Status of the Implementation
of the Child Welfare Component
of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) System

Report to the

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services
and
Fiscal Research Division

By
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

October 1, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Status of the Child welfareComponent of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services Through Technology (NC FAST) System:

SESSION LAW 2016-94 SECTION 12C.1.(c) Child Welfare/NC FAST – The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall continue toward completion of the child welfarecomponent of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services Through Technology (NC FAST) system to (i) bring the State into compliance with the Statewide Information System systematic factor of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and (ii) ensure that data quality meets federal standards and adequate information is collected and available to counties to assist in tracking child ren and outcomes across counties.

It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Child welfarecomponent of the NC FAST system be operational by December 31, 2017. To that end, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall report on the development, implementation, and outcomes of the Child welfare component of the NC FAST system to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services quarterly, beginning October 1, 2016 and ending with a final report on February 1, 2018. The report shall include, at a minimum, each of the following:

(1) The current timeline for development and implementation of the Child welfarecomponent to NC FAST.
(2) Any adjustments and justifications for adjustments to the timeline.
(3) Progress on the development and implementation of the system.
(4) Address any identified issues in developing or implementing the Child welfarecomponent to NC FAST and solutions to address those issues.
(5) The level of county participation and involvement in each phase of the project.
(6) Any budget and expenditure reports, including overall project budget and expenditures and current fiscal year budget and expenditures.

Timeline

1) SECTION 12C.1.(c).1 The current timeline for development and implementation of the child welfarecomponent to NC FAST

Per the language in Section 12C.1.(c), the original goal for implementation of the Child welfarecomponent of NC FAST was that it be operational by December 31, 2017.

SECTION 12C.1.(c).2 Any adjustments and justifications for adjustments to the timeline

The child welfare component, also called Project 4 (P4), will introduce a significant change to the way local departments of social services operate and manage their child welfare programs. Given the limited automation present in support of current child welfare operations, it is vital that county child welfare leaders and staff have the support required to ensure a smooth transition to NC FAST. As explained below, the initial project plan did not account for the business process improvement and extended implementation support staffing cost estimates. It is extremely important to provide business process improvement and extended support for the success of the project.
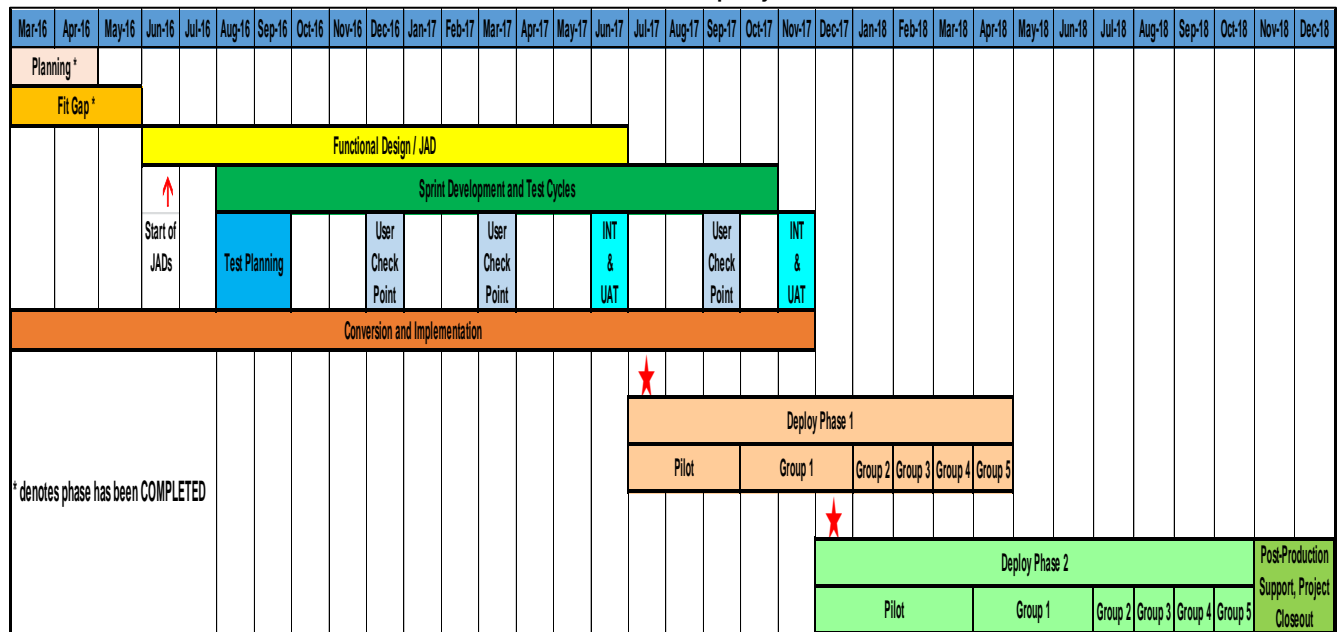
Based on feedback and the results of prior NC FAST deployments, the rollout of a major system requires a carefully planned, phased deployment across all 100 counties in the state. Also, the original schedule date was subject to completion of the Fit/Gap Analysis Phase and the need to address any issues and scope changes that were derived from that phase.

The Fit/Gap phase was completed in June 2016, and a high level Deployment Plan was developed. This expanded P4 Deployment Plan was developed based on input from the Tri-Chairs of the Children Services Committee and has been reviewed with the Executive Advisory Committee and the counties participating in the various phases of the project. The deployment schedule has also been presented to members of the Health and Human Services Legislative Oversight Committee.

Therefore, the child welfare component of NC FAST timeline has been updated:

- Functionality released to pilot counties:
  - July 2017 (Release One)
  - December 2017 (Release Two)
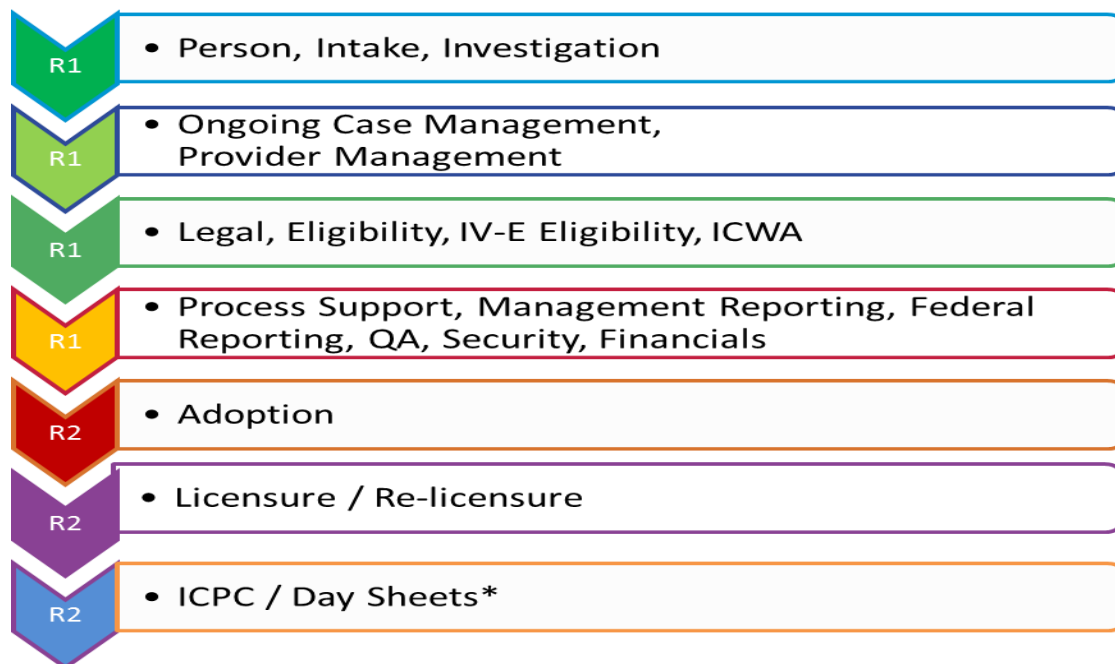- Subsequent Deployments to remaining counties through October 2018.

The chart below shows the revised timeline of the project:

Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18

Planning *

Fit Gap *

Functional Design / JAD

Sprint Development and Test Cycles

Start of JADs

Test Planning

User Check Point

User Check Point

INT & UAT

User Check Point

INT & UAT

Conversion and Implementation

* denotes phase has been COMPLETED

Deploy Phase 1

Pilot

Group 1

Group 2 Group 3 Group 4 Group 5

Deploy Phase 2

Pilot

Group 1

Group 2 Group 3 Group 4 Group 5

Post-Production Support, Project Closeout

3

Implementation Strategy

2) SECTION 12C.1.(c).3 Progress on the development and implementation of the system

The P4 Project implementation will be conducted in phases, with two major releases. Development occurs across four parallel tracks, using an Agile Project Management methodology. The project scope also includes the development and deployment of a mobile solution. Deployment to pilot counties will be conducted prior to the phased roll-out to remaining counties. The planned high-level functionalities are listed below:

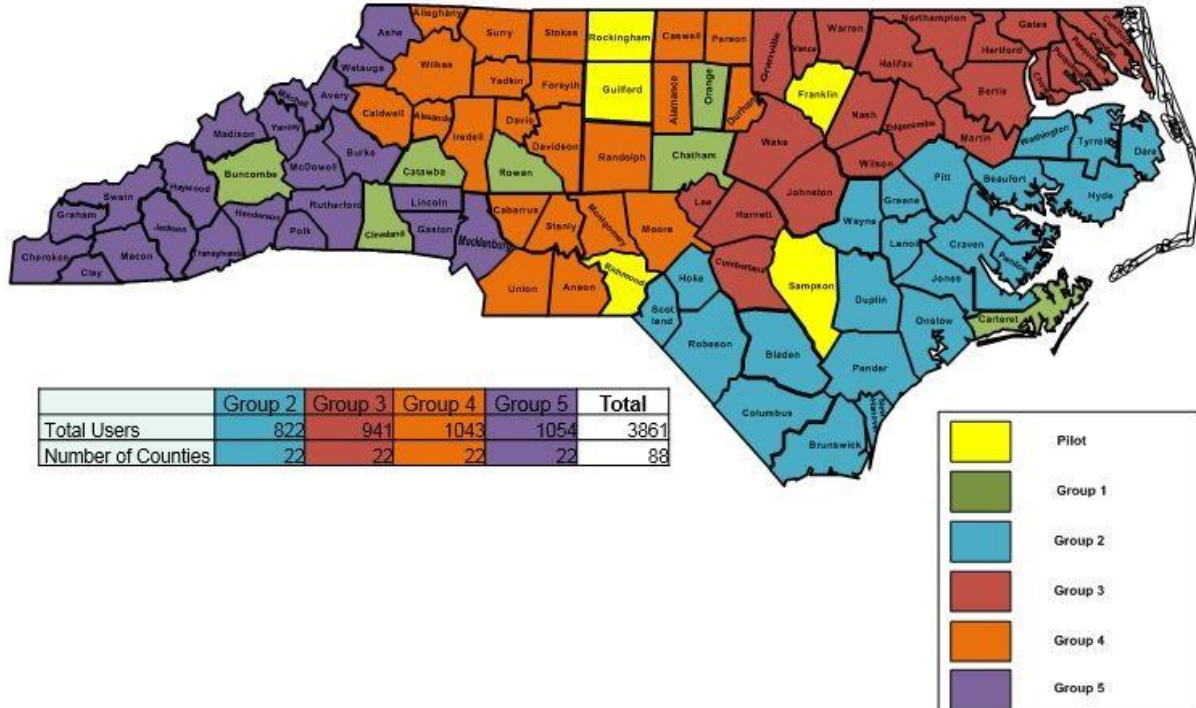| R1 | • Person, Intake, Investigation |
R1	• Ongoing Case Management, Provider Management
R1	• Legal, Eligibility, IV-E Eligibility, ICWA
R1	• Process Support, Management Reporting, Federal Reporting, QA, Security, Financials
R2	• Adoption
R2	• Licensure / Re-licensure
R2	• ICPC / Day Sheets*

R1 – Release 1; R2 – Release 2

Current Status and Planned activities

The P4 child welfare project team has completed the Fit/Gap Phase of the project and moved into design and development. The team is using an Agile Project Management methodology to ensure early county and state stakeholder involvement, adherence to the end users' requirements, and to contain schedule, cost, and scope risks. Our counties and state stakeholders are engaged throughout the design and development of each functionality release and completing User Acceptance Testing (UAT) testing before a release is approved. The status highlights are listed below:

- Functional design, development, and testing activities are in progress.

- Joint application design (JAD) sessions include demonstrations of the software to county and state participants as features are completed.
- Executive Advisory Sub-committees that include county, state, and project staff have been formed to cover specific areas of system functionality or project focus. These include Simplification, Mobile Device Management, Data Governance, Data Conversion, and Security.
- Collaboration with project vendors on new mobile applications for Case Workers and Investigators is underway.
- Recruiting and onboarding of project team resources is continuing for Software Developers, Business Analysts, Business SMEs, and Testers.
- Data conversion strategy work is ongoing.
- Initiated monthly status meetings with State DSS and the Tri-chairs of the Child ren Services committee.
- Identified pilot counties and developed options for deployment to subsequent groups of counties.
- Communication and training planning is in progress; initiating work on project collaboration site, project email address, and participation in the upcoming regional meetings of the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS).
- Participation in the Social Services Institute annual conference.

Deployment Plan

	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Total
Total Users	822	941	1043	1054	3861
Number of Counties	22	22	22	22	88

Legend:
- Yellow — Pilot
- Green — Group 1
- Blue — Group 2
- Red — Group 3
- Orange — Group 4
- Purple — Group 5

*Note: The counties that will implement in Deployment groups 2 through 5 are to be finalized.

Risks

3) **SECTION 12C.1.(c).4 Address any identified issues in developing or implementing the child welfare component to NC FAST and solutions to address those issues.**

The project team maintains a formal "Risk Register" of risks and issues affecting the project and reviews those details along with mitigation plans on an ongoing basis. The key risks are noted below.

The approach will be to focus on "Out of the Box" functionality and minimize customizations while trying to achieve a balance between supporting NC specific requirements and minimizing the long term project cost. We will also focus on providing high value functionalities first and minimizing disruption to county operations.

Risk I: Implementation of NC FAST P4 will have a significant impact on county processes and the way county child welfare social workers and supervisors document their cases and manage their work. This is a significant risk based on the lessons learned from previous NC FAST implementations. Mitigation steps include having a dedicated team to work with counties to do the following:

- Explore opportunities to expose child welfare staff to NC FAST ahead of P4 go-live (e.g., provide child welfare staff with read-only access to NC FAST)
- Encourage staff to become proficient with keyboarding/basic computer skills prior to of NC FAST go-live (if they are primarily reliant on hand-written notes today)
- Assess impact of transition to new to-be process flow
- Review job classifications and standardize pay ranges and hiring profiles
- Establish staffing model to identify staffing gaps ahead of go-live
- Ensure maximum staff availability around key deployment milestone dates

Risk II: Currently, child welfare processes and procedures vary from county to county. Counties may struggle adapting to the new system unless child welfare processes have been standardized. The Division of Social Services has the resource capacity to support counties on the implementation of policy as recommended by the North Carolina Statewide Child Protective Services Evaluation (March 1, 2016). Mitigation steps include:

- A standardization workgroup has been established with county representation to review and standardize the forms, notices, and requirements.
- All the workgroup activities have been advocated through the child welfare committee.
- A decision is to be made regarding use of the Outcome Management Structured Decision Making add-on.

Risk III: Inadequate supply of technical resources with the required specialized skills may impact the project schedule. NC FAST is proactively identifying other options to mitigate this risk. Mitigation steps include the following initiatives:

- Hire resources with pre-requisite skills and experience in advance, and provide training.
- A Training Plan has been developed to train the current and new resources with pre-requisite qualification.
- Cross training within the team.
- Re-allocation of expert resources from other NC FAST projects.
- Investigate options for recruiting interns and recent NC university graduates.

County Participation and Involvement

4) **SECTION 12C.1.(c).5 The level of county participation and involvement in each phase of the project.**
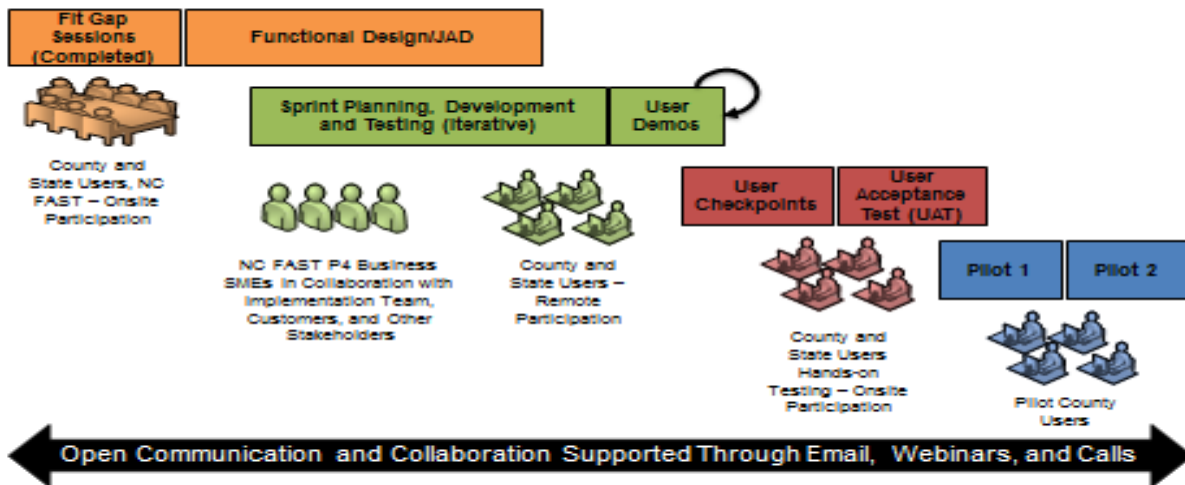
To promote a timely and smooth implementation of NC FAST Project 4, county workers have been involved in planning and readiness preparation from the beginning of the project development lifecycle. This collaborative, transparent approach with county involvement in processes and procedures is based on the Agile Project Management process used commonly in the development of complex information technology systems.

The Agile development approach engages with county stakeholders very early in the requirements confirmation and system design activities. The software is developed incrementally, so that functionality is demonstrated to the county representatives as the system is being built; their feedback helps to shape the design of the system as development and builds continue.

Counties that have actively participated in requirements analysis and design activities include Buncombe, Carteret, Catawba, Chatham, Cleveland, Richmond, Rowan, and Orange. Additionally, the five pilot counties (Franklin, Guilford, Richmond, Rockingham, and Sampson) will be engaged in formal hands-on checkpoint activities that will review system design and development results approximately every three months. This transparent, collaborative approach ensures that the system will provide the software tools that county DSS staff need to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. County and state DSS participation throughout the life cycle of the project is illustrated below:

County/State DSS Participation

Fit Gap Sessions (Completed)

Functional Design/JAD

County and State Users, NC FAST — Onsite Participation

Sprint Planning, Development and Testing (Iterative)

User Demos

NC FAST P4 Business SMEs In Collaboration with Implementation Team, Customers, and Other Stakeholders

County and State Users — Remote Participation

User Checkpoints

User Acceptance Test (UAT)

County and State Users Hands-on Testing — Onsite Participation

Pilot 1

Pilot 2

Pilot County Users

Open Communication and Collaboration Supported Through Email, Webinars, and Calls

Notes:
1. Number of user checkpoints may vary based on the detailed sprint planning; current plan calls for two checkpoints in Release 1 and one checkpoint in Release 2
2. One UAT for Release 1 and one UAT for Release 2
3. Pilot Counties to be identified soon

The user demonstrations, checkpoints, and user acceptance testing help the county and state users to have early exposure and hands-on experience with the new NC FAST child welfare system.

Feedback from county participants in Agile activities to date has been positive:

- Over 90% of participants said that the design sessions were good, very good, or excellent.

- 100% of participants said that their contributions were properly recognized.

- Over 95% of participants said that documentation they received was at the appropriate level of detail.

The NC FAST communication approach encourages open, two-way communication. To support this process, the NC FAST County Readiness team includes County Readiness Liaisons who will work together with County Champions and Pilot User Group members to do the following:

- Provide consistent and accurate information to targeted audiences at the proper times through engaging communication materials/resources.

- Employ multiple communication channels (e.g., newsletters, blogs, presentations, webinars, on-site visits) to share information in a timely manner with project stakeholders.

- Foster the establishment of realistic expectations about the system and related county DSS process changes.

- Define specific approaches to inform target audiences of NC FAST project scope, job/process impacts, and implementation activities and timing.

- Prepare local DSS staff for the impact the new system will have on their jobs, and equip them with the required knowledge, skills, and abilities they will need to effectively use the new system.

- Involve DHHS leadership and local DSS leadership and staff in preparation for the NC FAST implementation and related business processes impacts.

- Coordinate with Public Information Office (PIO) resources assigned to the NC FAST project to craft communications at the state and county level.

Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees under the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) have been established that meet at least monthly to address specific topics. These sub-committees are composed of county, state, and NC FAST project team members to ensure all stakeholder viewpoints are considered. Listed below are the specific committees and their objectives:

- P4 Conversion – To define a strategy to prepare for the migration of active cases into NC FAST.

- Document Management – To provide an overall framework for the security of and access to documents in NC FAST.

- Simplification – To develop a consistent and standardized method of operating across counties.

- Mobile Device Management (MDM) – To establish a statewide mobile policy, confirming mobile hardware and software standards, and providing counties with guidance about the future of NC FAST mobile computing.

- Security – To define the user security roles required to support child welfare operations in small, medium, and large counties.

- Data Governance – To establish who will share data across programs.

County Readiness Activities

- Introductory Meeting with County Leadership: Key members of the Implementation team will meet with county leadership to discuss general county readiness activities, roles, and timelines.

- County Workshops: Approximately one month after the Introductory Meeting, members of the County Readiness team will conduct a 1-2 day workshop with county DSS leaders.

- Town Hall Meetings: A series of local and regional meetings where Project 4 status and concepts will be discussed with county staff and leaders.

- Leadership Summit and Social Services Institute: A series of presentations delivered by project team members at key statewide conferences, providing an update on current project status.

- Webinars: As system functions become available, members of the County Readiness team will continue to make webinars available to county staff and receive feedback.

- Identify NC FAST users: The County Readiness team will work with DHHS and county DSS leadership to confirm NC FAST users for each system release.

For a list of county roles that interact with the project, refer to Appendix A.

To see survey results obtained from county participants in on-site joint application design (JAD) sessions, refer to Appendix B.

Budget and Expenditures

5) SECTION 12C.1.(c).5 Any budget and expenditure reports, including overall project budget and expenditures, and current fiscal year budget and expenditures. Overall Budget and Expenditures:

Current Fiscal Year (SFY 17) Budget and Expenditures:

Category	Overall Approved Budget	Actual Expenditures as of July 2016	Approved Budget - SFY 17	Actual Expenditures - SFY 17
Total	$70,080,650.72	$5,197,906.92	$52,079,912.16	$825,467.84

Notes:
1. The above approved budget is based on the initial project timeline of October 2017. The revised budget based on the revised timeline has been submitted to federal partners for approval.
2. Expenditures as of July 2016 do not reflect the ramp up of staffing that began in May 2016 due to the timing of contractor invoice payments.
3. The budget may be impacted by the hiring of contractor resources in place of state resources, because of delays in the state recruitment process.
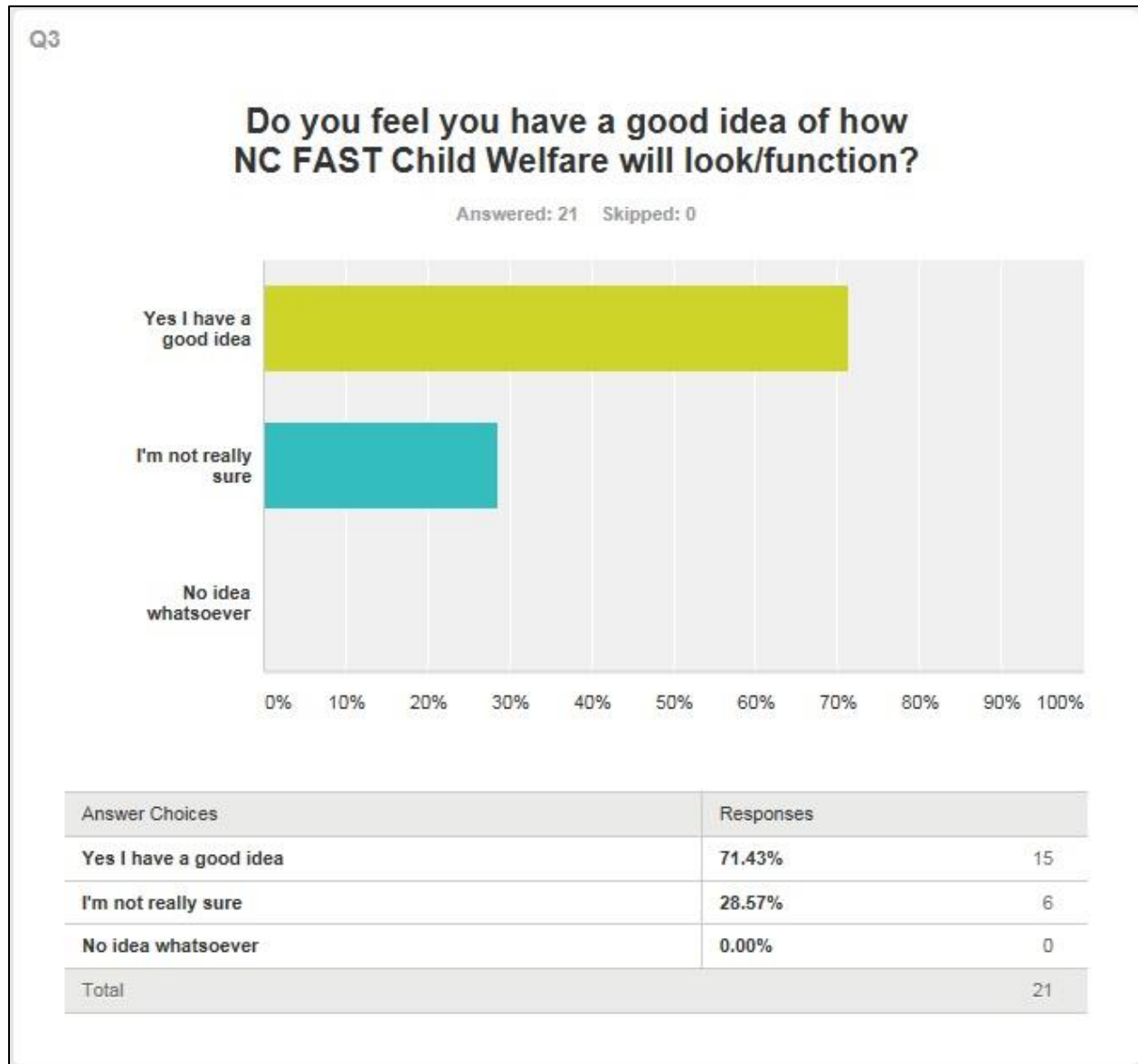
APPENDIX A

NC FAST Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
Project Leadership	DHHS, IBM, Accenture, County Directors	These team members include: • Members of the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) • Members of the Executive Advisory Subcommittee (EAS) • NC FAST Project Management Office (PMO)	• Responsible for managing required aspects of the Implementation • Continually gather status and monitor progress related to Implementation activities • Manage issue resolution
Implementation Team Leadership	DHHS, Accenture	• Monitor and coordinate overall implementation readiness activities within each county across all system releases • Provide assistance in completing readiness assessments and county go-live procedures • Provide leadership and assistance to the County Champions and County Readiness Liaisons as necessary	• Plan and guide the overall Project 4 implementation in each county • Develop and maintain the implementation strategy and associated work products (i.e., County Readiness Presentations, County Readiness Assessment Checklist and Tracking Log) • Manage the implementation activities across Architecture & Infrastructure, Application Development, Training, Business, and Conversion teams • Confirm integration and synchronization across the project teams • Coordinate the resources supporting the deployment of NC FAST at each county DSS office • Monitor the completion of activities across the counties • Track issues and resolutions
County Readiness Liaisons	DHHS, Accenture	• NC FAST County Readiness team members will be assigned one or more counties from each of the implementation phases • They will guide these counties through the readiness process and promote a successful NC FAST implementation in each of their assigned counties	• Serve as primary point of contact for County Champions in each county during deployment and funnel status, questions, and issues to the project team • Review NC FAST deployment communications and be familiar with deployment schedules • Deliver presentations and system demonstrations to county staff • Encourage participation in NC FAST activities by all levels of county staff and leadership • Work cooperatively with the NC FAST Conversion team to resolve issues as they arise • Assume responsibility for an overall successful activation/installation of NC FAST for assigned counties

Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
County Champions	County DSS Office	• A County Champion will be identified from each county by the County Director, as a key point of contact with the NC FAST team • County Champions are a critical component to the success of NC FAST; the County Readiness team will work with each County Director to confirm County Champions identified have the necessary skills to fulfill the role	• Serve as a primary point of contact with NC FAST project team; performs oversight of county specific installation and implementation readiness tasks, participants in issue resolution and coordinates with other appropriate county resources to complete tasks • Deliver Implementation communications to the appropriate county staff (prior to, during, and after go-live) • Escalate appropriate Implementation risks/issues to County Readiness Liaisons and/or Project County Readiness team • Participate in creating and monitoring assigned county's Implementation Readiness Checklist • Identify and address gaps resulting from the Implementation Readiness Checklist • Participate and complete NC FAST training • Assist in identifying training facilities and validating the availability of facilities and equipment • Support, monitor, manage, and enforce the NC FAST training requirements in the county • Help coordinate and provide on-site support for end users during NC FAST deployment • Coordinate county activities identified as a result of Readiness Workshops • Be a champion of the NC FAST project and support change within the county
County Technical Champion	County Government	• Coordinates with County Champion and County Director to confirm that county DSS hardware, network, and software are ready for NC FAST deployment to the county	• Serve as technical point of contact to the NC FAST Implementation team; performs oversight of county technical readiness tasks, participates in issue resolution and coordinates with other appropriate county resources to complete tasks • Escalate appropriate technical readiness risks/issues to County Champion and County Readiness Liaison • Identify and address gaps resulting from the Implementation Readiness Checklist review meetings • Be a champion of the NC FAST project and support change within the county

| Role	Team	Description	Responsibilities
NC FAST Help Desk	O&M - Help Desk	• Primary Help Desk to support pilot and phased roll-outs of NC FAST • Will have a dedicated team of NC FAST Help Desk agents for Project 4	• Provide ongoing technical support, troubleshooting steps, fixes, and enhancements as needed for the county users • Participate in NC FAST testing activities, as appropriate • Investigate and resolve issues within the NC FAST application as they are identified • Escalate issues as needed to Level 3 Help Desk for support and resolution • Escalate appropriate issues to Project Management
Pilot User Group	N/A	• A group of five counties who provide input to the NC FAST project team on a variety of items based on their experience with the new system	• Prioritize defects and system enhancements • Review and comment on project approaches • Serve as a communication conduit to the counties (both disseminating information and soliciting input from non-pilot counties) where appropriate

Appendix B – County/State DSS Survey Results from County Participants in On-Site JAD sessions

Q3

Do you feel you have a good idea of how NC FAST Child Welfare will look/function?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes I have a good idea	71.43%	15
I'm not really sure	28.57%	6
No idea whatsoever	0.00%	0
Total		21

Q4

Did we capture and appropriately represent your processes and/or job functions?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0
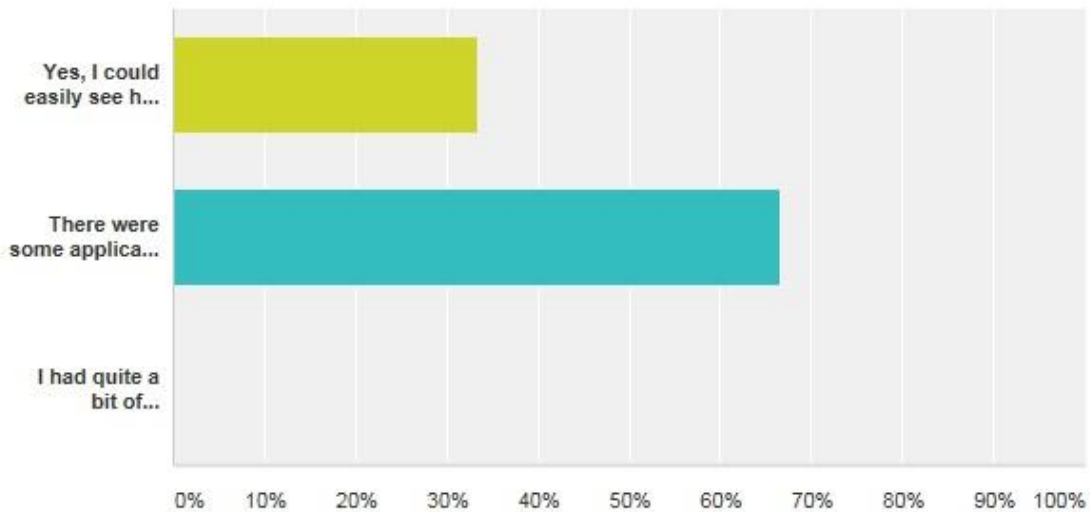
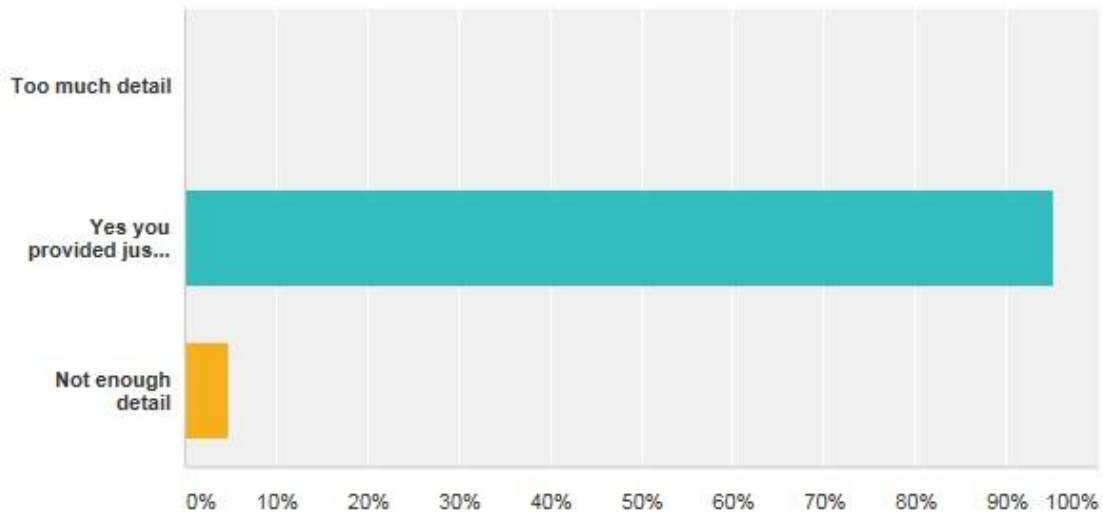| Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, I could easily see how I can do my job with NC FAST	33.33%	7
There were some applicable sections, but not quite everything	66.67%	14
I had quite a bit of difficulty seeing how this applies to my job	0.00%	0
Total		21

Did we provide the appropriate level of detail in the documentation for you (Epic docs and Minutes)?
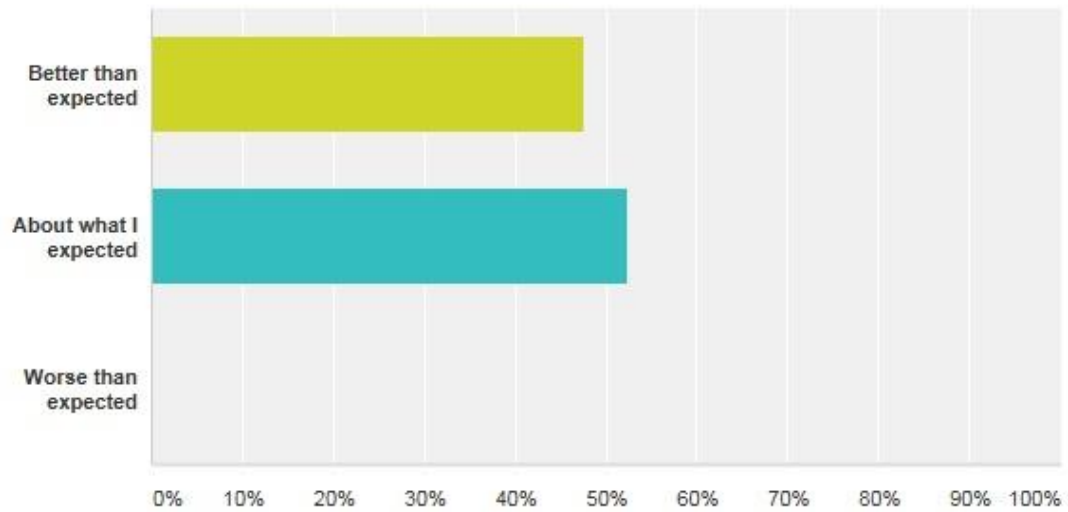
Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Too much detail	0.00%	0
Yes you provided just the right amount	95.24%	20
Not enough detail	4.76%	1
Total		21

*Epic documents are the functional design documents.

How well did the JAD Session meet your expectations? Was it...?
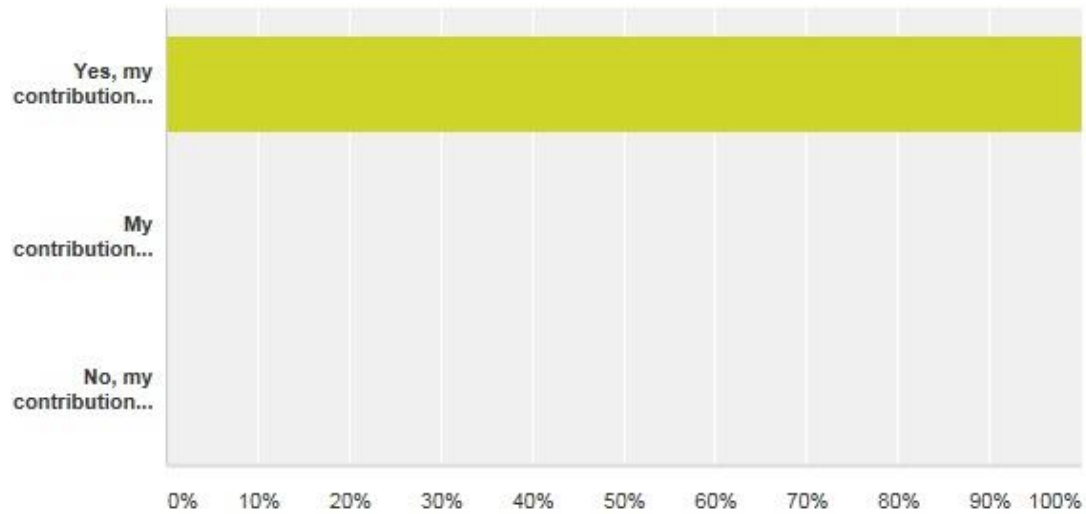
Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Better than expected	47.62%	10
About what I expected	52.38%	11
Worse than expected	0.00%	0
Total		21

Do you feel your contributions were properly recognized?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

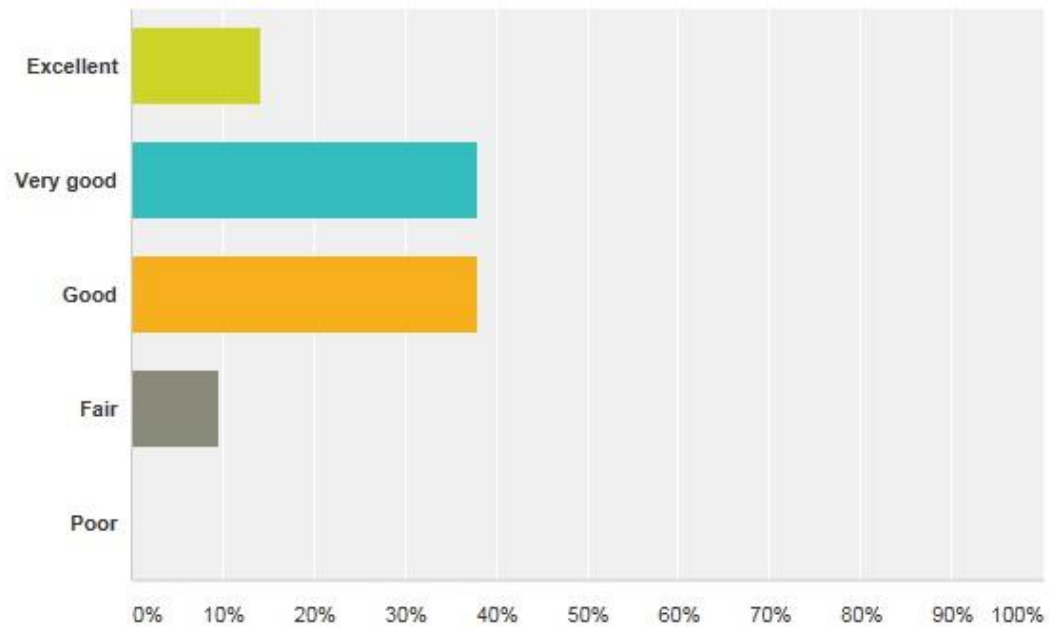| Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, my contributions were properly recognized	100.00%	21
My contributions were recognized, but not as much as I would have expected	0.00%	0
No, my contributions were not recognized	0.00%	0
Total		21

Overall, how would you rate the JAD Session?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	14.29%	3
Very good	38.10%	8
Good	38.10%	8
Fair	9.52%	2
Poor	0.00%	0
Total	21	