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ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo 2024

TECHNOLOGY + LEGAL

Beyond the Horizon: The Future of Innovation & Compliance in Human Services



Partnering for Change: How States and the U.S. Digital Service are Partnering to Improve Benefit Delivery

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Michele Gee, Economic Assistance Section Director, North Dakota Health & Human Services

Deb Etheridge, Director, Alaska Division of Public Assistance

Izzie Zahorian, Lead, U.S. Digital Service

Speakers



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Today, we'll be sharing preliminary results from an **implementation-focused SNAP technical assistance initiative** to rapidly improve SNAP application timeliness in partnership with states, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and the U.S. Digital Service (USDS).

A small, collaborative team with decades of experience designing, building, and improving government services.



September 2023: USDS on-site for **Medicaid technical assistance in New York**



August 2024: USDS on-site for **SNAP technical assistance in Alaska**

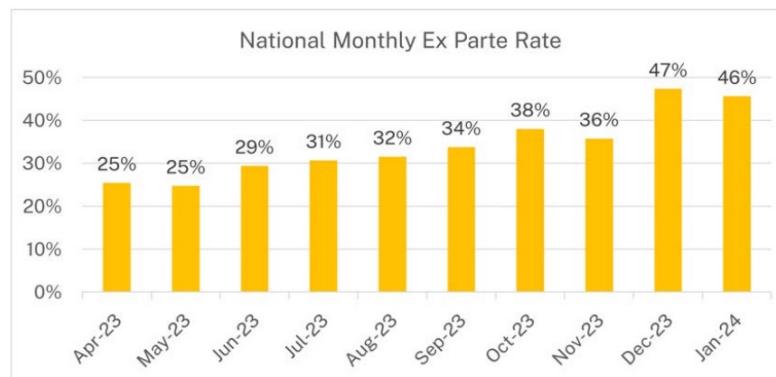
We're known for partnering with federal and state agencies to rapidly diagnose, fix, and improve public benefit processes and systems.

Half a million children, others being reinstated after removal from Medicaid

Leaders of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Thursday revealed the scope of the trouble, caused by computer systems failing to determine whether individual family members qualify for Medicaid.

The Washington Post

CMCS and USDS's efforts, alongside state Medicaid agencies, have helped to nearly double ex parte renewal rates nationally by the start of 2024: from about 25% in April 2023 to 46% in January 2024.²⁴



National ex parte renewal rates have continued to rise, with the most recent data indicating that they reached 50% in April 2024.

Sources: [The Washington Post](#), [2024 OIRA Burden Reduction Report](#)

In March 2023, CMS requested USDS assistance to address administrative churn during the public-health emergency unwind.

Unwinding and Returning to Regular Operations after COVID-19

The expiration of the continuous enrollment condition authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) presents the single largest health coverage transition event since the first open enrollment period of the Affordable Care Act

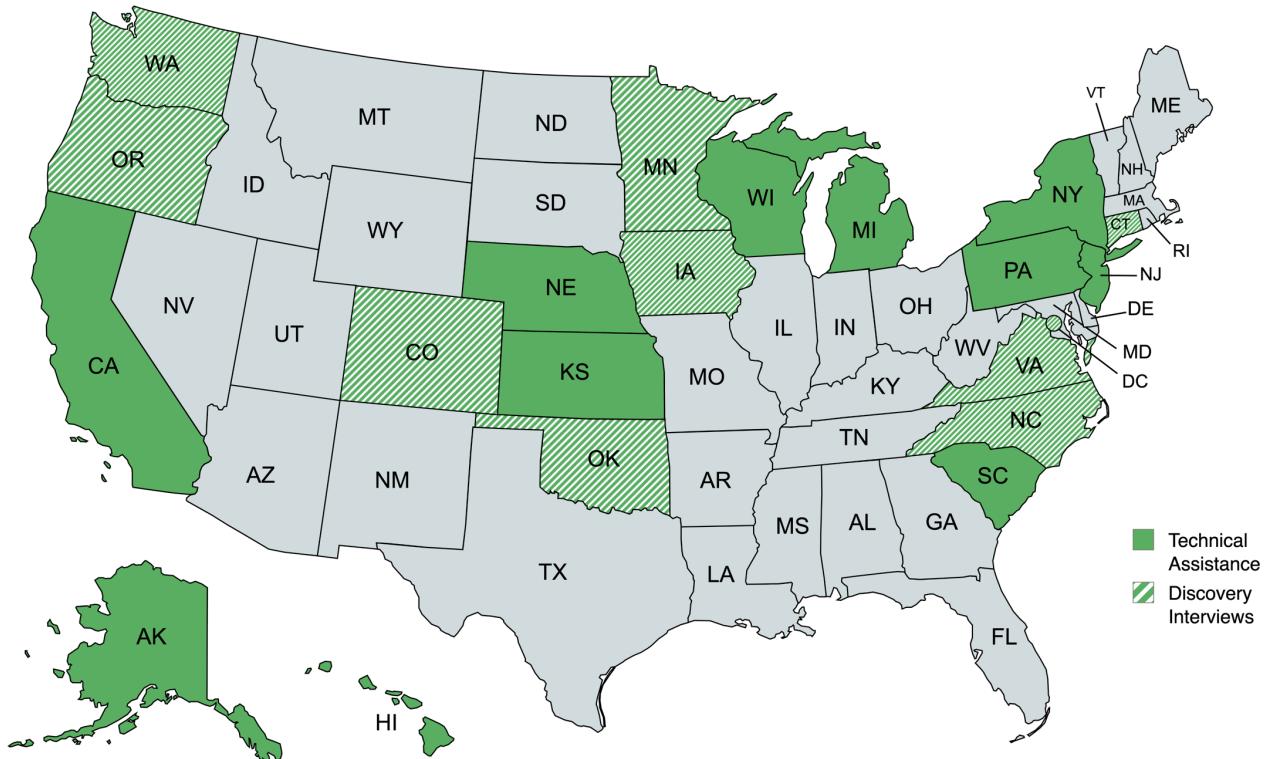
Medicaid.gov
Keeping America Healthy

Based on historical patterns, 7.9 percent (6.8 million) will lose Medicaid coverage despite still being eligible



ISSUE BRIEF
August 19, 2022

Year 1: Medicaid



In 10 months

- Met with 18+ states
- Partnered with 11 for hands-on technical assistance

Impact

- Automatically renewed **1.5 million people** for health care; projected to auto renew over 5 million more
- Decreased administrative burden by **2+ million hours** each for eligibility workers and the public
- Reinstated health coverage for **500k children and families** who had been wrongfully terminated

In March 2024, USDA requested USDS assistance to help address SNAP backlogs across the nation.

As of February 2024, 26 out of 53 states were out of compliance with SNAP application processing timeliness rates

Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/governor-letter-performance-operations>



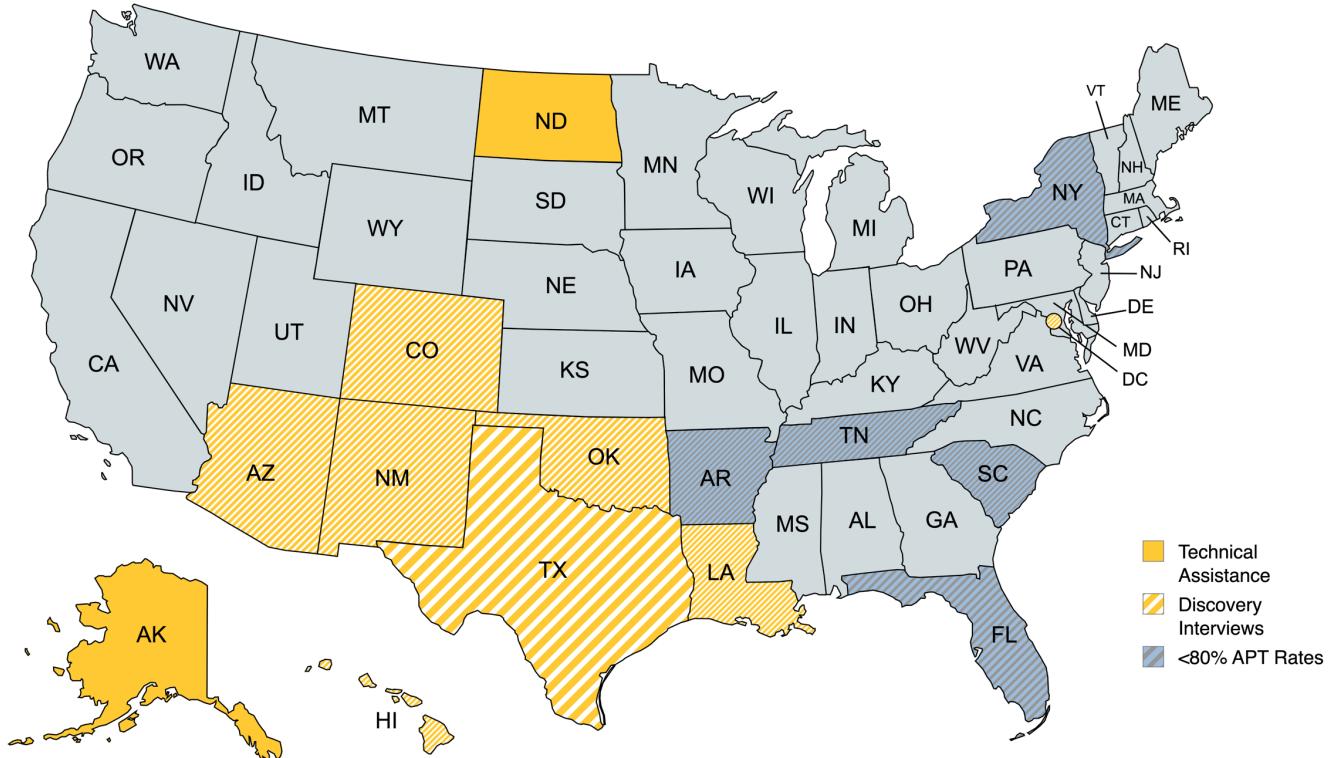
WASHINGTON, Feb. 8, 2024

Today, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a letter to 47 U.S. governors conveying concerns about how challenges in state administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are affecting American families. The letter underlines the urgency of the situation and encourages immediate state actions to improve.

Top challenges

- Public health emergency unwinding
- Increased caseloads
- Staffing shortages
- Expiring waivers
- New programs (e.g. Summer EBT)
- Limited in-house technical capacity

Year 2: SNAP



In 5 months

- Met with 10+ states
- Partnered with 2 for hands-on technical assistance
- Currently preparing for our 3rd

Approach

Pre-onsite

3-4 weeks

North star

Data analysis

Shadowing

Desk research

Onsite

1 week

Co-design

Prioritization

Implementation

Report

Post-onsite

3-4 weeks

Workstream sprints

Program collaboration

Leadership check-ins

Launch planning

Preliminary results

The SNAP TA initiative is projected to increase efficiency by up to 33% per state.



North Dakota

- Improvements to E&E systems are estimated to save **73k burden hours annually**
- Texting program is projected to **decrease missed interviews by 30%+**



Alaska

- Improvements to E&E systems are estimated to save **75k burden hours annually**





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Thank you

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