

Maximizing existing resources

Strategies for efficiency

Cami Jones, August 15, 2025



Center for Government
Innovation



WCMA
Washington City/County
Management Association
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Today's roadmap

01

Why we're all
maxed-out

02

Where time
gets lost

03

Fix what you
touch most

04

Make change
stick



What you're up against

- Rising service expectations
- Staff turnover, limited knowledge transfer
- Siloed systems with aging tools
- Chasing information, instead of delivering value

The resource squeeze is real, start small, start where it hurts most



**Why we're all
maxed-out**



Reframe “do more with less”

- Not about pushing harder
- Focus on what matters most
 - Using people, tools & time intentionally
- Loss isn't from laziness or resistance
 - Steps that don't add value

This shift isn't just for staff; it is for leaders too.

Reframe into:

- *Fewer Steps, Better Results*
- *Smarter work, Stronger Outcomes*

**Loss isn't from
laziness**



It's not a people problem

Even high-performing teams feel the weight when systems break down

- Excessive approvals
- Unclear ownership
- Rework from bad forms
- Delays due to lack of visibility

These are system issues, not people issues

Fixing even one part removes barriers and unlocks better performance

This isn't a people problem, it's a system problem

Fix the system



Where the friction shows up

No major collapse, just thousands of tiny friction points

- Workarounds that became permanent
- Bottlenecks nobody owns
- Duplicate steps
- Waiting on status or information

These moments add up fast across teams

Most live in your most-touched processes



Where time gets lost



Quick check-in

Raise your hand if you've:

- Re-sent a “checking on the status” email...more than once
- Fixed something yourself to avoid delay
- Waited too long for a simple task
- Watched a task bounce between people

Good news, visible problems are fixable problems. You don't need a full system overhaul, just start close to the work



Slowdowns are wearing you down

Not all friction is the same, some matters more

- Link frustration to impact
- Fixing one high-impact process can ripple outward
- Streamlining isn't just convenience, its impact

Start where pain and purpose intersect.



**Fix what you
touch most**



Zoom out: Connect improvement to what matters most

Identify one priority goal for your city or county –write it down now

- Could be housing, infrastructure, safety, or something else
- Choose something real that your team is trying to move forward

Now what is slowing it down?



The Process behind your priority

- Where does this process live?
- Where does it stall?
- Who touches it, is it too much?

Slowdowns tend to cluster in a few key places.

Now let's go deeper.



Where does it get stuck



Make the process visible

Uncover what's *actually* happening, not just what you *think* is happening.

- Reveal delays
- Unclear handoffs
- Rework
- Mismatches in roles

Why → So your fix gets to the root of the problem, not the symptoms

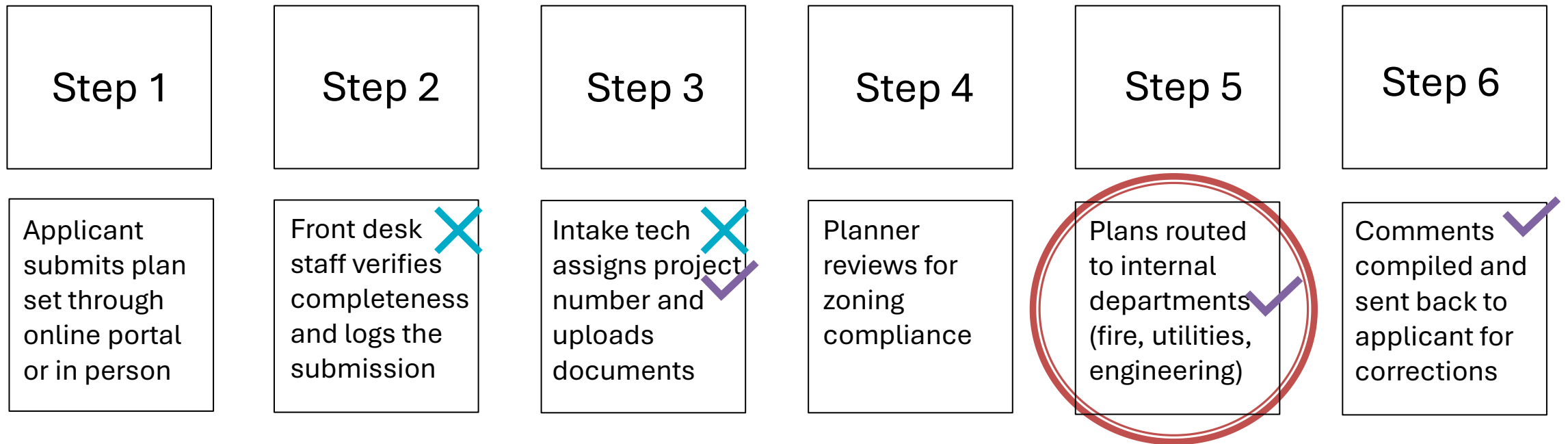
Let's look at an example.



Map it to see it



Example: *Plan Intake and Routing Process*



Now it's your turn to map.



Activity

Sketch the process you identified

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6



How do we make a smart change that sticks?



Map to momentum: Test one fix

- Don't fix the whole process
- Start where the pain is sharpest
- Try one small change
- Make it safe to test, easy to see

You'll try this for yourself in a minute, using PDCA.

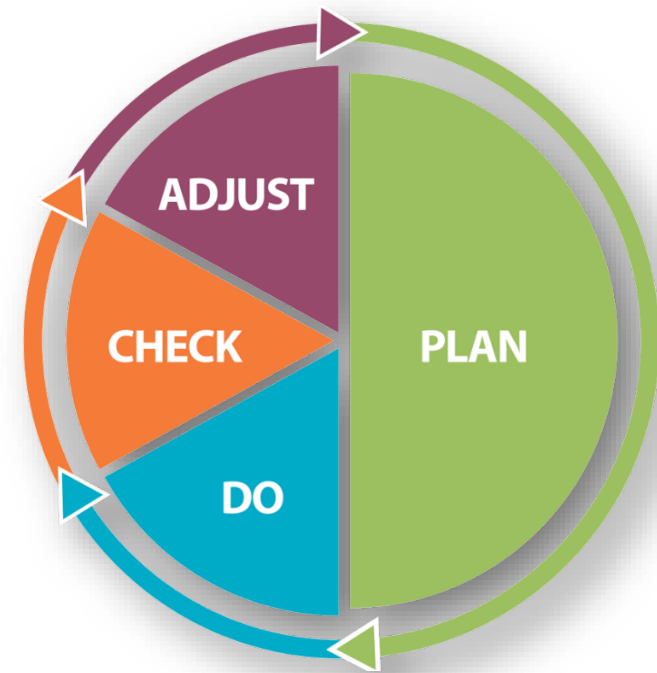


Making change stick



A simple tool to test + improve fast

- **Plan:** Define the problem
- **Do:** Try a small fix
- **Check:** Did it help?
- **Adjust:** What's next?



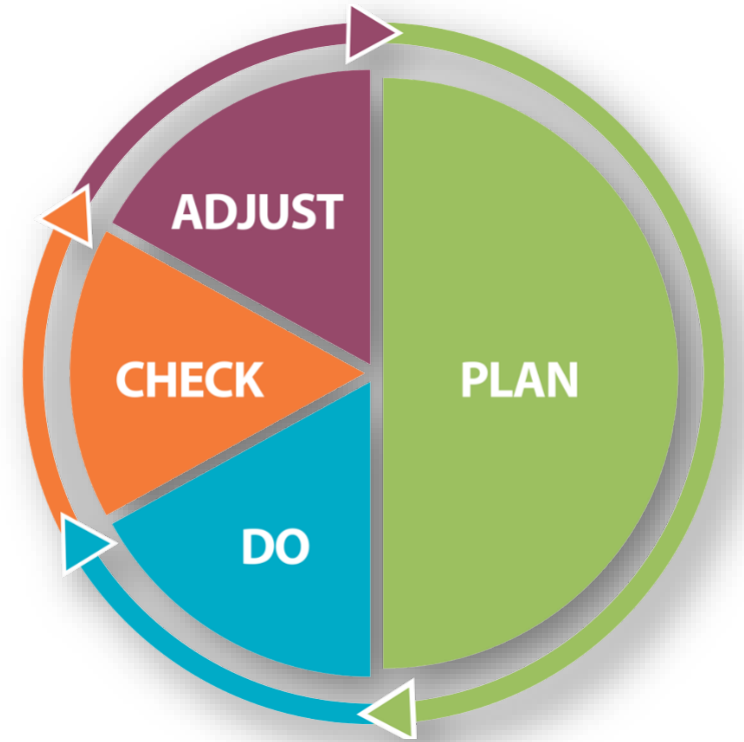
PDCA

How does this turn into real change?



Activity: PDCA

- **Plan** – What's one fix I want to try?
- **Do** – What's the first step I'll take to test it?
- **Check** – How will I know if it helped?
- **Adjust** – If it didn't help, what's one thing I'll tweak?



Tip: Start small. One form field, one step in the process, one department.



So how do we keep this going?



Don't forget to talk about it!

- Visibility builds momentum and trust
- Small wins spark more ideas and confidence
- Celebrate what worked, even if it's small
- Say it out loud: *"This got better, here's why"*

Habits form when improvement becomes the norm



**Share your fix,
to make it stick**



Build The Habit

One-time fixes are good, habits are better.

It starts with you:

- Celebrate small wins
- Say what changed
- Normalize success
- Make it stick

Ready to make this real?



**Let's bring it
together**



Try something this month:

- ✓ Small
- ✓ Testable
- ✓ Visible
- ✓ Shareable

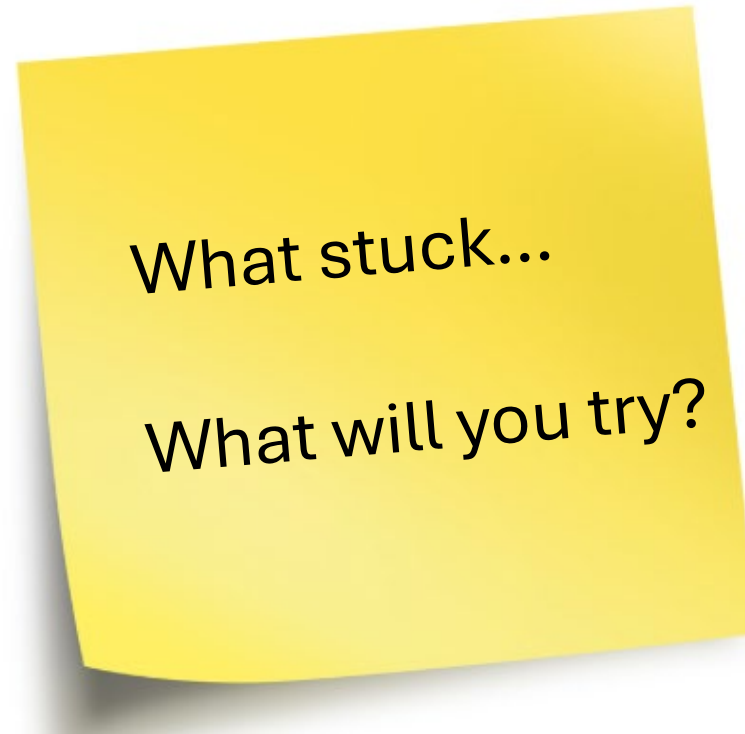
Test and Learn, Fix and Repeat



One goal → One
process → One fix



Share?



Any questions or ideas you want to talk through?



Questions?



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