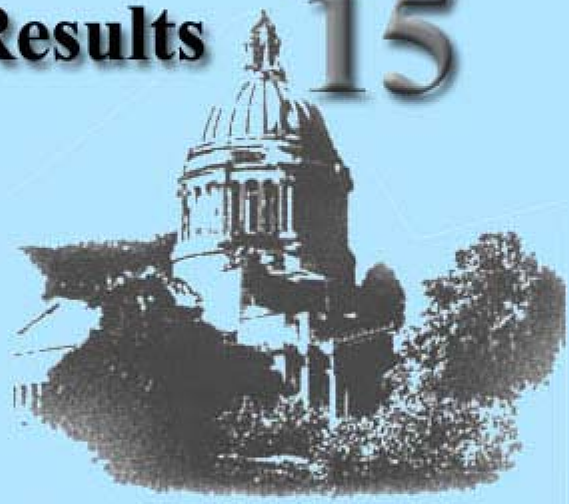
Governing For Results 15



An updated progress report on how state agencies are improving the quality, service and efficiency of state government.

July 2001

Welcome to the 15th Edition of Governing for Results

Governor Gary Locke

"Taxpayers have demanded a more efficient state government and we have listened and are working hard to gain the public's trust.

Collectively our efforts show the commitment we as state workers are making to improve our government. We are learning from the past and reshaping how we do business in the future.

Thanks to all the teams throughout the state for the great work on our quality efforts. I'm so proud of our achievements."

Gary Locke

This 15th Edition of *Governing for Results* highlights quality improvement projects throughout Washington State government. The projects reported here have already produced tangible results, including new revenue generation, resources and dollars saved, and streamlined processes providing better and quicker service.

These improvements have been initiated by state agencies in response to an Executive Order issued by Governor Locke in April 1997.

> Executive Order 97-03, Quality Improvement, requires each agency to develop and implement a plan to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the public services it provides.

Since the Executive Order was issued, Washington State agencies have reported over 1940 quality projects, saving the state over $77 million and collecting over $77 million in new revenue. As a result of these efficiencies, approximately 1,094,000 staff hours have been saved which eliminated overtime or redirected staff to other work.

The projects in this booklet were selected from the quarterly quality reports submitted by agencies. These quality efforts are led by the Governor's Office, with oversight by the Sub-cabinet on Management and Quality Improvement.

Agency contacts are listed for each project, if more information is needed. Additional copies of this publication are available through the Governor's Office or on the Governor's Home Page at *www.governor.wa.gov*.

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Governor's
Award for Service
and Quality Improvement

July 2001 Winners

The following teams were selected as winners of the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement for the second quarter of 2001. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of the *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams for winning this prestigious award.

Team Name/Agency	Book Edition Number	Page Number
Methamphetamine: Cleaning up Drug Labs and Dumps Department of Ecology	Book 14	40
Master Business License Internet Application Department of Licensing; Department of Revenue	Book 13	10
Electrical Licensing Team Department of Labor and Industries	Book 14	57
School Employees' Retirement System (SERS) Project Team Department of Retirement Systems	Book 15 Book 12	61,62,63 46
Field Audit Team Department of Labor and Industries	Book 14	52

TEAMS NOMINATED FOR THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR SERVICE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The following teams were nominated for the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement for the second quarter of 2001. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of the *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams.

Team Name/Agency	**Book Edition Number**	**Page Number**
Breaking the Cycle Alternative Release Program Department of Corrections	Book 14	30
Postcard Renewal Notice Implementation Team Department of Licensing	Book 12	42
Outreach Team School for the Deaf	Book 15	120
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Multiple Agency Projects

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Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE); Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA/OMWBE Co-location Partnership

Based on the analysis obtained from the state disparity study, OMWBE would improve services to businesses by locating an office in the Seattle/King County area where most of the businesses are located. OMWBE considered several locations based on accessibility, parking availability, and costs. However, the current location was selected when discussions between the US Small Business Administration (SBA) and OMWBE covered the issue of making compatible services more accessible and streamlined to both SBA and OMWBE customers. By co-locating, services are now "one-stop" for local, state and federal programs serving small businesses. SBA agreed to provide free office space in exchange for assistance in marketing their products and services to OMWBE certified firms (approximately 2,900 certified firms). The annual savings from OMWBE's administrative costs is redirected to support services for customers. SBA can reach a larger audience for its products and services without the expense of outreach and advertisement.

Results

- ★ Located accessible office space in Seattle for a satellite office to provide services, including DBE Support Services, to the majority of OMWBE customers.
- ★ Significant cost savings to OMWBE.
- ★ Redirect $18,786 of support services funds for actual services to certified firms from support services funds earmarked to be spent on administrative costs.
- ★ Found an office where other entities provide compatible programs to enhance the "one-stop" concept of services provision as a national model.

Team Name: SBA/OMWBE Co-location Partnership Team
Team Members: OMWBE: Cathy Canorro, Vicky Schiantarelli, Juan Huey-Ray (Management Sponsor); SBA: Tina Bradley, J. Darlene Robbins, Robert Meredith (District Director)

CONTACT: Vicky Schiantarelli, (360) 704-1197

Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect;
National, Washington State, and King County CASA
(Court Appointed Special Advocates);
Child Care Resource and Referral Network;
Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center;
Department of Social and Health Services;
Parent Trust for Washington Children;
United Way of King County

I Care about Kids Campaign

In the past, Child Abuse Prevention Month in Washington has received little or no statewide media attention or public acknowledgement.

This year, the 2001 Blue Ribbon Collaborative developed a more proactive and positive message to promote awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month (in April) and throughout the year. The new message "I Care About Kids" is printed on a red heart over a blue ribbon.

The "I Care About Kids" blue ribbon became a symbol used statewide as organizations from the collaborative worked with DSHS and National CASA, along with other partners, to plan statewide flag raising events in every DSHS region. These events were planned to raise awareness about Child Abuse Prevention Month, launch a new toll-free reporting phone number 1-866-ENDHARM and to simultaneously implement "Light of Hope" candlelight vigils. The statewide events had tremendous media coverage and all participants received blue ribbons to wear at the events.

Results

★ Successfully wrote a grant to the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.) to fund the printing of 200,000 *I Care About Kids* blue ribbons.
★ Developed a cloisonné pin with the same design to generate revenue for the Children's Trust Fund.
★ Easily increased distribution of the blue ribbons to 175,000 with the new universal message - a 75% increase!
★ Developed a wallet size card for mandated reporters with information and phone numbers for reporting.
★ Increased positive statewide media coverage about child abuse prevention.

- ★ Collaborated with DSHS to implement a new toll-free, easy to remember abuse and neglect reporting phone number 1-866-ENDHARM.
- ★ The collaborative effort significantly enhanced each member organization's capacity to reach a wider audience and leverage additional resources.

Team Name: Blue Ribbon Collaborative

Team Members: Washington State Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA): Sue Burrus; Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center (CHRMC): Carol Mason; The Indu Nair Guild of CHRMC: Bindu Nair; One Church One Child/UJIMA: Sam Townsend; King County Dependency CASA: Napoleon Caldwell, Constance Stockton; Parent Trust for Washington Children: Linda McDaniels; Volunteer: Natalie Gendler; DSHS Children's Administration: Ernie Gowen, Sharon Gilbert; United Way of King County: Joan Sharp, Lolo Arévalo; Child Care Resource and Referral Network: Sangree Froelicher; WCPCAN: Cheryl Reed

CONTACT: Cheryl Reed, (206) 389-2412

Washington State Patrol; Department of Transportation; Washington State Ferries

Soothing the Kingston Ferry Traffic Lines

When incoming ferry traffic in Kingston exceeded the holding dock capacity, waiting customers were forced to park out of town on an unimproved shoulder of State Route 104. At peak traffic times, the line was up to five miles long. Cars lining up to board the ferry created safety and blocking issues for through traffic. Impatient drivers were aggressively cutting into the line creating “ferry fury” and less-than-cordial verbal exchanges. On a customer survey, 83% of Kingston Ferry commuters indicated that line jumping was a problem at that location.

A “first-come, first-served” system was developed whereby Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers would issue “tally slips” to the first drivers to line up, entitling them to purchase the next available passage from ferry ticket sellers. Troopers and cadets initially had to stand on the fog line or on the highway itself to issue these tally slips. Then Department of Transportation (DOT) employees widened the highway shoulder to create a safer platform for tally slips distribution. New signs have been developed providing directions for drivers, cameras enable citizens to view images of any backups through Washington State Ferries' homepage, and a highway advisory radio service started on July 4, 2001, to inform drivers of wait line conditions.

Results

- ★ Local traffic is able to move through town more easily, and local businesses experience fewer interruptions to customer traffic.
- ★ Safety for troopers and cadets managing traffic flow has been improved.
- ★ “Line jumpers” are identified and sent to the back of the line.
- ★ Highway shoulder capacity is expanded, allowing more vehicles to line up.
- ★ Customers are informed of projected wait time and the new tally slip process, reduced driver frustration.

Team Name: Kingston Ferry Traffic Team
Team Members: WSP: Sgts Troy Tomaras and Ray Schierhoss, Troopers Glenn Tyrell and Mark Tegard, Members of Detachment 15/VATS; Department of Transportation: Lowell McBee, Brenden Clarke; Washington State Ferries: Leonard Smith

CONTACT: Sgt. Troy Tomaras, (360) 779-9111

Department of Information Services;
Department of Labor and Industries;
Department of Health;
Department of Revenue
Department of Social and Health Services

Transact Washington

Transact Washington was developed to meet the requirements of state policies, standards, and procedures for protecting sensitive data and confidential business transactions, and preventing unauthorized access and misuse of data. Transact Washington is a national first, enterprise-wide authentication gateway to secure government services. While centralized, agencies maintain control over the access to their applications. Transact Washington is an extension of the state's Internet portal, *Access Washington*. It leverages public key infrastructure and digital certificate technology to identify and authenticate users. Using a single digital certificate, trading partners can access numerous secure services offered by multiple state agencies in a single Internet session.

Results

★ Provides safe and secure access to transactional applications using digital certificates.

★ One face to government: an authenticated user can access many applications from different agencies at their convenience, around the clock, with a single sign-on Internet session.

★ Agencies don't have to spend valuable resources replicating for themselves the security infrastructure to meet the state security policy, standards, and guidelines.

★ Currently, there are 9 applications deployed behind the Transact Washington secured gateway. Another 7 are planned in the next couple of months. This is only the initial wave of applications. Over 500 digital certificates are registered to use Transact Washington.

Team Name: Transact Washington

Team Members: Department of Information Services: Lance Calisch, Mike McVicker, Mike Curtright, Darlene Kosoff, Kermit Kiser, Matt Stevens, Chuck Moore, Paul Hubert, Larry Dell, Scott Bream, Agnes Nevins, Dave Kirk; Department of Labor and Industries: Shelagh Taylor, Bob Lanouette, Arlene Smith, Cammy Webster, Mark Solie, Larry Blankenship, Mary Totten, Dennis Hoffer, Don Wood, Ed Bryan, Bruce Santy, Karen Peterson, Robert Raboin, Mike Rickert, Dan Mercer, Mini Clendenen, Nellie McMeel, Michele Payne, Eric Vondersheer, Brad Taylor, Jim Ryan; Department Of Health: Gary Schriker, Deb Gustafson, Cliff Schiller, Nola Sommer, Jody Simmons; Department of Revenue: Steve Bilhimer, Gary Dubuque, Shari Baldwin, John Garrison, Carl Schwarmann; Department of Social and Health Services: Fritz Wrede, Stan Kowalkowski, Sue White, John Weeden, Frank DiMichael, David Moore, Jack Daniels, Deb Likely, Bonnie Sweeney, Sue Smith

CONTACT: Lance Calisch, (360) 902-3440

Employment Security Department;
Grays Harbor College;
Goodwill Industries;
Grays Harbor Career Transition Center

Integration of Job Search Workshops

Employment Security Department (ESD) staff at Pacific Mountain WorkSource and Grays Harbor Career Transition Center were offering four different week-long job search workshops for WorkFirst participants, Unemployment Insurance claimants, Welfare-to-Work participants, and dislocated workers. Additionally, a weekly job club was offered that was staffed on a rotating basis by the agency and its partners. Most of the workshops were not full to capacity with staffing levels, workloads, and facility space as issues of concern. The team was charged to explore the feasibility of combining the workshops and providing integrated delivery of the workshop without compromising quality or the required curriculum. The team researched and combined the Job Hunter and WorkFirst curriculum into one workshop, with modular segments, that now meets the requirements for all populations. Instructors were trained to deliver the workshop and now offer it weekly to all job seekers.

Results

★ 188% increase in participation (average eight participants per workshop prior to integration and 15 as an average after integration).

★ Saved 2,880 hours by combining the workshop and rotating delivery among ESD and partner staff.

★ Increased customer satisfaction by combining four job search workshops and by forming the weekly job club providing access to all job seekers.

★ Enhanced working relationships among partners.

Team Name: The Workshop
Team Members: Employment Security Department: Debbie Richters, Jim Law, Chris Brabon, Ted Collins, Phillip Deihl, Tina Simons, Kathie Streifel; Grays Harbor College: Jack Brooks; Goodwill Industries: Geene Grimm, John Geelan; Grays Harbor Career Transition Center: Julie Skokan, Taunya Harnden

CONTACT: Debbie Richters, (360) 538-2371

Employment Security Department
KLTV
KLOG
Entercom Broadcasting System

Media Expansion Project

In the early 1990s, the Cowlitz County Job Service Center needed to do a better job publicizing job listings and other resources to customers. They began announcing job listings by calling into a local radio station and inputting job information on the local television access channel's community reader board. Recently, job seeker and employer customer services consolidated with local partnerships under the WorkSource one-stop umbrella. A team expanded the media activities to better meet the needs of the new WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum partnerships with a full menu of resources. Positive relationships with local media also provide local businesses and organizations free advertising for their openings and a larger, better qualified pool of applicants from which to make their hiring decisions. Job seekers appear at the WorkSource offices pre-screened, dressed for interview, and prepared for referral to an employer. The best practice is currently being utilized as a “media training pilot” with plans to apply its processes statewide.

Results

- ★ Increased recognition of the new WorkSource brand name, partners, and services.
- ★ Broader base of qualified, job ready applicants for referral.
- ★ Availability of free advertising and visibility for employers' openings.
- ★ Improved exposure for high volume and hard-to-fill job openings.
- ★ Increased staff training with announcing and other media skills.

Team Name: Marketing Cowlitz/Wahkiakum East
Team Members: Employment Security Department: June Trusty, Erin Chambers, Chris Cotten, John Watson, Gina Harkcom, PoChi Ostergren; KLTV: John Glasgow; KLOG: Bill Dodd; Entercom Broadcasting System: Kelly Gwinn, Gayle Kessinger

CONTACT: June Trusty, (360) 578-4222

Washington State Penitentiary Orientation Walla Walla

The Washington State Penitentiary (WSP) in Walla Walla County was experiencing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining new employees. Many applicants were unclear about work conditions and necessary employment requirements. People struggled with the application process and employees were resigning shortly after hire. Prison personnel staff, in collaboration with the WorkSource Walla Walla, devised a plan to offer scheduled orientations to interested applicants. A framework was developed for a process to inform and schedule potential applicants for these informational sessions. Almost immediately, the penitentiary noticed an improvement in the readiness of job applicants—experiencing greater success hiring and retaining new employees.

Results

- ★ Increased WorkSource capacity to develop customized services and service delivery approaches for business customers.
- ★ Improved readiness of job applicants for local major employer.
- ★ Enhanced customer satisfaction with WorkSource services.
- ★ Engaged customers in defining service needs and developing new service delivery strategies.
- ★ Increases market penetration with job seeker and employer customer groups.

Team Name: Washington State Penitentiary Orientation Walla Walla
Team Members: Employment Security Department: Ross Hamann, Doug Loney, Jennie Weber; WSP Walla Walla: Sherry Hartford, Ron Van Boening, Monty Renick, Carla Schettler

CONTACT: Ross Hamann, (509) 527-4393

Single Agency Projects

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Electronic Transcripts (E-trans)

Testimony during hearings is stenographically taken by court reporters on contract with the agency. To provide the transcript in the WORD format required by the agency, the court reporters had to perform a lengthy conversion process. Quality and timeliness of transcripts was often compromised because the reporters were not able to spend as much time doing necessary editing. Court reporters were becoming unwilling to perform work for the agency because of the extra time required for the conversion. The agency approved a new transcript format that allowed court reporters to purchase a software product that eliminates the need to convert files to WORD documents, resulting in higher quality transcripts being received more timely, and consequently, more timely issuance of our decisions.

Results

- ★ Transcripts are received at the Board more quickly, saving approximately 84 hours annually in staff time needed to check for late transcripts, and resulting in decisions being issued in a more timely manner.
- ★ There is a larger pool of court reporters to draw from, allowing for better quality and faster response.
- ★ The E-trans program has built-in security so that the transcripts cannot be modified.
- ★ E-trans files are smaller so they take less storage space and are more easily sent electronically to parties outside the agency.

Team Name: E-trans Team
Team Members: Larry Ramsey, Eric Damron, Jeannie Pontius, Melody Younglove

CONTACT: Melody Younglove, (360) 753-6823

Transcript Resubmits

Testimony taken at Board proceedings is stenographically reported by court reporters, resulting in over 800 transcripts per month. Reporters submit a paper copy of transcripts and a computer disk that is downloaded into the agency computer system. If a transcript contains an error, it is returned to the reporter for correction. The transcript was downloaded from the computer system to a disk and returned to the reporter, along with a manually produced list of transcripts to be resubmitted and the necessary corrections. Our new process is to return only the list of resubmitted transcripts and necessary corrections, which is now computer-generated. These changes have saved staff time, eliminated postage, and improved efficiency.

Results

- ★ Saved approximately 144 hours annually in staff time needed to locate transcripts and download to a disk, and to prepare the list of resubmitted transcripts.
- ★ More efficient process of resubmitting transcripts, which speeds up turnaround time for getting accurate transcripts of proceedings into the case files.
- ★ Saved postage required to return disks.
- ★ More accurate tracking of resubmitted documents.

Team Name: Transcript Resubmit Team
Team Members: Melody Younglove, Lisa Bartley, Jeannie Pontius

CONTACT: Melody Younglove, (360) 753-6823

Word Letter in Board of Appeals Information System (BAIS)

Anyone generating correspondence to the parties of an appeal was required to type the docket and party names and addresses each time a letter was written. Information was either read from the physical file or viewed from BAIS. The retyping of docket, party name, and address information increased the possibility of typographical errors, use of out-of-date information, and was a duplication of effort. The Word Letter is a document generated in BAIS that includes all parties' names and addresses directly from the database. Once generated it can be modified/saved etc. as any word processing document.

Results

- ★ Saved approximately 21 hours annually in staff time needed to retype names, addresses, case names, claim numbers, and docket numbers.
- ★ Increased accuracy of names and addresses, resulting in a decrease in returned mail due to typographical errors or use of out-of-date information.
- ★ Automatically includes consolidated docket and party information from database.

Team Name: Word Letter Team
Team Member: Jeanie Parr

CONTACT: Jeanie Parr, (360) 586-6346, extension 200

Turnaround Time Reduction for Pesticide Case Investigation

Pesticide Management compliance staff had the goal of completing 85% of pesticide investigation cases within 120 days and 100% of the cases within 180 days. This goal was not being met, and historically a high number of cases were not being completed within the desired timeframes. It is important for citizens and the agricultural community that the case investigation process be completed in a timely manner so that appropriate actions, including corrective action, can be taken. Team members recommended several steps to improve case turnaround time.

Results

- ★ Case investigation turnaround time (from the time a complaint is received through closure) is reduced so a greater percentage of cases meet the desired goals.
- ★ Strategic standard operating procedures have been refined and updated resulting in fewer time delays throughout the process.
- ★ Infractors are identified sooner so appropriate action(s) can be taken in a more timely manner.
- ★ Communication is more effective among compliance staff.
- ★ A more effective case tracking system has been developed enabling staff to know the status of a case at any given time.

Team Name: Pesticide Case Review Team
Team Members: Gary Buckner, Colleen Evans, Paul Figuerola, Mike Firman, Rody Flores, Kathi Matherly, Bob Merkel, Tim Schultz, Jeff Zeller

CONTACT: Bob Merkel, (360) 902-2038; Tim Schultz, (509) 225-2640

Interactive Database for Plant Pathology

The Plant Pathology unit provides diagnostic services to customers. Customers had been completing the required Pest and Disease Sample form by hand, resulting in the submission of many incomplete forms. Delays occurred in processing samples due to incomplete and missing information on the form. The same hand written form was also used to report the results of analysis. This is no longer acceptable to some of our export customers.

A database was developed and the submission form revised. A new report form was also developed which meets the requirements for exporting agricultural products. The report is generated from the data stored in the database producing accurate and timely reports to our customers.

Results

★ The new sample submission form is very simple and customer-friendly. Since its introduction this spring, 100% of the forms submitted have been filled out completely.

★ The new report sent to clients meets the requirements for exporting their products.

★ Time is saved and accuracy increased as client information is only entered once. Reports, new analysis requests, and disease lists are automatically generated.

★ The lab is now able to track its diagnostic activity for internal audits and plant disease frequency monitoring.

★ The potential now exists for self contained, limited access versions of the database to be sent directly to customers which will allow them to complete and send in electronic versions of request forms.

Team Member: Art Wagner

CONTACT: Art Wagner, (360) 902-2060

Bullet Trap

DOC Policy 410.230 requires a weapon-clearing barrel at all range, armory, or firearm storage areas. The barrel is designed to stop any unintentional discharge. The facilities at the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC) were not in compliance with this policy in all their towers.

Clearing barrels cost an average of $400. Staff at MCC conducted research and discovered that Remmington Armory made a weapon-clearing barrel. Remmington was contacted and agreed to share a copy of their design. MCC Maintenance staff were able to build the bullet traps for $25 each. Additionally, the design was offered to other DOC facilities within Washington State.

Results

- ★ Built 20 weapon-clearing bullet traps and placed at all MCC towers, range, and armory.
- ★ Saved $7,500 ($375 per barrel x 20 barrels).
- ★ MCC now in compliance with DOC 410.230.
- ★ Improved officer safety.

Team Name: Bullet Trap Team
Team Members: Bob Moore, Tim LaFleur, Kenny Olson

CONTACT: Tim LaFleur, (360) 794-2434

Daily Cell Inspections

The Special Offender Center is part of the Monroe Command Center, which houses chronically mentally ill inmates. Several months ago one specific unit was having problems with hygiene issues. This is a constant issue with some mentally ill inmates. They are often not capable of remembering to keep their cells clean. The inmate cells were messy and in need of a good scrubbing. Beds were unmade, there was garbage lying around, the floors were sticky and dirty, etc.

The unit implemented a new procedure for daily cell inspections. An officer on the unit started to score the cleanliness on a 1-10 scale (10 being the highest). No inmate could leave their cell until they received a score of 7 or higher. Staff would post the scores on the unit bulletin board. Inmates with consistently high scores may receive incentive TV and radio privileges for the month. This public posting created a sense of ownership by the inmates and the cells became more hygienic.

Results

- ★ Cut cell inspection time by 60% (from 5 minutes to 2 minutes per cell).
- ★ Saved 108 minutes per day (3 minutes saved x 36 cells).
- ★ Provides opportunity to teach life skills to mentally ill offenders.
- ★ Cleaner, more hygienic cells.

Team Name: Daily Cell Inspection Team
Team Members: James Bennett, Ken Fields, Charles Wade, Jeff Dye, Mike Walker, Amy Grenier, Frank Parsons, Patrick Fenton, Jim Hayden, Sonya DeWitt, Kathryn Grey, Keith LaMunyon

CONTACT: Kathryn Grey, (360) 794-2266

Food Warehouse Consolidation at Monroe

The Monroe Correctional Complex has four separate inmate institutions and three Food Service facilities that generated their own orders. Each of these facilities had their own inventories and varying product lines to meet their specific menu needs. This was a duplication of effort resulting in wasted staff time, higher food costs, and inconsistent product lines for the same central menu. A team was formed to look at the issue and to recommend a standard way of providing these services. Through consolidating functions (ordering, receiving, vendor product lines, and one distribution center) they are achieving their mission of just-in-time deliveries.

Results

- ★ Reduced value of food held in inventories by $134,355.
- ★ Reduced duplication of staff time in ordering, receiving, and logging into the inventory system by 38 hours monthly.
- ★ Reduced gate traffic to all institutions thereby increasing security.
- ★ Ensures all facilities are using most economical product lines. For example: changing frozen juice to bag-in-the-box-juice has saved $5,000 in one quarter.

Team Name: Food Warehouse Consolidation Team
Team Members: John Holeman, Diane Thornock, Jodi Weber, Keith Sherman, Mary Jewett, David Ruff, Richard Krier, Mike Townsend, Willie Daigle

CONTACT: Willie Daigle, (360) 794-2869

Inmate Personal Laundry Process

In the past, each living unit had a washer and dryer available for inmates to use to wash their own laundry. There were several problems with this arrangement, including damage to the equipment and disagreements between inmates about whose turn it is to use the laundry facilities.

A quality improvement idea was submitted to assign an inmate in each unit to launder all inmates personal laundry. This has resulted in less damage to the unit laundry equipment by having one or two operators rather than all inmates operating the washer and dryer. It has also eliminated disagreements of who and when the equipment is used. The process also ensures that state issued work clothing is not laundered in the unit machines but at the institution laundry as it should be.

Results

- ★ $600 saved in parts to laundry equipment in last six months.
- ★ 85% less work orders to repair laundry equipment.
- ★ 90% less complaints about use of laundry equipment.

Team Name: Inmate Laundry Team
Team Members: Barbara Sowers, Bill Mendoza

CONTACT: Barbara Sowers, (360) 374-8366

Mail Services

The Longview Community Corrections Office had been leasing a mail meter with Pitney Bowes and using the US Postal Service for their out-going mail. The cost for the mail meter was $95 per month. In addition, staff had to handle and post each piece of out-going mail and separate it from the campus mail. There was also an additional charge of $10 each time we used the services of United Parcel Service (UPS) to mail large items. In order to avoid this charge, staff were driving to UPS an average of twice a week in order to mail large items.

Staff decided to switch to Consolidated Mail Services (CMS) Department of General Administration. The cost for CMS is $10.30 per month. CMS does not require that mail be separated. This saves an average of 30 minutes staff time per day. CMS also provides recycled campus envelopes free of charge and provides pick up, posting, and mailing of UPS packages.

Results

- ★ Saved $84.70 per month for mail services.
- ★ Saved 30 minutes per day in staff time for preparing mail.
- ★ Saved 60 minutes per week driving to UPS to mail large items.

Team Name: Mail Services Team
Team Members: Tina Claussen, Tracy Grunenfelder

CONTACT: Tina Claussen, (360) 577-7599

MCC Interlock System 2000-020

At the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC), the control booth in Cell House 3 (CH3, the segregation unit) does not have a line-of-site view of the four tiers. Staff must rely on cameras to supervise the activity in a housing unit for inmates with disciplinary problems.

When the control panel was installed, the power configuration allowed operation capabilities to all buttons, when one was selected. This panel controls 80 cells. As a result of this configuration, it was possible to inadvertently open two (or more) cells at once. This could allow dangerous/violent inmates to “gang-up” on a correctional officer. In one instance, an officer was seriously assaulted when two cell doors were opened at the same time.

MCC’s architectural firm recommended replacing the old control panel with a modernized touch screen. The cost for the touch screen would have been $18,000. Rather than purchasing the touch screen, a team, lead by Maintenance Supervisor Wayne Pederson, fixed the problem by isolating power to each of the four rows. Now the staff controlling the cell doors only has to look at 20 buttons rather than 80. The total cost for this “fix” was $500.

Results

★ Saved $17,500.

★ Reduced number of buttons requiring visual scan by 75% (from 80 to 20).

★ Improved officer security.

Team Name: MCC Interlock System Team
Team Members: Wayne Pederson, Ralph Best, Robert Davis Jr., Michael Heue, Tommy Swartzenberger

CONTACT: Wayne Pederson, (360) 794-2674

MCC SOU Floor Sealant

The floor in a new construction area at the Special Offenders Unit (SOU) in the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC) needed to be sealed. An estimate from the contractor was $36,000 ($0.60 x 60,000 square feet).

MCC used four inmates from the Minimum Security Unit to seal the floor. The total cost was $4,250. This included inmate pay (640 hours of labor at $1.25 per hour) and the materials (300 gallons of sealant at $11.50 a gallon = $3,450).

Results

- ★ Saved $31,750.
- ★ Created jobs for inmates.
- ★ Increased quality of job. (Contractor states that the work performed was better than what is generally done by outside workers).

Team Name: MCC Floor Sealant Team
Team Members: Ronny Ingram, John Peterson, Bob Carter

CONTACT: Ronny Ingram, (360) 794-2601

Maintenance Morning Check-in/Check-out

The check-out process for inmates at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center who are assigned maintenance was cumbersome. Inmates would have to be checked out through the mud room by a correctional officer. If one inmate were late, it would hold up both the correctional officer and the maintenance staff who were waiting for their workers. There were times the crews would be 15-20 minutes late for work.

A new process has been implemented in which the inmates report directly to their work supervisors. This frees up the correctional officer to return to their security duties and places the "burden" on the offenders to report directly to their supervisor. Additionally, maintenance supervisors now take the responsibility of accounting for late and/or absent workers. This process better "mirrors" what the offender will have to do in the outside work environment.

Results

- ★ Increased productivity by 5% (work crews start on time, regardless if all the offenders are present or not).
- ★ Eliminated the need for two staff to out-process work crews.
- ★ Correctional Officer has 30 more minutes per day for other security duties.
- ★ Maintenance supervisors are responsible for counts.
- ★ Offenders learning "real world" concepts.

Team Name: Maintenance Morning Check-out Team
Team Members: Jim Lobach, Lori Telleria, Joe Ostrem

CONTACT: Jim Lobach, (509) 543-5811

Recycle Involvement Team

In June 2000, a process improvement team was given the task to improve recycling efforts on McNeil Island. The team conducted a two-week study in June 2000. The results demonstrated that 1/3 of the items placed in waste containers were recyclable. In addition, waste cost could be reduced by 1/3 if staff, Island residents, and inmates were educated on the benefits of recycling.

The Process Improvement Team toured Monroe Correctional Complex and incorporated some of their recycling collection procedures. They looked for ways to educate staff, inmates, and Island residents about the value/ease of recycling. Recycling containers were added to administrative offices and inmate living units. An education program was created for staff, inmates and Island residents by distributing flyers through the daily bulletin and in Island resident mailboxes. Information was distributed to inmates reinforcing the idea that money from aluminum pop cans will be placed in the Offender Betterment Fund.

Results

- ★ 255 tons of recycled materials diverted from landfills for the period of July 2000 through November 2000.
- ★ 215 tons of recycled materials diverted from landfills for the period of December 2000 through May 2001.
- ★ $2,703 from aluminum pop cans given to the Offender Betterment Fund.
- ★ Staff familiarized with recycling options available at MICC.

Team Name: Recycle Involvement Team
Team Members: Brad Carlson, Charles Darling, Diane Klontz, Dale Vanderbloom, Johnny Rich, Mike Sadowski, Michael Wright, Rick Denny, Rick Jordan, Norm Hill, Mark Blatman

CONTACT: Mark Blatman, (253) 512-1595

Visitor Application Process

The process for approving visitors at Clallam Bay Corrections Center was cumbersome and ineffective. Applications were being sent to multiple locations and there was no tracking system or means of tracing lost documents. The average approval time for visitor questionnaires was four to five weeks, with up to one half of the processing time spent in distribution. This would often result in the need for "special visits," which is very time consuming for staff to approve.

Public Access, under the direction of the Public Access/Visit Sergeant, was given the task of reviewing the procedure for approving inmate special visits and the procedure used for processing inmate visitor questionnaires. Their goal was to streamline the process and gain in efficiency, without diminishing any security measures.

A trial testing of the redesigned system, that involves the Public Access/Visit Sergeant and Public Access staff assuming some responsibilities previously assigned to Unit staff, produced results that are both exciting and interesting.

Results

★ Time for inmate visit list approval completion process reduced 80% (from an average 35 days to an average of 7 days).

★ 60% reduction in inmate special visits. (From January through October 2000 there was an average of 50 visits per month. In November 2000 through May 2001 there was an average of 20 visits per month).

★ Unit staff have "freed up" an average of 30 minutes per week to devote to supervising/counseling inmates.

Team Name: Visitor Application Process Team
Team Members: Larry Scroggins, Robert Kroeger, Ernest Grimes, William Keys, Tammy White, Hope Olson, Trevor Gordon, Debra Brokaw

CONTACT: Larry Scroggins, (360) 963-2000, extension 3027

Streamlining Emission Testing of Agency Vehicles

Agency owned vehicles are inspected annually for air emissions. Because Ecology does not have an on-site testing facility, agency transportation staff drove vehicles to inspection sites for the required testing. The Departments of General Administration (GA) and Natural Resources (DNR) both offer testing in the Olympia area; however, we needed to make appointments (sometimes days in advance) and drive vehicles to the testing agencies.

Last year Ecology paid DNR to come on-site and conduct emission tests on 34 vehicles. It took two DNR staff and five Ecology staff to assist with this event. DNR expressed that this was a one-time offer. Because of increased problems of taking vehicles to off-site testing facilities, Ecology staff set up a mobile testing site for one day to perform emission tests on the agency vehicles. Ecology was able to do tests on 34 cars in a fraction of the time with no added expense.

Results

- ★ It took approximately 4.5 hours to test 34 vehicles (24 more will be tested on-site).
- ★ It took one person from our Air Quality Program to perform the test and three from Transportation to ferry the cars through the emission-testing lane that had been set up.
- ★ Transportation staff did not have to spend hours driving vehicles to an off-site testing facility.
- ★ The Agency's Air Quality Program had accurate information about air quality emissions immediately following the tests.
- ★ Drivers experienced minimal down time from vehicles being tested.

Team Name: Emission Testing on Agency Owned Vehicles
Team Members: Art Betts, Tina Ebio, Lorna Mendez-Correa, Lydia Raska

CONTACT: Lydia Raska, (360) 407-7078; Art Betts, (360) 407-0244

Chipping Orchard Debris to Reduce Smoke

Due to a decline in the tree fruit industry, thousands of acres of orchard trees are being pulled out in North Central Washington. The most common method of disposal for orchard debris has been to burn it in large outdoor fires, similar to forest slash burns. The orchard-growing region is generally along the river bottoms in steep valleys that experience frequent air stagnation. Chipping is one alternative that appears to be viable for removing the debris, however, in many cases it is more expensive than burning.

Ecology was able to work with the federal government to reprogram air quality grant money in an innovative way to pilot an effort to chip orchard trees rather than burn them. In addition, Ecology approved a one-to-one air quality mitigation plan with Chelan County. Chelan County is offering free chipping to orchardists to mitigate the air quality impact of a diesel generating station.

Results

- ★ Grant monies were reprogrammed in a record 90 days, from the time that the idea was thought of to the time chipping started. Approximately 281 acres are in the process of being chipped in Okanogan County.
- ★ Ecology approved an innovative mitigation plan with the Chelan Public Utilities Department for the operation of their diesel generating station. The PUD offers free chipping to offset the impact of smoke from burning orchard debris. Approximately 441 acres are in the process of being chipped in Chelan County.
- ★ Ecology has forged local partnerships with the Agriculture community at a time when we have strained relationships with this industry.
- ★ The wood chips are currently being used as an energy recovery source in Okanogan County. In Chelan County the orchardist has the option to use the chips on their property or have them hauled to a co-generation plant. However, given the uncertainty of this market, other potential sources for use of the chips are being explored.

Team Name: Chipping Incentives Project
Team Members: Ecology: Susan Billings, Laura Lowe, Katherine Ann Scott, Sue Simms, Robert Swackhamer, Gary Zeiler; Okanogan County Pest Inspector: Dan McCarthy; Okanogan Conservation District: Laura Clark; Chelan County PUD: Keith Truscott
CONTACT: Susan Billings, (509) 575-2486

Reducing Costs and Errors on Vehicle Logs

The agency contracted with a data entry service company to key punch monthly data collected on 350 agency vehicle log sheets. This data is used to distribute vehicle costs to the correct agency cost codes. We were experiencing a high error rate in the work done by the data entry service due to problems with legibility and completeness of the logs.

Agency staff developed a data management application that imports employee and vehicle information from other agency data systems into the new vehicle log system. The need to enter data has been reduced. Information from the vehicle log sheets is now entered by agency staff who can correct errors as they are discovered during the data entry process.

Results

- ★ Reduction in the number of errors from approximately 1000 to 10 per month.
- ★ Reduction in the number of steps involved in processing the data.
- ★ Elimination of an outside contractor, saving $2,500 per year.
- ★ Only data that is actually used is now entered.
- ★ Provides easier access to previous months' records.

Team Name: Vehicle Log Data Entry
Team Members: Kevin Barbee, Sarah Barrie, Susie Fleskes, Carol Fleskes, Jim Massaia, Judy Mattingly, Lydia Raska, Shawn Sesna, Debbie Stewart

CONTACT: Sarah Barrie, (360) 407-7056

Redesigned Database Produces Timely Reports for Prosecutors

The Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) Securities Division prepares cases of investment fraud for criminal prosecution. As part of case preparation, financial records are reconstructed and analyzed. The prosecutors to whom cases are referred request interim analyses of financial data. A customized database application was used to do financial reconstructions. The database held the data but the analysis had to be done by exporting data to a spreadsheet where it had to be manipulated and reformatted prior to being sent out. Each report took an average of 2 hours to produce. A team was formed to redesign and enhance the database so that most analytical reports could be produced directly from the database. Reports are now almost instantaneously produced for prosecutors.

Results

★ Reduced the total amount of time spent preparing essential reports and summaries for each case.

★ Increased the total number of reports and analyses generated per year and improved the depth and detail of reporting.

★ Improved the ability to respond quickly to requests from prosecutors for reports and analyses to aid prosecutors in the pursuit of criminal investment fraud convictions.

★ Improved the ability to pre-screen cases involving analysis of financial data for potential crimes.

Team Name: FRAUD Database Enhancements Team
Team Members: Steve Raney, Duffy Rader, Suzanne Sarason

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

Streamlined Corrective Action Process for Examinations Reduces Regulatory Burden

The Department of Financial Institutions, Division of Credit Unions, examines and supervises credit unions that do business in Washington State in order to protect their members' financial interests. After examination, all credit unions were required to respond to the Division of Credit Unions in writing describing corrective action for exam findings, whether or not the credit union had the capacity and willingness to correct the problems on their own. Examiner time was required to review the adequacy of the corrective actions.

A team was formed to revise the exam response process. The revised process eliminated the need for written responses from Credit Unions rated as low risk. Credit Unions rated as having low risk, according to risk criteria, represented approximately 85% of regulated credit unions. Corrective actions to their exam findings are now reviewed at the following exam. Generally, these credit unions take appropriate and timely corrective action prior to the next exam.

Results

- ★ Reduces regulatory burden on lower risk credit unions.
- ★ More effective use of examiner time by shifting time savings into higher risk areas.
- ★ Time savings also redirected into improvements in written exam reports.

Team Name: Streamline Response Review Team.
Team Members: Rick Ullrich, Diane Moye, Jane Johnson, Linda Jekel, Mike Delimont

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

GA On-Line Statements

Bills for services that General Administration (GA) provides to state-agency customers do not always go to the person with payment authority. This results in lost and forgotten bills and delayed payments. Communication between GA's business offices and customers with overdue bills was difficult because the person with payment authority was not aware of them. The year-end financial reconciliation done by GA's financial office was time-consuming and frustrating for staff because of these overdue bills.

To simplify the process, the GA financial office launched an online Accounts Receivable Statements web site in July 2000. The site provides agency customers and GA divisions a simple, convenient method for checking outstanding bills.

Results

- ★ Unpaid accounts greater than 90 days reduced by 5 percent.
- ★ Central Stores accountant saves 2.5 hours per month on mailing statements.
- ★ Provides GA's accountants with a timely and effective tool for monitoring and collecting receivables.
- ★ Customers have expressed appreciation for timely information.
- ★ High marks in customer survey for usefulness, accessibility and saving time.

Team Name: GA Online Statements
Team Members: Holly Medlin, Julie Wiedlin

CONTACT: Julie Wiedlin, (360-902-7356)

Motor Pool Satellite Office

Customers of General Administration's (GA) State Motor Pool office indicated in a recent survey that the vehicle pick up and drop off location on Fones Road in Olympia is inconvenient. They identified the Capitol Campus as a preferred location. Another problem noted was inadequate parking space available at Fones Road. Several customers had vehicles impounded because they inadvertently parked in tow zones when no other spaces were available.

Motor Pool staff responded by working with GA's Parking Office to create a satellite office in the Plaza garage on the Capitol Campus. Currently, 10 mid-size sedans are available at this site from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Because of the high demand at this location, GA will add 20 vehicles this summer along with a full-time staff member. An additional benefit to the creation of the satellite office is reduced demand for parking at the Fones Road location.

Results

- ★ A reduction of 1,663 hours per year of customer's time picking up vehicles.
- ★ A savings of $13,910 per year in mileage costs for customers.
- ★ Transferring 30 Motor Pool vehicles to Capitol Campus location provides more parking space at Fones Road location.
- ★ Capitol Campus satellite location provides covered parking for customer and Motor Pool vehicles.

Team Name: Motor Pool Satellite Office
Team Members: Bryan Bazard, Kathy McComb, Steve Skagen, Kevin Arth, Mike Bartch, Steven Braley, John McMeel, Kevan Evans, Lonny Fillo, Lloyd Foster, James Daniels, Diana Boysen, Dena Rood, Annie Rosario, Gurney Reed, Doris Anderson, Julie Deruwe, Robert Buckingham

CONTACT: Bryan Bazard, (360) 438-8237

Consolidate Land Parcels On and Off Capitol Campus

General Administration (GA) owns many parcels of land on or adjacent to the Capitol Campus and Capitol Lake. Each parcel is accessed an annual fee of $8.50 by Thurston County Assessors Office for noxious weed control and conservation district fees. When annual assessment bills are received by General Administration, staff checks each identification number to verify ownership. The identification number is checked off on a tracking log and processed for payment. The financial office staff enters each parcel identification number into its accounting system and issues payment to Thurston County Treasurer's office.

To save money and streamline the process, GA staff looked for ways to consolidate some of the parcels in accordance with City of Olympia specifications. As a result of this effort, 53 parcels are being consolidated to five.

Results

★ Saves an average of $8.50 on each parcel for noxious weed/conservation assessment annually for a total of $408.

★ 53 transactions will be reduced to five.

★ Will save 30 minutes annually on verifying, tracking and data entry.

★ Will save an estimated five hours annually reconciling invoices.

★ Will simplify land management on and off campus.

★ Thurston County Treasurer's office will save an estimated $30 annually on paper, processing, postage and entry of payments.

Team Name: Consolidate Land Parcels On and Off Capitol Campus
Team Members: Nick Cockrell, Grant Fredricks, Jose Reyes, Kathleen Hoff, Duncan Crump, Andy Stepelton

CONTACT: Nick Cockrell, (360) 902-7383

Center for Health Statistics Improves Customer Self-Service Area

Configuration of the Customer Self-Service Area of the Center for Health Statistics was not customer friendly. It included a counter with windows, which customers mistook for an attended service counter. This created frustration and a perception of poor customer service. Lack of clear signage related to process and service requirements, resulted in staff being called to answer routine questions.

The room was reconfigured to be less confusing and more welcoming. The service windows were removed. Professionally made instructional signs were posted in the hallways and in the room; an ADA-accessible work space, a drop-slot for completed requests, and a clock that shows both the time and date were installed. An instructional, continuous-loop videotape was also added. The video describes paternity/adoption/correction procedures and demonstrates how to complete the applications, minimizing the number of customer questions and allowing staff to use time more productively.

Results

- ★ Signs help customers complete the process more effectively and efficiently.
- ★ Video provides an educational opportunity for customers.
- ★ Positive comments, regarding the room, are included on customer comment cards.
- ★ Minimizing interruptions has allowed shorter turn-around time in processing applications.
- ★ Staff spends less time answering routine questions and more time on workload.

Team Name: CFH Self-Service Area Improvements
Team Members: Teresa Jennings, Wendy Kinswa, Ray Moffatte, Charlene Peoples, Carrie Richardson, Jim Robertson

CONTACT: Wendy Kinswa, (360) 236-4311

Large On-Site Sewage System Information Packet Saves Customer and Staff time

Department of Health staff review engineered plans and specifications for large on-site sewage systems to ensure compliance with regulations and design standards. Staff were spending considerable time explaining routine requirements to customers and found that many submittals did not meet requirements. Time was also being spent scheduling on-site inspections for projects that did not meet basic requirements.

Staff developed a customer information packet that includes: regulations; design standards; a process flow chart; a list of frequently asked questions; and a check list to track completion. The same check list is used by staff to screen projects for feasibility prior to scheduling on-site inspections.

Results

- ★ Fewer non-viable project site inspections.
- ★ Improved quality of customers' engineering submittals.
- ★ Consistent information provided to the customer.
- ★ Reduced staff time needed to explain requirements.
- ★ Information packet provides an educational opportunity for customers.

Team Name: LOSS Information Packet Team
Team Members: Richard Benson, Lisa Brown, Virginia Darrell, Jeanne Robitaille, Mark Soltman

CONTACT: Jeanne Robitaille, (509) 456-4431

Electronic Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Office Services supports Department of Information Services employees by providing a centralized point for preparing and receiving Purchase Orders; a mail facility that daily performs three mail runs, prepares and receives first class and overnight mail; a warehouse for agency records, main-frame computer forms and supplies, office supplies, furniture, and surplus property. Office Services wanted an easy way to receive feedback from agency employees to determine if our programs were meeting their needs.

The Customer Survey Team created an on-line Customer Service Questionnaire Form, which is activated when agency employees complete a Supply Request Form to receive goods or services from Office Services. The survey is electronically sent to the Office Services manager.

Results

- ★ Received a 97% satisfaction rating.
- ★ Received 639 out of a possible 660 points.
- ★ Will modify the Supply Request form as a result of the feedback received.

Team Name: Customer Survey Team
Team Members: Don Coulter, Mike Elliott, Doug Golden, Jerry Wiatt, Eileen Zarate

CONTACT: Mike Elliott, (360) 753-4484

Progressive Commute Trip Reduction Plan

For several years, the Department of Information Services' participation in the Commute Trip Reduction plan was at 5 percent of its employees. To encourage staff to choose alternative transportation, it modified its internal Commute Trip Reduction plan in several significant ways. It created an agency-specific Commute Trip Reduction policy and upgraded its original plan to clearly guide employees through the details of the program. It initiated a "Dollar-a-Trip" program, allowing employees to earn up to $44 per month for biking, walking, pooling and using Intercity Transit. Most importantly, a strong and on-going communications campaign promotes extensive Commute Trip Reduction information on the agency's Intranet.

Results

- ★ Increased Commute Trip Reduction participation by 300 percent from the program's initial launch in 1999; increased from 18 to 62 employees actively involved in the program.
- ★ Removed a minimum of 44 vehichles from the streets, eliminating 3,366 lbs. of harmful air toxins that would have been released into the atmosphere each day.
- ★ Reduced fossil fuel consumption, and saved current participants at least $132,000 per year in gas, insurance and parking.
- ★ Spurred development of online ride match program, to be posted on "Inside DIS", the agency's intranet communications network, that will allow potential car and vanpoolers to use an interactive database to connect with other Commute Trip Reduction riders.

Team Name: CTR Riders
Team Members: Doug Golden, many DIS employees

CONTACT: Doug Golden, (360) 586-6578

Eliminating Short-Circuits from Electrical Inspections

Labor and Industries' electrical inspectors in the field inspect electrical work to ensure that minimum state requirements are met. They also check to ensure that electricians have the appropriate permits and licenses. In the Spokane area, inefficient work practices and procedures meant that inspectors were having to spend up to two hours every day in the office preparing for that day's field work. Further, problems in processing corrective notices resulted in only one-third of the notices actually being sent out for non-compliant work. Finally, inspection information and results were being "lost" in the transfer from inspector's portable computers to office PCs.

To address these problems, a centralized filing system was developed. Re-inspection information is now tracked via a database that also generates letters automatically. Finally, better work practices have been established to reduce the amount of time inspectors spend in the office, and to ensure that inspection results are not "lost in cyberspace."

Results

- ★ The amount of down time spent by inspectors in the office has been reduced significantly. This has resulted in a 23 percent (cumulative) increase in the number of inspections completed.
- ★ The percentage of inspections completed within 24 hours has increased from 74 percent to 91 percent.
- ★ All re-inspection notices are now being sent out.
- ★ The Spokane office has documented a 60 percent increase in the number of compliance citations written. As a result, there has been a 432 percent increase in citation fines (from $1,100 in January-April 2000 to $5,850 for the same four-month period in 2001).

Team Name: The Electrical Inspection Improvement Team
Team Members: Jerry Clark (Team Leader), Steve Breidenbach, Mike Andrus, Rex Burns, Jess Gairson, Lanny Hughes, Phil Jordan, Robert Judson, John Kendall, Wayne Molesworth, Roger Money, Bob Olson, Rodger Rickel, Greg Westby, Cass Lehinger, Mike Ehrgott

CONTACT: Jerry Clark, (509) 324-2532

Saving Data Storage Space and Dollars

The computer software that Labor and Industries uses to manage the payment of medical bills in the Workers' Compensation program is far too complex for the agency to run on its own computers. As a result, the agency must purchase mainframe computer processing and storage capacity from the Department of Information Services (DIS). Ever-escalating storage needs and resultant costs made it essential for the agency to find a way to minimize these storage needs and their costs, while ensuring data access and availability.

The agency set a goal to reduce storage space requirements for this data at DIS by 5 percent. The team exceeded this goal by creating a way to squeeze or compress the data before it is stored, and by establishing more effective procedures to track and manage data storage and archiving.

Results

- ★ Reduced storage needs and related costs at DIS by 9%, an annual cost avoidance of $25,200 for the stored data.
- ★ The new process allows staff to identify and delete data from storage when it is no longer needed.
- ★ Increased data storage space available for future growth, and reduced DIS costs to pay for that growth.
- ★ When programmers save their work, they can now designate how long it should be stored and when it should be archived.
- ★ Programmers now have storage and archival information so they can manage the data more efficiently.

Team Name: Data Facility Storage Management Subsystem Implementation Team
Team Members: Carl Cooper, Melinda Darmody, Selvius Turner, Ed Armstrong; Department of Information Services: Valerie William

CONTACT: Carl Cooper, (360) 902-5884

Effectively Managing Mainframe Computer Usage and Needs

Many of the software programs that Labor and Industries uses to serve its customers are too big to run on agency computers. This means that the agency must purchase mainframe computer processing capacity from the Department of Information Services (DIS). This processing is purchased in blocks of 10-million instructions per second (MIPS) at an annual cost of $129,600 per block. In May 2000, the agency's average MIPS usage increased unexpectedly and unexplainably by 20 MIPS. In addition to increasing costs, this also slowed computer response time for staff and customers.

The agency established a goal to reduce the rate of escalating usage by 15 MIPS per month. The agency achieved this goal twice over — first by developing effective measures to understand and monitor MIPS usage, and then changing how and when data is accessed so fewer instructions per second are used.

Results

- ★ Developed an effective way to measure mainframe needs and usage (MIPS per transaction) so staff can better understand changes, and plan more effectively for future needs.
- ★ Achieved a 19% decrease in MIPS per transaction, which equates to an average cost avoidance of more than 35 MIPS per month — amounting to $388,800 per year.
- ★ Continued L&I's track record as a technological leader in Washington State government, affording an opportunity for DIS and other state agencies to benefit from what has been learned about MIPS usage on this project.

Team Name Mainframe Environment Performance Review Team
Team Members: Carl Cooper, Gale Holmes, Bob Santeford, K. Andy Jackson, Barbara Collier, Crystal Hart; Department of Information Services: Tom Thomas, Julia Bergevin, Linda Luebcke

CONTACT: K. Andy Jackson, (360) 902-5878

Maximizing Computer Server Efficiency while Minimizing Costs

Labor and Industries develops and maintains some of the software programs (business applications) used to serve its customers. In the past, these programs were stored on 13 special computers called "servers." To service and maintain these server computers, the agency contracted for technical support, at an annual cost of about $550,000 per year. Additionally, many of the server computers had exceeded their productive life cycles, resulting in slow response times and work stoppages for staff and customers.

The team established a goal to reduce server equipment maintenance costs by 10% while improving performance. This goal was met and exceeded by consolidating business applications on fewer servers and finding a new way to store data.

Results

- ★ Reduced overall server maintenance costs by 13% — or $30,500 per year — and improved response times for customers up to 60 percent (depending on the task).
- ★ Changed the way that legally required imaging data is stored. This reduced related equipment needs and maintenance costs by 80% — or $43,500 per year — while increasing data stability.
- ★ Increased storage space on servers by 550 percent to accommodate projected growth during the next 3 to 5 years, and reduced physical space occupied by servers and related equipment by approximately 40 percent.
- ★ Consolidated business applications from four outdated servers to two new servers, reducing the total number of servers from 13 to 10, all of which are now within their productive life cycles.
- ★ Agency system administrators have fewer pieces of equipment to manage so they can spend more time identifying troublesome areas, anticipating problems and finding fixes before interruptions occur.

Team Name: L&I's Computing & Production Services Team
Team Members: Eric Vonderscheer, Ron Shively, Pasha Naini, Robert Reed, Bob Santeford, David Karakas, Marv Clarambeau
CONTACT: Marv Clarambeau, (360) 902-5998

Half as Many Computers Means Doubling Efficiencies

Labor and Industries has 10 "mobile" construction compliance inspectors across the state who work almost exclusively in the field, using laptop computers to access information they need to perform inspections. In addition, each inspector also uses a fixed-station desktop computer to complete some aspects of their work and perform other automated tasks. Besides complicating the inspectors' jobs, the use of two separate computers often resulted in compatibility problems (computers don't always work well together). Another significant consideration was that having two separate computer systems also translated into increased costs for training, computer rental, maintenance and technical support.

The agency set a goal to reduce annual computer equipment, maintenance & support costs for these mobile compliance inspectors by 30%. This goal was exceeded by making it possible for the inspectors to complete all their work using only their laptop computers.

Results

★ Reduced annual computer rental costs for mobile compliance inspectors by 40%, an annual cost avoidance of more than $18,000.

★ Reduced the number of computers for mobile compliance inspectors by 50%, thus reducing maintenance and related support costs.

★ Simplified the work of mobile compliance inspectors by enabling them to complete computer work on one machine rather than two.

Team Name: CREDITS Project, SCS IT Unit, Regional IT Units
Team Members: John Matthews, Terry Schurke, Shannon Beigert, Kathy Krogh, Shirley Lyshol, Evelyn Hinken, Stuart Petersen, Cass Lehinger, Cindy Reandeau, Mark Poage, Donna Edwards

CONTACT: Terry Schurke, (360) 902-6403

Emphasizing Safety for Teen Workers in Fast Food Restaurants

Working teen are more than twice as likely to be injured as working adults. Nearly half of today's working teenagers are employed in the food service industry, most of them in fast food restaurants. This industry has the highest incidence of injuries to teens — with slips, falls, cuts, and abrasions accounting for 85% of teen restaurant injuries. These are preventable injuries that cost an average of $5,400 for each workers' compensation claim filed.

Labor and Industries staff teamed with the Washington Restaurant Association (WRA) to develop a pilot project intended to eliminate all injuries requiring medical treatment during the model month of February 2001. In addition, the project set a three-month goal of reducing injuries by 25 percent among participating restaurants. The team trained supervisors and crew leaders, developed best practices for reducing injuries, and developed a model "non-slip" shoe policy that was adopted by several employers.

Results

★ There were no injuries requiring medical treatment (other than first aid) during the model month among participating restaurants.

★ Additionally, there was a 50 percent drop in injuries to all workers (many of them teenagers) in those restaurants over the same period one year ago.

★ Participating restaurants developed safety programs based on the model workshops and held monthly meetings with teen workers using "best practices" training materials. Several restaurants adopted the model shoe policy after it was demonstrated that significant savings were possible for employers who implement non-slip footwear programs.

★ A plan to replicate this workshop across the state and possibly customize the training for other types of teen employment such as agriculture is being developed.

Team Name: Teen Worker Pilot Project Team
Team Members: Patrick Woods, Larry Corbin, Rich Ervin, Elaine Fischer, Bridgit Flory, Bob LeMay, Mary Miller, Monty Paradis, Roberta Soran; Washington Restaurant Association: Anthony Anton, Kim Claussen

CONTACT: Rich Ervin, (360) 902-5310

Distributing Computer Software Efficiently and Effectively

Labor and Industries' process to package and distribute computer software to users in the agency failed to ensure that the programs worked properly, that they got to the right users, and that they were compatible with the user's equipment. As a result, staff sometimes received programs that did not work properly. And often, no one knew that there was a problem until the new software was put into use. This resulted in costly work stoppages. It also created extra follow-up work for the agency's Design and Engineering and Network Operations staff, and caused delays in scheduling for users receiving new computer software. The old distribution process presented multiple opportunities for possible failures and breakdowns as computer software was distributed to users, making it difficult to locate and fix problems.

A goal was set to reduce extra follow-up work by Design and Engineering and Network Operations staff by 50 percent. The testing and distribution process was improved to detect problems and create solutions before the user is affected.

Results

★ Reduced follow-up work required of Design and Engineering and Network Operations staff by 52 percent for each computer software program distributed.

★ Reduced average time required to distribute a computer software program by 3.4 percent, from 9.38 hours to 9.04 hours.

★ Reduced calls to the help desk and desktop work stoppages related to computer software program distributions.

★ The improved process for distributing computer software programs throughout the agency allows staff to find and fix problems faster, and yield better results.

★ Increased the agency's ability to manage the software distribution process and provide current status to customers.

Team Name: The SMS Improvement Project
Team Members: Bill Gillespie, Gary Epp, Loren Gee, James Dolliver, Gordon Swarthout
CONTACT: Bill Gillespie, (360) 902-5872

New and Improved Data Back-Up

Everyday during non-work hours, Labor and Industries backs up and stores computer data to prevent its loss in the event of disaster or other system failure. At times storage space has been exceeded, and the back-ups take longer than the non-work hours in a day. This results in the back-ups being completed during work hours, causing work slow downs and stoppages, as well as back-up failures for open files.

A goal was set to double the speed of the back-up process, and triple the storage space available for back ups. An innovative "back-end network" was developed to back up and store data via a new connection that is separate and independent of the traditional links used to perform work.

Results

★ Agency data can now be completely backed up and stored during non-work hours, and selected agency data can now be backed up at any time without interfering with agency work in progress.

★ Agency data can now be backed up and stored two to four times faster (depending on the type of data) than was previously possible.

★ Storage space for backing up agency data was tripled.

★ Multiple paths were developed for data to move to and from storage. This makes it faster to get files from storage and further reduces the agency's risk of permanent loss of data access.

★ The new process and network is projected to meet the agency's growth needs for backing up and storing data for the next three to five years. Additionally, it also makes it simpler and less expensive to accommodate anticipated growth.

Team Name: SAN Implementation Team
Team Members: Ron Shively (Project Lead), Pasha Naini, David Karakas, Bob Reed, Bob Santeford, Marv Clarambeau, Marjorie Dausener, Russ Kalista, Bruce Santy

CONTACT: Marv Clarambeau, (360) 902-5998

Travel Reimbursement Made Easy

Whenever Labor and Industries staffers are required to travel in the performance of their jobs, they are reimbursed for their expenses. To receive this reimbursement in the past, they submitted a paper travel voucher to Fiscal Office staff. This system was complicated, unwieldy and frequently required Fiscal Office staff — who understood the complex and intricate rules — to correct the forms and ensure travelers were reimbursed.

Then L&I piloted a new electronic Travel Voucher System (TVS). Under TVS operating rules, vouchers can be revised only by travelers. Since most travelers don't understand travel regulations, many vouchers were being returned to travelers for corrections, delaying payments for up to 60 days. The result was widespread frustration and dissatisfaction.

Fiscal Office staff provided information to travelers to increase their knowledge of regulations, and streamlined some procedures, eliminating duplication of travel voucher review.

Results

★ Travel vouchers are now processed in the Fiscal Office within 24 hours of receipt.

★ Travel vouchers are processed by one full-time employee — additional staff time is no longer needed to process vouchers.

★ Labor and Industries employees now get reimbursed within 3 to 4 days of submitting their travel vouchers — a significant improvement from the 60 days previously experienced.

Team Name: Travel Rapid Action Project Team
Team Members: Dan Contris, Angie Flahaut, Nancy Clark, Tammie Wilson, Libby Faust, Rudy Arellano, Steve Binder, Jean Vanek, Dave Reilly, Kelly Rosie; Office of Financial Management: Meredith Rafferty

CONTACT: Dan Contris or Steve Young, (360) 902-5743

Recruiting/Hiring Qualified Safety & Health Professionals

Labor and Industries' King County region has experienced difficulty keeping pace with the demand for workplace safety inspections, due to the difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified safety and health professionals. Supervisors were frustrated with the hiring process and the shortage of qualified candidates who were willing to work in King County.

The agency — in cooperation with the state Department of Personnel — set a goal of establishing an innovative outreach process that would attract qualified candidates to fill vacancies in King County. Specifically, the agency set out to recruit 15 qualified candidates for Safety and Health Specialist 2 positions in the Region's Compliance Program within a 10-week period. An expanded collaborative partnership with the Department of Personnel was created to change the testing and screening processes to better meet business needs. A model hiring process was developed. It included a "core competency" skill test that allows supervisors to screen directly for a potential candidate's knowledge and skill to perform the job. A community outreach program to labor unions, injured worker placement programs and others was created as part of the innovative recruitment efforts.

Results

- ★ Recruited 23 new, qualified candidates in 10 weeks.
- ★ Built new partnerships with DOP, Central Washington University and community partners to improve future hiring efforts.
- ★ Recruited four candidates from the Safety and Health program at Central Washington University.
- ★ Identified strategies and methods that will help in the recruitment process for other hard-to-fill positions.

Team Name: Office of Human Resources/Region 2 Recruitment Project
Team Members: Starleen Parsons (Team lead), Christopher Bowe, Deborah Yantis, Elizabeth Benavidez, James Monahan, Katherine Deuel, Kelly Dressel-Hays, Stephen Hardy, William Corbin, Roberta Soran, Gene Brehmeyer; Department of Personnel: Mitch Baker, Dave Cahill, Tom Rawlings; Consultants: Gayle Wilde, Patricia Delaney

CONTACT: Starleen Parsons, (360) 902-5695

Dealer License Applicant Requirements Form Reduces Waste

The Master Licensing Service (MLS) receives a tremendous number of requests for vehicle dealer license applications. While an average of two hundred and twenty application packets are sent out each month, very few are actually completed and returned due to the legal requirements involved in becoming a dealer. In order to reduce the ”waste” associated with mailing packets for which no application results, the team came up with a Dealer Requirements form to be sent as the ”first point of contact” for those persons interested in applying for a dealer license.

This form provides the list of requirements in an easy-to-read outline format. Once the individual receives and reviews the form, they are then able to determine whether or not they would qualify for the license. If they determine they would like to continue with the application process, they then contact either MLS or Dealer Services and request the multi-page packet. Unlike the large licensing packet, the Dealer Requirements form can be faxed or e-mailed to clients to help them quickly decide if they qualify. By placing the easy-to-read Dealer Requirements form on the Internet, those who determine they cannot qualify will not need to contact DOL at all. In addition to reducing production and delivery costs by reducing the number of packets sent out, additional dealer forms were placed on the Internet for easier public access.

Results

★ Reduces the number of application packets being reproduced, and the amount of postage being used to mail out the packets (saves $4,250 per year).

★ Improves customer awareness of licensing requirements prior to application request.

★ Provides Internet access for the Dealer Requirements Form and other Dealer Services forms.

★ Decreases licensing application processing time once the application has been received (saving 208 hours per year).

Team Name: Dealer License Applicant Requirement Team
Team Members: Nancy Skewis, Cherie Bullett, Ann Nielsen, Becky Alcorn, Winnie Killian, Candy Barnes, Chuck Coach, Carmen Borja
CONTACT: Chuck Coach, (360) 664-6453

Dealer and Manufacturer Services Business Verification and In-House Training Program

The process for certifying new dealers used to consist of an investigator conducting a physical inspection of the new place of business to verify that the requirements have been met. During that inspection, training was provided to the new dealer.

The in-house training program pilot test eliminated the physical inspection of the place of business. Instead, the new dealer is required to submit photographs of their place of business and the photos are examined to verify compliance with requirements. Training for new dealers is then conducted at the Dealer Services regional office.

This new process is also used during the change of name and address process, which only requires submission of photographs and verification that the dealer's business telephone is listed through the phone directory.

Results

★ Reduces the cost of new dealer certification.

★ Establishes a more positive relationship between the investigators and the dealers.

★ Promotes greater uniformity and standardization in our training with dealers.

Team Name: Dealer Services Business Verification & Training Team
Team Members: Lewis Dennie, Deborah Gadberry, James Botaitis, Grant Collins, Bob Oster

CONTACT: Lewis Dennie, (509) 482-3609

Prorate and Fuel Tax Refunds Streamlined

There are several units in Prorate and Fuel Tax that process fuel tax refunds for their customers. The processing of these refunds utilizes two distinct computer systems: (1) VISTA – which is maintained by Lockheed Martin – is a tax return system used by many jurisdictions, and (2) UNISYS – which is the Washington State system which, for this purpose, is used for processing the refund. The two systems were not set up to communicate with each other, requiring staff to double key large amounts of data into these systems.

The study group accomplished four major objectives: 1) requested a computer system enhancement to change the issuance of refunds from a weekly to a daily basis, 2) requested an enhancement to keep twelve entries on the refund system instead of three, 3) requested system enhancements to expand the capability of VISTA to download information into UNISYS – eliminating the double-keying of much of the information, and 4) updated all flowcharts in each of the work areas.

In addition, staff and management are currently working with Information Services staff to move the refund system off of UNISYS and onto a Visual Basic program in a server environment, which is much more user friendly. The benefits of this migration will be significant but unknown at this time.

Results

★ Changed refund issuance from a weekly to a daily basis – now customers receive their refund claim form in one or two days instead of a week or more.

★ Eliminated the double-keying of much of the customer and refund information – resulting in a savings of more than 385 staff hours annually and a significant reduction in the error rate.

★ Staff can now look up the last 12 unlicensed refund claims by any one account on the system instead of having to look up the refunds in manual warrant register books, saving 780 hours of staff time.

Team Name: Refund Process Study Group
Team Members: Jeff Beach, Betty Mickelson, Khai Vu, Judy Harlow, Charlotte Cureton, Wendy Seid, Ken Cole, Tami Jones, Kim Bankuti, Doug Gill, Jody Sisk, Wendy Seid, Lora Jungmayer, Susan Gordham, Vic Lafrancoeur, Linda Rae, Diane Foster, Debra Then
CONTACT: Jeff Beach, (360) 664-1844

Refund Check Insertion Improvements

The Financial Audit Services (FAS) and Office Support Services (OSS) units in Licensing's Prorate and Fuel Tax (P/FT) Program used to spend large amounts of time processing warrants (checks) to be sent to customers receiving refunds. These checks were sent to General Accounting from the State Treasurer's office, and then forwarded to DOL. Reports that accompanied the checks were separated and delivered to the FAS unit. FAS verified the information on the reports and forwarded them to the OSS unit. The OSS unit matched each check to the original claim and the remittance advice form, and then mailed them to the customer. Under this process, it took approximately five or six days for checks to be mailed to customers from the time the warrant was generated. After checks were mailed, the information was keyed into an Excel spreadsheet. This process averaged 11 minutes for each batch of 30 warrants.

As a result of changes to the process, the State Treasurer's Office now delivers about 40% of these checks directly to Consolidated Mail Services for mailing. P/FT only receives the issuance report and remittance advice for each warrant and OSS staff keys the information into an Excel spreadsheet. Mailing time for checks has now been reduced from approximately six days to two days. The processing time for OSS staff has been reduced from 11 minutes to about one minute for a batch of 30.

Results

- ★ Reduced mailing time for checks not having attachments, from about six days to two days.
- ★ Reduced the time it took for OSS staff to process warrants from 11 minutes per batch to one minute for a batch of 30.
- ★ Increased security by minimizing the number of staff who must physically handle the warrants.

Team Name: Warrant Insertion Improvement Team
Team Members: Ann Diaz, Carol Durham, Lesley Kinley, Victor LaFrancoeur, Betty Mickelson, Donna Miller, Jaime Stephens, Khai Vu

CONTACT: Victor LaFrancoeur,t (360) 664-1838

New Process Saves Customers Time, Reduces Confusion and Provides Greater Flexibility

Feedback from state agency employees who take training courses from the Department of Personnel (DOP) identified two problems that were important for DOP to solve. First, customers wanted longer than the existing two-month lead-time to sign up for a course (many customers were using time-consuming tickler files). Second, customers wanted less confusing and more user friendly course catalogs. As a result of this feedback, DOP improved the process for registering employees for training so that customers can now register up to six months in advance for classes, the course catalog is easier to read and understand, and every course listed in the catalog is available for registration.

Results

★ Allows DOP customers to plan for classes further in advance which makes scheduling easier.

★ Saves employees time in registering for classes.

★ Allows DOP to meet customer demand more readily, particularly for the most popular classes - DOP schedules more classes as existing ones fill up.

Team Name: Bigger Window of Opportunity to Register for Training
Team Members: Rod Bracken, Judy Storey, Jean Backman, Bill Zachmann, Doug Spohn, Tammy Wood

Contact: Doug Spohn, (360) 664-1991

Shipping and Accounting Working Together

State agencies frequently contact the Department of Printing (PRT) requesting information related to delivery confirmation. Access to this information was limited to the shipping department only. A team consisting of Accounting and Shipping Department employees researched and implemented a process which tracks package delivery, payroll time for PRT drivers and billing charges for print jobs. PRT Accounting staff are able to quickly respond to customer inquiries regarding delivery information, thus increasing customer satisfaction and efficiency for PRT. This process also saves PRT an estimated 326 FTE hours a year by eliminating additional paperwork, allowing an increase in delivery capabilities.

Results

★ Saves PRT an estimated 326 FTE hours per year by eliminating additional paperwork.

★ Improved response time for PRT.

★ Increases delivery capabilities.

★ Increases customer satisfaction.

Team Name: Shipping and Accounting Working Together
Team Members: Steve Dowdell, Lynley Clark, Mike Singer, Corey Dean, Sean Mahoney, Debbie Molenda, Patrice Landaker, Carol Ames

CONTACT: Carol Ames, (360) 570-5543

Improved Data Analysis Helps Reduce Errors

Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) staff experienced processing and system errors, especially regarding payments, after implementing major service improvements with a new third party record keeper. Some errors were the result of manual data entry and some were due to the record keeping system. DCP's process to collect and analyze meaningful data was time consuming and did not yield ready-to-use information.

DCP revised their process of monitoring system errors to ensure that all processing errors were reported, documented and responded to in a timely manner. Analysis of this data helped focus improvement efforts on urgent and reoccurring errors, including implementing a two-step validation of payment information prior to processing. The revised process now takes approximately 15 minutes a day, compared to up to four hours before. Processing and system errors have been reduced from a three-month average of 195 in December 2000, to 28 in May 2001, a reduction of 85 percent.

Results

★ Reduced processing errors to DCP participants, especially payments, by 85 percent.

★ Reduced staff time to consolidate and record customer complaint data by over 90 percent.

★ Offered customers greater confidence in the accuracy of their accounts.

★ Improved customer satisfaction, which is reflected by the reduced number of complaints.

Team Name: Reduction of DCP Record Keeping System Errors
Team Members: Anne Holdren, Dina Morrow, Guy Richardson, Cindy Wallace

CONTACT: Anne Holdren, (360) 664-7009

Collecting Current Member Addresses

All current Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Plan 2 members will have a choice to transfer to a new retirement plan, PERS Plan 3, beginning in March 2002. To help members make this important choice, the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) is conducting an extensive education campaign with a direct mail component. In the past, DRS did not maintain current addresses for members until they retired. DRS was missing 47,000 addresses (37 percent) for the active PERS Plan 2 members.

Through cooperative efforts with employers, DRS reduced the number of missing addresses from 47,000 to 6,000. In the process employers avoided the costs of distributing this information to their employees. This approach saved the costs of using a third-party service to identify customer addresses. Those costs are estimated at $50,000 or higher depending upon the vendor approach.

Results

- ★ Provides 120,000 members with better customer service and more timely information through direct mailings.
- ★ Benefits employers by avoiding the costs of distributing 120,000 sets of information to employees.
- ★ Avoids the need to identify customers without address information, and then sort and package 41,000 information sets to the customers' employers.
- ★ Provides employers with a process to report addresses, which is part of their new reporting responsibilities under Plan 3, in time to assist the project and members during implementation of the new Plan 3.

Team Name: PERS Plan 3 Address Collection Team
Team Members: Judy Allen, Ken Baldwin, Carlos Benavidez, Brian Berghoff, Debbie Callar, Greg Deam, Anna Easton, Jennifer Fasciona, Scott Koura, Chris Lamb, Rob Long, Gayle McGee, Dave Nelsen, Barbara Reed, Ann Risdon, Kim Smith, Erin Soper, Mitch Thompson, Lyle Tillett, Linda Watson, Anna White, Janette Witchey

CONTACT: Rachel Nesse, (360) 664-7934

A Simplified Approach to Balancing the Books

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) administers two defined contribution plans with two investment options. A third-party administrator (TPA) manages members' self-directed investments and the State Investment Board (SIB) manages all other member investments. DRS accounting staff perform four reconciliations monthly to ensure accurate financial reporting. This process was time-consuming because of its complexity and was further complicated due to accounting differences between the TPA and DRS.

A solution was implemented to simplify balancing the books. The team designed a new form layout that is easier to prepare and clearly identifies outstanding balances. Discrepancies can be coordinated quickly and resolved. DRS collaborated with the TPA and the SIB to create a common language to improve the processing differences between the organizations. The team developed detailed procedures and standardized the reconciliation workflow. The improvements provided an excellent format for training more accountants to work the process efficiently.

Results

★ Streamlines the reconciliation process by creating clear and consistent standards.

★ Improves early identification and resolution of outstanding balances.

★ Produces a standard training guide for accountants doing the process.

★ Decreases the reconciliation process time by creating a process template.

Team Name: Plan Three Reconciliation Process Team
Team Members: Debbie Ocheltree, Wendy Page, Larry Bona

CONTACT: Debbie Ocheltree, (360) 664-7256

Effective Member Decision Support

Implementing an entirely new retirement system requires extensive and effective communications with customers who will be affected by the new system. Members must make significant financial decisions related to the new retirement system.

This project used multiple means of communicating with members including newsletters, brochures, classroom investment education seminars, videos, focus groups, web pages and telephone support. Extensive statistics on usage and duration of customer contacts were kept to monitor the effectiveness of the program. Customer surveys were conducted during and after the education efforts to assess effectiveness of the process, and process adjustments were made based on survey results. Quality assurance on communications helped vendors receive immediate feedback on improvements that may be needed.

Results

★ Increased 99 percent of seminar participants' understanding of Retirement Investments. Sixty-six percent of participants rated their understanding as good or excellent after the seminar, compared with 19 percent before the seminar.

★ Improvements based on customer survey results are being applied to the next project PERS Plan 3 to assure effectiveness of communications.

★ Creating active quality assurance reviews of presentations provides education vendors immediate feedback to improve the quality of presentations.

Team Name: SERS Communications Team
Team Members: Sheila Ehrig, Stephen Wade, Laura Leland, Keoni Fontaine, Rose Bossio, Stephanie Penrose, Greg Deam, Jeff Wickman, Kris Fjalstad

CONTACT: Rose Bossio, (360) 664-7286

Process Improvements for Retirement Members

When a new School Employees' Retirement System (SERS) member elected to transfer their retirement contributions to the new SERS Plan 3, their account was credited with a one-time additional transfer payment. In addition, members who transferred were credited with a share of extraordinary investment gains realized in 1998 and 2000. The SERS project worked with the State Investment Board to project cash flow needs for the transfer and gain sharing obligations. Accurately estimating the projected cash requirements allowed the State Investment Board to liquidate only the amounts necessary to cover the payments. Having the cash available for crediting the accounts resulted in funds being available to members for investment 30 days earlier.

SERS also instituted three new investment options for members who manage their own investments of contribution funds. The new Horizon funds were created for members who want to choose pre-established multi-asset portfolios with varying risk levels that are managed and automatically adjusted by the State Investment Board. This results in fewer transactions needed by the investor.

Previously customers who wanted to withdraw retirement contributions were required to submit a different form to either the Department of Retirement Systems or a contracted record keeper, depending upon which investment program they participated in. Now the customer sends all withdrawal requests to the record keeper. This saves time and confusion for the customer, eliminates delays to reroute forms, and improves turnaround time for the withdrawal request.

Results

- ★ Made the transfer and gain sharing payments available for investment in the market 30 days earlier than projected.
- ★ Eliminated the need for the customer to continually re-balance their portfolio.
- ★ Provided one location for customers to submit all withdrawal requests, eliminating confusion, errors, and reducing turnaround time.

Team Name: SERS Project Team
Team Members: Rose Bossio, Jeff Wickman, Ken Baldwin, Greg Deam, Ron Newell, Cathy Cale, Wendy Page, Anne Holdren
CONTACT: Rose Bossio, (360) 664-7286

Leveraging Communications with Web Services

Implementing an entirely new statewide program poses special communications challenges. The School Employees' Retirement System (SERS) project faced the challenges of providing information on the new retirement program to approximately 46,000 school employees throughout the state, and providing training to staff on the business and technical aspects of the new program. Each school employee needed to make a significant and irrevocable financial decision about whether to transfer to the new retirement plan called SERS Plan 3 or remain in SERS Plan 2. Providing consistent, unbiased information to these customers was of paramount importance.

In addition to using more traditional methods, the SERS team enhanced its comprehensive education and training program by using Web technology. A Web-based financial modeling tool was developed to allow members to create benefit projections for each Plan based on their personal circumstances. An online search capability was implemented on the SERS Web page for customers. Customers can search quickly for information using words and terms that are familiar to them.

Training of agency staff was improved by supplementing traditional training classes with a Web-based online training manual. The manual can be referenced quickly and is always available to the staff.

Results

- ★ Enhances customer service through the DRS information Web site, saving customer time and minimizing customer confusion.
- ★ Provides immediate benefit estimates to assist members with their transfer decision, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- ★ Establishes a best practice for online training and procedures manuals for DRS, which was not previously available.
- ★ Saves staff timeby using the online training manual, which was previously spent coaching one on one.

Team Name: SERS Project Team
Team Members: Rose Bossio, Sheila Ehrig, Greg Deam, Kris Fjalstad, Laura Leland, Stephen Wade, Brad Andrews, Stephanie Penrose, Tim Valencia
CONTACT: Rose Bossio, (360) 664-7286

Automation of 6166 Estate Tax Deferrals

In certain cases, federal guidelines allow estate taxes to be paid over a period of fifteen years. The first five years of payments are interest only and the last ten years are interest and principal.

When processing such payments in the past, employees used a manual process which was complex and prone to error. Other problems surfaced when an estate amended a tax return. Changes to the principle amount required recalculation of all subsequent interest and principal payments. Calculating these changes manually took up to 4-8 hours per file.

Results

- ★ Developed a spreadsheet which uses the principal balance to automate the calculation of payments and interest.
- ★ Reduced time on each file from an average of 4-8 hours to a few minutes for most, and up to 30 minutes for the most complicated. This saved 256 hours annually.
- ★ Copies of spreadsheets distributed to the taxpayer provide an audit trail and show each calculation, allowing the customer to verify information.
- ★ Amended figures can be entered into the spreadsheet and the new principle amount used to automatically recalculate payments and interest. This information can be printed and sent to the estate representative.
- ★ Files maintained on a shared division drive allow multiple employees to work on the file and update or provide information if a telephone call is received.

Team Members: Teresa Hansen, Phoebe Hein, Kim Davis, Debra Brower, Linda Smith, Frank Marshall, Melanie Piccin, Julie Japhet, Thuy Kim Huynh

CONTACT: Frank Marshall, (360) 753-7518

Tax Equity for Farmers Legislation

The statutory definition of "farmer" excluded growers who use their agricultural products in a manufacturing process (e.g., making wine from grapes). These growers were not eligible to purchase agricultural inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer) at wholesale unless the growing and manufacturing operations were separately organized.

The Department proposed legislation to recognize that a person can be both a farmer and a manufacturer without losing the tax benefit provided to farmers. In recent years, the agricultural industry has changed substantially so that growers must manufacture products from the crops they raise to meet market demand, and have been forced to restructure their business operations as a result.

Results

- ★ Eliminates the need for a person to incur the costly expense of restructuring his or her farming and manufacturing operations into separate entities in order to retain the tax benefit provided to farmers.
- ★ A grower can now purchase agricultural inputs at wholesale regardless of whether he or she subsequently uses the products in a manufacturing operation.
- ★ A grower can now purchase horticultural services (such as cultivating land or harvesting agricultural products) without paying sales tax, regardless of whether he or she subsequently uses the products in a manufacturing operation. Although this issue has not been a problem to date, this legislation fixes an unintended consequence of 1993 legislative changes regarding horticultural services.
- ★ All farmers qualifying for the B&O tax exemption for wholesale sales of agricultural products are now exempt from the litter tax, as opposed to just those that produce nonmanufactured agricultural products from animals.
- ★ Updates and coordinates statutory definitions of "farmers" to eliminate conflicts between multiple uses of the term.

Team Name: Tax Equity for Farmers
Team Members: Russ Brubaker, Leslie Cushman, Claire Hesselholt, Fred Kiga, Alan Lynn, Ray Philen, Will Rice, Tim Sekerak, Don Taylor
CONTACT: Russ Brubaker, (360) 570-6131

Improving Property Tax Administration

Provisions in the property tax statutes regarding county Board of Equalization appeal deadlines, the levy correction process, and the ratio calculation process are in need of coordination and improvement. In addition, the property tax statutes contain incorrect language that needed to be removed after the courts found parts of Referendum 47 unconstitutional.

The Department proposed legislation that provided a uniform timeline for appeals to the county Boards of Equalization, improved the ratio calculation process for personal property, specified a levy error correction process, and deleted incorrect language.

Results

- ★ Allows the Department to use three years of personal property valuation data when calculating the ratio of assessed value to market value. This reduces the risk of generating large spikes or fluctuations in a county's ratio from one year to the next by increasing the sample size of data.
- ★ Provides authority for county Assessors to correct levy errors that resulted in taxpayers within a taxing district paying an incorrect amount of tax. These corrections may be phased-in over three years to lessen the financial impact to the district.
- ★ Provides a consistent statewide timeline for appeals to the county Boards of Equalization, for appeals on both valuation and exemption issues.
- ★ Removes statutory language on value-averaging that is incorrect and obsolete after the courts found parts of Referendum 47 to be unconstitutional.

Team Name: Improving Property Tax Administration
Team Members: Kathy Beith, Russ Brubaker, Sandra Guilfoil, Fred Kiga, Margaret Knudson, Deb Mandeville, Peri Maxey, Kim Qually, Will Rice, David Saavedra, Tim Sekerak, Don Taylor, Jim Winterstein

CONTACT: Russ Brubaker, (360) 570-6131

Sharing Resources to Find Unclaimed Property Claimants

The Unclaimed Property Section has over 1 million names listed in our database, and many of those owners no longer live at the address that was provided to our office or the owners are now deceased. The Revenue Agents within our Forest Tax Section have the tools and experience for locating people. The Agents periodically experience lag time with their collection activities and now use that time to locate unclaimed property owners.

Results

★ Mailed over 800 claim forms to potential owners/claimants.

★ Processed refunds between January and May 2001 totaling $2.1 million.

★ 540 owners received unclaimed property due to the efforts of the Revenue agents.

Team Name: Special Programs Locator Team
Team Members: Ann Ryan, Jim Lovett, Randi Johnson, Patti Wilson, Mary Gisler, Alisha Rollins, Darcy Floe

CONTACT: Patti Wilson, (360) 664-2200

Tacoma Field Cooperative Committee

In early 2000, the Tacoma supervisors identified issues that were negatively affecting office morale and production. A committee was formed to identify improvement opportunities in processes to generate better cooperation between the Tacoma field office divisions.

Results

★ A Skip Tracing form was created to locate difficult-to-find taxpayers. This enabled auditors to request assistance from Compliance staff who had the expertise to find people.

★ A Compliance Research Request form was created to allow both auditors and revenue agents to request assistance from each other and obtain specific information from a taxpayer.

★ Instituted a Buddy Program within the office by pairing up people from each division.

★ Instituted a pre-audit screening of accounts with Compliance to determine viability of an audit before beginning audit process, potentially saving staff time.

★ Created an Expert Informational Matrix to assist the front counter staff when they need answers to specific taxpayers' questions.

Team Name: Tacoma Field Cooperative Committee
Team Members: Dennis Malone, Karen Erickson, Susan Macdonald, Chris Westwood, Steve Schneider; Sponsors: Jim Munro, Mark Craig, Joyce Veenstra, Mark Longrie

CONTACT: Dennis Malone, (253) 593-5147

Alternative Audit Sampling

Field auditors have traditionally used a block sampling technique to test taxpayers' sales and purchase documents to ensure proper reporting of their excise tax liability. In these cases, auditors would typically go to a file cabinet at the taxpayer's location and assume that all pertinent documents are there to be reviewed. However, in some cases, there may be missing records. The creation of other sampling techniques enable auditors to apply sampling methods that are more appropriate in audits of larger, more complex taxpayers, that typically involve large volumes of records.

Results

- ★ Created and provided field auditors with one week of classroom instruction on alternative audit sampling techniques.
- ★ Alternative audit sampling may work well with the new Managed Audit Program.
- ★ Using the random sampling method, the probability for increasing the accuracy of the audit findings is enhanced.

Team Name: Alternative Audit Sampling
Team Members: Frank Akerley, Mike Chertude, Scott Elliott, Scott Garrison, Kim Halvorsen, Sandra Hurley, Margaret Nabakoza, Stan Nicman, Kathy Robertson, Bob Schauer, Rick Tedrow, Chuck Young, Cherryl Scott (Sponsor)

CONTACT: Stan Nicman, (425) 489-1727

Very Low Income Housing Property Tax Exemption

The property tax exemption for very low income households had some administrative barriers and unintended inadequacies that hampered the equitable exemption of low income housing.

The Department proposed legislation that increased the flexibility of the exemption in order to allow property owners to retain the exemption, and to minimally expand the program to include relevant providers of quality low-income housing.

Results

- ★ Expands the exemption to include spaces in mobile home parks owned by nonprofit organizations.
- ★ Changes the administration of the exemption regarding group homes, so that each occupant constitutes a separate household and the income of each occupant is considered separately for eligibility.
- ★ Allows the exemption to be retained if an occupant's income rises above fifty percent over the median income level, but remain less than eighty percent of the median income level in facilities with less than ten units or spaces.
- ★ Changes the date for calculating the number of low-income occupants from January 1 to December 31 for the first year of operation, allowing the first year of operation to be exempt from property taxes.
- ★ Includes tribal and intertribal housing authorities in the exemption program.

Team Name: Very Low Income Housing
Team Members: Russ Brubaker, Leslie Cushman, Sandra Guilfoil, Fred Kiga, Peri Maxey, Kim Qually, Will Rice, Tim Sekerak, Harold Smith, Steve Smith, Don Taylor, Jim Thomas, Jim Winterstein

CONTACT: Russ Brubaker, (360) 570-6131

Compliance On-Line Manual

The Field Compliance Manual is the primary resource for collection staff statewide. The manual covers policies, procedures, and legal issues associated with basic through complex tax collection actions. Over the years, the manual had grown to a huge hard copy document on each revenue agent's desk. Information was difficult to locate. Updates required hours of copying, purging, and reinserting of pages. The new manual is on-line in a new format on the agency Intranet site. It contains highly accessible menus for each topic. There are hundreds of links to laws, WACs, forms, and instructional materials. Updates are completed on-line as needed.

Results

- ★ Information is more readable and easy to locate.
- ★ Centralized on-line updating guarantees everyone is operating off the same page.
- ★ Information is available at the click of a mouse rather than leafing through huge three ring binders.
- ★ Links provide much more information than a hard copy manual could provide.
- ★ Eliminates paper and printing costs saving $300 a year and 200 hours of staff time in updating manuals.

Team Name: Compliance Manual Rewrite team
Team Members: Dana Lynn, Anita Ady, Daryl Clark, Nick Harper, Joe'l Albrecht, Ross Garrison, George Willock, Libby Parsons

CONTACT: Ross Garrison, (360) 570-6053

Auditing in an Electronic Environment

Many businesses retain records in an electronic format. Auditors must be able to access and analyze the data in an efficient and effective manner. The Department developed procedures and training for auditing in an electronic environment. This program reduces auditor time at the taxpayer's place of business by approximately 20 percent and is less intrusive to the taxpayer. The data is obtained electronically and input errors are eliminated. Data in electronic format lends itself to advanced sampling techniques. Audits are preformed more efficiently resulting in a better product.

Results

- ★ The entire audit staff was trained in computer assisted audit techniques.
- ★ Software was analyzed and acquired to assist in data conversion.
- ★ Computerized audit tips and techniques were distributed to the auditors.
- ★ An auditing reference manual was created and distributed.
- ★ Less intrusive audit techniques were developed and implemented saving approximately 20 percent of audit time at the place of business.

Team Name: Auditing in an Electronic Environment
Team Members: Scott Elliott, John Grant, Robert Suarez, Greg King, Danielle Musser, Carol Erdle, Kathy Robertson, Jeff Bemis, Forrest Bush (Sponsor)

CONTACT: John Grant, (509) 576-3020

Eliminating Modem and Line Costs

The agency currently has a number of systems which require expensive modem-to-modem phone line connections between the Department of Information Services IBM mainframe and the Department of Revenue's Tandem and Pertec systems. As systems are rewritten or eliminated, the agency will replace the expensive modem connections with other less expensive connections and will discontinue the use of some software programs.

Results

- ★ Eliminated Gemini Software at savings of $2300/year in May, 2001.
- ★ Turned off spare Pertec connections and phone line at savings of $903/month, in June 2001.
- ★ Met with Employment Security Department to discuss eliminating older connections for mainframe screens.
- ★ Met with the Department of Licensing to discuss replacing older connections to the Master Business License group for master business application data.
- ★ The Forest Tax Section plans to replace the Pertec data entry system.

Team Members: Georman Chin, Sue Kim, Charlotte Craven, Gary Dubuque, Carl Schwarmann, Kurt Wieburg, Larry Agan, Susan Swan; ESD and DOL personnel

CONTACT: Georman Chin, (360) 586-7995

100% Accurate Now and Again

When the Governor mandated a 93.5% accuracy rate for food stamps, a Home and Community Service (HCS) team was formed to ensure correct eligibility determination on an ongoing basis. The team for food stamp eligibility determination developed an audit and training plan that included:

1. Conducting Food Stamp Basic Training.
2. Providing ongoing training on Food Stamp accuracy in biweekly unit meetings and monthly all-staff trainings.
3. Developing Tip Sheets for high error eligibility issues.
4. Conducting team staffing for all cases selected for quality control.
5. Distributing audit results to staff.
6. Consistently keeping staff informed on policy and eligibility issues.

Results

★ Achieved 100% food stamp accuracy rate for both fiscal years 1999 and 2000, exceeding the 97.67 statewide rate.

★ Increased staff cooperation and productivity with the team-building process used in this project.

★ Established a process for consistently producing accurate food stamp eligibility.

★ Clients receive consistent quality service when benefits are correctly determined.

★ Staff can count on reliably receiving the information they need to calculate food stamp benefits.

★ Prevention of federal fines and sanctions by meeting the mandated accuracy rate.

Team Name: HCS, AASA Region 4 Food Stamp Quality Assurance
Team Members: Beverly Fails, Peggy Rezac, Judith Finn, Kim Jimerson, Sue Lewis, Jerald Ulrich, German Rodriguez

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Early Warning Protects Vulnerable Adults

The law, which required the reporting of abuse of vulnerable adults, was changed in July 1999. There was great disagreement among stakeholders on the interpretation and implementation of the new law. In addition, there appeared to be a lack of reporting of abuse among certain provider groups.

Focus groups were convened in many areas of the state with a broad array of stakeholders. The groups achieved consensus and participated in writing guidelines for implementing the law. A training package and supportive materials were developed based on the recommendations of the focus groups.

Results

★ Perspectives of diverse stakeholders were included in the interpretation and implementation of a new law.

★ Educated the community on how and when to report abuse of vulnerable adults.

★ Increased calls reporting abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults by 17% in the months following the training.

★ Consistent enforcement of mandatory reporting requirements by Residential Care Staff.

★ Increased statewide safety net for vulnerable adults.

★ Developed a training package that will be used for ongoing training with DSHS regulators, new staff, and the community at large.

Team Name: Mandatory Reporting Stakeholder Group
Team Members: Patricia Lashway, Jan Thomson, Lori Melchiori, Irene Owen, Glen Knepper, Robert Stroh, Denny McKee, Stacy Winokur, Annette Curry, Ken Luthy, Pat Bossert, Tom Farrow, John Gaskell, Melanie Johnson, Bill Moss, Larita Paulsen, John Piacitelli, Sheldon Plumer; Providers and Stakeholders: Janet Adams, Patti Barber, Jennifer Boharski, Mark Buckley, Donna Cobb, Naomi Cummings, Bill Day, Martha Ehman, Dan Fruichantie, Kary Hyre, Jan Kavadas, Jeff Larsen, Kathy Marshall, Debbie Murphy, Bruce Reeves, Betty Schwierterman, Janell Shardelman, Carol Silva, Tom Stanley, Harry Steinmetz, Laurie St. Ours, Nancy Watkins
CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Faster Financial Services Help Vulnerable Adults

Federal guidelines require that medical/long-term care financial applications be processed within 45 days. The Pasco Home and Community Service office completed 73% of the applications within this required timeframe. This means that 27% of clients who submitted applications waited longer than 45 days for notification of their eligibility. Applicants, many who are severely ill and disabled, went without needed services, Medicaid coupons, and long-term care.

A team of clerical, financial, and social services staff identified delay-points within the application process. Steps were established for clerical, financial, and social services to reduce the delays. Improved communication methods and tools were developed and implemented.

Results

- ★ Increased ‘On-time applications’ by 23% from 73% to 96%.
- ★ Savings of 188 hours annually means less time is spent on client/provider phone calls and more time available to process applications quickly.
- ★ Improved communication between clerical, financial and social services saved time to improve response times.
- ★ Improved client services in that eligibility determination is faster, needed long-term care services can be arranged, and clients’ health and safety are maintained and enhanced.
- ★ Fewer phone calls are required to complete the application. This time is used to process applications quickly.

Team Name: Pasco PIT (Process Improvement Team)
Team Members: Karen Lindberg, Sharon Anderson, Diane Storms, Judi Jeffreys, Sherrie Michael, Esmeralda Luksic, Sande Nielsen, Annie Vasquez

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Innovative Financial Web Page Saves Staff Time

Financial workers had to look at many different WEB sites while determining financial eligibility. This took a good deal of time and staff found it difficult to remember sites locations. Many sites had been saved as “favorites,” but this also forced staff to scroll through all of their favorites to find the correct site.

A team of financial workers and the information technology specialist developed a one-page WEB site for financial staff that would house the most often used sites. This Webpage includes a variety of frequently used sites and manuals for verifying income or resources. The new web page also allows financial staff to open as many of 15 sites without losing their access to the primary program used in determining eligibility.

Results

- ★ A user-friendly website encouraged the use of the inter-intranet information.
- ★ Staff spent less time looking for the appropriate Internet site.
- ★ Improved accuracy and quicker processing of applications with the use of the Internet.
- ★ Saved 693 hours in financial worker time each year.

Team Name: Financial Web Page Team
Team Members: Chuck Johnson, Judi Jeffreys, Maryann Risenhoover, Sande Nielsen, Diane Storms, Rick Iddings, Annie Vasquez, Corina Garza

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Innovative Training Improves Client Services and Staff Morale

Financial staff and managers expressed a desire for ongoing financial eligibility training to be conducted by Home and Community Services (HCS). While formal training is provided, staff expressed the need for additional training opportunities. This training was to include eligibility, program changes, Food Stamp Basic Training and Financial/Medical CORE Training.

Monthly, all-financial staff training present eligibility material, changes in eligibility or policy, and program enhancements. The team updated the Food Assistance Learning Guide to present Food Stamp Basic Training for a long-term care population and eligibility rules. They also designed the Long-Term Care Financial/Medical CORE Training curriculum and training modules.

Results

★ Maintained a food stamp 100% accuracy rate for fiscal year 2000 at Region 4 Home and Community Services.

★ Greatly improved customer service. Financial services are consistently and reliably provided.

★ Savings of $14,500 resulted with this effort.

★ Increased employee satisfaction and morale as management has responded to the desire for training, and employee needs are being met.

★ Increased customer service with staff's program knowledge increasing as well as their understanding of their job as a whole.

Team Name: HCS Region 4 Financial Training Team
Team Members: Peggy Rezac, Judith Finn, Jerald Ulrich

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Teamwork Speeds Return Home for Nursing Facility Residents

When Aging and Adult Services Administration initiated a statewide mandate to reduce the number of Medicaid clients in nursing facilities, some Region 4 Home and Community Services (HCS) staff had a problem. Staff assigned to King County nursing facilities with a high proportion of Medicaid residents found it difficult to plan effectively for both the large number of new admissions and long-time residents. A special team of two social workers and a community nurse consultant was formed to help.

First, the team assessed all Medicaid residents. Then they helped relocate those who could return to community living without delay. And finally, staff developed discharge plans for the others able to return to the community with assistance. Case managers followed up on the remaining resident discharge plans. The team developed an information grid showing 12 care specialties (e.g., Mental Health, Ventilator Care, Respite) for 78 King County nursing facilities. This grid was posted on the HCS Region 4 Intranet for staff reference. For each of the nursing facilities, the team ranked the potential for HCS activity on a five-point scale and then made recommendations for staffing and work time allocations. The team developed a procedure for using the services of Independent Living staff to help nursing facility residents locate and move into community rentals.

Results

- ★ Assessed 573 Medicaid residents in nine facilities between January and June 2000. Fifteen of these residents were relocated into the community and developed discharge plans for follow up with an additional 24.
- ★ Saved approximately $276,000 in service costs with this team effort.
- ★ Saved over 600 hours in staff time and was dedicated to helping other residents return home and less restrictive settings.
- ★ The team's active presence signaled to both nursing facility staff and residents that Aging and Adults Services Administration is committed to expanding client options and providing services in the least restrictive setting.

Team Name: Nursing Facility Relocation Specialty Team
Team Members: Mary Craves-Hollands, Mike Ejiawoko, Michael Johnson, Lisa Merry, Janice Lee

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576]

Taking the "Emergency" out of Emergency Adult Protective Services (APS) Placements

Finding placements for vulnerable adults needing immediate residential care was a time-consuming process for Adult Protective Services (APS) staff. Phoning long lists of caregivers to locate vacancies in appropriate facilities took time and focus away from client services. To address this problem, the team made advance arrangements with supportive services and a range of facilities willing to accept short-term emergency placements.

Results

- ★ Skilled nursing facilities located in the north, south, east and west sections of King County agreed to accept emergency APS clients.
- ★ One enhanced residential care facility agreed to accept emergency APS placements.
- ★ Three adult family homes agreed to accept emergency APS placements.
- ★ Identified transportation, medical assessment, and emergency funds to meet emergency needs.
- ★ Improved services to vulnerable adults, reduced stress and frustration for APS staff, and enhanced cooperation with care providers.
- ★ Increased mutual understanding of APS procedures and services among providers and APS staff recognition of providers' strengths and concerns.

Team Name: Adult Protective Services Emergency Placements
Team Members: Kathleen Burge, Dick Goard

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Connecting Families with Local Communities

Family crisis increases the risk of children being placed in out-of-home care. It's important to find new and creative ways to safely support children remaining at home with their families. When children do need to be placed in out-of-home care to ensure their safety and well being, they need to stay in their local community to support continuity and connection to family, friends, and school. Sometimes we're not able to locate caregiver families in the child's community and as a result we have to place them outside of their community.

The South King County Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) partnered with the local communities of Black Diamond, Enumclaw and Maple Valley to launch the Community-Family Partnership Project (CFPP). CFPP is an innovative, best practice model which enables us to support more families safely caring for their children in their own home or community. This increases stability and support to families and children within their communities. The project creates "Community Family Support Meetings" to empower and provide families with local community resources, support, and shared decision making. It mobilizes foster parent recruitment efforts and creates a local foster parent support group to support and retain current and new foster homes. Community liaisons provide training and education aimed at increasing shared ownership for meeting families needs. A generous grant from the Stuart Foundation is helping take the project to the communities of Kent and Covington with plans to expand to neighboring communities of Auburn, Algona, and Pacific.

Results

★ Provided local community support for 27 families.

★ 11 children/youth placed in out-of-home care stayed in their community.

★ 6 newly licensed foster families, creating 9 additional foster care beds.

★ Identified 75 families interested in becoming foster parents.

★ Provided 90 foster parent's local orientation classes; including childcare.

Team Name: Community-Family Partnership Development Team
Team Members: Bill Caughey, Kara Allen-Eckard, Plateau Youth Coalition: Charel Fisher, Kimberly Fish, Debi Cleland, Pat Peterson; Maple Valley Community Center: Donna Werdell; Enumclaw Citizen: Ramsey Graham
CONTACT: Elizabeth Jones (206) 923-4892

“Kid’s Book” Provides New Way to Share Information about Children’s Needs and Life Events

When children are removed from their family home due to concerns of abuse and neglect, the situation is often an emergency. As a result, there may not be time to collect all of the information needed about a child, their history and special care needs. It is difficult to provide caregivers with full and timely information. Sometimes children do not have a record of some of their time in out-of-home care; a record of their milestones, events, and achievements

The Divisions of Licensed Resources & Children and Family Services teamed together with foster parents to develop an innovative way to gather this information, share it with foster parents, and provide history for children of their time in out-of-home care. The team created the “Kid’s Book.” This “Kid's Book” stays with the child and becomes a valuable resource for the child in the future to support recollection of events, achievements, and developmental milestones. The “Kid’s Book” provides caregivers information about the child's family, medical, dental, immunization, educational, mental health, and special needs history, as well as a place to store materials and information. Caregivers and social workers are being encouraged to continually update and add information, pictures, events, milestones, and memorabilia creating a “LifeBook” for the child from their first day of placement.

Results

- ★ More complete record for the child and family of the child’s milestones while in out-of-home care.
- ★ Convenient resource to update and maintain important information about the child.
- ★ Increases quality and consistency of information gathered and shared.
- ★ Reduces time spent to collect and share information.
- ★ Improves relationships between social workers, foster parents, and families.

Team Name: Region 2 “Kid’s Book”
Team Members: Greg Dootson, Janice Jiles, Lila Rose, Les Rucker, Dan Capetillo, Kathy Dodson, Pam Lamb, Rey Pascua, Laurie Richardson; Foster Parents: Marti Clauser, Debbie Scudder, Judy Wibberding
CONTACT: Elizabeth Jones, (206) 923-4892

Web-based Employer Database

To assure custodial parents receive the child support they are due, it is important that employers remit wages in a timely manner to the Division of Child Support (DCS) for those employees who owe child support. In the past, DCS workers would issue a series of withholding notices by regular and certified mail to employers who failed to remit wages. A web-based database was developed by the Kennewick DCS Field Office with information on employers with a history of non-compliance. The database is used to identify employers who need to be initially contacted by certified mail or in person — allowing DCS to more quickly collect child support wages. The database has decreased the time expended working with employers to achieve compliance. In some cases, savings of as many as 60 days are achieved.

Results

- ★ Eliminates need to prepare and send multiple withholding notices.
- ★ Quicker collection of child support.

Team Name: Non-Compliant Employer Website Team
Team Members: Bob Anderson, Kevin O'Neil, Greg Tiffany, Mary Smith, Terry Yoshino, Layne Allen, Liz Schneider, Ron Mruz, Stephanie Wise

CONTACT: Stephanie Wise, (509) 249-6084

Streamlining Case Files

Until recently, the Division of Child Support was printing, disbursing, filing forms, and storing them in case records as paper file copies. This resulted in several problems, including: employee handling time associated with distributing, filing and then purging old copies as updated forms were generated, and amount of storage space needed to store paper file copies.

To remedy these issues, employees at the Division of Child Support identified 16 highly used forms for file copy elimination — eliminating the need to print, manually distribute, file, and retain paper copies of these forms in case records. Now an estimated 70,000 pages of these forms each month are no longer being stored in case files.

Results

- ★ Eliminates need to print, manually distribute, file, purge and then recycle paper copies.
- ★ Saves filing storage space.
- ★ Saves natural resources.

Team Name: File Copy Reduction Team
Team Members: Debra McEldery, Michelle David, Solveig Tripp, Rhonda Opoka, Richard Libbey, Brian List, Dawn DeLong, Vicki Cates

CONTACT: Debra McEldery, (360) 397-9842

Alcohol Drug Addiction Treatment Support Act (ADATSA) Bed Utilization

Low-income individuals seeking residential treatment for alcoholism or drug addiction were unable to locate available residential treatment openings (beds). The community and the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) determined information regarding available treatment beds was difficult to obtain. The ADATSA Bed Utilization (ABU) Committee recommended a centralized database to track the availability of treatment beds. ABU receives information on openings by fax, e-mail, or telephone and provides information on available bed space to assessment centers statewide. For the first half of 2001, ABU received information on an average of 95 open beds per month. The database is maintained by the statewide 24 Hour HELPLINE. In July 2001, treatment providers were mandated to provide HELPLINE the data on treatment openings.

Results

- ★ Clients are served better and faster.
- ★ More persons with serious addiction problems are in treatment and not continuing to abuse drugs or alcohol. (Research shows that for every dollar spent on treatment $3.71 is saved in other publicly funded costs.)
- ★ Community partners are working more efficiently, saving their staff time (estimated at 1000 hours annually) and resources.
- ★ Under utilization of DASA funded residential beds is reduced.
- ★ Saves 360 hours annually of DASA staff time.

Team Name: ADATSA Bed Utilization Committee
Team Members: Fred Garcia, Jim Friedman, Harvey Funai, Edie Henderson, RoseMary Micheli, Nancy Reid, Scott Waller, Barb McHenry (Chairperson), Aaron Moy, Melissa Laws, Beth Danhart, Lisa Romwall

CONTACT: Barbara McHenry, (360) 438-8083

Reducing the Costs of Industrial Insurance Claims

At Fircrest School, the Division of Developmental Disabilities residential habilitation center, the costs of industrial insurance claims were increasing. A QI Team was chartered to address this concern and it combined the talents and efforts of the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Employee Services Division (ESD). The mission was to reduce the length of time that injured employees remain off the job by 1) improving communication between the claims representative, the physician, the employee's supervisor, and the employee, and 2) improving the return-to-work options.

After analysis, the team designed, piloted and implemented the Assisted Staffing Program. In the new program, the claims representative provides the information to the physicians. This has improved communication between the physician, the workplace, and the employee. Injured employees are returned to work sooner and join their regular work groups and clients. The new program expands the options of potential tasks or duties that can be performed by the employee while they continue to heal.

After piloting the new program with employees that were currently on leave, it was fully implemented in May 2000. It is proving to be very cost effective and maintains continuity of services. This program has benefited both the client and the employee.

Results

★ Currently an estimated savings of $360,000 this year by reducing incurred costs from $900,000 during FY00 to an estimated $540,000 during FY01.

★ Reduced Time loss days from 3,175 days to 2,423 days.

★ Reduced accident reports from 335 to 293.

★ The new Assisted Staffing Program was evaluated and the customer satisfaction survey resulted in a 3.5 from Supervisors and 4.2 from employees. (Scale 1-5, 5 being the highest).

★ Re-designed the DSHS Employee / Volunteer Personal Incident Report, commonly know as Form 3-133, and it is being used state-wide.

Team Name: Claims Costs Reduction Team
Team Members: Deanna Fournier, Jennifer Owen, Kelly Melton, Lauri Johannessen; ESD: Nancy Carlson; ESD/Fircrest: Margaret McGill, (Team Leader); Asha Singh (Management Sponsor),Dan Drischel (QI Facilitator)
CONTACT: Margaret McGill (206) 361-3003

Reducing Stress and Turnover in Region 4

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Region 4 State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLA) program had ongoing problems scheduling coverage for the 24-hour pager. The SOLA provides 24-hour staff support to 51 clients in locations throughout King County. In order to ensure that appropriate staffing ratios are maintained, an attendant counselor manager is scheduled to be on stand-by during non business hours, 7 days a week to answer the pager. The volume of calls received by the managers assigned to the pager were excessive, and the number of consecutive days managers were required to carry the pagers contributed to manager burnout, and job dissatisfaction. These issues contributed to high manager turnover.

Guidelines were established by the team that define clear lines of authority and when to call the Staffing Pager, the Administrator pager, or the Staffing Residential Services Coordinator. The team also established a pager coverage schedule that is the least disruptive for the workload and a coverage schedule for staff vacations and sick leave. The volume of calls has significantly decreased and managers are reporting a tremendous increase in job satisfaction and significantly increased productivity.

Results

- ★ Reduced the number of unnecessary calls to the pager by 35%.
- ★ Reduced the average number of hours spent on unnecessary calls from 4.8 hours to 0.2 hours per month.
- ★ Reduced the manager turnover from 50% to 0% by reducing stress and improving the quality of work life for managers.
- ★ Increase in productivity reported by managers and staff.

Team Name: Pager Problems Team
Team Members: Allison Heaton, Cheryl Leonard, Cathy Niva, Kellie Derum, Sonja Pate, Deb de Kruif (Team Leader), Nancy Hammil, Colleen Frombach, Martha Gluck (QI Facilitator)

CONTACT: Deb deKruif, (206) 545-6725

Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration Develops Meaningful and Valid Performance Measures

The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) Meaningful Measurements Team (M&M Team) was chartered to develop and recommend meaningful and valid performance measures for each of the Administrations Strategic Plan Goals. This was a new and innovative approach to performance measure development designed to be inclusive and move the Administration toward outcome based measures.

In tackling this task, the M&M Team involved as many customers and stakeholders as possible in the development of the measures. We believe that measures should describe JRA based on the information we derive from our stakeholders and clients. In addition, the measures should have a meaningful relationship to the day-to-day business of our employees, should be valid, and should reflect the positive achievements of the Administrations work.

Results

★ Improved Customer Focus. Over 150 stakeholders participated in focus groups through out the state. In addition, over 3,000 surveys where distributed for measurement input.

★ Increased stakeholder and customer awareness of JRA mission, goals and operations as a result of information sharing at focus groups.

★ Provides a basis to improve evaluation in order to identify program/service success and communicate those achievements internally and externally.

★ Enhances implementation and utilization of JRA's Strategic Plan.

★ Provides an example of a successful stakeholder/customer involved process that can be duplicated within JRA or by an organization.

Team Name: JRA Meaningful Measurements Team
Team Members: Cindy Blue, Cheryl Colglazier, Candy Curl, Leslie Graham, Joe Kabel, Esther Palma, Trent Phillips, Sid Sidorowicz, Debbie Spoonhoward, Harold Snow, Solomon Uwadiale, Bernard Williams

CONTACT: Cheryl Colglazier, (360) 902-8081

Data Match Improvement Team

The federal government requires Medical Assistance to do a data match with employers and identify third party insurance. The Automated Client Eligibility System was used to look for possible matches.

With the old system, every quarter employers were mailed a cumbersome form at an approximate cost of $19,720 per year. As a result of this mailing, staff spent an average of 480 hours per year on the phone responding to employer inquiries and complaints.

The team developed a new more user friendly form. The forms were more self-explanatory and mailed only when there was a change in circumstances from the previous quarter. Forms printed each quarter dropped from 58,000 to approximately 6,500 at a mail savings of approximately $17,565 per year.

Results

- ★ The old form required 483 hours per year to prepare and mail. The new form used 53 hours per year to prepare and mail.
- ★ Postage costs for the old form were $78,880/year, with the new form the costs of postage are $8,618/year, a savings of 89%.
- ★ Using the new form, employers calling in with questions or complaints has dropped from 1,328 per quarter to 486.

Team Name: Data Match Improvement Team
Team Members: William F Koepp (Team Coach), Roger Malmberg, Judy Miller, Mary Benton, Debbie Koepp, Michael Haynes, Joyce Moses, Mark Benya, Jack Rantalla, Sharla Metheny, Michele Hergert, Andy Renggli (Team Sponsor)

CONTACT: William F Koepp, (360) 725-1941

Division of Access and Equal Opportunity (DAEO) Harassment Prevention Training Project

The Division of Access and Equal Opportunity (DAEO) used to offer both Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention Training (SHA&P) and Non-Discrimination Training (ND). SHA&P was and is presently required training by DSHS. ND training was previously required but this requirement was dropped in recent years. Attendance at ND training went down although the challenge of discriminatory behaviors still exists.

To meet this challenge the DAEO Training Team integrated SHA&P and ND into one training called Harassment Prevention Training. This one half-day class provides DSHS employees with the needed awareness to comply with the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Non-Discrimination policies. This integrated training has resulted in the reduction in staff time and training costs, and also raised employees' awareness in sexual harassment and discrimination.

Results

- ★ Provided enhanced awareness and prevention information in both subjects.
- ★ The integrated class enabled more employees to receive critical information.
- ★ Increased compliance with policies and avoided lawsuits.
- ★ Reduced training time for employees and trainers by a total of 1,964 hours.
- ★ Reduced training costs by $4,370 per year for DSHS programs and saved $1,671 in trainers' travel costs.

Team Name: DAEO Training Team
Team Members: Massey Bentz, Sonja Bogan, Frances Bailey, Jane Fellores, Jana Matthews, Lucia Neilson, Kammy Haddon

CONTACT: Lucia Neilson, (360) 753-4143

DSHS Energy Tracking System

Recent energy shortages and rising utility costs have prompted the state to look for ways to conserve energy and control rising costs. The department operates 220 facilities across the state, representing nine million square feet of property, and an annual utility cost of $7,820,000. Because people's lives hang in the balance of the budget, the DSHS Lands and Buildings Division partnered with the Budget Division's LAN/Open Systems Group to develop a web-based, department-wide Energy Tracking System that collects information from state utility companies, compares baseline information, reports energy and thermal usage, generates reports for General Administration, and allows the agency to control costs. The enhanced quality and accessibility of the monitoring system, along with the heightened awareness and emphasis it places on tracking and auditing results, produces parallel energy cost savings throughout the agency.

Results

★ Reduced 75% of staff time (8,936 hours a year) in handling paperwork. Web-based data entry and reporting is easily accessible and maintainable by DSHS energy coordinators, avoiding needless paperwork shuffles and time-consuming transmittal.

★ The effectiveness of the Energy Tracking System enabled the successful implementation of the DSHS energy conservation plan. As a result, DSHS is able to reduce energy and thermal costs from $7,820,000 to $6,820,000 per year.

★ Reduced report process time from days to minutes. Reports now can be transmitted to General Administration within a matter of minutes.

★ Using the Tracking System, targeted steps can be taken to curtail energy consumption and rising costs. Trends can be identified that will allow the agency to identify savings in the years to come.

★ Other agencies are considering adopting the DSHS Energy Tracking System to monitor and control their utility costs as well.

Team Name: DSHS Energy Tracking Systems Group
Team Members: John Moody, Brad Carlson, Victor Alcantara, Allen Smith, Dave Carrell, Debbie Armstrong
CONTACT: Dave Carrell, (360) 902-8325

Forms Printing Cost Reduction

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Forms and Records Management Services (FRMS) designs, develops and maintains thousands of forms for DSHS programs. Prior to 1995, FRMS had always used the State Printers and Copy Centers for all printing needs. In 1995, FRMS learned that the Correctional Industries (CI) Print Shop in Monroe was able to provide printing services at a lower rate. The facility is a fully functional, state-of-the-art printing facility. The consensus was to test sample the printing services.

After using CI for several months, the cost analysis on the print jobs that have 500 to 10,000 prints indicated a savings of 25% or more on each job completed. This information provided an incentive for executing a bid process between the State Printer and CI for large printing orders containing 10,000 prints or more. The agency that could meet the turnaround time and had the best rate would receive the order. This new process resulted in a $145,641 savings from large orders as of June 2001. An average of 25% cost reduction in small orders from 1995 to present has also resulted in an additional $116,148 savings.

Results

★ In the last five years, this process has saved DSHS $261,789 in printing and shipping costs. These dollars remain with the programs and help improve service to clients.

★ Improved customer service between FRMS and DSHS programs.

★ Improved the team awareness of potential cost savings they were capable of achieving for the agency.

★ Enhanced the competency of the Forms Consultants to become more effective in resource management, which also assisted in accelerating their process improvement to achieve department business goals.

Team Name: Forms and Documents Management Consultants Team
Team Members: Toni Benham, Tri Howard, Millie Brombacher, Kat Ostergard

CONTACT: Toni Benham, (360) 664-6047

Online Vendor Information

DSHS employees who process vendor bills rely on the information in the Vendor Book or the Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS) when they process the bills. The Vendor Book was costly and outdated. Updated vendor information was only posted in AFRS. To be able to access AFRS, it costs $300 to hook up each computer with the mainframe system. After that, every time the users access AFRS system, a mainframe usage fee is charged.

A team consisting of staff from three offices found a solution. In the TRACKS E-Purchasing system, a link called Vendor Look-up was created with a pop-up window of vendor information. This link can be used by all authorized employees from their personal computers with no cost. This online Vendor look-up saved thousands of dollars in mainframe costs, increased information access and accuracy, and reduced process time.

Results

- ★ Reduced on-going mainframe usage costs for approximately 1,000 users. Estimate savings: $75,000 a year.
- ★ Avoided additional mainframe hook-up fees: $300 per computer. Estimate savings: $22,500 - one-time savings.
- ★ Increased vendor information access and accuracy.
- ★ Reduced process time for paying bills from the vendors.
- ★ Avoided late payments due to incorrect vendor information.

Team Name: Online Vendor Information Team
Team Members: Steve Hulbert, Celina Verme, Ken Moses, Jay Treat, Kim Hewitt, Matthew Mattlock, Wanda Emmick, Lynn Graham-Hoey, Diane deLeon, James Briggs, Teresa Sapp, Rena Patch, Toby Mottman, Janice Huntley, Judi Rogers

CONTACT: Steve Hulbert, (360) 902-8316

Employee's Identification Card

The Washington Soldiers Home and Colony provided its staff with identification cards/badges IAW Part 483, Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The process required two to four weeks to receive the card/badge. The HR Assistant located a different source within state government that was able to supply similar identification cards/badges at approximately half the cost of the original contractor. In continuing to improve the process, she developed a computer program using MS Access which contained the desired identification card/badge format. She then obtained approval for one time expenditure for specialized laminating equipment and developed the process of producing the cards/badges in house. We are now able to produce Identification cards/badges on site, thereby saving money and time and enabling new staff to feel they are an immediate full member of the staff.

Results

★ The Home produces an estimated 100 ID cards/badges a year. The production cost will be reduced from $7.50 per card to $2.50 per card for a savings of $500 a year.

★ Reduced processing time from 15 minutes to 5 minutes per card. This 10 minute time savings went from a total of 25 hours to 8.33 hours per year.

★ Reduced waiting time to receive card from 2 to 4 weeks to 1 day.

★ Improved employee satisfaction due to quicker system for getting required ID badge.

★ Improved business practice that reflects real time processing to coincide with daily staffing issues.

Team Name: Washington Soldiers and Colony Home Human Resources Department
Team Members: Norma Urquhart, Gary Klein

CONTACT: Norma Urquhart, (360) 893-4521

Styrofoam to Ceramic Cups

The Washington Soldiers Home and Colony was using in excess of 8,942 disposable coffee cups per week for a resident population of 198 to drink coffee. A brainstorm suggestion by an employee was to purchase ceramic cups and place them by the coffee outlets for use over and over. The activities department solicited veterans organizations throughout the state for donations of company mugs to use for the Home's residents. The food service department absorbed the dishwashing requirements of the cups within existing capacity. The total cost savings for the agency was $5911 a year.

Results

- ★ Previously, the agency purchased 8,942 styrofoam cups for coffee and it is now purchasing less than 500 cups a week.
- ★ Reduced the cost of styrofoam cup purchases by $5911 year.
- ★ Increased partnerships with veterans organizations throughout the state that donated ceramic mugs at no cost to agency.
- ★ Reduced the garbage waste at the Washington Soldiers Home.

Team Name: Washington Soldiers Home and Colony Product Use Committee
Team Members: Mike Arthur, Lynn Zemke, Shannah Rongen, Syndee Wietfeld, Martha Fox, Vickie Wright, Terry Newby

CONTACT: Mike Arthur, (360) 893-4520

Internet Unemployment Insurance Claim

With a focus on improving customer service and in support of the Governor's initiative on digital government, the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Team wanted to give claimants another option to open initial claims. During the winter of 1999-2000, UI claimants were having great difficulty contacting the TeleCenters. The workload levels in the three UI TeleCenters had increased beyond telephone capacity. UI staff formed a team to develop a plan, design and implement an automated program that allows UI claimants to file their initial claim for benefits over the Internet—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Additionally, staff at the UI TeleCenters are now able to process portions of these claims, using a database created by the team, directly into the GUIDE automated system, eliminating the keying of claimant information.

Results

- ★ Increased customer satisfaction by creating a web-based UI initial claim form that claimants can access from their computer in their home, a library, Internet café, or any location with Internet access.
- ★ 12.5% of all initial claims have been received via the Internet since implementation of the web-based application resulting in a reduction of a corresponding number of telephone calls to file an initial claim.
- ★ Eliminated keying portions of claimant information directly into the UI automated system (GUIDE) by creating a database using Microsoft Access.
- ★ Increased employee satisfaction by reducing the need to key in all of the information.

Team Name: Internet UI Claims
Team Members: Dennis Mansker, Larry Ihlang, Bob Wagner, Brenda Miranda, James Job, John Ludwig, Hal Greenbaum, Leslie Novy, Wardell Dye, Kenneth Adams

CONTACT: Bob Wagner, (360) 902-9591

Benefit Payment Control (BPC) Address Correction

Employment Security Department's (ESD) Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefit Payment Control (BPC) Unit mails 50 - 60,000 billing statements monthly. Approximately 3,000 were returned with invalid addresses. The Post Office sends notification of address changes—charging a fee of 50 cents each, a cost of approximately $1,500 per month to the agency. Correcting addresses required looking up addressees in alphabetical listings, checking social security numbers, and making inputting changes to the system. Limited staffing resources only allowed 1,000 address corrections, leaving about 2,000 unprocessed monthly. During the next billing period, the addresses not processed would yield duplicate notification from the Post Office and resulted in additional fees. The team purposed to eliminate or reduce the number of address change notification cards that were not being processed. After brainstorming, they selected and adopted a best practice from another ESD unit—a bar code scanner. With this tool, social security numbers and address changes appear on a computer screen, a "find" command is sent, and the correct claimant account appears. The new address is then entered. All address changes are now completed and duplicate notification cards are eliminated. Additionally, returned mail and costly fees have decreased.

Results

★ Saved $10,800 annually in postal costs by using a bar code scanner to update lists with correct addresses.

★ Saved 840 hours annually and decreased workload by eliminating the backlog and maintaining a current address list.

★ Reduced the amount of returned mail by 50%.

★ Improved customer service by updating addresses and assuring that customers receive their unemployment information.

★ Improved employee satisfaction by using a tool that helps them to manage their work more effectively.

Team Name: UI BPC Support Team
Team Members: Carole Bernhardt, Matthew Thompson, Deja Juneau, Renee O'Hara, Debbie Calcott
CONTACT: Nancy A. Noble, (360) 902-9787

Cash Handling Process

The Office of Special Investigation's (OSI) Fraud Management Unit (FMU) detects, writes, and collects overpaid Unemployment Insurance benefits. FMU staffers spend a substantial amount of time logging checks received by claimants, preparing temporary cash receipts and transmittals, and making copies. This work-intensive process required two people. The team brainstormed solutions and developed a new process, which redirects the payments to the Treasurer's Unit using color-coded envelopes. This change eliminates the need to prepare temporary receipts, decreases processing time, and mitigates the cash handling risk.

Results

★ Saved 271 hours annually by redirecting the payments and eliminating duplicate work.

★ Increased employee satisfaction by eliminating redundant work.

★ Eliminated the need for two people to process the cash, which mitigates the cash handling risk.

Team Name: Cash Handling Process Team
Team Members: Pat Mayhew, Harvey Perez, Linda Rutledge, Renee O'Hara, Sheryl Mayes, Cheryl Brown, Lindsay Blain, Lisa Zolman, Stacy Baldwin, Josh Thompson

CONTACT: Pat Mayhew, (360) 438-4039

Retention Service Postcard

Spokane Post Employment Specialists are required to maintain frequent contact with WorkFirst customers. When telephone contacts, home visits, and work site visits proved impractical, staff would send out letters, appointment forms, information sheets, and stamped return envelopes in their efforts to obtain program information like client work hours and wages. Many customers had moved and letters were returned due to incorrect addresses. Researching correct addresses and resending letters was a time consuming and burdensome process especially when customer responses to letters were minimal. The team brainstormed and designed a series of 3x5 postcards containing standard messages—request for information, program service reviews, program emergency hot line number, and a comment section. These attractive postcards are easy to read and display the colorful WorkFirst logo for program recognition. The use of the postcards eliminated writing, folding letters, and stuffing envelopes. Their database generates address labels with the customers' most current address. Clients now receive valuable program information in a timely and convenient format.

Results

- ★ Saved $2,572 annually in paper, envelopes, and postage costs by eliminating duplicate letters and erroneous addresses.
- ★ Saved 120 hours by streamlining the customer contact process.
- ★ Adopted as a best practice and implemented at three other sites.
- ★ Improved customer satisfaction by providing more timely information.

Team Name: Postcard Team
Team Members: Larry Domingo, Lyle Moholt, Sally Ring, Jennifer Rodney, Melissa Keplin, Kevin Scrivner

CONTACT: Lyle Moholt, (509) 532-3186

Keeping Customers' Information Secure and Confidential

Staff at the Vancouver Plaza WorkSource Center provide self-serve options to customers using the resource room. Customers checked in by printing their name, social security number, and services requested on a sign-in sheet. The information was accessible to all customers in the resource room and confidentiality of private information was at risk of being compromised. Sign-in sheets were collected by the data entry staff and keyed into the electronic system. Keying errors were common due to illegible writing. The team met, brainstormed, tested several approaches, and decided to have customers check-in with the receptionist at the front desk. Receptionists now key in names, social security numbers, and services to the electronic system. Information is provided directly by customers to receptionists, reducing errors and security risks.

Results

★ Improved customer satisfaction by protecting confidential information.

★ Saved 477 hours annually by transferring data entry duties to receptionist reducing errors by obtaining the information directly from the customer.

★ Improved employee morale and working conditions by eliminating duplicative work and creating goodwill with the customers.

Team Name: The Promoters
Team Members: Iris VanBuren, Holly Parkin, Yvette Hoyt, Clarencia Gaines, Dana Bacon, Cathi Smith, Marianne Jones, Nyleen Smith, Michelle Blake

CONTACT: Cathi Smith, (360) 735-5021; Iris VanBuren, (360) 735-5015

Consolidation of Priority Mail to Central Office

The Vancouver WorkSource Center and District Tax Office staff sends mail to the Olympia central office via separate Priority Mail pouches on a daily basis. Priority Mail pouches were not used to capacity levels, causing additional base charges. The team researched, developed, and implemented a plan to consolidate daily mailings to the Central Office.

Results

- ★ $1,060 saved annually by consolidating daily mailings and controlling base charges.
- ★ Improved employee satisfaction by modeling good stewardship of state resources and creating goodwill with general public.

Team Name: Priority Mail
Team Members: Dave Somdalen, Shirley Trimbo, Linda Hansen, Colleen Hankins

CONTACT: Dave Somdalen, (360) 735-5057; Dorothy Virgil, (360) 735-5055

Help Card

The Spokane WorkFirst Post Employment Team has developed a drivers license sized "Help Card" to promote quick access to employment and support information for WorkFirst participants. The card fits in a purse or wallet and provides customers with important support services information, names and telephone numbers including the toll-free number to WPLEX (Washington Post Employment and Labor Exchange). WorkSource and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) staff provide the card during job search workshops, in resource rooms, at job clubs, at in-person interviews, or as an enclosure with routine mail correspondence.

Results

- ★ Increased customer satisfaction by providing post employment services and resource information in a concise and easy to access manner. All WorkFirst customers receive the "Help Card."
- ★ Increased customer satisfaction by providing easy to carry and access "Help Card" that lists program services and numbers.
- ★ The "Help Card" is now widely disseminated throughout Spokane and has enhanced WorkFirst customer service.

Team Name: Spokane Post Employment Team
Team Members: Vang Xiong X. Toyed, Sally Ring, Albert Garza, Chris Mietus, Mary Ellen Voss

CONTACT: Vang Xiong X. Toyed, (509) 532-3144

Unemployment Compensation Self-Service Fax

Though the department transitioned the primary source for Unemployment Compensation services to TeleCenters, customers still come into the Lewis County Job Service Center (JSC) seeking assistance with their claims. During peak unemployment in winter, the impact on limited JSC resources is severe. In an effort to identify improvements, the team measured the numbers of claimants coming to the office and the services they required. The team changed the process used for faxing claimant's information to the TeleCenter. A self-service faxing project was initiated to reduce the amount of staff time used in faxing paperwork to the TeleCenter and Continued Claims Processing Unit in Olympia. Staff programmed the fax machine for self-service and developed a set of instructions. Claimants now can fax their own paperwork!

Results

★ Saved 60 hours annually by implementing self-service faxing.

★ Increased customer satisfaction by eliminating wait time, customers do not have to wait until staff are available to fax paperwork for them.

Team Name: The UC Fixers
Team Members: Pat Pratt, Dennis Smith, Jan Anderson

CONTACT: Jan Anderson, (360) 740-3980

Removing Roadblocks to Travel Reimbursement

When traveling, employees frequently "speed check" out of hotels. When this occurs, on the morning of departure, the hotel slips an invoice/receipt under the door showing the balance owed. If the charges are correct, the employee can simply return the room key and the hotel will automatically charge the invoice amount to the employee's credit card. The employee does not receive a receipt showing the charges were paid ("0 balance" receipt). The Vendor Payment Unit required that employees attach a "0 balance" original receipt to the travel voucher before reimbursement by the agency. This procedure resulted in long delays reimbursing travel expenses, because the employee had to submit some other evidence of payment. This usually involved contacting the hotel for another receipt (hotels often will not provide another original receipt) or obtaining some other proof of payment (credit card billing slip or statement). The team researched state travel policy and what other agencies required. The requirement to submit a "0 balance receipt" has been retracted.

Results

- ★ Saved 156 hours annually and reduced Vendor Payment Unit workload and eliminating the proof of payment documentation.
- ★ Eliminated unnecessary and burdensome paperwork.
- ★ The traveler eliminates work time to secure proof of payment documentation.
- ★ Increased employee satisfaction by eliminating the frustration of an unnecessary delay in reimbursement of travel expenses.

Team Name: ESD Travel Improvement Team
Team Members: Mary Kristofferson, Philip Brock, Ketsy Pitts

CONTACT: Philip Brock, (360) 902-9728

Improve Accounting for Resource Sharing Agreements

The WorkForce Investment Act requires one-stop services for job seekers. Employment Security Department (ESD) formed partnerships with other agencies to offer one-stop services. Partners negotiate Resource Sharing Agreements on how common costs (rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.) are to be shared among the residents of the site. Often times the agreements are not finalized until well after costs are paid by ESD. During the negotiation/signing process, operating costs are allocated to agency cost centers/projects. This practice resulted in inaccurate cost center/project expenditure reports until the agreements could be signed and correct accounting entries made. The team designed and implemented a process that increases accuracy in cost reporting. Costs are now charged to a suspense code while agreements are being negotiated. Managers are now able to see these costs in the accounting reports throughout the period of negotiation.

Results

- ★ Increased accuracy in cost reporting.
- ★ More timely reporting of accurate accounting information.
- ★ Improved management of resources.
- ★ Improved documentation for those costs being shared between parties to the agreement.

Team Name: Improve Accounting for Resource Sharing Agreements
Team Members: Mary Kristofferson, Philip Brock, Kellie Karr

CONTACT: Philip Brock, (360) 902-9728

Integrated Provider Network Database

The Health Care Authority (HCA) and Medical Assistance Administration began implementation of an integrated provider network database (IPND) for Basic Health, Healthy Options, Public Employees Benefits Board and Children's Health Insurance Program in 1998. The purpose of the database is to provide information about contracting health plans' provider networks across all these programs for use by staff and enrollees in selecting health plans, research, contracting, and policy making. A quality improvement objective was established in 2000 to improve data quality and completeness, to represent at least 80% of all the health plans' networks by 2001.

Results

- ★ As a result of the interagency collaboration, HCA spent $120,933 over the '97-'99 and '99-'01 bienniums, out of a total project budget of $746,797, saving $625,864.
- ★ Data completeness has exceeded 90% for all programs.
- ★ The data reporting process was made more consistent with Office of Insurance Commissioner requirements, easing the reporting burden on health plans.
- ★ Data accuracy has been greatly increased through contracting with a national leader in health care data management.
- ★ A new Internet provider directory has been designed and implemented to make this information more readily available to the public.
- ★ The program has achieved these improvements without expenditures beyond prior projected levels.

Team Name: IPND Project Team
Team Members: David Beshears, Becky Boutilier, Roger Gantz, Dan Lehuta, Jamie Macomber, Michelle Senn, Dick Shoemaker, Cathy Spencer, Peggy Wilson

CONTACT: Becky Boutilier (MAA), (360) 725-1639;
Dick Shoemaker (HCA), (360) 923-2880

Correspondence Workflow Improvement

The Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) receives approximately 3,000 letters on an annual basis from subscribers, health plans and other sources. Previously, the correspondence process was cumbersome and placed a high demand on staff time. It required four staff to log the correspondence. There was no workflow management mechanism in place for tracking the location of a letter or to highlight overdue correspondence. This multi-step process caused delays for customers. Responses were often not timely. Supervisors had difficulty efficiently managing their correspondence workflow.

A team was formed to review the process. The team suggested automating the correspondence log-in process and developing a systematic approach to help the supervisors better manage their correspondence workflow. In the new process, letters are scanned through the PEBB imaging system as soon as they are received. The letters are routed to one staffer's imaging "queue" for review. The staffer routes the letters automatically to the appropriate supervisor's "queue" for response. This process is done within 24 hours. With the revised process, re-routed letters can be easily identified, and the total number of letters are monitored for timely response.

Results

- ★ Allowed for collection of management information about inquiries, improved quality, accuracy and responsiveness to our customers.
- ★ Streamlined log-in, tracking processes, and enabled first-call resolution to customer inquiries when they called about a letter sent to PEBB.
- ★ Reduced staff log-in processing time from 1,560 hours to 260 hours annually.
- ★ Reduced tracking staff from four to one.
- ★ Eliminated the need to purchase file folders for the correspondence. This saved $900 per year.

Team Name: Correspondence Improvement Action Team
Team Members: Jayne Wallace, Kathy McCord, Mary Whittle, Aimee Wagner, Laney Tabanek, Renee Bourbeau

CONTACT: Jayne Wallace, (360) 923-2620

Technology Improvement Assists Customers

The Health Care Authority (HCA) mails approximately 20,000 enrollment packets annually to customers who want to enroll in the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Retiree, Long-Term Disability or COBRA programs. Previously, the handling and mailing of the PEBB packets was cumbersome and involved several staff from different divisions. Traditionally, when customers requested a packet, PEBB staff would fax or e-mail the warehouse staff with the request to physically transfer the packets for processing. The warehouse would deliver the packets to PEBB staff who, in turn, would either print a label or hand write the name and address of the customer and then return the packets to the warehouse for mailing. Since there was no tracking mechanism for addresses, this caused duplicate mailings.

A multi-divisional team worked together to review the ordering and mailing practices. The team developed an on-line “Request for Packets” through the HCA’s database. With this on-line application, the distribution and mailing of packets becomes faster, cheaper and more efficient. Also, the warehouse has the capability of sending the customers’ addresses through a “clean out” program to ensure corrrect addresses. This keeps the database accurate and fewer packets are returned as undeliverable.

Results

★ Reduction in staff time used in manual process from ten minutes to three minutes per transaction. This represents approximately 2,333 hours or 58 weeks of time saved on manual processes. Time saved is now being used to perform other more critical customer service functions.

★ System-generated labels save labor on handwritten labels and minimize the overall amount of returned mail.

★ Reduces lapsed time between the customer’s request for packet and HCA’s mailing of packet.

★ Provides effective monitoring/control of packet mailing: eliminates duplicate records received from customers, and decreases postage costs associated with duplicate mailings.

Team Name: Requests for Packets Action Team
Team Members: Jayne Wallace, Norm Rice, Mary Whittle, Mike Angel, April Inchausti, Stephanie Longanecker, Jeff Coler, Samantha Kenner, Gayle Heinemann, Barbara Bauman
CONTACT: Norm Rice, (360) 412-4205

Electronic File Transmission Nets Improvement

Sponsoring organizations for the Basic Health Plan assist and oversee more than 25,864 Basic Health (BH) enrollees. A sponsor deals directly with BH applicants to assist them in the application submission and eligibility processes, and also are responsible for sponsored enrollees premium share. A paper enrollment report was developed in 1998, and during the Summer of 2000, the sponsoring organizations requested an electronic report to assist with tracking and member reconciliation efforts. A team was formed to tackle this issue and look at better ways to assist the sponsors and our potential customers.

Results

★ Postage savings of $1602 per year.

★ Improved customer satisfaction.

★ Able to redeploy 12 hours month of staff time.

★ Increased level of customer service to our sponsoring organizations.

★ Sponsor organizations receive needed and more accurate data in a more timely fashion.

Team Name: Sponsor and Outreach Team
Team Members: Laura Budsberg, Rebecca Burch, Gail Burris, Pam Galloway, Christy Vaughn, Romeo Solis

CONTACT: Laura Budsberg, (360) 923-2704

Telephone Call Routing and Scripting Initiative

The original call flow and scripting of telephone calls asked callers to select option 1 for accounting and option 2 for customer service. This was obviously confusing to our customers. We saw this in the number of callers our accounting staff received over an extended period of time that needed to be transferred to customer service. Additionally, callers and staff were frustrated by the number of misdirected calls. In most cases, the caller needed to talk to customer service and often did not wait long enough to hear the correct option before making a selection. By re-ordering the options in the scripting and call flow, the error rate of callers selecting the incorrect option decreased. Accounting staff received fewer calls that needed to be redirected.

Results

★ Calls to Accounting staff measured for the same months in (FY 00) and (FY 01), factoring out seasonality changes in call volume, decreased by 1278 calls (-13%) for a five month period (Jan – May). Misdirected calls decreased by more than 255 calls per month.

★ With an average talk time of 2:19 minutes per call for that five month perid, this redeploys 49.4 FTE hours to other workload requirements.

★ Caller satisfaction with call processing increased because customers did not reach the incorrect customer service area and then have to be re-directed or wait in queue a second time to have their questions answered.

★ Staff frustration decreased because they were not having to re-direct calls on a constant basis.

★ A better understanding of the call system was achieved.

Team Name: Call Flow Improvement Team
Team Members: Cindy McKinzie, Christy Vaughn, Dave Wasser, Romeo Solis, Les Sagawinit

CONTACT: Cindy McKinzie, (360) 412-4308

Electronic Procurement Good for Bidders and State

Each year the Health Care Authority (HCA) solicits proposals for Basic Health and Public Employees Health Care programs. Approximately 300 Request For Proposal (RFPs) are printed and mailed annually. Bidders were required to mail 8 copies of their proposals for evaluation purposes. The process of printing, collating and mailing an RFP, over 600 pages long, and subsequently distributing the proposals was labor intensive and expensive for the bidders and the state. To resolve this problem, the HCA redesigned their procurement web site to accommodate the electronic release of the RFP and required bidders to submit their proposals electronically.

Results

- ★ HCA saved $11,900 in printing costs.
- ★ Electronic receipt of proposals allowed the HCA to distribute the proposals to evaluators within minutes of receiving the proposal.
- ★ The electronic solicitation and electronic submission of proposals resulted in an FTE savings of 200 hours per year.
- ★ In previous years, bidders were required to submit 8 copies of their proposal. Bidders saved an indeterminate amount on printing and mailing costs.
- ★ The entire system, to include negotiations and clarification of questions, will be more efficient.

Team Name: Contracts and Procurement Electronic RFP Team
Team Members: Melodie Bankers, Pam Hildebrand, Elin Meyer

CONTACT: Elin Meyer, (360) 923-2801

Streamline Operational Reports Quality Team

Results of a report inventory effort indicated that a large number of unnecessary and duplicative reports existed. A quality improvement action team was formed to review this issue and create a process that all staff could understand and follow. In an effort to better manage the data needs of operational staff, a major cleanup was initiated. The cleanup and continued maintenance of operational data needs allowed for the development of an accurate inventory of needed operational reports. It also resulted in time saved for both the distributors and users of the reports.

Results

- ★ Implementation of process to ensure all operational reports are current and needed.
- ★ Process in place that staff could understand.
- ★ Net report elimination of 67 individual reports (21% reduction).
- ★ 260 hours of support staff time redeployed as a result of decreasing report distribution by an average of 1 hour daily.
- ★ $625 saved annually as result of decreased report production costs.

Team Name: Streamline Operational Reports Quality Team
Team Members: Kathy Eberle, Jeff Caldwell, Lisa Barber, Nancy Newcomb, Elaine Laughlin, Nancy Bickford, Preston Cody, Rebecca Burch, Christy Vaughn, Pam Galloway, Victoria Snyder, Tristian Marty, Shawna Sliva, Kathy Templet, Lois Johanson, Darla Nelson, Teresa Edwards, Cindy McKinzie, Jill Thiery, Tricia Mackin, John Nelson

CONTACT: Lisa Barber, (360) 923-2695

Telephone Service Level Team

Call volumes and low staffing levels resulted in a baseline measurement of 42% call service level for the period June 1999 to June 2000. Call service level is defined by "calls answered within 300 seconds or less." Calls arrive in a random pattern and it would be impossible in any business environment to achieve a 100% service level. However, because of our customer focus, we assembled a team to review the situation and identify improvements. We opted to improve by 5% over baseline. This was included in Basic Health's (BH) strategic plan and Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Call vectoring changes (how calls come in), redeployment of two additional full time staff, re-structuring of work codes that identify why someone calls and re-structuring reporting capabilities has increased our average to 69.25% for the 2000-2001 reporting period. Current call service level for the past 3-month average is an impressive 78%.

Results

★ Information collected by the new revised wrap codes provides valuable data for BH project teams and historical information on workload staffing drivers for staffing requirements analysis.

★ Real-time monitoring of service level and average speed of answer by supervisors provided the capability to shift staffing resources to better meet caller needs.

★ Better reporting capabilities to anticipate where lower service levels occurred so adjustments to staffing can be made when necessary.

★ Overall better customer service.

★ Higher and more responsive level of customer service (more calls answered within 300 seconds or less).

★ Double line log in (both member and non-member lines) allowed call center staff to be ready for calls on two telephone numbers simultaneously as well as provide better overall coverage for both lines.

Team Name: Telephone Service Level Team
Team Members: Nancy Bickford, Kathy Templet, Elizabeth Ammann, Lisa Barber, Laura Budsberg, Elizabeth Duncan, Teresa Edwards, Karen Griggs, Alesia McKoy, Melissa Mueller, Kathy Newman, Vicky Petersen, Les Sagawinit
CONTACT: Nancy Bickford, (360) 412-4260

Review Forms for Updates and Conversion to Digital Form

With the interest to bring the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board digitally current and more accessible, all forms were reviewed for updates, deletions and conversion to digital form. Several forms were updated to meet current policy and have been posted on the intranet. In-house training was provided to Hearing Officers and Correctional Records Specialists so that they can access these forms and customize them to reflect individual caseloads. We no longer need to utilize Department of Printing services to produce agency forms which provide a small savings for our agency.

Results

★ The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board forms are updated and digitally accessible.

★ Completed forms and recommendations from the Hearing Officers are more legible.

★ A small savings was realized in paper use and Department of Printing costs.

★ The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board forms are kept current with immediate updates.

★ Staff has received training in the use of electronic forms.

Team Name: QI Group II
Team Members: Robin Riley, Irene Seifert, Russell Snelson, Frances Spreier, Jody Swails

CONTACT: Robin Riley, (360) 493-9266

CLE Tracking

Bar Associations require Administrative Law Judges (ALJ's) to obtain continuing legal education (CLE) credits each year to maintain active bar status. While revising our training policy, it became clear we needed a way to accurately track the CLE credits our ALJs were earning. The ideal database would not only track the CLE credits and money being spent on judicial training, but would also provide a uniform registration process.

Instead of developing our own tracking system, we contacted the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (BIIA) to find out how it tracked this information for Industrial Insurance Appeals Judges. The BIIA cooperated in sharing resources. Within three weeks after meeting with BIIA, we made minor changes and installed the BIIA system at OAH. The system is now in full operation tracking CLE credits.

Results

★ Accurately track CLE credits and training dollars spent on judicial staff.

★ Saved money and time by using a database that was already developed.

★ Share resources between BIIA and OAH.

Team Members: Office of Administrative Hearings: Diana McCutcheon, Zerita Hix, Frank Mighetto; Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals: Jane Beaulieu, Dan Lipp, Gretchen Zatarain, Eric Damron

CONTACT: Diana McCutcheon, (360) 586-4023

Envelope Standards

The Office of Administrative Hearings has five field offices that issue hearing notices and decisions relating to unemployment insurance matters. We frequently use large envelopes due to the bulk of the documents being mailed. We use printers to address envelopes. We discovered that the field offices were using a variety of larger sized envelopes. The lack of uniformity required more programming and maintenance of printers, higher postage costs, and printing and storage costs for different-sized envelopes. The five offices agreed that when larger than business size envelopes were needed, the offices would standardize use of 6X9-1/2 inch envelopes. This is smaller than the Postal Service definition of a "large envelope" and requires less postage. The uniform size requires only one printer configuration and simplifies requirements for information technology support.

Results

★ Reduced postage costs because envelopes are not classified as "large envelopes" by Postal Service.

★ Lower printing costs and easier handling of supplies because of single size for envelopes.

★ More efficient use of information technology staff time.

Team Members: Jody Keys, Jon Loreen, David Hansen, Stephanie Croom Williams, Johnette Sullivan, Gina Hale

CONTACT: Jody Keys, (360) 664-2033

Employer Web Site

The Partnership Committee – a legislatively mandated committee of businesses concerned about child care benefits for employees – was looking for a method of getting information to medium and small businesses about how to evaluate and implement work-life benefits in challenging business environments. Child Care Advantages contracted with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network to develop pages on their website as a central resource for employers. This website is linked to the new Office of Trade and Economic Development, Small Business Resource unit web page and other appropriate state agency web pages. The new web site is www.childcarenet.org.

Results

- ★ Easily accessible information and resources for employers throughout the state.
- ★ Reduction of time spent by employers looking for benefit implementation tools.
- ★ Easily accessible information available on costs and benefits of childcare as part of an employee benefit package.
- ★ Possible reduction in amount of time spent by Child Care Advantages staff in providing information and referral on child care benefits.

Team Members: Kathy Chance, Gail Gosney, Vernita Shye, Jacquie Montez

CONTACT: Gail Gosney, (360) 725-4034

Employee Orientation and Management Training

During the last six years the role of the agency manager has changed significantly. There has been an advent of a connected computerized organization, a move from basic park maintenance to full resource management, more services required with the same or declining resources and law enforcement and public safety becoming more professionally demanding. In addition, over the next five years a significant number of State Parks' managers will retire. As managers retire the agency loses their institutional knowledge.

To meet the goals of the next century the Agency must have well trained managers, must be providing a consistent, common knowledge base, and must have agency specific training to enhance interagency communication and personal relations.

The charter team defined and designed an employee orientation and management succession program that will prepare park professionals to sustain the State Parks system. The programs will balance the agency's rich, eighty-year heritage with the challenges of managing change now and in the future.

Results

★ An employee orientation Power Point presentation on disk and on-line to be provided to all employees.
★ An agenda for Employee Orientation Training. First Training was completed in May, 2001.
★ A list of suitable prerequisite Human Resource and Development classes prior to moving forward into Management Training – Parts 1 and 2.
★ An agenda for Management Training, Part 1 – Managing the Day-to-Day Responsibilities of a State Parks Manager.
★ A mentoring program.
★ A suggested agenda for Management Training, Part 2 – How quality decisions are made within Washington State Parks.
★ A description of the criteria needed for certification as a manager within the Agency.

Team Members: Bill Overby, Terry Doran, Lisa Mosley, Paul Malmberg, Allan Jacobsen, Katie Gerard, Cynthia Middleton, Brenda Morefield

CONTACT: Brenda Morefield, (360) 902-8677

Financial Coding

Program managers needed to know that they receive all the financial data needed to make the best-informed decisions. They needed to make sure that the current coding system optimized this data collection, and they needed a verifiable tracking method.

The Financial Coding team formed to
- Investigate financial tracking needs throughout the agency.
- Explore the variety of coding options/combinations available in Agency Financail Reporting System (AFRS).
- Evaluate costs of options in terms of workload, time keeping, staff confusion, reporting, AFRS storage costs, etc.
- Adopt financial coding structure paradigm that optimizes data collection against the costs of acquiring data.

After the research, the team recommended a change from the current "program index structure base" to a "master index structure base." The capital coding structure will be changed to establish a "Project Structure base." The Project structure in AFRS allows codes to be turned off, can track expenditures across biennial lines (even across many biennia), and will continue to allow tracking of important functional elements within and across projects. This coding structure meets the needs of program staff, inspires confidence in the data, and is verifiable.

Results

★ Better program management from improved data.
★ Increased program and agency accountability.
★ More informed budget decisions.
★ Reduction in the amount of keying being done in the fiscal section.
★ Accommodate changes to coding with minimal staff disruption.

Team Members: George Price, Cindy Cavanagh, Verna Watson, Allison Alderman, Al Wolslegel, Robyn Malmberg, Bill Gansberg, Mark Bibeau, Terri Heikkila, Paul Malmberg, Tom Oliva, Myrna Loy-Zolyomi, Marsh Taylor, Don Powell, Steve Brand, Jeff Carlson, Lynda Gee, Scott Griffith

CONTACT: Mark Bibeau, (360) 586-6609

Outreach Team

The Washington School for the Deaf is filling the void that currently exists statewide in public schools by delivering a wide variety of services that historically existed exclusively at the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) campus in Vancouver. As a direct result of strategic planning efforts, WSD expanded its services from on campus to Statewide Outreach Services. Instead of serving only the 150+/- students who attend the pre-school through grade 12 program, the effort is to address the additional 2-3,000 deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state. It is believed that by filling this void a greater number of deaf/hard of hearing students in the public schools will perform better in school, improve their social skills, develop a broader network of peers, achieve greater success in college and find greater success in the world of work.

Results

- ★ 133 intake/referrals in the first seven months in operation (27 operational days).
- ★ Support given to 33 school districts across the State of Washington.
- ★ 990 phone calls/e-mails logged in consultation and research.
- ★ 10,000 miles traveled to provide on site support.
- ★ 7 on campus community outreach programs sponsored.
- ★ 10 video workshops were broadcast.

Team Name: Outreach Team
Team Members: David Born, Amy Cohen-Efron, Nikki Ekle, Jackie Gralnick, Sharon Hammer, Sarah Shetler, Despo Varkados, Valerie Ryan

CONTACT: Valerie Ryan, (360) 418-4347

Managing Vehicle Collision Repairs

When Washington State Patrol (WSP) vehicles incurred damages from collisions, accidents or vandalism, drivers were required to obtain three bids for repair services before contracting for the work to be done. This process took valuable time away from their public safety roles and did not necessarily ensure that the best repair was conducted for the lowest possible cost. Filing and tracking information for invoice payments and insurance claims processing drained even more time from the agency.

A team of employees evaluating possible improvements for this process set up a pilot program with a private sector collision management company which would rapidly research and direct employees to the best repair shop and log the required billing and insurance information. At the end of the pilot program employees showed a 73 percent satisfaction level with the service, the average cost of repairs had dropped, troopers had recovered hundreds of hours of "lost" time, and billing and insurance information was processed quickly and smoothly.

Based upon WSP's success with this program, the General Administration Department's Office of State Procurement is seeking bids to offer commercial collision management to all state municipalities and agencies.

Results

- ★ 948 hours of trooper time was saved during a six-month test period.
- ★ Average repair costs were reduced by $733 per incident.
- ★ Insurance payment recovery increased by 29 percent.
- ★ Vehicle out-of-service time is reduced by 5 to 7 days.
- ★ Quality of repairs shows no negative impact.
- ★ Successful pilot project has paved the way for widespread cost savings in other state and local governments.

Team Name: Collision Management Team
Team Members: Dennis Kellogg, Sylvia Lewallen, Leonard Ong, Bob Green

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