal? Write the first step.
- What happens next? Write the next step and draw an arrow connecting the two steps. Each time you do this, consider whether what happens next is one of the following:
  - Actions-if the next step is an action, document the step and:
    - How long each step takes
    - How much time passes in between steps
  - Document production-if the next step includes a document, identify it as such
  - Decisions & alternate possibilities-if a step includes or leads to a decision, write what the decision to be made is, draw an arrow for each possible response, and then write what the next step is for each of the responses.
  - Handoffs-if there is a handoff, make a note that this is the case
  - Waits-if a wait exists anywhere, document how long that wait is. You can document the average time the wait lasts.
- Remember to always document what is *actually* happening, not what is *supposed to* happen. It can be worthwhile to go back after you have finished to discuss whether there is any difference between what is happening and what should be happening to decide if there is just cause for this and which process you would like to keep.
- What happens last? At what point does the client count towards your performance target?