FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND CORE FUNCTION SELECTION

A functional analysis provides a high level (coarse) representation of critical functions for each of the major work areas in the organization. These functions are the ones that ensure timely, high quality, least cost services or good are provided. By understanding the core functions, you can begin to decide how to improve an organization through redesign.

Here are the major steps in a functional analysis:

- **List Current Major Work Units:** Make a list of all major areas of work in your organization. This can be from an organizational chart or some other form of organizational documentation showing responsibilities and reporting relationships.

- **Brainstorm Functions Performed in Each Unit**: For each major area, brainstorm ALL of the basic duties, processes, or services provided. Don't worry about how detailed they should be, just brainstorm.

- **Select Critical or Core Functions that Lead to Timely, High Quality, Least Cost Outputs (goods or services):** Now that you have a list of functions in each area, analyze each function through three (or more) criteria: which ones help ensure that you will provide timely, high quality, and least cost services (or goods)? If you picture a large funnel with a filter at the bottom, which functions would make it through to the other end?

- **Explore How Critical Core Functions Connect or Interrelate to Each Other:** How does one core function impact the other? Using this as a guiding question, draw arrows from one to another. Is there a pattern? Does this tell you something about how functions flow through the organization?

- **Discover How and Where Core Functions Can Be Improved:** Now that you have a rough idea of how the organization is composed, you can ask: what kinds of improvements would help make our services even better than they are today? You can list these improvement by work area, function or for the whole organization. One very helpful way to do this is that gather a group of customers or people who work with your organization (constituents) and ask them to give you suggestions for improvements. Once this is done, you can begin redesigning your organization or improving your processes one by one.