

"Current State vs. Future State" Mapping Exercise

Purpose:

To help your department identify where they are today (current state), where they want to be (future state), and what gaps need to be addressed to get there.

Time Required: 60–90 minutes

Format: In-person or virtual team workshop

Materials: Whiteboard or flip chart (or virtual whiteboard), sticky notes, markers, or shared document if virtual

Step 1: Define Focus Areas (10 min)

Choose 3–5 key dimensions of your department to assess. For example:

- Service Delivery
- Internal Processes
- Structure & Staffing
- Communication & Collaboration
- Stakeholder Satisfaction
- Technology/Tools

Write each on a large sheet or board column.

Step 2: Current State Reflection (15–20 min)

Ask team members to answer:

“What is our current reality in this area?”

Have them write responses on sticky notes or add to a digital board under each category.

Prompts:

- What’s working well? What are the challenges or pain points? What’s inconsistent or outdated? Where are we falling short?

Step 3: Future State Visioning (15–20 min)

Ask:

“What do we want this area to look like in the future?”

Encourage blue-sky thinking but keep it relevant and actionable.

Prompts:

- What would ‘great’ look like here? How would service or experience be improved? What capabilities or outcomes would we have?

Step 4: Gap Analysis (15–20 min)

Compare current and future states. Ask:

“What’s missing or needs to change to get from here to there?”

For each focus area, identify:

- Identify gaps in skills, processes, resources, or structure.
- Note any potential quick wins and long-term improvement goals.
- Organize Future State inputs into categories or themes (e.g., analytics, finance, customer experience) to help surface patterns.
- Use MS Excel or another collaboration tool to visually group related ideas.
- Watch for repeating patterns, these will reveal your core focus areas/themes.

Document key insights and themes throughout. Example: [LINK](#)

Step 5: Prioritization & Next Steps (10–15 min)

As a group, identify:

- Top 2–3 areas with the biggest impact if improved
- What can/should be addressed immediately vs. long-term
- Any barriers (authority, budget, bandwidth)

Optional tool: Use an **Impact vs. Effort Matrix** to prioritize actions.

Outcome:

You’ll leave the session with:

- A shared understanding of where the department is today
- A clear picture of the desired future state
- Concrete areas for focus and improvement
- A starting point for goal-setting, planning, or resourcing discussions