

Minnesota Eligibility Technology System Executive Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Details

- January 25, 2022
- 10 a.m. - noon
- Room 1200, Minnesota Senate Building, 95 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55155

Participants

Voting Members

- Nate Clark, MNSure - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Janet Goligowski, Stearns County - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Kari Ouimette, Scott County - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Chuck Johnson, DHS - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Kari Koob, MNSure - present (via Microsoft Teams)

Non-Voting Members

- Jon Eichten, MNIT - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Greg Poehling, MNIT - present

Guests

- Colleen O'Brien, MNIT - present (via Microsoft Teams)
- Jackie Hippen, MNIT - present (via Microsoft Teams)

Agenda Items

Call to Order & Welcome

Greg Poehling, MNIT

Greg Poehling, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Members introduced themselves. Greg reviewed the meeting agenda.

Administrative Items

ESC Members

There were two new METS ESC members since the meeting met last: Kari Ouimette from the counties and Cynthia MacDonald from MNIT.

The committee needed to approve the January 28, 2020 minutes as that is the last time the METS ESC met.

MOTION: Kari Koob moved to approve the draft January 28, 2020, meeting minutes. Nate Clark seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Greg then moved onto approval for the fiscal reports.

Jackie Hippen presented the fiscal reports starting with background of what has happened with fiscal reports since the last public meeting. The last time a fiscal report was presented to and approved by the METS Executive Steering Committee was in November of 2019. Since then meeting rooms were unavailable due to legislative session or COVID-19, Jackie has presented quarterly financial reports to the ESC budget workgroup for review, discussion and informal approval. The workgroup consists of Chuck Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, Greg Poehling, Chief Business Technology Officer for MNIT Services partnering with DHS and MNsure, Kari Koob, Chief Financial Officer of MNsure and Janet Goligowski representing MN counties. During the official meeting hiatus, eight reports have been reviewed and approved by the budget workgroup. Following approval, each report was also submitted to the Legislative Oversight Committee along with a letter from the co-chairs of the METS ESC, Chuck Johnson and Greg Poehling.

Jackie is requesting official approval for the previous seven reports. A few things to note:

- Development costs in FY20 were nearly \$9M less than in FY19 due to two reasons - one was that six of the 10 development projects were new that year and started more slowly than expected. The second reason was the onset of COVID-19 in spring of that year. Many development efforts were put on hold as the state focused their attention pandemic response.
- Operational expenses increased by nearly \$2M over FY19, as GetInsured costs continued to transition out of development and into operations, and MNIT completed system enhancements to deal with the public health emergency.
- Underspend in development continued as four of the eight METS enhancement projects remained on hold throughout the year due to COVID.
- Also recorded within Development, MNsure received ARPA funding toward the end of FY21, and a system enhancement related to COVID response was completed in the last few months of the year.
- Operations spending increased by 2.5% due to a number of factors including cost inflation, work shifting from development to operations and continued COVID-response.

MOTION: Kari Koob moved to approve the first seven financial reports including: FY20 Q2 Fiscal Report, FY20 Q3 Fiscal Report, FY20 Q4 Fiscal Report, FY21 Q1 Fiscal Report, FY21 Q2 Fiscal Report, FY21 Q3 Fiscal Report, FY21 Q4 Fiscal Report. Janet seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Jackie Hippen gave an overview the System Fiscal Report for QE 09/31/21 starting with the four-year view. Of note:

- FY20 is final and reflecting actual expenses.
- For FY21, most of the year end expenses have been processed, and the FY19 column has switched from budget to estimated actuals.

- The FY22 column shows
 - You'll see a total development budget of approx. \$38.67M.
 - The total APD budget in the FY22 column equals \$38M - approx. \$11M from the FFY21 award and \$27M from the FFY22 award. As mentioned a moment ago, funding for development related to the METS APD is matched by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and awarded on a federal fiscal year, so the FY22 budget represents a blend of two federal awards. Only a portion of the current award is represented in FY22 and the remainder is in FY23.
 - Also included in the FY22 development total is approx. \$640K for COVID-related enhancements funded by the American Rescue Plan.
 - Total FY22 operations budget is approx. \$37.59M. You will notice that the operations budget in FY22 is higher than in previous or future years. There are three significant development efforts being funded through operations this year, which are expected to be completed by the end of this fiscal year.
- The FY23 column
 - The development budget shows the final quarter of the FFY22 APD award.
 - For operations, MNIT's costs are expected to increase by approx. \$1M to accommodate operational tasks related to the development efforts being completed in FY22.

Jackie walked through the SFY21 quarterly report:

- All four quarters of FY21 are complete, plus expenditures thru September 30 have been captured. This leaves a balance of approx. \$2.46M in outstanding expenses. Since the end of September, expenses totaling approx. \$2.4M have been recognized, leaving less than \$50K outstanding. Given this small amount, this will be the final review of FY21.
- Development
 - On a budget of \$44.76M, we will spend \$30.76M, resulting in underspending of \$14M.
 - This further breaks down to a \$13.4M underspend in the APD development budget and \$600K underspend in the MNsure-related development funded by ARPA.
 - For the APD, we had overspent in staff augmentation which was offset by underspending in state staff and service contracts. We also show underspending in MNIT-Central services and General administration; both of those cost categories contain budget based on the number of people expected to work or track time to development projects. Because many development efforts were paused for the entirety of FY21, our actual expenses came in well below budget. HW/SW was significantly underspent due for the most part to one contract - the entire amount required was budgeted but the actual payments will be spread over three years. The underspent budget in FY21 will be shifted forward to satisfy obligations in future years.
 - For the MNsure/ARPA development project that was active in FY21, a small portion of the \$600K underspend was carried forward and spent in FY22 to wrap up the project. The rest was recognized as underspend.
- Operations

- On a budget of \$33.1M, we will spend \$30.1M, or 91%.
- Our goal is to be within 5% of budget within each cost category. Here is how we ended FY21:
 - We spent 84% of the state staff budget. In part, this underspend is a result of a state-wide hiring freeze during SFY21.
 - Staff Augmentation was underspent by 2% and Service Contracts were overspent by 4%. The net overspend was balanced by underspend in state staff.
 - A balance of over \$800k remains for hardware and software. As mentioned earlier in the development section, a large contract was fully budgeted in FY21 but will be paid over the next few years. A portion of that contract was attributed to METS Ops, as well as METS Development.
 - MNIT-Central expenses ended the year 97% spent.
 - General Admin ended the year 12% underspent. As COVID continued into a second fiscal year, administrative costs were low - people were already settled into their home offices, many in-person training and conferences were deferred, and office supplies were left unpurchased. The General Administration budget was reduced in FY22.

Jackie showed the FY22 quarterly report:

- This table shows the budget, expenditures and financing for FY22 and the year's anticipated expenses. We currently expect both development and operations to end the year within 3% of their stated budgets.

MOTION: Kari Ouimette moved to approve the FY22 Q1 Fiscal Report. Kari Koob seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved. The report will be sent to the legislative oversight committee along with the other 7 Fiscal reports just approved.

Greg Poehling shared the update about METS ESC Workgroup. This is a subgroup of this METS ESC that was established in November of 2019. Its purpose was to build the investment and awareness of the ESC by providing opportunities for information exchange about the roadmap that would take place outside of ESC meetings.

The workgroup was set up to meet as frequently as needed to stay informed about roadmap activities, but the starting expectation was that it would meet in the months when the full ESC didn't or couldn't meet for any reason. In retrospect, it was fortunate that this workgroup was already set up when the pandemic hit, as it gave us a clear path for ensuring ongoing input from ESC members during the period the ESC couldn't meet due to required meeting locations being closed to the public.

The workgroup's membership includes one ESC member each from MNsure, DHS, counties and MNsure. Currently the workgroup members are Nate Clark, Chuck Johnson, Kari Ouimette and Greg. Each ESC member on the group also has an ESC back-up member. Meetings are additionally attended by METS SGG members and program staff.

The ESC Roadmap Workgroup has for the most part met monthly since the start of the pandemic. There are several standing agenda items, covering information similar to what is

typically presented to the ESC in the IT program status update. Examples include the current roadmap, progress and input towards planning the next roadmap, the latest deliverables schedules, and the spotlight status of all projects in the portfolio.

Beyond the standing agenda, the workgroup has addressed several topics of interest in the past two years. A partial list includes:

- Monitoring the status of projects placed on hold due to COVID (in fact, we held a series of 3 weekly meetings to fully understand impacts and options for resuming the on-hold projects)
- Reviewing dependencies between major projects
- Providing input on a plan to address a pattern of testing runway issues that had surfaced for METS projects
- Comparing the current schedule of deliverables for the Unique Person ID project to projected dates that had been given to the legislature
- Receiving updates on changes to the DHS IT governance structure
- Reviewing and approving the METS budget, given that the full ESC was unable to meet
- Reviewing an annual retrospective on accomplishments and challenges of the METS portfolio

METS IT Program Status Update

Colleen O'Brien, METS Program Manager, MNIT Services @ DHS/MNsure

Colleen O'Brien of MNIT presented the METS ESC Update slide deck. Slides of note are described below:

Slide 4 shows the major high-level events that took place since METS ESC last met on January 28, 2020.

- First, just a few days after this group last met, the federal public health emergency was declared. Within a few weeks after that, most DHS, MNsure and MNIT staff shifted to telework. The federal emergency is expected to remain active at least through April 15, 2022.
- Second, on March 27, 2020, the METS SGG (which was then called the PMT), placed eight METS projects into “on hold” status while staff pivoted to COVID-related work. Five of those projects have since resumed, and there’s more to come on the others in a moment.
- Third, due to the closure of required state office locations for this public meeting, the full METS ESC was unable to meet during the pandemic until just this month. However, as Greg Poehling described earlier, the METS ESC Roadmap Workgroup has met

monthly during the past two years and has provided input on the governance, administration and business operations of the METS system.

- Fourth, work on the METS annual roadmaps has continued. The 2020 roadmap that was active when this group last met was retired at 2020 year-end; a 2021 roadmap was established and then retired at its year end; and the 2022 roadmap (which needs approval) is now active.
- Fifth, the lasting impact of the roadmap work is that 7 major releases have been deployed to the METS system, resulting in many enhancements and fixes that have improved service to citizens, created efficiencies for workers, and saved money for the state.
- One final note is that the name of the governance body that provides day to day oversight of the METS system has changed. It used to be the METS Program Management Team (or PMT). Now it is the METS System-based Governance Group (or SGG). This name change is related to an overall DHS change effort oriented towards improved transparency and consistency for DHS IT governance.

Slide 5: Status of projects placed on “COVID-19 Hold” on 3/27/20

- As mentioned, eight projects were placed on hold shortly after the federal public health emergency was declared. Slide 5 shows the current status of each.
- The top four projects were resumed within a few months. Two of these (Federal Tax Law Changes and Renewals Process Improvements FFY20) have since completed. The other two (Unique Person ID and Tribes as Processing Entities) remain active; you’ll see them on the current roadmap slide.
- The fifth and sixth projects on this slide, METS Electronic Eligibility Verifications Discovery and METS Eligibility: Income, remained on hold until they were defunded the following year as part of overall DHS prioritization efforts related to the enhanced federal funding application process.
- The sixth project, METS Eligibility Determination: Pregnant Women and Auto Newborns was resumed just this past October 1 and is active on the current roadmap. This project will address functional gaps in eligibility and enrollment determinations for Pregnant Women and newborns that are granted automatic eligibility for Medical Assistance.
- And then finally the last project, Cost Sharing for MA, remains on hold. It is expected to remain on hold for six or more months following the end of the public health emergency, as this project’s staff will be needed to assist with the transition back to normal operations.

Slide 6: Summary: Project changes since January 2020

This is a high-level summary of what’s happened at a project level since the METS ESC last met.

- 17 projects that were active back then have completed
- 5 new projects started and completed
- 7 projects that were active back then are still active now
- 7 new projects started and remain active now

Slide 7: Impacts: GetInsured Implementation

The highlights of the GetInsured Implementation project include:

- Deploying in fall 2019, this project integrated a new commercial off-the-shelf (or COTS) software platform called GetInsured with existing state systems
- The project was named as a finalist for MNIT's 2020 Project of the Year award, and MNSure staff have described it as the "Most impactful upgrade to MNSure's technology since MNSure went live in 2014"
- It resulted in significant processing efficiencies. In particular, the enrollment of consumers with insurance companies changed from a multi-day manual process to a seamless operation done in real-time.
- It also resulted in an improved user experience and enhanced self-service options for Minnesotans who shop through MNSure, which in turn translated into markedly improved consumer satisfaction ratings.
- The improved user experience also contributed to significantly reduced call center volume, which has resulted in substantial savings to MNSure

Slide 8: Impacts: Renewals Process Improvements FFY20

The Renewals Processing Improvements FFY20 project deployed in the summer 2021 and fall 2021 releases. 3 main impacts:

- First, it completely eliminated the blackout period for public program workers updating "Public Program only" cases.
 - The term "Blackout period" refers to a period of time during the renewal process where workers are not allowed to enter changes to the client's record. Blackout periods are manually intensive in that they require public program workers to track a list of changes for each client and then process the changes after the renewal is complete, which could take up to 90 days.
- Second, this project delivered a change that allows workers to directly update public program cases for a situation where they used to instead spend 1.5 to 2 hours closing and then re-entering the case.

- Third, this project made DEED wage income data available for public program renewals, and improved employer matching between existing income and electronic sources.
 - As part of the public health emergency response, the renewals process has been suspended for public programs. Thus, public program workers will primarily experience the positive impacts of this project's work after the public health emergency ends.

Slide 9: Impacts: Data Mart 1.5

The Data Mart 1.5 project has made it much easier and less expensive for METS partners to access their data, in that it enables authorized users from DHS and MNsure to directly query METS data using standard reporting tools. Prior to creation of the Data Mart, METS data was mostly accessed through a request to technical staff for development of a custom report, which typically involved waiting days or weeks for the report to be delivered.

- One particularly notable outcome of the DataMart 1.5 project is that it has enabled DHS to more fully claim federal reimbursement for the Basic Health Program, thus saving millions of dollars for the State.
- Data Mart 1.5 project remains active and is actually currently in red status for reasons.

Slide 10: Impacts: COVID-19 Relief APTC Changes project

- The COVID-19 Relief APTC Changes implemented eligibility rule changes for advanced premium tax credits that were enacted in the American Rescue Plan Act. The changes were deployed to METS in spring and summer of 2021 and enabled significantly more Minnesota households to receive tax credits for healthcare coverage in 2022 over 2021. The changes also contributed to a jump to \$6089 per eligible household for the average tax credit in 2022.
- In acknowledgement of these important accomplishments, as well as the project's swift timeframe from start to completion, this project was just two weeks ago named the winner of MNIT's 2021 Project of the Year award. This is an extraordinary honor and accomplishment, especially given the caliber of the other seven projects that were nominated across all state agencies.

Greg added that he is very proud that this project was named project of the year. There has been a lot of work in many state agencies to respond to COVID-19 related needs. There has been a lot of great work across the state to make citizen's lives better. There was a lot of great collaboration between multiple state agencies and multiple vendors, and the work was completed relatively quickly and it puts money into the pockets of individuals and families. Great work.

Slide 12 shows the METS FFY 2022 Roadmap as it looks today, about four months into the federal fiscal year that started on October 1, 2021. After reviewing the slide, will be asking for METS ESC approval of this roadmap.

- Ongoing/Annual Work: this category is that they are considered “lights on” work that must take place in order for the existing METS system to remain viable. Some projects, like the two 1095-B projects and the Human Services Disaster Recovery Exercise, take place on an annual basis to meet federal requirements. Others, like the Curam Upgrade 2022 project, are necessary to keep the METS infrastructure up to date with the latest security enhancements and defect fixes.
- There is also a large category of work that is labelled “M&O: Non Project Work.” The M&O stands for Maintenance & Operations, and this item includes a variety of regular efforts that have been operationalized over time, as well as change requests for enhancements and defect fixes that do not require the rigor and oversight of a full-sized project.
- Development Projects: These projects will deliver new changes or enhancements to the METS system. A few of note include:
 - Unique Person ID and Effective Dates are both multi-year projects that have incrementally delivered scope over the course of several releases. Both started in 2018, and both are on track to deliver their final scope this year. Unique Person ID is focused on addressing duplicate person records in METS, while Effective Dates is focused on giving workers the ability to enter changes in circumstance on the date the change is reported, along with the actual effective date of the change.
 - Tribes as Processing Entities is focused on enabling White Earth Nation and Red Lake Nation to be the first two Tribal Nations to serve as processing entities in the METS environment.
 - MNsure PARN Updates will update the Private Annual Renewal Notice (PARN) to more accurately reflect IRS tax law, APTC attestation language, MNsure contact information and more.
 - Extending MA Postpartum Period for Pregnant Women is the result of a 2021 state law that extended postpartum coverage to 12 months for pregnant women who qualify for Medical Assistance or the Children’s Health Insurance program.
 - MinnesotaCare Eliminate the Family Glitch. This is a new addition to the roadmap since the start of the fiscal year. The project stems from a 2021 state law to extend MinnesotaCare to individuals previously excluded due to an Affordable Care Act provision that deemed employer sponsored family coverage affordable based on the cost of the individual premium rather than the on the cost of the family premium. This project is positioned to start on February 1.

MOTION: Chuck Johnson moved to approve the METS 2022 Roadmap. Kari Ouimette seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Slide 14 shows four efforts that delivered scope in the METS release that deployed on January 16, 2022:

- Unique Person ID delivered an enhancement for True Merge functionality in METS; the enhancement will significantly increase worker productivity when merging duplicate records, in that it automatically consolidates historical client information into one active person record. Prior to this change, METS workers have had to manually construct historical information from a variety of sources.
- Effective Dates implemented functionality to eliminate the current work-around workers must use to determine effective dates when processing a change. The new functionality ensures accurate eligibility and coverage for current or prior certification periods.
- The Grant/Pope County Merger supports an initiative of Grant and Pope Counties to merge their human services operations. Starting January 18, METS enrollees with MA eligibility who live in Pope or Grant County are assigned to the combined operation, which goes by the name of Western Prairie Human Services.
- Fourth, the M&O non-project work effort delivered eight updates to notices and 10 production changes.

Three efforts that have delivered scope outside of a major METS release during the winter release timeframe, which extends back to September. Most notably, Unique Person ID deployed two defect fixes for the METS True Merge capability. Both correct logic issues related to person records where access has been restricted due to client safety concerns.

Slide 16 shows the rolling deliverable schedule for new development projects.

The status indicators show what's taking place for each project during the different release timeframes.

- If the project is listed as "Active" during the timeframe, we know that project work is taking place, but the project is not expected to deliver scope to production in that period.
- If the project is listed as "Complete" during the timeframe, we know that the project successfully delivered scope as planned during that period. For example, columns 4 and 5 use this status to show the projects that delivered scope in the fall 2021 and winter 2021 timeframes.
- If the project is listed as "Firm" during the timeframe, it has met the requirements to deliver in the major METS release that is planned for that timeframe. For example, the 2022 spring release timeframe column shows that Tribes as Processing Entities is Firm, therefore it is approved to deliver to the METS platform in that period.
- If the project is listed as "Targeted" during a timeframe, this means that it is either working to gain entrance to the major METS release, or it is expecting to deliver scope outside of the major METS release.

- For example, column 5 shows that Infrastructure Improvements IAM MNsure MFA and Dev Enhancements is targeted for the spring release timeframe. It is expecting to deliver outside of a METS release in this timeframe.
- For example, Column 6 shows that Extending MA Postpartum Period for Pregnant Women is targeted for the end of spring release timeframe. In this case, the project is working to meet the requirements for deploying in the spring timeframe's major METS release, but has not yet done so. Once it meets those requirements, the cell will be updated to "Firm."
- Recent changes to this slide are shown in red or white with the delta symbol. From left to right:
 - In column 1, MinnesotaCare Eliminate the Family Glitch was added as a new project to the schedule.
 - In column 2, the current phase changed for three projects: Renewals Processing Improvements FFY20 closed, and two projects advanced to the execution phases.
 - In column 4, the delivery of scope for three projects in the 2021 winter release timeframe is now listed as complete.
 - And in columns 5 through 8, the DataMart 1.5 project is now listed as active whereas it was previously expected to be complete. This project is in the process of extending its schedule in order to finalize one table and retrofit all existing tables with historical data.

Slide 17 shows the same rolling deliverable schedule, this time for ongoing and annual work. Again, recent changes to this slide are shown in red or white with the delta symbol. In column 2, the phase of several projects progressed since last month, and in the 2021 winter release timeframe, three efforts successfully delivered their scope as planned.

Slide 18 combines information from both rolling deliverables schedules to show all the efforts that are expecting to deliver scope in the spring 2022 release timeframe. The top of the slide shows projects that will deliver in the METS release on March 13, and the bottom of the slide shows projects with deliverables outside that release.

Slide 19 shows all the efforts that are expecting to deliver scope in the end of spring 2022 Release timeframe. The top of the slide shows three projects that are either firm or targeting to deliver in the METS release on June 12, 2022, and the bottom of the slide shows projects with deliverables outside that release.

Slide 20 is the final slide in this section. The top shows projects that will deliver in the METS summer release on August 7, and the bottom shows projects with deliverables outside that release.

Slide 22 shows each of the active projects on the roadmap along with their red, yellow or green status as reported by the project managers for the week ending Friday, January 21.

The report shows 14 projects; one is in red, four are yellow, and nine are green.

- Red project:
 - DataMart 1.5 is RED due to risk and schedule issues. A change request to re-baseline the schedule, accounting for project delays and a missed requirement for capturing historical data, is under discussion by sponsors. The team is working to identify a resolution date.

- Yellow projects:
 - Infrastructure Improvements - IAM MNsure MFA & Dev Enhancements is Yellow due to delays in finalizing an updated project management plan and scope statement to include counties in the work effort. The team is working to identify a resolution date.
 - Extending MA Postpartum Period for Pregnant Women project is Yellow due to delays in finalizing requirements documentation and meeting other requirements to gain access to the end of spring release it is targeting. Resolution is expected this week.
 - Data Access & Management Reports - FFY2022 project is YELLOW due to time and schedule delays. User Acceptance Testing for three required tax tables is behind due to delays caused by open enrollment, the public health emergency, and COVID-19 reporting activities. Resolution is expected in early March.
 - Effective Dates is yellow due to delays in review and approval of a functional design that's needed to stay on track for delivery in the Summer Release. Resolution is expected this week.

MNsure Update

Presenter: Nate Clark

Nate Clark gave an update on open enrollment. Saturday January 15, MNsure completed its open enrollment for plan year 2022. It was the ninth open enrollment and was the most successful. For 11 weeks, MNsure handled 80,000 phone calls, hosted 1.3 million sessions on MNsure.org, 33,500 views of the assister directory page and 332,000 plan comparison sessions. Maintained phone call support at an average of 7 minutes. Additionally, for sign up activity: private health plan sign-ups: 134,257; public program applicants: 32,445; total accessing health coverage: 166,702; dental plan sign-ups: 29,220; percentage of households receiving tax credits: 58.6%, which is up 10% from last year. Average yearly tax credit by household: \$6,088.74. Record number of health plans, 10% higher.

The APTC project that was completed last year was key to the success seen above, and success of open enrollment. The fact that the credits were there was noticed by Minnesotans, and enrollees in 2021 were eligible to receive an additional \$73 million in savings more than they would have received otherwise. This was only possible through the successful completion

of the APTC project. The benefits continue this year and the sign-ups show the value of the project work.

Open enrollment last 11 weeks, it's a period of concentrated activity, and the success described is based on 10 months of planning is successful only with the support of our staff, assisters, brokers, and all of MNSure's partners at DHS, counties, MNIT and more.

New Business

No new business.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

Greg adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.