



Improving the Efficiency of Benefit Delivery: Outcomes from Six States

Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation

Michael Katz, NAWRS, July 31, 2017

Goals of Work Support Strategies Initiative



Improve families' well-being by increasing enrollment in the full package of work supports.



Help states deliver benefits more effectively and efficiently



Share lessons learned to inform state and federal policies.

Work Support Strategies Evaluation

- Interviews, focus groups, and document reviews
- Client experience surveys
- Administrative data analysis
- Reports, briefs, events, presentations, and blogs on key topics of WSS initiative

What Changes Did States Make?

- **Policy changes**
 - Streamline access within each program
 - Increase cross program integration
- **Technology changes**
 - New and improved eligibility systems
 - Lobby management technology
 - Online applications and web portals

What Changes Did States Make? Continued

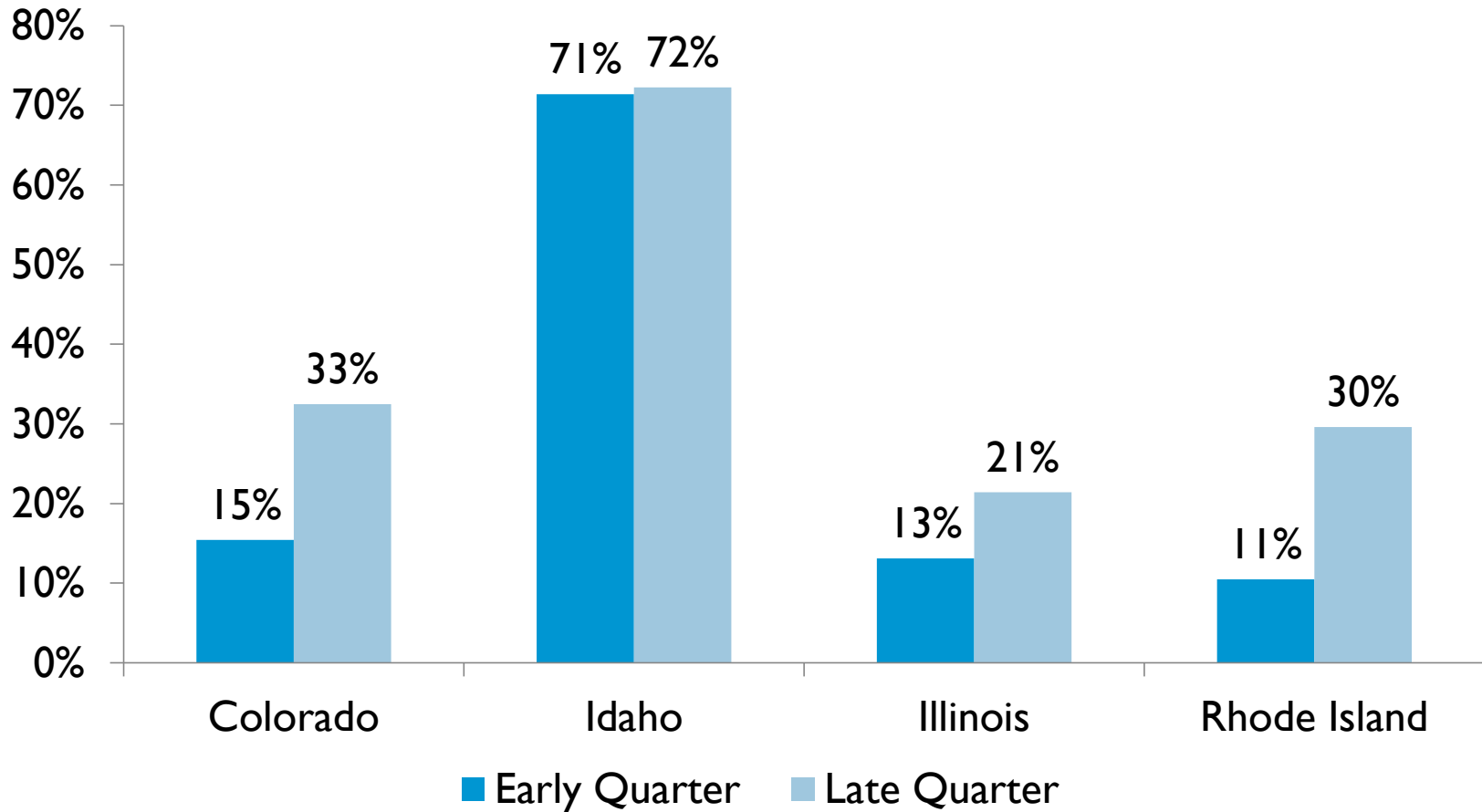
- Business process changes
 - Cross-program integration
 - Lobby changes
 - Work flow
 - Other changes to reduce workload

Outcomes

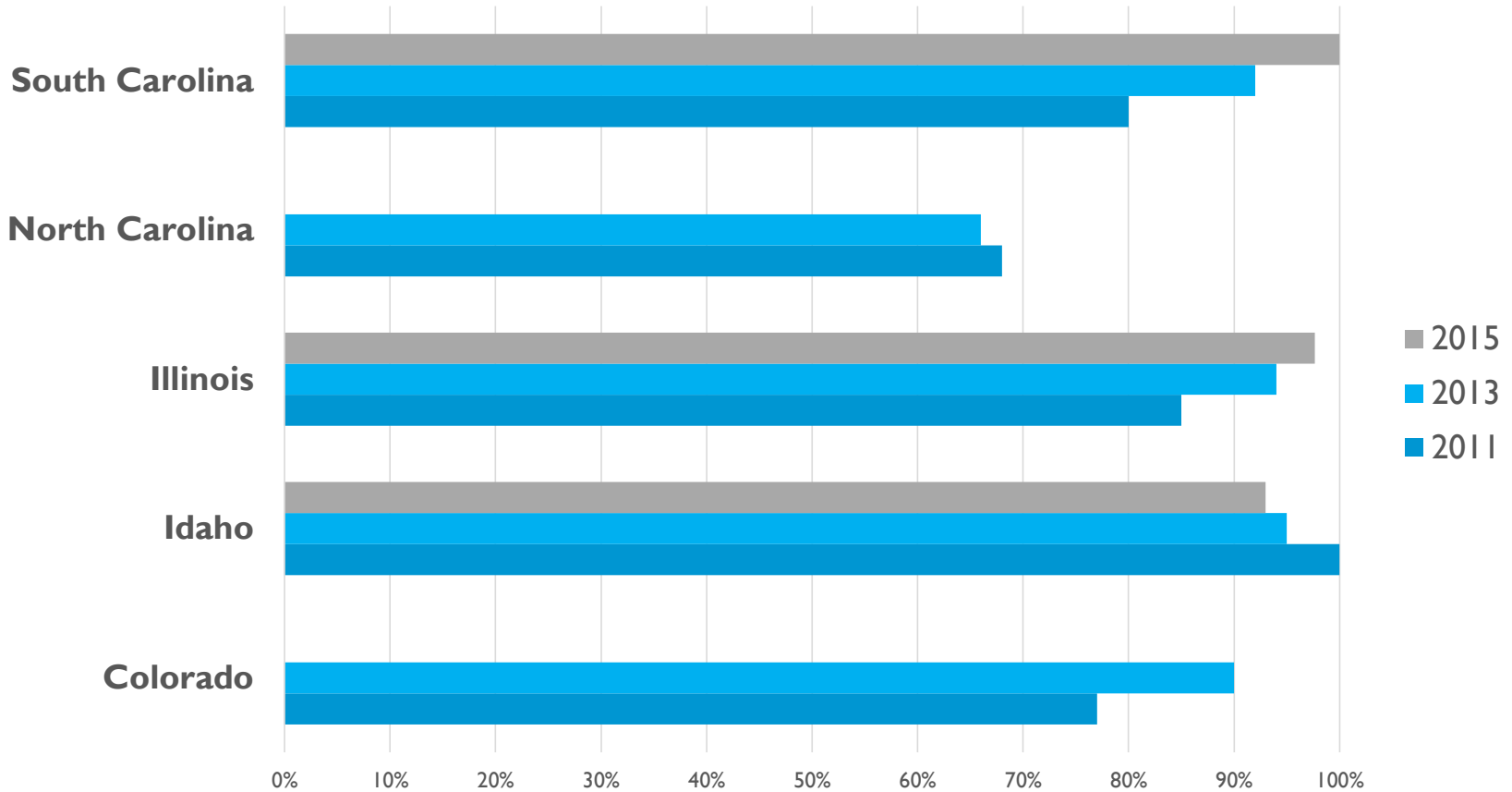
Overarching Findings

1. Faster delivery of benefits after application
2. Increase in joint participation
3. Some success in reducing churn at time of renewal, but not consistently
4. Mixed evidence on improving workflow,
 - Some reductions in client wait times
 - No clear trends on worker service times

Substantial Increases in SNAP Same Day Service



Joint SNAP and Medicaid/CHIP Participation Rates for Children: 2011, 2013, and 2015



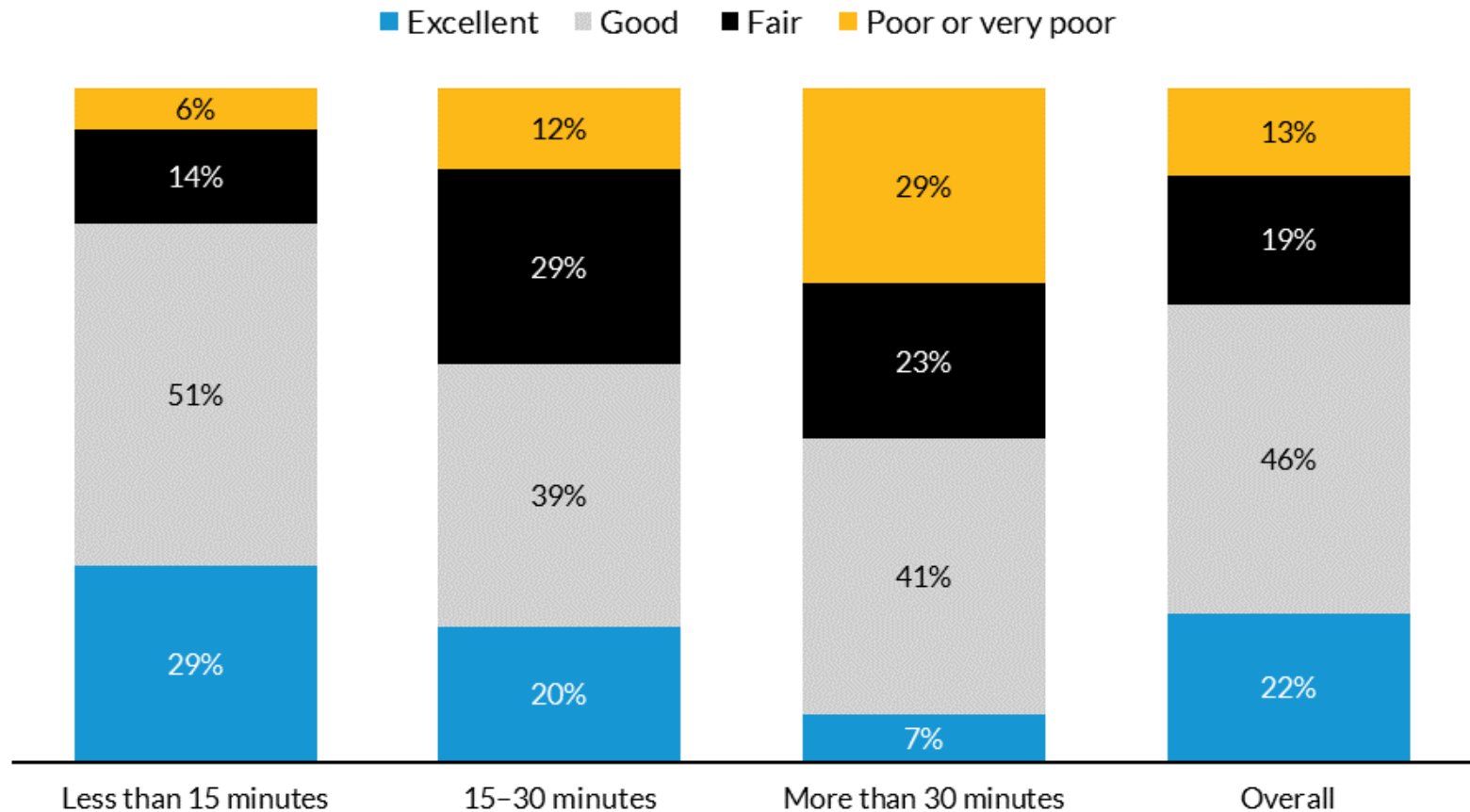
**What is Most Important to
Clients? How do Changes
Affect Clients?**

Interactions with staff

- Clients are affected by their interactions with staff
- When asked which customer service improvements were most important to them, “being treated more respectfully” was the top priority for 15 to 17 percent of survey respondents
- Focus group participants also emphasized how staff interactions colored their experience applying for benefits
- Surveys showed negative interactions with staff were significantly associated with worse overall experience

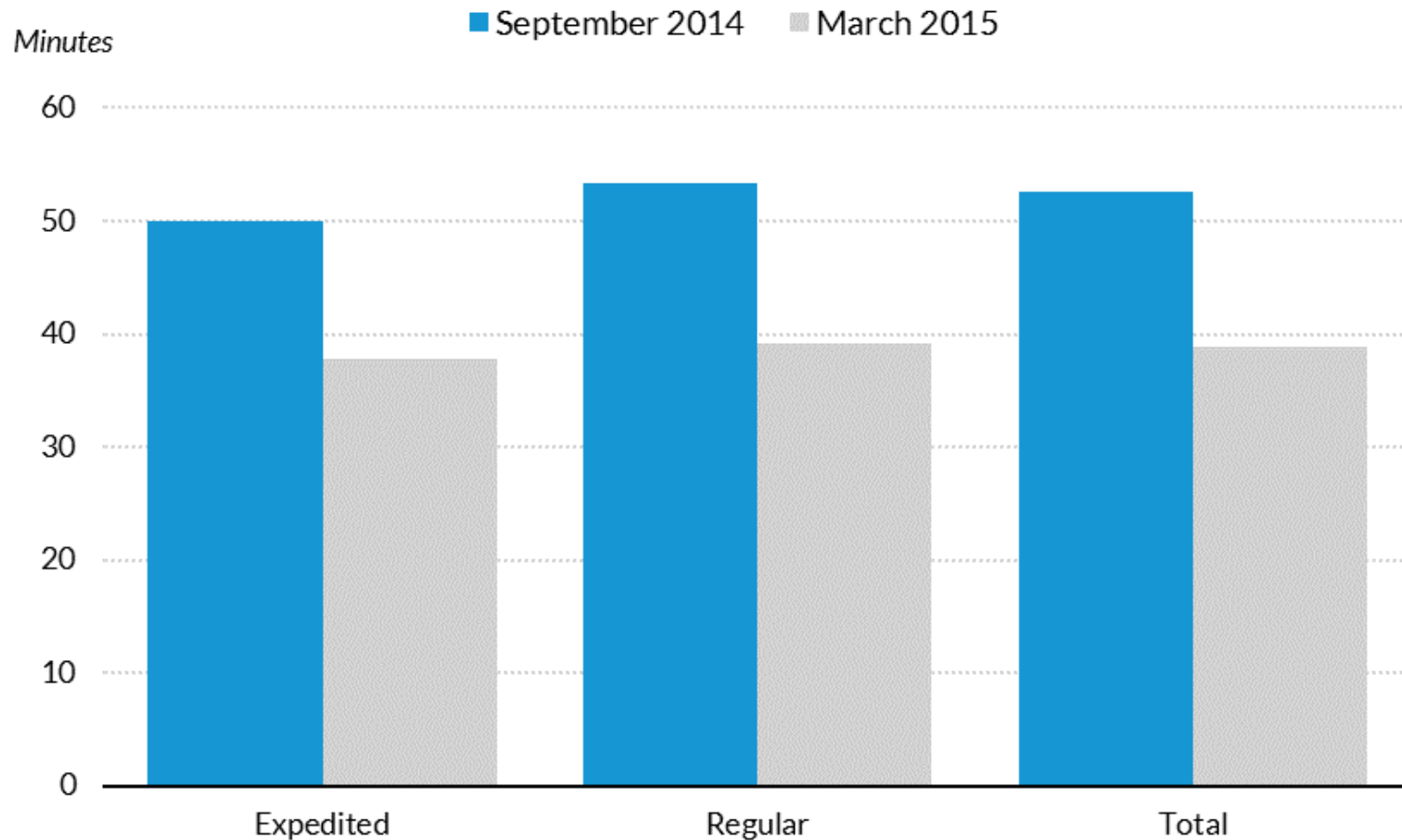
Office Wait Time

Overall experience by time waiting in office in South Carolina



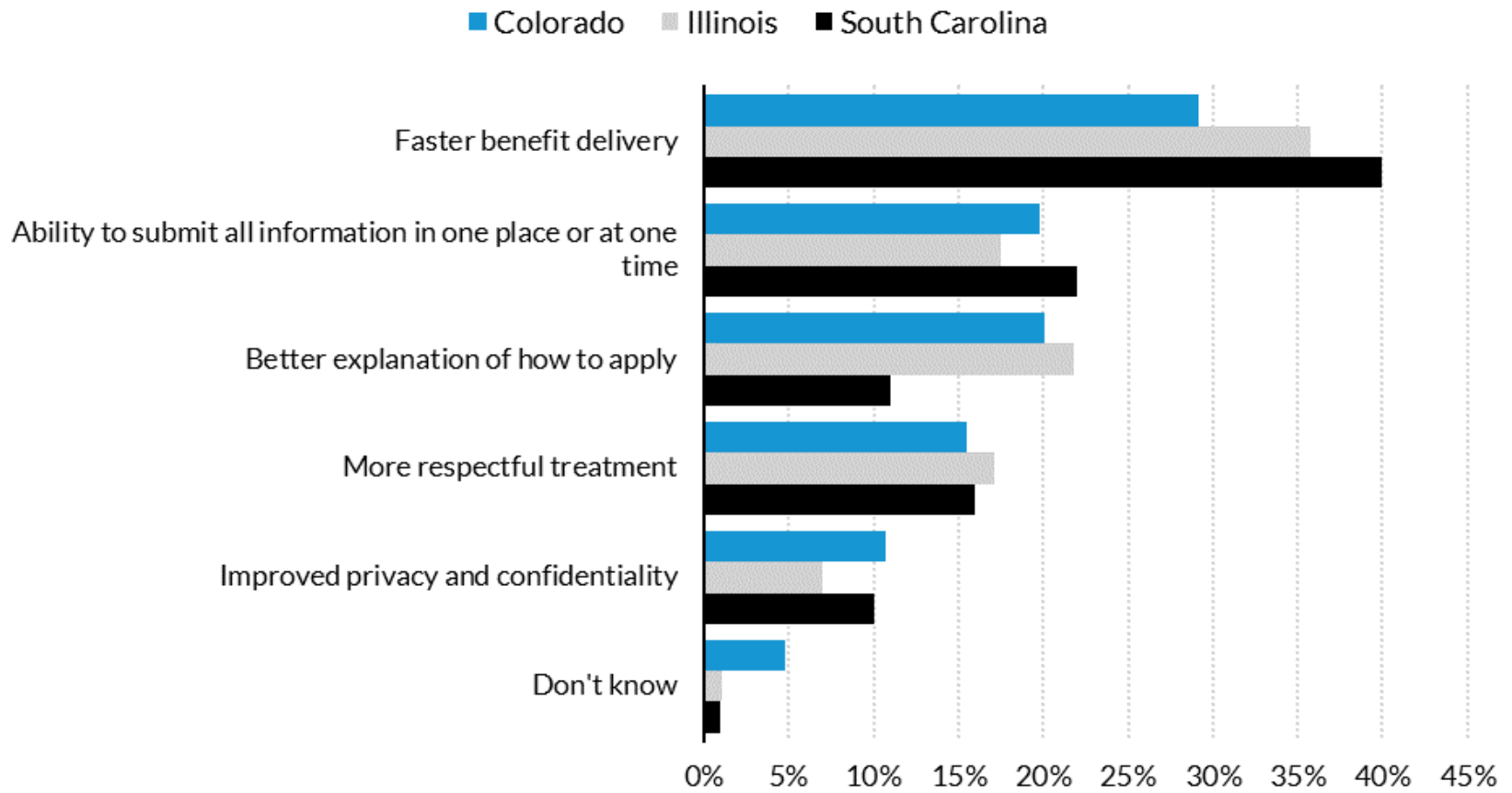
Office Wait Time

Reduction in office wait time in Illinois



Wait Time for Benefits

Most Important Service Improvement Related to Timeliness and Process, per SNAP Applicant Survey

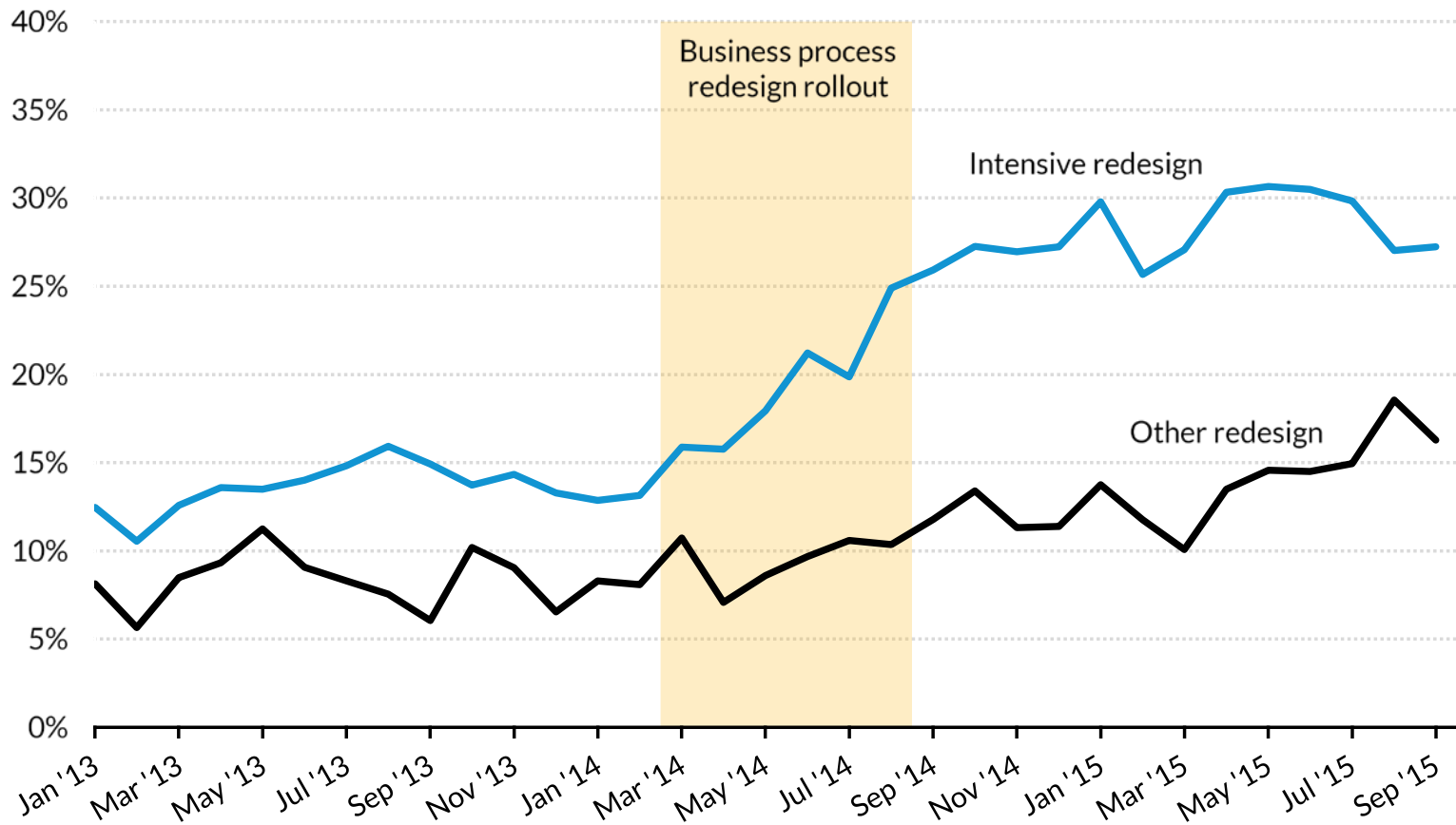


Wait time for benefits

- *“The fact that you can walk in and within, let's just say two hours—which is a long time, two hours—you can walk out with a food stamp card, and in two days, you have food stamps. Your Medicaid is being processed, and whatever other program you want on, they're processing it. I mean, that's pretty amazing that they can do that.” Client*

Wait Time for Benefits

SNAP Applications Processed Same Day in Colorado Counties, by Type of Business Process Redesign



Experiences differ by key application and client characteristics

- Online vs. in person
- Age
- Employed vs. unemployed
- English as second language

Conclusion

- Motivation for improved service delivery
- Improvements are challenging, but possible
- WSS state efforts have demonstrated improved outcomes based on this work