

Worker Mentor Manual: Enhancement Requests

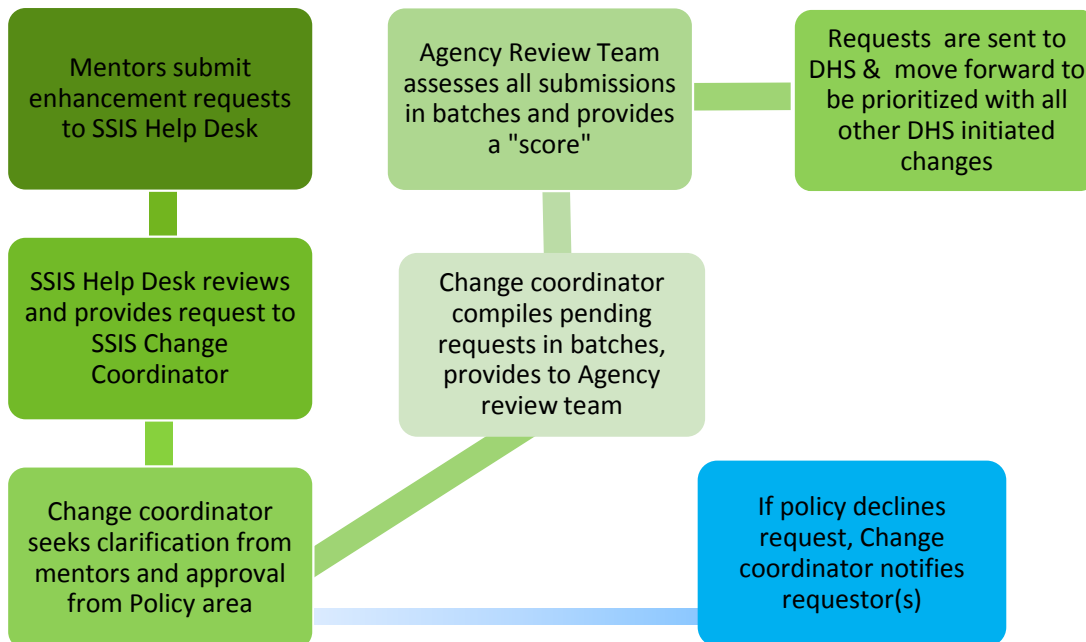
Mentors are in a unique position to be able to request modifications to SSIS. The method for this is the Enhancement request process. Mentors document a change to improve functionality that they believe would benefit the users.

Enhancement Request Process

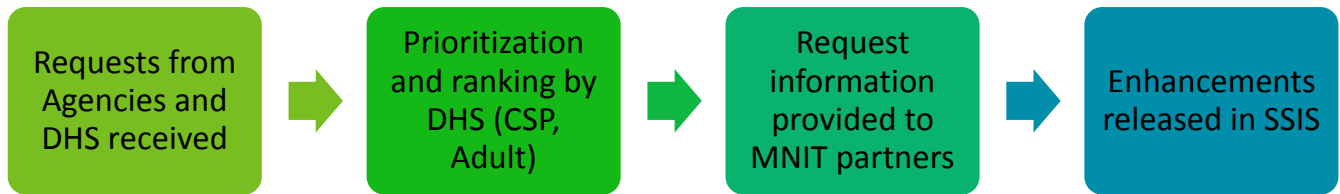
Enhancements are submitted to the SSIS Help Desk and forwarded to the Change coordinator. The Change coordinator may contact the requestor for additional information and clarification of the request. Then the request is approved or denied by the policy area or, for general enhancements, by the SSIS Business Operations unit.

All external requests are reviewed in quarterly batches by an Agency Review team. The External Review Team consists of nine county and tribal agency representatives from across the state who assess each enhancement from a statewide perspective. Requests are prioritized into a high, medium, or low category. Requests are moved forward with other DHS initiated changes for consideration. The internal DHS processes for review of enhancement requests is extensive. Strong candidates rise to the top and are prioritized higher in the Design queue. The priority ratings are low, medium, high, and essential (legally mandated). Requests can be deferred or withdrawn from consideration within the prioritization process. The Change Coordinator works to notify local agencies of the priority status of their request.

Enhancement Request process for Agencies Flowchart



Overall Agency Enhancement Request Process flowchart



FAQs

Who can make an enhancement request?

SSIS Mentors and SSIS Coordinators from local social service agencies can submit enhancement requests.

What should be included in an Enhancement request?

1. The specific purpose or outcome of the enhancement request - sometimes referred to as the "business need"
2. Impact of the change, such as increased efficiency for workers, oversight, or fiscal impact
3. Any other relevant information

How frequently does the Agency review Team review enhancements?

The Agency review team reviews enhancement changes on a quarterly basis.

What does the Agency Review team considering when reviewing enhancement requests?

The team considers the overall impact and importance of each request, including but not limited to:

- The specific business purpose it fulfills
- Current "workarounds" (EX: exist and are acceptable, or no workaround exists)
- How large of an impact will this have (EX: will impact some users, but not most)
- Potential fiscal impacts (current or future)
- Complexity of request

What does the DHS internal team consider when reviewing enhancement requests?

- Requirement (EX: is this a state or federal requirement)
- Impact on users across the state (EX: will impact all/most fiscal workers and increase efficiency)

- Other programmatic considerations (EX: there are large federal changes that are currently on a timeline to be implemented that must take priority)
- Complexity of request (EX: impacts only an existing report, additional of 1 item to the filer)
- Size and complexity of the solution for MNIT staff (EX: a highly wanted item from agencies that is easy for developers to complete)
- Needs across program areas (ex: Adult protection, Child Welfare, and other areas)

What happens once an enhancement is accepted?

Once an enhancement request is accepted, it is communicated to our MNIT partners, who then complete system design work and solutioning, in coordination with business partners. Application development occurs and finally the work is tested by Quality Assurance before being approved for a release. Our MNIT partners work on items based on the prioritization of requests.

If I submitted an enhancement request, when will it be included?

It depends. Timeframes are determined by several issues, including priority for the business area, impact on end users, federal and state requirements, and complexity. All enhancement requests are prioritized against each other. For example, Adult protection state legislative changes, agency enhancement for a new report, and a child welfare federal policy change are all weighed against each other to determine what will be completed. Some requests that are high impact might be simple or “quick wins”. Items that are “high priority” are worked on first, creating a longer wait for lower priority requests. When items requested by agencies are included in a release, the requesting agency is notified either by the Change coordinator or through the Release Notes.

Why might an enhancement request not be accepted?

Not all enhancement requests are accepted. The reasons include:

- The system is functioning as designed, the enhancement functionality already exists
- The enhancement is not possible due to technical functionality limitations
- Insufficient information in the request and attempts at clarification were unsuccessful.
- State program/policy does not support the enhancement request
- The request only benefits one agency
- What is reported is actually a “bug” in the system, this is treated as a bug and “fast-tracked” to be corrected
- Capacity limitations. All work to be completed by SSIS is based on the large priorities weighed against what MNIT Services can do. MNIT provides development services for SSIS, MAXIS, MMIS, MEC2, Licensing, Department of Health, PRISM, and other systems. These program areas carry necessary requirements and enhancement requests as well.

How many enhancement requests are received by the Help Desk?

The Help Desk receives about 2-5 enhancement requests from agencies each week

What types of enhancements come from the State of Minnesota/DHS?

Enhancement and changes from State of Minnesota/DHS are primarily related to new and changing requirements. Federal and state statutory requirements and policy changes are prioritized and must be completed according to specific requirements and timeframes (EX: the Family First Preservation Services Act is a high priority with a federally determined timeframe to be completed). Other requests are typically related to improved functionality for workers in agencies or best practices.

What if I want to know about the status of an enhancement request?

Contact the help Desk. They will forward your inquiry to the Change Coordinator.

Enhancement or Change?

Both words are used and can be thought of, largely as synonymous. At DHS, we think of them as being slightly different; “enhancements” are small changes that edit something currently in SSIS-grid options, a report, and so on. “Changes” are something new – a new report, a new option for an action, a new user role. You may hear both and use either.