Governing For Results 17

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

January 2002

Welcome to the 17th Edition of Governing for Results

> "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."

Governor Gary Locke

This 17th 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 2110 quality projects, saving the state over $102 million and collecting over $80 million in new revenue. As a result of these efficiencies, approximately 1,364,300 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 for obtaining additional information. 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

The following teams were selected as winners of the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement for the fourth 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.

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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 fourth 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
Uniform Medical Plan Claims Cost Reduction Project Health Care Authority	Book 16	80
Assistive Technology and Treatment Center at Fircrest School Department of Social and Health Services	Book 12	62
Multi-Lingual Translation and Interpretation Services Department of Ecology	Book 17	21
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Gambling Commission

Health Care Authority

Liquor Control Board

Washington State Patrol

Multiple Agency Projects

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**Washington State Patrol;
Washington Military Department**

Faster Pay for Fire Fighting Efforts

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) Fire Protection Bureau and the Military Department (WMD) are lead agencies for the state's fire mobilization program which includes responsibility for reimbursing volunteer firefighters, local fire districts, vendors and contractors for state wildfires. In the past, when wildfires were frequent, the reimbursement task became overwhelming. Funding to train and pay temporary help was unavailable, so payouts could take up to six months to complete. With projections of a severe 2001 fire season and to meet the critical need to process claims in a timely fashion, a "Payment Team" strategy was implemented. Recruiting from the fire service, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Federal Forest Service, a stand-by pool of accounting staff was lined up through the Fire Protection Bureau's resource order and tracking system. For each wildfire, an ad hoc Payment Team was quickly convened, a small vanguard from WSP and DNR was dispatched to the fire site to guide accurate paperwork completion, and then the waiting Payment Team members rapidly processed the claims.

The 2001 fire season was as disastrous as predicted. Payment Teams were assigned to all 13 state-declared mobilization fires and the teams processed over 70 percent of all claims in less than 30 days.

Results

- ❖ Cost savings – 65% decrease in processing costs from 2000 to 2001.
- ❖ Staff time savings – 69% decrease in regular time from 2000 to 2001 and 53% in overtime.
- ❖ Reduction in claims processing time from over 180 days to less than 30 days.
- ❖ 432% increase in claims handled per day.

Team Name: Fire Payment Team
Team Members: WSP: Lt. Steve Kalmbach, Aloha Watson; WMD: Jill Christian, Michelle Salinas; DNR: Judie Cline, Angie Delaney; Yakima Fire District #12: Christy Vetsch; Chelan Fire District #1: Kathy Amaral; Cowlitz Fire District #2: Kara Metzger

CONTACT: Lt. Steve Kalmbach, (360) 426-1661

Department of Social and Health Services;
Department of Health;
Governor's Council on Substance Abuse;
Lieutenant Governor's Office;
Liquor Control Board;
Office of Community Development;
Superintendent of Public Instruction;
Traffic Safety Committee;
University of Washington

2001 Washington State Prevention Summit

Since the 1980s, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has co-sponsored a statewide conference whose goal is to provide education and support for alcohol and drug abuse prevention programming throughout Washington State. The annual conference also provides opportunities for community teams comprised of youth, educators, prevention professionals, and law enforcement officials to share strategies for preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems in their communities. In 2000, the planning team reached out to other agencies hosting similar conferences and agreed to make the annual prevention conference a Prevention Summit by combining all of the conferences into one event.

The planning committee for the "2001 Washington State Prevention Summit," included representatives from DSHS, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, Office of Community Development, University of Washington, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Liquor Control Board, Traffic Safety Committee, Governor's Council on Substance Abuse, and the Department of Health. They created a conference agenda around specific goals, and measured their success in achieving those goals. The agenda was designed to increase the participants skills and abilities to plan and provide prevention activities in local communities by presenting information about research-based "best practices" and the most current regulatory policies and strategies.

Results:

❖ 1,036 individuals (including about 350 youth) from across the state representing various disciplines attended the 2001 Prevention Summit. One out of ten participants completed a post conference evaluation.

❖ 67% stated their skills and ability to provide prevention activities in local communities increased.

❖ 56% stated their knowledge and skills regarding research-based prevention strategies and state and local policies increased.

❖ 34% stated their knowledge and skills regarding policies and program's best practices within tobacco prevention and control increased.

❖ 28% stated their skills and ability to reduce underage drinking through regulatory strategies increased.

Team Name: Prevention Summit Planning Committee

Team Members: Lieutenant Governor's Office: Sydnie Baron, Kimberly Rhoads; University of Washington: Deborah Costar; DSHS: Barb Green, Dixie Grunenfelder, Michael Langer, Deb Schnellman, Steve Smothers, Chris Flores; Office of Community Development: Dale Grenier, Marsha Irving; Superintendent of Public Instruction: ohn Hughes; Liquor Control Board: Letty Mendez, Manuel Romero, Stacey Smith; Department of Health: Tom Wiedemann

CONTACT: Barbara Green, (360) 438-8220

Department of General Administration;
Department of Information Services

Eforms

The Department of General Administration (GA) uses two forms for paying agency bills. The A-19 form, State of Washington Invoice Voucher, is used for payment of goods and services, primarily provided by a private vendors. The Journal Voucher is used by the fiscal office for paying bills owed to other state agencies, distributing funds within GA or to make financial corrections. Before this project, payment information from the forms had to be manually entered the into the Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS), the state's computerized accounting system. Re-keying the information was time-consuming and resulted in occasional errors.

This project created the AFRS Interface Document, an electronic form that can be used for 95 percent of all financial transactions processed within the agency. The form interfaces directly to AFRS, eliminating the re-keying of data. The form allows digital signatures and the electronic routing of the form, which eliminates the need to pass paper copies from desktop to desktop for approval and payment.

At the current usage, the project saves 360 hours of data entry time per year.

Results Achieved:

❖ Saves 360 hours of staff time annually.

❖ Increased data accuracy.

❖ Increased customer satisfaction with reduction in payment processing time.

Team Name: Eforms Team
Team Members: Kathy Iblings, Helen Martz, Cheryl Crank, Yvonne Contris, Chris Stevenson, John Honnold, Paul Palms, Toril Frost, Susan Rolland, Carlene Covey

CONTACT: Kathy Iblings, (360) 902-7355

Single Agency Projects

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Advisory Letters to Our Customers Explaining New State Law

Recent changes to the Public Accountancy Act significantly impacted approximately 8,000 Washington State CPA certificate holders. To ensure that all certificate holders were aware of these changes, the agency devised several comprehensive letters targeting each type of certificate holder group explaining how the changes in the law affected them. Each letter focused on the group's individual interests and needs and included the appropriate forms and instructions. The agency also developed a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer to include in the mailing.   A special "button" on the home page of the agency's website was created specifically for our certificate holders to quickly take them to the detailed information they need. Agency staff was cross-trained to ensure phone calls from certificate holders are answered promptly.

Results

❖ Increased public awareness of the changes to the Public Accountancy Act.

❖ Proactive advisory to our customers related to decisions they must make within the next two and a half years.

❖ Reduced staff time to respond to customer inquiries.

Team Name: Advisory Letters Team
Team Members: Dana McInturff, Mel Curtiss, Robin Atkinson, Sandra Shoemaker, Cheryl Sexton, Michelle Paulsen, Lori Mickelson, Jennifer Reinke

CONTACT: Sandra Shoemaker, (360) 664-9192

Tracked Vehicle for the Eradication of Spartina

Spartina is a non-native cordgrass that is destroying mud flats and salt marshes in Washington State. It spreads quickly, is difficult to eradicate, and traditionally has been treated by hand pulling, digging, mowing, applying herbicides, or a combination of these methods. Two employees improved on a machine built by a Willlapa Bay clam farmer that he used to eradicate Spartina from several small sites.

In 2000, a small tracked vehicle was purchased and re-fabricated to rip, cut, and bury (disking) Spartina root mass. In a pilot study, the efficacy rate of disking averaged 90%. When disking is used in combination with an approved herbicide, the efficacy rate is even greater. The pilot study proved so successful that a larger machine has been purchased enabling treatment of more acreage per year.

Results

- ❖ Traditional methods cost $1000/solid acre. The cost of disking is $160-200/solid acre. This results in an estimated $120,000 savings/year.

- ❖ The amount of herbicide (spraying) used is reduced when disking is combined with spraying.

- ❖ Spartina's growth rate is 20%/year. Traditional treatment methods control Spartina at approximately 8%/year. By disking, the control rate is increased to 13%.

- ❖ Disking allows for year around control work, whereas the other methods are most effective in spring and summer only.

- ❖ Using mechanical treatment methods has a significant, positive impact on the environment and the shellfish industry in the state.

Team Members: Kyle Murphy, Kevin Soule, Blain Reeves

CONTACT: Kyle Murphy, (360) 902-1923

Collections

Correctional Industries (CI) is a program committed to maintaining and expanding offender work training and reducing the tax burden. CI sells various items to government and private industries. The old CI collection process involved:

- Individually drafting dunning letters.
- Manually tracking collections efforts in Excel.
- Documenting the tracking efforts by "cutting and pasting" into customers folders, taking up to 8 hours.
- No immediate access to past collection efforts.
- Monthly statements requiring three days of work, by two staff members.

A team looked at ways to increase collections. The collection letters are now hand addressed and are sent in 45 days, rather than 60. Additionally, Correctional Industries purchased a collection module (less than $6,000) including customization of statements that is integrated with CI's accounting software. This module allowed for the reduction of one full time staff ($22,800 per year).

Statements are now processed and printed within one hour and take only one staff person. Account notes can be viewed at any time by anyone in the accounting department. The notes are directly inputted into a letter and sent to the customer verifying the discussion. All written communication is automatically produced with addresses, contact person, and invoice information.

Results

❖ Reduction of one full time employee. Savings of $22,800 per year and 2,000 hours.

❖ Past due accounts dropped from $433,747.76 to $39,313.64 in five months (April to August 2001).

❖ Reduction in time sending out statements from six days (three days X two people) to one hour.

❖ Immediate access to collection efforts with customer, resulting in better customer service.

Team Name: CI Collections Team
Team Members: Sherralee Syrovy, Ed Jones, Gerald Buchanan, Sharie Arnold

CONTACT: Sherralee Syrovy, (360) 753-9661

Dedicated Phone Line for Directions

Cedar Creek Corrections Center (CCCC) was receiving an average of 200 telephone calls a month, requesting directions to the facility. Each telephone call took an average of five minutes for staff to provide directions. This became a burden for administrative staff.

A transfer line dedicated to providing directions was developed. Now when a visitor asks for directions, they are immediately transferred to a line with a pre-recorded message providing detailed directions to CCCC.   This line has a "repeat" feature so visitors can listen to the directions as many times as necessary.

Results

❖ Eliminates an average of seven hours staff time per month providing directions.

❖ Provides consistent information.

❖ Enhanced customer service.

Team Name: Dedicated Phone Line Team
Team Members: Kenneth Towne, Jaye Craig, Leroy Wallace

CONTACT: Leroy Wallace, (360) 753-7278, extension 212

Escapes

Approximately 95% of all escapes from total confinement facilities occur from "Security Level 2" facilities. Security Level 2 includes camps, minimum-security compounds, and pre-releases. Escapes are more prevalent from Security Level 2 because the facilities are designed with less confinement and security. Offenders housed in these facilities have promoted through the classification process and are nearing the end of their sentence. Security Level 2 escapes during the 1990's averaged 47.7 escapes per year.

A team was formed and given the charge to "*reduce the escape rate (per 1,000 offenders) from Security Level 2 facilities by 5%.*" The team assessed the escape patterns and developed strategies to reduce escapes. The strategies included: analyzing the profile of those who escaped and changing the classification policy; staff training to ensure consistent performance of security routines and recognition of offender risk behaviors; development of a standard security audit; and improved supervision standards for off-site work crews.

Results

- ❖ 18 escapes from Security Level 2 facilities in 2000 (62.5% reduction from the 1990's).
- ❖ Nine escapes from Security Level 2 facilities in 2001 (81% reduction from the 1990's).

Team Name: Escape Reduction Team
Team Members: Jocelyn Hoffe, Terri Ober, Clint Catron, Dave Swisher, Robert Anderson, James Skiens, Steve Rawlins, Richard Mason, Tim Root-Ferguson, Lynne DeLano, Gary Clark, Sandra Carter, Joseph (Clint) May, Kenneth Boursaw, Carlos Haley, Rick Karten; Facilitator: Charles Washburn

CONTACT: Rick Karten, (360) 586-0696

Emergency Fire Crews

In 2000, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent an excess of $1,000,000 training National Guard Reserves to fight forest fires. Those trained in 2000 were not available to fight fires in 2001. Thus, DNR would have had to spend this amount of money again to train new National Guard Reserves.

Staff from the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the DNR got together and decided to expand their current base of inmates trained to fight fires from 600 to 850. The inmates were trained from existing resources at the facilities that have DNR crews. The cost to train an additional 250 inmates was approximately $250,000.

The Department of Corrections' Emergency Fire Crews were mobilized during the recent fire season and fought in the Tonasket forest fire in Central Washington. The inmates were instrumental in supplementing the existing resources and providing effective, low-cost fire suppression to the communities in Washington State.

Results

❖ Responding to and abating a State wildfire during the 2001 season.

❖ Cost savings of $750,000 in training.

❖ Solidified interagency relationship between DNR and DOC.

❖ Prison inmates aided in the protection of Washington State communities and natural resources.

Team Name: Emergency Fire Crew Team
Team Members: DOC: Ruben Cedeno (team leader), Tom Donahue, Maggie Miller-Stout, Bob Moore, Sandra Carter, Patricia Gorman. DNR: Todd Palzer (team leader), Randy Warnock, John Stuchell, Joe Perrault, Bill Sanders, Jim Messer

CONTACT: Ruben Cedeno, (360) 753-7278, extension 301

Repair and Replace Flooring and Carpet

The flooring and carpet in the staff duty area at the Longview Work Release facility needed to be replaced. The carpets in the common areas of the facility were worn and stained. Bids obtained from private vendors ranged from $19,000 to $21,000. A team explored the option of having the flooring and carpet replaced by inmate workers from Larch Corrections Center and using mostly recycled carpeting and supplies. The total cost to replace the flooring and carpets was $968.77.

Results

❖ Cost avoidance savings to the State of approximately $19,000.
❖ Created jobs/skill training for inmates.

Team Name: Flooring and Carpet Team
Team Members: Tracy Grunenfelder, Patricia Gorman, James Tooley, Jack Newman

CONTACT: Tracy Grunenfelder, (360) 577-2211

Help Kit for Writing Infraction Reports

Non-custody staff, such as a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Work Crew Supervisor, is occasionally required to write an infraction report on an inmate who is violating rules/policies. Non-custody staff receives minimal training and has little experience in writing an infraction report. Consequently many serious infraction reports were not properly written and, thus, would be dismissed in a hearing. As a result, non-custody staff would become upset when infractions were dismissed due to missing information and/or evidence, and offenders were not being held responsible for their behaviors.

A "help kit" was developed and placed in strategic areas at Cedar Creek Corrections Center. This "help kit" consists of a list of inmate rules and correlating violation numbers, examples of properly written infractions, all necessary forms for writing infractions, and all necessary forms and materials needed for "evidence control." Additionally, a Correctional Officer is now dispatched with a "help kit" to assist crew supervisors (or other non-custody staff) in writing infraction reports. This ensures integrity and improves chain of evidence gathering.

Results

❖ 90% reduction in number of infractions dismissed.

❖ Infraction reports are now written in 75% less time.

❖ Improved working relationships between DNR and DOC.

❖ Improved working relationships between custody and non-custody employees.

❖ Improved accountability for inmates.

Team Name: CCCC Help Kit Team
Team Members: Alfred Fitzgerald, Tom Barte

CONTACT: Tom Barte, (360) 753-7278, extension 618

Kitchen Efficiencies

Staff working in the food services unit in the Minimum Security Unit (MSU) at the Monroe Correctional Complex was looking for efficiencies. They identified two ways to cut costs.

Disposable Styrofoam bowls were used in the MSU inmate dining. This was a costly expenditure and environmentally taxing, as Styrofoam is not biodegradable. A decision was made to replace Styrofoam bowls with reusable plastic bowls. Total expenditure for 16 cases of bowls is $1,651.20. Annual cost of Styrofoam bowls was $5,423.08.

During meal service, napkins had always been placed on the dining room tables. Inmates were able to take as many paper napkins as they wanted with meals. Often, they took more than they needed and wasted a considerable amount by throwing them away. A solution was implemented by providing three napkins on each tray from behind the serving line. Since implementation at MSU, the usage of napkins has dropped from six to three cases a week. This practice is now being implemented throughout the Monroe Correctional Complex, for an overall cost reduction of $23,650 annually.

Results

❖ $3,771 annual savings by not buying Styrofoam bowls.

❖ Less waste products sent to landfill.

❖ $23,650 annual savings in napkins.

Team Name: Kitchen Efficiencies Team
Team Members: Keith Sherman, John Holeman

CONTACT: John Holeman, (360) 794-2765

One Bakery for Three Institutions

At the Washington State Penitentiary, there are three separate food service units: one at the Main Institution, one at the Medium Security Complex and one at the Minimum Security Unit. The Main Institution food service department has a full-line bakery, yet the other parts of the institution were purchasing goods from outside vendors. In addition to being costly, this increased the number of deliveries from outside vendors, which adds to the security risk at an institution.

A team decided the Main Institution Bakery would produce the bread, buns, and roll demands for all three food service units. Staff from the Main Institution now make deliveries to the Medium Security Complex and the Minimum Security Unit. In the first five months, the cost to those two food units for buns and rolls was $5167, compared to the commercial cost of $13,035 for a saving of $7,868.

Results

❖ $7868 savings from August 1 – December 31, 2001.

❖ Reduced number of outside vendor deliveries to institution (greater security).

❖ Creates employable skills for jobs outside of prison.

Team Name: WSP Bakery Team
Team Members: Keith Powers, Anthony Schmidt, Phillip Underwood, William Neissl, Gary Ford, Vance Potts, Gary Duncan

CONTACT: Keith Powers, (509) 526-6391

Cleaner Air Tomorrow, Today

Diesel fuel combustion from motor vehicles emits some of the highest levels of toxic and fine particle air pollutants. Federal rules will require new diesel engines meet lower emission levels beginning in 2007 and will require ultra-low sulfur fuels for all on-road engines beginning in 2006. Diesel engines are built to last 1,000,000 miles; therefore benefits from the federal rules would not be seen until 2010. A consortium of public and private partners developed the Diesel Solutions program to make diesel vehicles in the Central Puget Sound area dramatically cleaner beginning now. Volunteer agencies and businesses have begun to retrofit their diesel vehicles to use ultra-low sulfur fuels for cleaner air emissions. This program accelerates the benefits of cleaner fuels and cleaner engines in the Central Puget Sound region, which means cleaner air for all of us.

Results

❖ Seventeen private and public organizations and businesses have partnered on Diesel Solutions.

❖ King County, the City of Seattle, Boeing, Emerald City Disposal, the Everett School District, Durham School Services, the Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle have begun to phase in ultra-low sulfur fuels for their transit and diesel vehicle fleets and will begin installing retrofit devices.

❖ Ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel is being supplied by Phillips Petroleum (Union 76) five years before the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is requiring the fuel be made available, making this initiative possible.

❖ EPA has committed to providing funding up to $2 million dollars over the next several years to leverage this project. Other funding partners include Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and Ecology.

❖ This multi-year commitment will reduce toxic and fine particle emissions by more than 90 percent and hydrocarbon emissions to nearly undetectable levels.

Team Name: Diesel Solutions
Team Members: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, United States Environmental Protection Agency, King County Metro, The City of Seattle, The Boeing Company, Everett Public Schools, Durham School Services, Pacific Rim Enterprise Center, Emerald City Disposal, Department of Transportation, Port of Seattle, Phillips Petroleum, Department of Ecology, The Diesel Technology Forum, Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association, Cummins, Detroit Diesel, Johnson Matthey
CONTACT: Dennis McLerran, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, (206) 689-4004

Checklist Helps Improve Environmental Justice Awareness

The state's poor and minority populations are potentially exposed to higher levels of pollution and increased levels of diseases, with fewer resources at their disposal to address these issues. An Environmental Justice Checklist for employees was designed to help recognize and address Ecology's relationship to environmental justice and help managers and employees understand these relationships. The Checklist helps to raise awareness of possible environmental justice issues and dynamics when working with communities or when working with statewide policies that affect the public's health or a community's environment. The Checklist identifies specific references to Ecology's in-house resources to enhance our work in relation to environmental justice dynamics.

Results

❖ A comprehensive Environmental Justice Checklist has been implemented to improve the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in our projects and policies.

❖ A multi-program and multi-disciplinary team created the Checklist to gain buy-in for its use and ensure relevance to our work.

❖ Thirteen presentations were given around the state to staff on the importance of Environmental Justice and the use of the Checklist.

❖ The Checklist was reviewed by the Attorney General's Office to help Ecology avoid potential legal challenges to environmental actions.

❖ The Checklist has been cited as an example by the National Academy of Public Administration's December 2001 report to the Environmental Protection Agency on improved permitting.

Team Name: Environmental Justice Committee
Team Members: Patty Betts, Barbara Carey, Ellen Caywood, Alex Coleman, Lori Crews, Dawne Gardiska, Molly Gibbs, Guy Gregory, Kevin Hancock, Dawn Hooper, Rhonda Hunter, Zelma Jackson, Tom Laurie, Thom Lufkin, Dolores Mitchell, DouGlas Palenshus, Flecia Phillips-Curtis, Brenda Reagan, John Ridgway, Joy St. Germain

CONTACT: John Ridgway, (360) 407-6713

Multi-lingual Translation and Interpretation Services

Many small businesses, such as dry cleaners and convenience stores, throughout the state are owned and operated by persons speaking a language other than English. These businesses are regulated by Ecology for air emissions, water quality protection, soil and groundwater protection and oil spill prevention. To improve our effectiveness in communicating with non-English speaking citizens, Ecology developed Translation and Interpretation Review Teams in Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. "Certified" Ecology employees fluent in the Team language provide translation and interpretation services to other Ecology staff.

Results

❖ Improved ability to communicate complex environmental rules and regulations to non-English speaking business owners.

❖ Translation of scientific and technical terms into Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

❖ 560 hours of translation and interpretation services provided in 2001 using internal staff expertise.

❖ Savings of $36,400 in 2001 by using internal staff versus contracting out for the service.

Team Name: Multi-lingual Translation and Interpretation Teams
Team Members: Spanish Team: Gregory Bohn, Bill Green, Cliff Kirchmer, Beth Stipek, Antonio Valero; Vietnamese Team: Steve Chan, Teddy Le, Tuan Vu; Korean Team: Byung Maeng, Hun Seak Park, Jenny Yoo; Chinese Team: Sunny Linhao Becker, Gary Lee, Marina Yee; Guidance Team: Mary Burg, Brenda Reagan, Joye Redfield-Wilder, John Ridgway, Greg Sorlie, Joy St. Germain, Joe Williams, Mike Wilson, Polly Zehm

CONTACT: Brenda Reagan, (360) 407-6020

Leasing Water for Salmon in the Dungeness Watershed

Despite rain and snowfall throughout the spring months of 2001, Washington State experienced the second-driest year on record. Both stream flow and snow pack levels were half to two-thirds their normal levels last year. In the Dungeness watershed, irrigators had already been working for several years to improve system efficiencies and increase summer instream flows. In the 1998 Trust Water Right Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Dungeness Water Users Association and Ecology, the irrigators agreed to always leave at least 50% of the total flow from the Dungeness River, regardless of their legal water rights. Given 2001's severe drought, coupled with three Endangered Species Act listings for salmon on the Dungeness River, the irrigators and Ecology entered into a number of temporary lease agreements to augment the 50% flow agreement the Water Users were already committed to, ensuring additional flows for salmon in the Dungeness.

Results

❖ Thirteen landowners agreed to forgo irrigation on 1,030 acres (20% of the total commercially irrigated land in the Dungeness Watershed) between August 1 and September 15, the critical salmon migration period.

❖ Through the Trust Water Leasing Agreements, water levels in the Dungeness were augmented for salmon migration during the second worst drought on record (8.5 cubic feet/second of additional water was estimated in the river, due primarily to the temporary leases, plus additional system improvements).

❖ All of the five irrigation diversions from the Dungeness River have real time water measuring devices installed for accurate measurement of water use.

❖ Landowners, irrigation districts and companies and Ecology worked together in a cooperative and trusting spirit to meet the goal of sufficient water for salmon.

Team Name: Trust Water Leasing
Team Members: Cynthia Nelson, Peggy Clifford; Dungeness Water Users Association: Gary Smith, president; Mike Jeldness, water use coordinator; Department of Fish and Wildlife: Dick Allen

CONTACT: Cynthia Nelson, (360) 407-0276

Combined Examinations Save Time and Money

The Consumer Services Division of the Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) licenses and regulates mortgage brokers, check cashers/sellers (payday lenders), escrow companies and consumer loan companies. Many of the licensees regulated under the Consumer Loan Act and the Check Cashers and Sellers Act have multiple locations. All locations require examinations at least every 24 months. Currently there are 289 main offices with 611 branches licensed under the Consumer Loan Act and 200 main offices with 637 branches under The Check Cashers and Sellers Act. In addition there are a total of 210 Escrow Agent locations that also require examination. The field examination staff consists of four examiners. The large number of locations and small examination staff created great difficulty in maintaining examinations within the regulated timeframe. Rather than examine each individual location, arrangements were made to perform the examination at either the main office or a central location to cover all locations for licensees with multiple branches.

Results

- ❖ Average number of hours per branch location was reduced from 16.5 to 2.75.
- ❖ Average cost of examination for the licensee was reduced by 81.33%.
- ❖ Estimated 8,580 examination hours saved annually allowing examination staff to conduct more examinations and meet statutory time requirements.
- ❖ Estimated $81,292 in travel cost savings for examination staff due to travel to one location rather than many.
- ❖ Focus for regulation can be shifted to licensees requiring closer monitoring.

Team Name: Field Examination Team
Team Members: Ed Burgert, Kwadwo Boateng, Casper Coleman, Sandra Thomas, Nicole Scott, Boone Mill

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

Department of Financial Institutions

Resource Redesign Project Improves Customer Service

The Securities Division of the Department of Financial Institutions regulates the offer and sale of securities by small businesses to protect the investing public and as a secondary goal, provides various forms of assistance to small businesses contemplating a securities offering to encourage capital formation in the State of Washington. The primary method of providing assistance to small businesses has been through the publication of several informational documents in hard copy and on our website. These materials, however, had become seriously outdated. In addition, these materials had been augmented with new materials resulting in a high degree of information overlap. Staff reviewed and revamped the outdated materials. As a result, four new brochures were drafted, three were eliminated, and three were revised; an exemption matrix was created which includes references to filing forms, statutes, regulations, and policy and interpretive statements to enable small businesses and securities attorneys to compare the various exemptions available from registration; the small business Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were revised and updated; four information packets were created for mailing to small businesses interested in conducting a securities offering; and the Small Business Assistance section of our website was fully revised to integrate these new materials as well as to provide updated information and active links.

Results

❖ Improved customer service and reduced phone calls.

❖ Small businesses have access to current information in regard to conducting a securities offering.

❖ Exemption matrix is available on our website with links to applicable statutes, regulations, policy and interpretive statements, and filing forms.

❖ In the first two weeks of operation, the exemption matrix received 152 page views, 134 sessions, for an average viewing time of a little over 3 minutes.

Team Name: Small Business Resources Redesign Team
Team Members: Faith Anderson, William Beatty, Patricia Loutherback

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

Department of Financial Institutions

Risk Based Examination Cycles Reduces Regulatory Burden for Credit Unions

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. The Division would normally have planned to examine each credit union every fourteen months. That approach has treated all credit unions the same regardless of the risk profile at the credit union. The new approach varies the examination cycle between 12 and 18 months for each credit union based upon the risk factors present in that individual credit union. Higher risk rated credit unions will be examined every 12 months while lower risk rated credit unions will be examined every 18 months.

Results

❖ As of year-end, 41 of 94 credit unions are eligible for an extended examination cycle.

❖ Since the examination places increased demands on the time of credit union management, there is now an increased incentive for credit unions to reduce risk factors in their credit union.

❖ Additional time is now available to monitor credit unions with higher risk profiles.

Team Name: Risked Based Exam Team
Team Members: Linda Jekel, Mike Delimont, Jane Johnson, Doug Lacy-Roberts

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

Department of General Administration

Advertise Public Work Projects on the Internet

The Division of Engineering and Architectural Services (EAS) manages the construction, renovation and rehabilitation of state-owned buildings. The division contracts with private consultants and contractors to provide a full range of services, including design, construction and energy management. EAS maintains lists of qualified consultants for projects in which their fees will be under $100,000. This list is updated annually by placing ads in newspapers asking consultants to submit a statement of qualifications. The agency also advertises construction projects where consultant fees will exceed $100,000. The money for these ads comes from the client, usually another state agency, which is hiring EAS to manage its project.

The newspaper ads contained detailed and lengthy information about projects or the criteria for submitting their qualifications. This made the ads expensive, in some cases more than $700. A further problem was many potential consultants did not see the ads.

This project put most of the information on the division's web site. Now, a much shorter ad appears in newspapers that directs potential consultants to the EAS web site. The shorter ads save EAS $15,609 annually. Clients saved $15,698. In addition, this new method increases the volume of clients visiting the web site and decreases the number of phone calls to EAS regarding the ads.

Results

❖ EAS saves $15,609 in advertising costs annually.

❖ Clients avoid $15,698 in advertising costs annually.

❖ EAS staff person spends approximately 15 to 30 minutes less time processing and responding to consultant phone calls.

❖ Potential consultants have quick access to information needed to submit their statement of qualifications or to get specific project information.

Team Name: Advertise Public Work Projects on the Internet Team
Team Members: Jo Ann Cabiao

CONTACT: Jo Ann Cabiao, (360) 902-7231

Department of General Administration

Motor Pool Fleet Care Program

The Motor Pool Program manages a fleet of about 1,400 state-owned vehicles, which are used by approximately 78 state agencies. Most of the fleet consists of Ford Taurus sedans. Since these vehicles are assigned to government agencies throughout the state, the program receives monthly repair work invoices from more than 30 Ford dealerships. Sometimes, the invoices are given to the customer and then forwarded by the customer to the Motor Pool for payment. This is not only inconvenient for the customer, but if the misrouting is untimely it results in a late payment. Other times, invoices were sent to both parties, which resulted in a duplicate of payment.

To solve these problems, the Motor Pool enrolled in the Ford Quality Fleet Care Program. The program offers savings of 30 percent below retail costs for parts and labor to repair Ford vehicles. Enrolling in the program saves Motor Pool $55,000 annually. On average, $184,211 is spent each year without the discount on parts and labor for these vehicles.

In addition to the dollar savings, the program reduced staff time spent processing payments by about 27 hours annually. A monthly invoice from the Quality Fleet Care Program lists all repair work done on fleet vehicles by every Ford dealership in state. The payment process is 95% more accurate and late payments on repairs for Motor Pool's Ford vehicles were eliminated.

Results

❖ Saved more than $55,000 per year on repair to Ford fleet vehicles.
❖ Saved about 27 hours per year of staff time processing repair work invoices.
❖ Centralized billing eliminates multiple invoices from Ford dealerships.
❖ Increased billing accuracy by 95%

Team Name: Motor Pool Fleet Care Program
Team Members: Bryan Bazard, Steve Skagen, John McMeel, Diana Boysen, Nancy Wagner, Annie Rosario

CONTACT: Bryan Bazard, (360) 438-8237

Department of General Administration

Lights Out

The 847 overhead fluorescent lighting fixtures in the General Administration financial office could not be turned off during nights, weekends or holidays. In addition to squandering valuable resouces and money, this projected a wasteful image to the public.

This project team installed three light switches next to the hallway door to give more individual control to employees. Timers were also installed. The lights now automatically go off at 6 each weeknight and must be turned on manually in the morning. Quantum Engineering, the energy-performance contractor for the Capitol Campus, and General Administration's energy-conservation program, managed the project. The project saves about $13,360 per year and 438,000 kilowatt hours, equal to the annual electrical use of 43 homes. Total cost of the project was $49,426. The project was funded through a loan from the state Treasurer's office. The savings will pay off the loan, plus interest, in about seven years.

Results

❖ Annual cost savings of $13,360.

❖ Saved over 438,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, enough to power about 43 homes.

❖ Portrayed an energy conscience image to the public.

Team Name: Lights Out Team
Team Members: Dale Abersold, Art Arneson, Dan Moore

CONTACT: Dale Abersold, (360) 902-7336

Department of General Administration

Desktop Fax

The Central Stores Customer Service Unit receives frequent requests for copies of invoices and other documents. An internal study indicated that 10 percent of a customer service representative's time was spent mailing or faxing the requested documents. Staff spent over 50 hours a month retrieving documents, preparing envelopes and mailing or faxing the information.

The team worked with General Administration's Information Services program and a commercial fax vendor to enable customer service staff to handle requests electronically from their desks. Now, when staff access documents in the Central Stores database, a new computer program simultaneously checks the master customer record for an e-mail address. If an electronic address is found, the requested document(s) is e-mailed. If no address is found, the customer service representative composes an e-mail, attaches the requested document and forwards it to the commercial fax vendor. The vendor converts the e-mail to a fax and sends it to the customer. A confirmation of fax transmission is e-mailed to the customer service representative. If a customer is unable to receive an e-mail or a fax then a copy of the document is mailed.

The new process saves staff time, mailing costs and provides customers faster response to their requests.

Results

❖ Saves 600 staff hours per year.
❖ Increases the ease and speed of processing requests.

Team Name: Desktop Fax Team
Team Members: Robert Jacobson, Tom Stidham, Corey Larson, John Cadoo

CONTACT: Corey Larson, (360) 902-7444

Streamline State Contract Usage Reporting

Nearly 1000 vendors have contracts managed by the Office of State Procurement (OSP). These vendors are required to submit quarterly contract usage reports. The reports are used to determine the fee that OSP charges contract users. This is the primary funding source for OSP. The information is also used to determine the worth of a contract for future negotiations.

Many vendors did not meet quarterly reporting deadlines, in part because, prior to 1999, there was no standard reporting form. Even after a standardized form was created, some vendors didn't file or were late submitting their reports. An OSP staff person mailed or faxed a form letter reminder and a six-page reporting form to non-complying vendors.

This project changed a manual process into an electronic one. Now, reporting reminders are e-mailed quarterly to all vendors. The standardized reporting form was put online as well. The new process improved vendor reporting, generating additional revenue for OSP. More accurate information on purchasing activity allows OSP to charge agencies correctly so they are not over or under charged.

Results

❖ Using email to notify vendors instead of mailing or faxing reminders saved 64 hours of staff time annually.

❖ Email notification to customers saves $480 annually in mailing costs.

❖ Confirm payments from agencies that do not currently pay for our services and also charge agencies correctly so they are not over or under charged.

❖ Determine term worth of contracts for re-bidding, and leverage for better prices.

Team Name: Streamline State Contract Usage Reporting Team
Team Members: Tia Livingood, Randy Simmons, Leanne McConnell, Judy Brian

CONTACT: Tia Livingood, (360) 902-7412

Department of General Administration

Consolidate Radiophones

The Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) manages and maintains many of the properties it leases on behalf of state agencies. This requires regular communications between DRES building managers and maintenance staff. To make these communications efficient and cost-effective, the division bought 49 radiophones – hand-held devices that combine two-way radios, pagers and cell phones. Staff saved money on cell phone bills by using the two-way radios. The division got 12 of the radiophones at no cost by taking advantage of special offers from the providing company. But most of the radiophones were bought individually, under varied and sometimes expensive payment plans.

Working with the vendor, the DRES building manager, consolidated the phones under one payment plan, creating better service at a lower rate. Prior to consolidation, the division paid $2,424 per month for 49 radiophones. It now costs $1,056 per month – a cost reduction of about 44 percent.

Results

❖ Consolidation under one contract saves $16,421 annually.

❖ Reduces invoice processing, redirecting staff time.

❖ Redirects funds to cover costs for 11 additional radiophones.

❖ Allows immediate contact among field staff, making efficient use of time.

❖ Faster response time to trouble calls.

Team Name: Consolidate Radiophones
Team Members: Ted Martin, Mark Hagan, Maryann Duffy

CONTACT: Ted Martin, (360) 586-0566

Center for Health Statistics Phone Line Improvement

The Center for Health Statistics main phone line receives 300 to 400 calls per day. These came in on eight incoming lines. The operator could not effectively answer questions on all eight lines. Customers were frustrated with the amount of time it took to answer their calls. There were customer complaints daily about the phone menu and many callers hung up.

The team reconstructed the entire menu on the main line. It directs callers to topic specific submenus. Many questions are now answered by pre-recorded messages (mailing address, birth certificate cost, etc.). There is an option to repeat the main menu and an option to return to the main menu at any time. The caller can press zero to be connected to a customer service representative.

The incoming lines were reduced to four. The volume of calls directed to customer service representatives has lessened, showing that customers are getting the information they need through the topic submenus. There have been no complaints about the current phone menu.

Center for Health Statistics staff can change any portion of the menu, if needed.

Results

❖ More efficient, consistent customer service provided through topic specific submenus.

❖ Customer Service Representatives redirect their time to daily priority work and error checking.

❖ Fewer calls lost.

❖ Reduced turn around time for questions and requests.

Team Name: CHS Phone Line Team
Team Members: Wendy Kinswa, Ray Moffatte, Charlene Peoples, John Swanson, Flo Zikas

CONTACT: Wendy Kinswa, (360) 236-4311

Health Professions Quality Assurance and Facilities and Services Licensing Streamline Investigation Procedures

The Health Professions Quality Assurance, and Facility and Services Licensing sections of the Department of Health investigated complaints separately. Each program viewed information gathered during an investigation differently and staff did not always know or consider each others rules and regulations when conducting investigations. There were conflicting procedures for retaining investigation notes and retaining evidence.

This team established a Quick Response Team (QRT) for investigations that includes staff from both sections. Each participant understands their roles and responsibilities in conducting an investigation. Policies and procedures have been changed to share complaint information between the sections.

Results

❖ Developed roles and responsibilities for a Quick Response Team established with members from each section.

❖ Cross-trained Facilities & Services Licensing and Health Professions Quality Assurance staff in investigative processes, policies, and procedures.

❖ Referred questions about investigative notes and evidence retention to Faciliites and Services Licensing Enforcement Action Procedure Workgroup.

❖ Developed cross-training plan for investigators on federal regulations, health care practitioners, practice procedures, updates, etc.

❖ Established on-going feedback loops between sections for complaint processing.

Team Name: Sharing Evidence Workgroup
Team Members: Sandra Dlugoaz, Bart Eggen, Linda Furkay, Jeanne Giese, Jeanine Johnson, Bonnie King, Lynn Larson-LeVier, Yvette Lenz, David Magby, Bliss Moore, Richard Morrison, Theresa Phillips, Byron Plan, Jennell Prentice, Barbara Runyon, James H. Smith, Stephanie Todak; Office of the Attorney General: Mark Brevard, Karen Jensen

CONTACT: Linda Furkay, (360) 705-6775

HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse Statewide Hotline Improvements

The AIDS Hotline is a source for information about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, a referral source for testing, and the entry point for access to the state's early intervention and prescription drug programs for those with HIV.

The hotline menu options were in English only. Staff members also spoke English only.

The AIDS Hotline manager added a menu option in Spanish that directs callers to Public Health Seattle-King County bilingual staff during working hours and to the Center for Disease Control's Spanish hotline after hours.

There is currently no funding for a separate Hepatitis C program, and the public has limited channels to access this information. The Hotline manager also added a menu option that directs callers to information about Hepatitis C, including information about how it is and is not transmitted. This includes a menu option that allows callers to speak with a health educator to receive more information.

Results

❖ Demonstrates cultural sensitivity to customers.

❖ Spanish speaking callers receive the health information they need in their primary language.

❖ The public is better educated about Hepatitis C.

❖ Expected reduction in incidence of disease through education.

Team Name: HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse Hotline Team
Team Members: Laurie Barker James, Teri Eyster

CONTACT: Laurie Barker James, (360) 236-3487

Grant Applications Simplified

The SF424 is a standard budget form required as part of every application for federal asistance. You cannot edit this form electronically using the version available on federal websites.

This team developed an electronic SF424 in an Excel workbook that allows program managers to input budget information and have the totals calculate automatically. The workbook consists of four budget worksheets. Programs can enter up to four projects or phases, one into each worksheet. They can specify a category for each program cost. The Excel workbook calculates personnel benefit costs and calculates and applies indirect costs. Costs are summed and displayed by category on an intermediate form (SF424A) and by funding source on the SF424.

This form is available on the Department of Health's intranet. The team is working toward publishing this form on the Department of Health's internet site so it will be available to other organizations.

Results

❖ Reduced grant budget development and editing from approximately 20 hours to 5 hours per application.

❖ Previous grant application budgets can be modified, rather than developed from scratch.

❖ Produces an electronic file that can be easily edited and shared.

❖ Potentional to share electronically with other state agencies.

❖ Eliminates errors in calculating benefit and indirect costs by performing calculations automatically.

Team Name: Grant Application Budget Team
Team Members: George E. Haase, Thu Van Pham

CONTACT: George E. Haase, (360) 236-3946

Informative X-ray Powerpoint

The Division of Radiation Protection works to protect the public and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation. As a part of this mission, they regulate machine-generated sources of radiation through education, shielding review, inspections and enforcements of safe practices. This safeguards both x-ray equipment operators and their patients.

To enhance the education component of its mission, the X-Ray Control Section developed two Powerpoint slide shows in a question and answer format covering x-ray inspection topics such as standards, imaging, processing, and physics. These "quizzes" were developed for use by radiologic technologists, state X-ray inspectors, medical physicists and the general public both as continuing education, refresher training, and to spark further interest and study on the various subjects. The quizzes are available on the web at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/rp/Default.htm-xray (click on 'x-ray quizzes' from the table).

Results

❖ More X-ray information available 24/7 to other states, medical physicists, radiologic technologists and the public.

❖ Generate interest and answer questions from the public.

❖ Useful training tool for new staff members where little formal training is available.

❖ Outreach initiated from less well-known program.

Team Name: X-ray PowerPoint Quiz
Team Member: Mike Odlaug

CONTACT: Mike Odlaug, (360) 236-3237

DIS/NRB Heat Recovery Measure (ECM)

Heating the Natural Resources Building (NRB) and OB2 requires large amounts of electrical and natural gas energy. Vast amounts of heat are collected by 26 air conditioning units that cool the Department of Information Services (DIS) data center. In the past, this heat was vented to the atmosphere as waste.

A multi-agency team, including vendors, developed the ability to take heated water captured in the A/C units and pass it through a heat exchanger into a water pipe system which takes the heated water up through the water coils of the building's overhead air system. The heated air warms the NRB and OB2 buildings at tremendous savings.

Results

- ❖ Free preheating of the outside air before the normal systems start up saving electrical and gas energy. Annually saves 1,163,571 kilowatt hours of electrical energy and 3,113 therms of gas energy. Gas usage for preheating drops to zero.
- ❖ The new heat rejection system provides additional redundancy to the air conditioning and cooling tower systems for the state's data center.
- ❖ Efficiencies in data processing dollars. Money spent to cool the processors and reject the heat is now captured in the form of waste heat and utilized to preheat two state office buildings. Savings of $82,140 annually.
- ❖ Increased life expectancy for the air conditioning cooling towers (replacement cost of $60,000 each) by controlling them and using them for heat rejection only when needed by the data center's air conditioners.
- ❖ Heat available in the evening and weekends for DIS's swing and grave shifts without operating the buildings' system.
- ❖ We send considerably less waste water to LOTT for release into Puget Sound.

Team Members: Paul Clemens, Mark Fromme, Jim Vane; Department of General Administration: Art Arneson, Dave Harder, Mike Leonard, Rich Reed; Vendor: Quantum Engineering

CONTACT: Jim Vane, (360) 902-3291

Online Customer Service Agreement Application

Before a customer may obtain services from Department of Information Services (DIS), the customer must first execute a Customer Service Agreement (CSA). When a customer contacts a DIS service provider, the provider contacts the DIS contracts office to determine whether the customer has an existing CSA. It can take up to 24 hours to get an answer. It can take several days to execute a new CSA.

The online CSA application enables a service provider to determine in seconds whether a customer has an existing CSA, and, if one does not exist, allows a customer to execute a new CSA in a few minutes.

Results

❖ DIS service providers can now determine in seconds whether a customer has a Customer Service Agreement in place. This inquiry used to take an average of 2 hours and up to 24 hours. The contracts office receives approximately two such requests per week. This has saved over 100 hours per year.

❖ The time DIS contracts staff spends processing a new CSA has been reduced from an average of 2 hours to an average of 3 minutes. DIS processes on average 1 new CSA each week. A savings of 100 hours per year.

❖ Customer service has improved. Customers no longer have to wait an average of 2 hours while DIS service providers check to determine whether the customer has a current CSA. Customers who need to complete a CSA can complete that process the same day they inquire about services, rather than having to wait several days. This enables them to begin receiving services right away, often saving them money.

Team Members: Rich App, Beverly Boyd, Jacie Cox, Mike Dombrowsky, Gail Douglas, Mary Jackson, Brian Jensen, Barb Malen, Ro Marcus, Jerry Messer, Mai Nguyen, Ki Hung No, Laura Parma, Scott Smith, Tim VanDerhoof, Bruce Webb

CONTACT: Brian Jensen, (360) 902-2299

Automating Computer Fixes for Failed Operations

Every day, Labor and Industries runs hundreds of computer processes to provide services to customers and to maintain business records. To avoid slowing down the system for staff and customers who use computers during business hours, most of these computer operations are grouped together and processed in the evening. When a computer process fails before it finishes running or "abends," designated employees are notified so they can fix the problem and re-run the computer operation. In the past, abends were documented and traced using a slow, labor-intensive, manual paper process. The result was wasted time and duplicated data entry.

The agency solved this problem by designing a tracking process that uses the agency's existing computer capabilities to capture abends data, thereby eliminating the need for manual tracking.

Results

❖ Eliminated duplicate work (entering data from paper forms to a tracing database), saving 85 staff hours per year.

❖ Automated the abends tracking process.

❖ Provided faster and easier tracking of problem resolution, status and results.

❖ Provided all programmers with immediate access to complete abends data and logs.

Team Members: Rex Garrett, Darla Braniff, Sandra Foster, Gregory Jones, Larry Brown, Kristen Baldwin-Boe

CONTACT: Rex Garrett, (360) 902-5876

Data Entry at L&I – "Good-To-Go" the First Time

Labor and Industries and many other state agencies enter their accounting transactions (such as vendor payments, cash receipts and accounting adjustments) into the agency financial reporting system (AFRS), which resides within the Office of Financial Management (OFM). To accomplish this at L&I, it was necessary for accounting staff to perform duplicate data entry -- once for the agency's internal purposes and again when posted to the AFRS system.

To eliminate this redundancy and its resulting unnecessary use of staff and resources, a team from L&I and OFM developed a system -- the AFRS Interface Management System (AIMS). This system removes the need for duplicate data entry by providing for the electronic transfer of accounting information from L&I's system into AFRS**.**

Results

❖ Eliminated 6,000 redundant data entry transactions per month. This is a savings of 1.25 FTE's.

❖ L&I is providing AIMS system code to OFM so that other AFRS agencies can take advantage of savings.

❖ Accounts Payable saved 85.5 hours of overtime (last two biennial closings).

Team Members: Larry Rzany, Angie Flahaut, Mark Johnson, Nancy Clark, Dan Contris, Robert Kinzie, Teresa Moats, Stephen Hluch: AFRS Interface support provided by OFM: Cliff Wilder, Ray DeFant, Vonnie Tallon

CONTACT: Dan Contris, (360) 902-5743

Clearly Written Letter Improves Collections, Saves Staff Time

Labor and Industries' (L&I's) Collections Program is responsible for collecting workers' compensation premium dollars from employers who have not paid in a timely manner. Each quarter, L&I sends delinquency letters to 18,000 Washington employers whose quarterly reports and payments are overdue. When employers don't respond to the letter within 20 days, the account is assigned to collections.

Collections staff members were convinced that many employers weren't responding because they didn't understand their responsibilities as detailed in the delinquency letter. The letter was confusing and filled with excessive legal jargon.

Staff members rewrote the letter, clearly stating the issues and the action that the employer needed to take. Results from the initial three quarters show a significant improvement in response rates.

Results

❖ As a result of the letter's improved clarity, fewer clients were angry or resentful, resulting in reduced complaints and smoother working relationships.

❖ Fewer employers were confused about the letter's intent or instructions, and complied more readily.

❖ The number of overdue accounts resolved by the delinquency letter increased by 602 over the past three quarters -- the equivalent workload of 1.3 annual FTE's.

❖ The resulting efficiency has enabled staff to tackle other tasks, including 960 out-of-state claims.

Team Name: Delinquent Letter Squad
Team Members: Carl Hammersburg, Dana Botka, Carmen Riojas, Judi Craft, Jeanne Ramirez, Debbie Rogers

CONTACT: Carl Hammersburg, (360) 281-5328

Department of Labor and Industries

Quicker Means More in Collections

A primary responsibility for L&I's Collections staff is the collection of premium payments from employers whose workers' compensation accounts are past due.

Staff members for Southwestern Washington believed that they could achieve better results and free up time to pursue other duties by expeditiously working new workload assignments. They believed that the fresher the case, the more likely they would be able to recover monies and remove the account from their workload. Smaller workloads, they reasoned, translated into more time to pursue more difficult assignments.

To test their theory, they assigned three staff members to specifically work new accounts, and to track their success, something that hadn't been done previously. Within six months, it became apparent that accounts not only were being resolved more quickly, but that they also were requiring less attention from senior collection staff members. Significantly, the unit's overall receivables were reduced as well.

Results

❖ Within six months, 84 percent of new assignments were released within 90 days, an increase of 14 percent from the start of the project.

❖ Within six months, 20 percent of the total monies owed by the released accounts was collected in 90 days, a decrease from 28 percent.

❖ Within six months, 31 percent of premiums owed from the previous quarter were received in 90 days, an increase from 16 percent averaged for the previous year.

❖ Within seven months, the amount of outstanding receiveables was reduced to $8.5 million, a decrease of $3.2 million since the start of the project.

Team Name: Region 4 Collections
Team Members: Carleen Anderson, Sam Haigh, James Kreusch, Paula Kerr, Suzette Wells, Candy Gleason, Kristine Phinney, Denise Whitcraft, Maureen Strand, Jane Schermerhorn, Bibi Gulmohamed

CONTACT: Candy Gleason, (360) 902-4700

Department of Labor and Industries

A Library of Printer Drivers Halves Printer-Problem "Help-Desk" Calls

All personal computers need software programs to communicate with printers and to print documents correctly. These programs are called printer drivers. Each type of printer requires its own kind of driver. Without the right driver, printers won't print, and work comes to a halt while technical staff responds with a fix. Problems with printer drivers result in work stoppages at L&I.

After studying this problem, a team created a complete central on-line library of updated printer drivers and made it available to all of the agency's computer technicians. Printer-related calls to the agency's Help Desk plummeted.

Results

- ❖ Saved 1,833 technician staff hours per year (a 19 percent reduction).
- ❖ Reduced by 56 percent the number of computer Help Desk calls related to printer drivers.
- ❖ Created a central on-line library of currently used printer drivers accessible to all technicians, and a process to accurately maintain this library.
- ❖ As a side benefit, created a process to pre-stage new network printers, so that new printers are usable upon receipt (avoiding delays of up to three weeks).

Team Name: Printer Drivers Team (aka The Printer Posse)
Team Members: Bill Gillespie, Donna Edwards, Donna Cole, Randy Sanford, Bill Blanford

CONTACT: Bill Gillespie, (360) 902-5872

Department of Labor and Industries

"You've Got Mail" . . . Too Much!

Labor and Industries' staff members use and rely on electronic mail (e-mail) to do much of their work and assigned duties. Computer storage space is set aside for each employee's e-mail files. When that storage space is full or exceeded, staff members lose their ability to send e-mail. To regain e-mail capability, they must delete e-mail files to re-establish storage space. Although effective in preserving computer storage space, this has proven to be disruptive, and often results in staff members unable to work at critical times.

A team was established to study the problem and devise a solution that would reduce the number of times staff members are unable to send e-mail for exceeding allotted storage capacity.

As a result, staff members who are nearing their storage limit are now sent early warning messages that include hints and help for e-mail usage and storage. In addition, an on-line e-mail help page was created, featuring tips and suggestions for managing e-mail.

Results

- ❖ Reduced the number of staff unable to send e-mail due to exceeded storage limits by 52 percent.
- ❖ Saved 1,000 staff hours per year in emergency management of e-mail files.
- ❖ Created a web site to help staff better manage their e-mail files and use e-mail more efficiently.
- ❖ Reduced computer help desk calls for assistance in managing e-mail files by 40 percent.

Team Name: Tough Love
Team Members: Rebecca Scroggins, Chris Cotey, Terry Goldsby, Crystal Hart, Marv Clarambeau, Evelyn Hinken, Kendra Hoeschen

CONTACT: Rebecca Scroggins, (360) 902-4468

Department of Labor and Industries

"Ferreting Out Fraud" – Pensions Investigations Project

Every year, Labor and Industries pays pensions to thousands of Washington workers who have been permanently injured while on the job. L&I staff members responsible for determining pensions were convinced that some pension recipients were fraudulently collecting money they didn't deserve.

An investigative team was brought together to explore the issue and devise solutions. The team developed an investigative system to detect erroneous payments due to fraud. It was tested in one of the agency's six regions. The team developed a checklist, made use of on-line investigative resources and began developing a network of key relationships with others outside of the agency. Within two months, the team identified two fraudulent pension claims, totaling $56,941. This model will be expanded to the agency's other five regions.

Results

❖ Developed a pension investigation checklist for investigators to use as they pursue investigations.

❖ Researched and successfully used a database for investigating the activities of individuals suspected of fraud.

❖ Made useful contacts with out-of-state fraud investigators who have potential information on individuals suspected of fraud within Washington.

❖ Collaborated with the Department of Corrections on using that agency's database for identifying pensioners who were incarcerated, and thus ineligible for pension payments.

Team Name: Pension Investigation Team (The Ferrets)
Team Members: Russ Johnson, Virginia Andersen, Carrie Boyd, Lynda Cochran, Paul Powell, Larry Russell; Consultants: Cindy Ranger, Gayle Wilde

CONTACT: Russ Johnson, (360) 902-6695

Making Rules Easier to Find, Read and Understand

Like most government regulations, Labor and Industries' workplace safety and health rules were poorly organized, difficult to read and riddled with confusing bureaucratic, legal jargon. This made it difficult for employers to find, understand and comply with their workplace safety and health responsibilities, thus potentially endangering the well being of their employees.

In a collaboration of unprecedented scope with business and labor, L&I redesigned, reorganized and rewrote the rules to make them easily accessible and understandable to employers and employees. This was accomplished without adding any additional employer requirements or removing any worker protection. The new Safety and Health Core Rules were made available and distributed to employers in August 2001. This single book of core rules provides about 80% of small non-manufacturing employers with a complete, easy-to-use set of requirements. (Additional industry-specific rules are currently being re-written.)

Results

- ❖ Reorganized and rewrote Safety and Health Core Rules so they were user-friendly, easy to read, understand and apply, especially for small companies that typically lack full-time safety personnel.
- ❖ Created tools, forms, checklists along with the rules to help make compliance easier for employer and employees.
- ❖ Posted the new rules on the Internet for easy use, with links to other helpful safety and health sites.
- ❖ Produced the new rules on compact disk (CD) and sent it to 40,000 businesses.

Team Name: Innovations Project Team
Team Members: Michael Silverstein, Gail Hughes, Connie Stewart, Grace Giorgio, Rowena Johnson, Carol Stevenson, Donna Manders, Martha Work, Nichole Rose, Alan Lundeen, Christine Swanson, Cindy Ireland, Suzanne Waits, Tracy Spencer, George Huffman, Paul Marsh, Marilou Russell, Kim Telasky, Arlene Hallom, Michael Radach, Jeff Grimm, Ed Whitney, Myron Thompson, Steve Borst, Craig Blackwood, Glenn Harvey, Joe Luce, Michael Wood, Dan McMurdie, Stefan Dobratz, Paul Snow, Michael Farley, Anne Soiza , Richard Apple, Cheryl Moore

CONTACT: Gail Hughes, (360) 902-5439

Department of Labor and Industries

Toning Down Printer Cartridge Expenses

To manage workers' compensation claims most efficiently, Labor and Industries converts all paper documents to electronic computer files. More than 35,000 pages of claims documents are scanned into electronic images every day. Often, due to imperfections in the scanning process, a black border was added to the electronic copy of the document. This black border resulted in printer toner being wasted whenever a paper copy of a claim file was needed. The annual cost of toner for printing all claim files is about $110,000.

The team implemented a computer program that greatly reduces how often black borders are printed.

Results

❖ Reduced the number of black borders printed, which resulted in less printer toner being used when paper copies of claim files are printed out.

❖ Reduced toner cartridge costs by 35 percent – an annual savings of $38,500.

Team Members: Marc Abraham, Ann Evans, Ken Lisle, Buck Riley, Thomas Thomas, Kathy Whisler, Rick Wickman, Douglas Glen

CONTACT: Marc Abraham, (360) 902-5979

Moving to New Storage Technology for Archiving and Retrieval of "Purged" Title/Registration Records

Each year a "purge" of vehicle records from the vehicle database takes place (8 years without any activity, "totaled" vehicles, and old plates that are replaced records). These purged records are recorded onto microfiche files and provided to the Investigative Research Unit (IRU) of Title & Registration to allow restoration, if it becomes necessary, of those records. These sheets of microfiche records are accessed by inserting them individually into a reader which displays onto a black and white screen. The records are located on the sheet of microfiche by scrolling them across the screen with a handle. This equipment is very antiquated and the records are extremely small, of poor quality and therefore difficult to read. To find a record on the microfiche, the staff in IRU must first go to a specific location in their work area and locate the sheet of fiche (1778 for the 2001 purge) by a resource locater number identified at the top of each sheet, insert it into the machine and scroll until you locate the record for printing.

This year, the storage technology was changed to compact disks. Each staff member in IRU was provided a set of 3 CDs which contain all the purge records. This allows access to these records directly from the staff member's workstation. The quality of the viewed and printed records is greatly increased, and has decreased the amount of time it takes to access each record by approximately 15 seconds. IRU has accessed and restored 19,339 records so far since the installation of the CDs in March 2001.

Results

❖ Reduced the cost of producing copies of the purged records for IRU from $2524 for one set of microfiche to $660 for 8 sets of CDs.

❖ Allows staff to access records directly from their individual work stations, and reduced the amount of time it takes to access the record by an average of 15 seconds, for a savings of 4,835 minutes or 81 staff hours.

❖ Provides the opportunity for other work units to obtain copies of the purge files and access directly from their work area using their PC and the CDs.

❖ Prevents the need to maintain old, outdated microfiche equipment.

Team Name: Purged Files Storage Improvement Team
Team Members: Bob Turcotte, Katie Sprengel, Rick Breidenbach; Department of Information Systems: Gordon Bowman
CONTACT: Debra Then, (360) 902-0116

eLearning Network

The majority of training that the Department of Personnel (DOP) provides state employees is held in Olympia. The expense of the training, travel, possible overnight accommodations, and the employee's absence from their duties for one or more days make it very difficult for many employees throughout the state to be able to participate in many of DOP's training courses.

On October 15, 2001, DOP launched the eLearning Network. The network provides instant accessibility to more than 1,200 courses via the employee's personal computer. The courses cover a broad range of practical and popular topics that include: project management, communication skills, and a variety of computer applications.

Results

- ❖ eLearning courses are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- ❖ Convenient and practical for staff who work in remote locations, are unable to get away from their office, work a different shift, or who prefer to learn at their own pace.
- ❖ Provides flexibility by allowing the employee to take all or part of the courses depending on their individual need.
- ❖ The employee has one year to complete the course so can work on the course at their convenience without interfering in work duties.
- ❖ When the course is successfully completed, it will automatically be added to the employee's training profile.
- ❖ There is a substantial cost saving of 35-40% off the current market price due to the state's purchasing power.

Team Name: eLearning Network Team
Team Members: John Robertson, David Dobson, Tammy Dobson, Carol Daugherty, Pam Rupert, Marilyn McNeil, Jordan Hughes, Billy Howard, Gary Wilkenson, Tyrone Williams, Warren Kelly

CONTACT: David Dobson (360) 664-6256 or email davidd@dop.wa.gov

Department of Printing

Streamlining Accounts Payable

The Department of Printing (PRT) partners with private businesses by outsourcing 50% of printing work annually. Processing outsourced vendor invoices can be extremely time-consuming and lengthy, resulting in delayed customer billing and vendor reimbursement. Through customer inquiries, PRT became aware that this delay impeded accounting for both PRT's customers and vendors. This team assessed the current billing process and implemented changes, which eliminates two unnecessary functions and saves approximately 275 FTE hours annually. In addition it reduces turnaround time for vendor reimbursement and customer billing.

Results

❖ PRT will save approximately 275 FTE hours annually in unnecessary functions.

❖ Reduces turnaround time for vendor reimbursement and customer billing.

Team Name: Streamlining Accounts Payable
Team Members: Kara Skinner, Terry Tyler, Jerry Williams, Virginia Hoover, Jolaine Swanda

CONTACT: Jolaine Swanda, (360) 570-5073

Department of Retirement Systems

Expanded Communication Reduces Petitions and Appeals

The volume of petitions filed by retirement system members and employers challenging Department of Retirement Systems' administrative decisions increased dramatically in 2000 from the previous record high in 1999. Customers were pushing for more rapid decisions. More petition decisions were being appealed. Legal Services staff analyzed all petitions to identify areas of high reversal or higher than average processing time.

The solutions included: 1) summarizing the petition question and decision at the beginning of the petition in plain English; 2) using less "legalese" in petitions and eliminating unnecessary exhibits; 3) setting up weekly meetings between Legal Services staff and Retirement Services staff to discuss and resolve potential legal issues before they become petitions; 4) developing guidelines for agency staff to resolve issues that previously would not have been dealt with until the appeal stage; 5) developing rules in advance of implementation of new programs; 6) using Frequently Asked Question pages on the agency Web site for topics where petitions are more common; 7) having staff meet with family law attorneys to discuss unique characteristics of public pensions; and 8) having one person review all petition decisions for consistency.

Results

❖ The average response time for petitions decreased from 300 days in 1998 to 39.1 days in 2001 (87 percent reduction).

❖ The number of petitions decreased from 62 in 1999 to 23 in 2001.

❖ The average number of hours spent by the petitions examiner on each petition decreased from 59.4 in 1998 to 32 in 2001.

❖ The number of petition decisions that were appealed decreased from 26 in 1999 to 9 in 2001.

❖ The number of petition decisions that were reversed decreased from 7 in 2000 to 2 in 2001.

Team Name: Petitions and Appeals
Team Members: Steve Nelsen, Lucille Christenson, Elyette Weinstein, Merry Kogut, Ceil Buddeke, Evelyn Fielding-Lopez, Jack Bryant, Margaret Wimmer, Zan Johnston
CONTACT: Steve Nelsen, (360) 664-7308

Timely Imaging of Mail Strengthens Service

Incoming mail must be imaged before Retirement Services staff can respond to a written customer request. In May 2001, it took three days to image the incoming mail (i.e., prepare and scan the documents, index the resulting images and perform a quality assurance review before releasing the images into the system), making it difficult to respond to customers in a timely manner.

The new mail unit analyzed the capacity of machines and staff, then reorganized the work to increase production and to take advantage of staff strengths. The analysis provided data to justify shifting one staff position into the unit. Quality Assurance was centralized in one position to streamline the handling of work. System upgrades reduced keystrokes, improved response time and reduced system errors.

Results:

❖ Ninety-five percent of the time new mail is imaged by the end of the day it is received. This increases the likelihood of meeting the correspondence response time goal of five days and directly impacts customer service.

❖ A three-month backlog of imaging documents received or created by analysts has been eliminated.

❖ Staff morale has improved with the elimination of backlogs.

❖ Processing time has been reduced from three days to the same day.

Team Name: New Mail Imaging
Team Members: Adam Jansen, Lucille Christenson, Jim Stanton

CONTACT: Adam Jansen, (360) 664-7267

Imaging Historical Paper Files

The imaging of 550,000 paper files for the agency's Electronic Document Image Management System was taking much more time than initially anticipated and budgeted. At the July 2001 production rate, it would have taken 10 years to complete the process.

Based on a root-cause analysis of the process, several changes were made to increase production. Changes included simplifying the document indexing criteria, changing the purging criteria for unneeded documents, freezing system changes to stabilize the process, providing cross training to increase understanding of the process, monitoring production data, and changing the procedures and priorities for imaging shelved files.

Results:

❖ Reduced processing time for files needed immediately from 2.5 weeks to the same or next day.

❖ July 2001 production was 73 percent of goal, while December year-to-date production improved to 101 percent of goal. This significant improvement was achieved by increasing the daily production rate sufficiently to make up for goal deficits at the beginning of the biennium. The goal is based on 144,000 files being imaged this year.

❖ Increased overall production rates by 50 percent betweeen July and December 2001, and the production rates have stabilized at the higher level.

❖ Increased morale and decreased staff turnover.

❖ Increased production rates sufficiently to reduce the projects duration from 10 to four years.

Team Name: Backfile Conversion
Team Members: Adam Jansen, Lucille Christenson, Jim Stanton

CONTACT: Adam Jansen, (360) 664-7267

Department of Retirement Systems

Electronic Document Imaging Speeds Response to Customers

By 2005, the number of employees retiring from public service will increase by 30 percent over Fiscal Year 2000 levels – posing the risk of a substantial increase in the turnaround time for customer service requests. The Department of Retirement Systems kept over 500,000 paper files containing member data that was reviewed when completing individual business transactions. Customers inquiring by phone or visiting the agency without prior notice waited half a day – often longer – if staff needed information from one of these files, which were stored away from headquarters. No duplicate files were maintained and the agency risked losing critical information if the paper files were destroyed as a result of a physical disaster.

The Department of Retirement Systems successfully implemented a state-of-the-art electronic document image management system, allowing staff to instantly respond to customer requests by accessing member files electronically. Workflows in the system automate forwarding and distribution steps in processes that were previously done manually. Electronic storage and retrieval of member file information prevents loss of data from physical disasters. This new system also positions the agency for future streamlining and automating of business processes.

Results

❖ Customers enjoy immediate responses to inquiries over the telephone or when visiting the agency without an appointment.
❖ New mail is electronically imaged and matched with the member file to give staff complete information at first viewing to perform business transactions.
❖ Work that requires access to a member's file by more than one staff person can be done simultaneously.
❖ Customers benefit from improved disaster recovery capability for agency data - member files are no longer at risk of destruction from physical disasters.
❖ Paper file storage costs will decrease as the remainder of member files are converted to electronic images.

Team Name: Electronic Document Image Management System (EDIMS)

Team Members: Cal Blackburn, Marc Bourgois, Theresa Bradeen, Lucille Christenson, Mark Feldhausen, Marcie Frost, Jim Gunn, Susan Harp, Debbie Jewell, Sally Nichols, Tami Schwender, Selina Soto, John Specht, Karen Spoon, Jim Stanton, Jeff Wickman

CONTACT: Jeff Wickman, (360) 664-7303

Supplemental Retirement Plan Expands Flexibility for Customers

The federal Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 – which took effect on January 1, 2002 – brought numerous important changes to the Deferred Compensation Program, which is administered by the Department of Retirement Systems. The Act contains both optional provisions and provisions mandated by the federal government. A project team formed to research, analyze and implement the mandatory provisions – and as many of the optional provisions as possible to provide the best service to program participants.

Over an intense six-month period, the project team developed, tested and implemented technology system enhancements to support the implementation of the Act's provisions. The project team completed an extensive overhaul of the program's publications and Web site, and created a variety of new educational materials critical to assist participants with decision making around their new flexibility. Close to 10,000 customized educational packets were mailed to specific customer groups who are affected differently by the provisions of the Act. All mandatory and optional provisions were implemented on time, by January 1, 2002.

Results

❖ Service was enhanced through increased flexible retirement planning options for customers, beyond the mandatory provisions required by the legislation.
❖ Timely, customized communications provided explicit information for unique customer groups affected differently by the new legislation.
❖ New education materials were created and existing publications updated to ensure that clear, comprehensive information was available to participants to make critical, time-sensitive retirement planning decisions.
❖ Expanded information resources for customers through a revision of the program Web site include a frequently asked questions page, an overview of the Act's impact on the Deferred Compensation Program and printable versions of all updated publications.

Team Name: Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001
Team Members: Trina Arnott, Ken Baldwin, SJ Barnsley, Nancy Borst, Cathy Cale, Marilyn Davis, Kris Fjalstad, Anne Holdren, Robert Julian, Stephanie Klapstein, Merry Kogut, Chris Lamb, Dina Morrow, Ron Newell, Cindy Wallace, Donna Wells, Jeff Wickman
CONTACT: Robert Julian, (360) 664-7021

ELF Payment Enhancements

Processing tax returns is a significant effort for the Department of Revenue. By providing alternative filing/payment methods, the Department has improved service and decreased processing time. Initially, the Department developed an electronic filing system (ELF). This system was available to taxpayers who made payments via an electronic fund transfer process. It was not available to those who wished to pay by check or credit card. The Department later introduced a pay-by-check process, which increased usage but did not eliminate manual paper processing. A third alternative - pay by credit card – has increased use of electronic filing *and* reduces the need for manually processing paper documents.

Results

❖ Saves time for the taxpayer by eliminating the need for a paper return.

❖ Provides another payment option for the taxpayer.

❖ Funds are available faster.

❖ Payments are more quickly accessible on-line and provides for easier payment tracking.

❖ Eliminating the need for a paper payment document saves 72 hours of staff time.

Team Name: EPMS Phase 2
Team Members: TAA: Larry Schmitt, James Petit, Debbie Young, Cheryl Moss, Annette Parbon, Beverly Albritton, Leilani Hesser, Debbie Haller, Phil Christopher, Kristine Rompa, Kristine Ancock, Nettie VanHorn, David Tradewell, Tom Gruver, Deborah Taylor, Bertha Ferris, Billie Young, David Tevis, Cathy Cheatam, Janetta Taylor; F&ES: Kim Asbach, Minh-Hanh Nguyen, Anita Duemig-Fairbanks; IS: Steve Bilhimer, Gary Dubuque, Renee Alexander, Kent Andrus, John Garrison, Byron Schabell, Parrish Preston, Carolyn Scott, Bob Bulgrien, Thuy Nguyen, Betty Adams, Tim Anderson, Joyce Fouts, Gregg Gallwas, George Smith, Suzi Simpson, Sue Nelson

CONTACT: Anita Duemig-Fairbanks, (360) 902-8878

Targeted Use Tax Education

Washington state levies a sales or use tax on products purchased by businesses. However, many businesses purchase merchandise from mail order catalogs or the Internet - and often do not pay either the sales or use taxes. Discovering whether a business owes such taxes often requires a time-consuming and costly audit.

To promote voluntary payment a series of Special Notices were developed and sent to targeted industries. The notice informed taxpayers of their use tax obligations, provided examples of the types of items subject to tax, and asked taxpayers to review their records, and report and pay taxes due. The special notices improved tax collections.

Results

❖ For July 2000 – June 2001, Physicians reported a gross amount of $1,562,894 or an additional $101,590 state use tax revenue collected.

❖ For July 2000 – June 2001, Dentists reported a gross amount of $3,201,636 or an additional $208,135 state use tax revenue collected.

❖ For July 2000 – June 2001, other medical professionals reported a gross amount of $2,329,988 or an additional $133,485 state use tax revenue collected.

❖ For October 2000 – June 2001, Accountants reported a gross amount of $1,608,533 or an additional $104,561 state use tax revenue collected.

❖ For January 2001 – June 2001, Architects reported a gross amount of $372,497 or an additional $24,216 state use tax revenue collected.

Team Name: Targeted Education Team
Team Members: Brad Flaherty, Gary Davis, Richard Cason, Sandra Yuen, Dianne Fisher, Don Gutmann

CONTACT: Richard Cason, (360) 486-2143

Business and Occupation Tax Recovery Efforts by Forest Tax Staff

Taxpayers who exceed $100,000 gross annual proceeds from timber harvesting are subject to Business and Occupation (B&O) tax as well as the Forest Excise tax. Before September 2000, the Taxpayer Account Administration (TAA) division of Revenue was responsible for assessing this tax. Two Forest Excise Tax Examiners cross-trained at TAA and in December of 2000, the Forest Tax section assumed the responsibility for contacting and assessing this group of taxpayers. Currently, 795 taxpayers have been contacted about their B&O liabilities and over $980,000 in previously unrecovered taxes have been assessed. The Forest Tax compliance section has also assumed the responsibility for collecting any delinquent B&O taxes resulting from these assessments**.**

Results

❖ Interdivisional cooperation created opportunity for enhanced skill development and better utilization of specialized DOR staff knowledge and skills.

❖ Information Services Staff and Forest Tax staff redefined requirements for the quarterly report used to identify this group of taxpayers, creating a more manageable and improved research tool. The report was reduced by 467 pages over the course of one year.

❖ Taxpayer education efforts by the Forest Tax section now include an increased emphasis on possible Business and Occupation Tax responsibilities in addition to Forest Tax liabilities.

❖ Total account management approach by Forest Tax to this group of taxpayers includes research, assessment, and collection of the tax and interaction with the Appeals Division for interest waivers.

❖ Anticipated revenue to be generated this fiscal year is $980,000.

Team Name: Small Harvester B&O Tax Team
Team Members: Barbie Proffitt, Steve Griffith, Randi Johnson, Ann Ryan, Nicole Mays, Julie Hoke, Donna Conlee, Linda Nelsen, Rob Rice, Kari Johnson, NettieVan Horn

CONTACT: Randi Johnson, (360) 586-5247

PC Rollout

Since rolling out new PCs is a cyclical activity, and because Client Computer Services sometimes lacks sufficient staff to complete rollouts in the time desired, utilizing staff from other sections within Information Services (specifically Network Services) allows earlier completion of projects. This provided a cross training opportunity for section staff.

Lacking necessary information (about a Revenue Enhancement, Oracle re-writes, potential moves and staffing issues) the rollout was estimated as a nine-month project. Once better information became available, project timelines were reduced, allowing a nine-month project to be concluded in three months.

Results

❖ More timely deployment of new technology – from an estimated nine-month rollout to three months.

❖ More efficient use of staff.

❖ Increased divisional teamwork.

❖ Provided additional cross-training opportunities.

❖ Increased coordination between division staff and Information Services.

Team Members: Ken Joubert, Lonna Hocker, Mike Geisenheimer, Kim Vo, Brad Strand, Jim Reilly, Nathan Olsen, Joy Foster, Frank Reale, David Jewell, Mike Davis, Curtis Byre, Andrea Carlson, Brian Smith, Louis Pottschmidt, Mike Neff, Jim Warren, Steve Hellyer, David Lazar, Kurt Wieburg

CONTACT: Lonna Hocker, (360) 586-9880

Ratio Study

The Division challenged itself to analyze and improve the administration of the state-mandated county Ratio Study.   The Ratio Study involves the annual analysis and measurement of each county's level of assessment.   The process includes analysis of existing sales in each county (comparing their sale price to the assessed value) as well as audits of personal property accounts and appraisals of other real property in areas where there are a limited number of sales. This information is used in the equalization of the state school levy.

In January 1999 this process required full utilization of 32 professionals each year and workloads were forecasted to increase beyond the capabilities of the existing staff. The end result allowed the division to significantly reduce the need for supplemental real property appraisals by: 1) placing greater reliance on strict, statistically generated workload determinations; 2) improving the reliability of the raw data received from the counties; and 3) modifying our internal management of the process. All this was done while also improving the reliability and integrity of the final estimates.

Results

❖ FTE requirements were reduced from 32 to 19 employees between 1999 and 2001. This is a 41 percent reduction and represents over 25,056 FTE hours saved.

❖ After reallocations, this improvement generated $190,000 in direct dollar savings.

❖ The process requires less intrusion on taxpayers in the counties that were previously subjected to real property appraisals.

❖ The end result of the ratio is more readily defended and explained.

❖ Remaining workloads represent higher level and more intersting work that affords greater opportunities for professional growth for staff.

Team Name: Ratio Process Review Team
Team Members: Sandy Guilfoil, David Saavedra, Sheryl Campbell, Mark Maxwell, Deb Mandeville, Mary Welsh, Stan Woodwell

CONTACT: Sandy Guilfoil, (360) 570-5860

Unclaimed Property Industry Mailing Pilot

Uncashed employee paychecks and vendor checks are, after a period of time, considered property which is abandoned and reportable to the state. The state attempts to locate the owners, safeguarding the money for the owner or the owner's heirs. However, many businesses do not know about the law governing unclaimed property or how to report it. The usual education model is to physically visit these businesses and inform them of their reporting requirements and the unclaimed property law. A recent approach, allowed for the mailing of a letter of instruction and all necessary forms, based upon business classification.

Results

- ❖ One mailing provided instructions to more than 5000 businesses. Of those, 250 new businesses were reported.

- ❖ Provides a successful, more cost effective way to educate smaller businesses.

- ❖ More than $125,000 previously unreported property has been reported to the state.

- ❖ Property reported as a result of the mailing is considered "timely filed" for interest and penalty purposes, resulting in good will for this amnesty period.

Team Name: Unclaimed Property Industry Mailing Pilot
Team Members: Linda Brown, Emily Peterson, Diana Tibbetts

CONTACT: Linda Brown, (360) 664-8750

Improve DOR Referral Process

Managers within Revenue rely upon Employee Services for accurate and timely register information. However, because available information was not always reliable or consistent, both Employee Services and hiring supervisors sometimes expended additional effort to ensure correct information.

Employee Services coordinated with the Department of Personnel to provide accurate, timely, and current employment registers to hiring managers.

Results

- ❖ Employment registers are up-to-date and error free.
- ❖ Only current names are listed on the register – no more invalid names.
- ❖ Increased communications and cooperation with the Department of Personnel.
- ❖ Standardized process so all referrals look the same.
- ❖ Saves approximately 200 staff hours a year (creating and maintaining registers).

Team Members: Laurie Milligan, Beth Fleury, Darcy Bristow, Carole Lynch, Eric Magbaleta; Department of Personnel: Martha Thomas, Teresa Dillon, Rhonda Bell

CONTACT: Laurie Milligan, (360) 570-6180

Communications Email Box

The Communications Email Box (CEB) in the Taxpayer Services Divisions has been transferred from Taxpayer Information and Education (TI&E) to the Telephone Information Center (TIC). TI&E originally had clerical staff view and determine the processing of the questions that came in the CEB. Today, the TIC staff perform this first function in processing email questions. (The TIC staff respond to simple questions such as: requests for forms, tax rates, and public information. Tax questions are referred on to TI&E.)

Results

❖ Because of their previous experience working on the telephones, TIC staff have significant technical knowledge. This makes it possible for them to answer over half the email received and reduces the amount of email requiring a formal response from TI&E.

❖ TIC staff, because of their broad knolwedge, are able to answer questions that other staff would have to spend time researching. Many email questions are now responded to in less than 48 hours with most being answered within a few hours.

❖ The TIC work unit includes a number of people capable of working the CEB. This allows for seamless customer service, since with a relatively large group, there is good coverage for annual leave, sick leave, meetings, and classes.

❖ Because TIC staff work the telephones on a daily basis, they are accustomed to speaking with taxpayers and referring questions when necessary. Email and telephone work seem to go hand in hand. The work is similar and staff are able to use time when they are not busy with calls to answer questions.

Team Name: Telephone Information Center
Team Members: John Wack, Cindy Autuchovich, Sue Cook, Linda Miller-Baldwin, Maureen O'Connell, Judy Wells

CONTACT: John Wack, (360) 486-2181

Leasehold Excise Tax Brochure

Taxpayers are often unaware of the Leasehold Excise Tax (i.e. they do not know what it is and/or when it applies to their situation.) An informational Leasehold Excise Tax Question and Answer Brochure was created. This document has improved customer service by providing taxpayers a better understanding of this tax.

Results

❖ Improved customer service through education of taxpayers.

❖ Field staff can easily answer general questions because they now have an informational brochure available to respond to general questions.

Team Members: Kathy Forsberg, Teresa Hansen, Alyson Chase

CONTACT: Kathy Forsberg, (360) 586-5190

Department of Revenue

Streamlining Safe Deposit Box Claims and Bank Fee Reimbursements

The Department has often been successful in locating owners of safe deposit boxes. However, when rental and drilling fees are owed the bank for the safe deposit boxes, owners cannot reclaim their contents until they repay those fees. Typically, the owner traveled to the bank branch office, repaid the fees, and submitted proof of the payment to the Department. Because of the age of the fees, (five years+), the owner might have to make several contacts before locating a knowledgeable bank employee to accept the fee and give them a payment record.

The solution: The owner now pays the bank fees to DOR, DOR reimburses the banks, and DOR is able to immediately deliver the contents of the safe deposit box to the claimant.

Results

❖ Simplifies claims process for returning owners.

❖ Improves likelihood that owner will complete the claim.

❖ Single source fee reimbursement process for bank.

❖ Keeps reimbursement process in DOR control - no outside contacts are required.

❖ Reduces potential auction processing and costs.

Team Name: Field Team
Team Members: Nancy Savage, Judith Denoyer, Jack Neumann, Gloria Shawler, Linda Brown, Pat Tate

CONTACT: Nancy Savage, (360) 753-5553

Department of Revenue

Leasehold Excise Tax Imaging of Paper Files

Prior to imaging, Miscellaneous Tax maintained approximately 425 quarterly taxpayer accounts. Each taxpayer file could include tax returns, correspondence, and audits and because of the number of documents can take up considerable physical space (some files were up to 20 inches wide). If someone outside of Miscellaneous Tax wanted information from these files they needed to contact Miscellaneous Tax and often would wait for some time before receiving the information. Imaging the information in the tax files reduced the need for storage space, and because the files were on-line, information was quickly accessible.

Results

❖ Reduced space required to archive 32 boxes of paper documents.

❖ Providing department-wide access via the computer to imaged files saves staff 60 hours each year.

Team Members: Kathy Forsberg, Teresa Hansen, Mel Kirpes, Jeanette Bashaw, Janet Mastroianni, Byron Safford, Jennifer Dennis, Helen Stubbings, Donald Suess, Tzietel Roney, Dena Merritt, Tara Morey, Mariam Kumher, Nhung Le, Wanda Williams, Mike Vernam, Ada Paz, Azad Hussein, Sary Sam, Kim Davis

CONTACT: Kathy Forsberg, (360) 586-5190

Department of Social and Health Services

Less Work – Better Services

Nursing home Medicaid clients received two separate, computer generated notices about their financial and program eligibility. This project eliminated redundant letters to clients, avoided duplication of effort by deparment staff and generally improved the maintenance and accuracy of client case records.

Team members developed a new streamlined process eliminating duplicate mailing of letters and saved postage and staff time. The team also developed a new process greatly improving record keeping accuracy and organization of files.

Results

❖ Reduced wasteful filing of letters and notices by field and headquarters professional and support staff by 94%.

❖ Generated significant improvements in staff morale and saved staff time for direct client care.

❖ Improved services to clients, families and providers.

❖ Reduced postage by eliminating duplicate mailings.

❖ Improved the accuracy and organization of client records.

Team Name: Home and Community Services Efficiency Improvement Team
Team Members: Lyn Adair, Louise Chadez, Richard Dauphin, Shari DeBerg, Colleen Vetsch

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, Ph.D., (360) 725-2576

Department of Social and Health Services

Assuring Timely and Accurate Responses to Public Disclosure Requests

Each week, DSHS gets hundreds of public disclosure requests for information about its clients and services. Short timeframes, potential monetary penalties for privacy violations and non-compliance, and state public disclosure laws make it critical that agency employees respond to these requests promptly and accurately. This fall, the Economic Services Administration developed and delivered (with assistance from the Attorney General's Office and the DSHS Public Disclosure Officer) the first comprehensive DSHS training targeted to employees tasked with responding to pubic disclosure requests.

Of the 210 training evaluations completed, over 90% of respondents reported that the training was excellent and gave them the information and tools they needed to assure timely, accurate responses to public disclosure requests.

Results

❖ Fourteen training sessions were delivered throughout the state and attended by over 225 employees.

❖ Over 90% of those who evaluated the training reported that the training gave them the information and tools needed to effectively respond to public disclosure requests.

❖ Greater compliance with public disclosure mandates to limit agency liability risk.

Team Name: Public Disclosure Response Improvement Team
Team Members: Sydney Martin Doré, Kristal Wiitala Knutson, Nancy Koptur, B.J. Bailey, Leslie Edwards-Hill, Rena Milare, Leslie Birnbaum

CONTACT: Sydney Martin Doré, (360) 413-3290

Innovative Staff Implement Software Improvements Reducing Tax ID Problems

The Division of Disability Determination Services (DDDS) was spending significant time and energy at the end of each calendar year preparing and mailing 1099s to Medical Evidence of Record (MER) and Consultative Examination (CE) Vendors. The purpose of the project was to improve this process and reduce staff time spent in finding and correcting problems in the data that was necessary for producing the 1099s. A secondary goal was to ensure that vendors received accurate and timely 1099s. The improvement was achieved through two major software changes: 1) A tax ID tiebreaker file was added that joined vendors using the same tax ID number; and 2) Edits were added to prevent entering a payment for a vendor that had no tax ID number loaded to the vendor file. The improvements included: reduction in the number of preliminary runs to find and correct errors; reduction in the number of W-9s sent to vendors at the end of the year to get tax ID information; and reduction in the number of problems in the vendor database.

Results

❖ Reduced end of year data cleanup by ensuring one tax ID number was loaded to active related MER and CE vendor records, ensuring the tax ID number was accurate and complete.

❖ Reduced the number of preliminary runs from six to one and reduced the number of tax ID problems needing correction from over 3,000 to 20 for this year.

❖ Reduced the number of W-9s mailed to vendors at the end of the year for tax ID information. The mailing of W-9s was spread out more evenly throughout the calendar year and is handled as a part of the normal workflow for the Medical Claims Unit.

❖ Reduced the number of 1099s returned for corrections from vendors that required corrected updates to the IRS from 30 to 2.

❖ Eliminated overtime for Medical Claims staff, which allowed redirection of 48 hours of IT staff time and saved a total of $16,167.

Team Name: 1099 Process Improvement Workgroup
Team Members: Ted Steege, Patricia Earl, Jennie McCloud

CONTACT: Ted Steege, (360) 664-7495

Department of Social and Health Services

Review Improvement Project

Medicaid clients receiving financial assistance and/or food stamps must read and sign a form detailing their rights and responsibilities. The signed form is then returned to the financial worker. This process is federally required every three to twelve months and takes considerable professional and support staff time.

The project combined multiple mailings to clients and saved staff and client time as well as postage while maintaining compliance with federal requirements.

Results

❖ Reduced postage costs by $253,400 (estimated annually statewide).

❖ Saved approximately 52,792 FTE hours of financial and support staff time (estimated annually statewide).

❖ Reduced procedural errors (financial workers occasionally forgot to send additional forms).

❖ Reduced phone calls to and from workers.

❖ Clients receive less mail, were less confused and spent less time making phone calls to financial staff.

Team Name: Review Improvement Project Team
Team Members: Bill Allman, Barbara Blaylock, Tim Dahlin, Cheryl Thomas, Kevin Krueger, Chris Toombs, Patricia Morrison

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, Ph.D., (360) 725-2576

Department of Social and Health Services

Improving Documentation of Child Interviews

Every month Children's Administration (CA) receives more than 6,000 referrals reporting concerns a child may be abused or at substantial risk of abuse or neglect. More than half of these reports are investigated by Child Protective Social Workers. During the investigation process, social workers interview the alleged child victim to obtain their account of the reported incidents. It is essential to have child interviews well documented in case action is needed to protect the child. There is a need to identify a method to ensure the utmost accuracy and completeness of the interview in the most efficient manner possible.

The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) and Children & Family Services (DCFS) created a statewide quality improvement team to test the strengths and limitations of audiotape versus written documentation of child interviews. Three pilot sites were identified and with the help of Harborview Sexual Assault Center, DLR & DCFS pilot participants received training. Public meetings were held in each community and letters were sent to stakeholders to inform them of the project. The team collected data to evaluate improved documentation of child interviews, workload issues, staff satisfaction, and costs. Results of the pilot indicated benefits of documenting interviews through audio tape recording. The pilot also identified technical and legal issues that need to be addressed prior to the statewide implementation.

Results

- ❖   100% of staff using audio documentation reported improvements in quality, accuracy, and flow of child interviews and a preference to use audio versus written documentation of child interviews.
- ❖ Reduced CA staff time needed to document a child interview.
- ❖   Evaluation of 120 child interviews suggests staff are able to meet required documentation timelines more frequently.
- ❖   75 audio taped interviews rated by staff indicate children presented a high level of comfort during audio documented child interviews.

Team Name: Near Verbatim Audio Tape Pilot
Team Members: Eavanne O'Donoghue, Dot Guthrie, Mavis McHenry, Sue Lesperance, Teri Clark, Patricia Turner, Pat Wulf, Marjorie Fitzgerald-Rinehart, Elizabeth Jones

CONTACT: Elizabeth Jones, (206) 923-4892

Interior Restorations at Fircrest School

The Division of Developmental Disabilities' Region 4 Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) faced a growing problem with the living units on the Fircrest School campus. Repair to the living units, now thirty years old, had been piecemeal, disruptive for clients and staff, and was extremely inefficient. The downsizing of living units and resulting need to relocate clients into better-located buildings on the campus, created an opportunity to establish a team to address this concern.

Three separate designs and color schemes were developed in an effort to stay away from the cookie cutter approach. The appropriate staff chose resulting schemes for two "model" living units, and the in-house staff of professionals performed the remodels. Some of the work was done by outside contractors. The team also developed a standardized set of cleaning procedures for all surfaces and implemented these procedures campus-wide. An unplanned, but significant outcome, has been a substantial improvement in client behavior and staff morale due to the comforting atomosphere created.

Results

❖ Saved $175,297 by using in-house project management and implementation.

❖ Completed two 16-bed residential units with the optimum combination of in-house professionals and outside contractors.

❖ Reduced the number of requests for repairs during the past year by 70%, which equals to $11,235 of savings.

❖ Developed and implemented, throughout the campus, a standardized set of cleaning procedures for all interior surfaces thereby increasing overall efficiency.

Team Name: Interior Restoration and Standards Team
Team Members: Y-Jut Buonto, Dave Chielens, Tim Cleary, Dean Crawford, Bob Forhan, Bill Gega, John Gruel, Dennise Guisasola, Wagdi Hafzalla, Art Hedquist, Barney Heichel, Kevin Keeler, Gideon Kuller, Shin Lee, Adrienne Monillas, Tim Molvik, Roland Nelson, Brenda O'Connor, Chris Olsen, Bert Richardson, Carl Robinson, Brad Scott, Mike Scott, Mohammed Thompson, Jim Trokey, Frank Webb, Suk-Jae Yi, Ellen Williams, Dan Zeth

CONTACT: Mike Scott, (206) 361-3123

Department of Social and Health Services

Reducing Paperwork while Increasing Data Accuracy

The Division of Developmental Disabilities' Region 4 State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLA) program needed to improve data collection and client documentation. The support staff for developmentally disabled clients faced numerous ambiguous forms. Client documentation was redundant and cumbersome. This contributed to inaccurate data, missing data, negative residential evaluations, poor communication between staff and prevented optimal client support. A Quality Improvement (QI) team was chartered to analyze and improve the process.

The QI team standardized the forms and streamlined the process. By combining essential information and eliminating obsolete information they were able to consolidate as many as six forms into one.   They provided more space on the forms and inserted visual cues for data collection frequency and level of detail prompts. They established program-wide procedures and implemented training. This has enabled support staff to efficiently collect and transfer accuate data. They can now efficiently support the client in their growth towards meeting their goals.

Results

❖ Increased accuracy of the data by standardizing the format.

❖ Increased efficiency by saving 504 staff hours per year. Staff is not required to record the same information in multiple locations.

❖ Reduced six different documentation / data collection forms into one.

❖ Reduced waste by saving paper, approximately 1500 sheets per year.

❖ Increased communication between staff at shift change and / or when staff is transferred. Documentation is clear and easy to understand.

Team Name: Forms Standardization Team
Team Members: Gayle Turner, Nancy Hammil, Cheryl Leonard, Cindy Krassault, Tom Brown, Kellie Derum, Karina Nunez

CONTACT: Gayle Turner, (206) 985-3731

Kelso Community Services Office Voucher Payment Improvements

Vouchers for WorkFirst clients to purchase essential items were generated by an automated system. Vendors are required to return these vouchers, signed by clients, to the Community Services Office. Vendor payments cannot be issued without the client-signed voucher. Some vouchers issued at the Kelso Community Services Office were not being returned with invoices by vendors. The incomplete documentation caused delays in vendor payment process.

The team identified the need for improving the process. They decided to generate all vouchers in triplicate: one for the client, one for the vendor, and one for the file. The client is asked to sign all three vouchers before leaving the office. The office keeps the file copy. As needed, the file copy can then be matched with incoming invoices submitted by vendors. As the result, the average process time for vendor payment reduced from 75 to 45 days. The maximum process time reduced from 120 to 60 days.

Results

- ❖ Reduced the average voucher processing time from 75 days to 45 days.
- ❖ Reduced the longest payment processing time from 120 days to 60 days.
- ❖ Improved customer service to vendors by processing invoices in a more timely manner.

Team Name: Voucher Payment Improvements
Team Members: Loretta Urling, Anna Willis, John Hanrahan, Sabrina McNally, Debbie Thompson

CONTACT: Sabrina McNally, (360) 501-2469

Creating a Virtual Community Services Office

The Online CSO (Community Services Office) is a DSHS Internet site (www.wa.gov/dshs or www.onlinecso.dshs.wa.gov) that offers residents in Washington State unprecedented access to the agency and many of its services. The site includes the nation's first statewide web-based application for welfare benefits and social service supports. Before *The Online CSO*, most residents had to go to one of the 66 local Community Services Offices in the state during regular weekday hours to obtain many of the services. Now people can get information on DSHS services and apply for the assistance they need at any time, seven days a week, in their homes or anywhere where Internet access is available.

The Online CSO is part of a larger effort underway in DSHS to make its services more accessible and convenient for Washington residents. It is a key example of how technology can be used by government agencies to bring essential services to Washington's citizens in a convenient and cost-effective way.

Results

❖ The website is accessed an average of 6,000 times a day.

❖ During the website's first three months, over 2,590 applications for assistance were filed online.

❖ The Online CSO has been selected by the WSA (formerly the Washington Software Alliance) as one of three state agency finalists for the 2001 Outstanding Contribution to Digital Government Award.

Team Name: The Online CSO Customer Service Team
Team Members: Billie Hartline, Greg Beck, Todd Feiring, Eva Rooks

CONTACT: Billie Hartline, (360) 753-4801

Improving Up-front Services – Pasco Community Services Office

People coming into the Pasco Community Services Office to see their financial worker or complete a form were required to take a number or stand in line to first see a receptionist. The average wait time under this system was 74 minutes.

The team identified a number of changes aimed at streamlining the waiting time and improve customer service. Experienced financial workers were placed in the reception area to answer questions and provide information, walk-in-hours were expanded, a self-service form's area was created that allowed customer to access needed forms without seeing a worker, and a greeter is now in the lobby area directing customer flow. In addition, the reception area received a new coat of paint , a mural was painted by a local teacher, and a children's play area was established.

Results

❖ Customer wait time was reduced from an average of 73 minutes to 4 minutes.

❖ According to a recent employee survey, over 85% of staff feel that the number of walk-in clients needing to see their worker has been significantly reduced, and 63% of the staff feels they have more time to complete their work.

❖ Changes resulted in a total annual savings of 7,904 hours of staff time.

❖ No client complaints regarding wait times at the office.

❖ Staff have more time to focus on eligibility and process applications, contributing to the office's improved food stamp accuracy rate (from 92% to 100% currently) and reduced application processing times.

Team Name: The Upfront Process PIT
Team Members: Dan Pruiett, Kim Sanchez, Laurie Pofahl, Nelda Alaniz, Kathryn Lowell, Javier Ruiz

CONTACT: Dan Pruiett, (509) 545-5563

Reorganization of the Washington Soldiers Home Dietary Department

The objectives of this project were to reorganize the Dietary Department, ensure an efficient service delivery system, save staff time, continue to provide a high quality of food service, maintain staffing levels within existing FTE allotment, and provide for adequate coverage during annual, sick, and holiday leave. The previous schedule allowed all dietary employees to work each Friday to provide extra services as needed. However, the department's needs were not being met and it led to duplication of work and attendance as well as morale issues. The process included the following actions: (1) Elimination of staffs' duplicate scheduled hours on Fridays which saved an estimated 224 hours per month. (2) Four positions were reduced from 40 to 32 hours per week schedules which resulted in an additional 128 hours saved per month. (3) Two 50% positions were reduced to four hours per day positions instead of five hours per day. This action allowed even more savings of 44 hours per month. This reorganization realigned hours worked within the department by a total of approximately 396 hours per month. The re-allocation of these hours will allow the dietary department to adequately cover holiday, annual, and sick leave and remain within its allocated FTE budget while still providing efficient service delivery.

Results

❖ Maintained staffing levels within department's existing FTE allotment.

❖ Created an efficient service delivery system that provides for adequate relief coverage for a 24/7 operation.

❖ Saved 396 hours per month staff time and eliminated scheduling duplication on Friday.

❖ Continued to provide a high quality of food service, which is measured through residents' comments on Meal Acceptance Questionnaire.

Team Name: WSH Dietary Department Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Marlene Weir, Derna Rodewald, Patricia Rowland, Laura Pederson, Kathy Willis, Nancy Egnew, Laura Schoenbachler, Jay Freeman, Rosemarie Shook, Diane Langley, Mack Horne, Don Cagle, Darla Grav, Krystal Frietas, Tom Dudley, Janet Vandoren, Dennis Rodrigues, Mary Veney, Peggy Landreth, Marjorie Carr, Patti Caster, Joanne Reeves, Renee' Gallaway, Dorothy Stanifer, Veda McCall, Charlyn Leitch, Elizabeth Henderson, Deana Fitting, Ruth Harris, Leila Barker, Char Erikson, Ginger Beasley, Gary Klein, Gary Condra

CONTACT: Marlene Weir, (360)893-4508

Kittitas County Veterans Outreach

Previously, services were not provided for veterans claims and entitlements in Kittitas County. Through a coordinated effort between the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Kittitas County Commissioners, the Kittitas County Veterans' Coalition was organized. The Kittitas County Veterans' Coalition opened an outreach office in Kittitas county with the financial support of DVA and Kittitas County. The office is staffed with volunteers. It provides services in Ellensburg three days per week and in Cle Elum one day per week. Through a coordinated community effort, veterans are now able to access claims and entitlement services in their own community.

Results

❖ The Kittitas County Veterans Coalition was organized and secured non-profit 501c3 status.

❖ The Coalition secured matching financial support from County and State Government.

❖ A financially distressed rural community is helping veterans access monetary entitlements.

❖ An average of 60 clients per month receive assistance, resulting in more than 10 claims for federal benefits being filed each month.

❖ More than $250,000 in federal VA benefits has been secured for the Kittitas County economy.

Team Name: Veterans Services/Kittitas County Veterans Coalition
Team Members: Jim Rising, Ric Price, Alex Deluao,Lonnie James, R.J. Kraft, Ben Butkovich, Bill Robbins, Sally Robbins

CONTACT: Jim Rising, (360)725-2188

Employment Security Department

Report Distribution Employment Security Manual

Employment Security Department (ESD) did not have a manual to assist agency staff with accessing and printing reports in the Report Distribution Employment Security (RDES) system. RDES is an electronic repository that provides internal management information and accounting reports from ESD internal mainframe systems, as well as from the Department of Information Services (DIS). Staff expressed frustration accessing the system as the RDES administrator received numerous requests for a users' manual that could save time finding and printing reports. User input was solicited and incorporated into the development of the RDES Manual that could be used by even the newest agency employee. The manual resides on the ESD Intranet site with a direct homepage link. Employees now have quick and easy access to system information and are able to find and print reports conveniently.

Results

❖ Saves an estimated 4,188 FTE hours annually expediting finding and printing reports.

❖ Reduced the number of user complaints and errors preparing critical agency reports.

❖ Improved customer service with an on-line users' manual linked to ESD's Intranet site.

❖ Fewer requests for assistance on the RDES system.

Team Name: Change Management Team
Team Members: Barb Flynn, Lonnie Rogers, Linda Cochran, Joanne Bird, Kim Anensen, Tim Hanson, Darrell Wallace, Glena Red Elk, Rick Champagne

CONTACT: Rick Champagne, (360) 438-4749

Pre-Collection Telephone Pool Project

The Benefit Payment Control (BPC) Unit collects overpayments of unemployment benefits paid to claimants. Program Coordinator 2 positions (PC2) were answering incoming calls to the unit. The BPC lead worker suspected that as many as 35% of calls was non-revenue generating and might be answered by staff in a different job classification. A project team was developed to brainstorm ideas, resulting in the development of the Pre-Collection Telephone Pool Project. The issues included: the telephone systems ability to accommodate switchboard type activities and provide data reports; replacing Coordinator positions with two Program Assistants (PA); developing methods for production data collection; developing training for new staff; and creating a flowchart of phone routing.

Results

❖ PC2s redirected average 6.3 hours of daily phone time to revenue generating activities—estimate $1.2 million annual revenue increase.

❖ PAs generated 30 collection letters for the month. (Estimated annual revenue increase - $120,000 annually).

❖ Increase bank garnishments by 193 and wage garnishments by 64 in October.

❖ 746 address corrections were completed during the month, improving client correspondence.

❖ Test period provided a baseline for abandoned calls and average wait time, creating basis for future improvements.

Team Name: Pre-Collection Telephone Pool Project Team
Team Members: Linda Marshall, Leovy Cabrera, Becky Richards, Nancy Noble, Renee O'Hara, Debbie Calcote

CONTACT: Nancy Noble, (360) 902-9787

Local District Tax Office Use of UI FastTax System

Unemployment Insurance (UI) FastTax is a state-of-the-art software system that allows employers to send their quarterly Unemployment Insurance tax and wage reports to the department electronically. FastTax replaces old paper and magnetic tape reporting that used to take up to ten working days to process and input information, which caused delays establishing claims for Unemployment Insurance customers. Delays also produced duplicative requests for re-determining customer wages. Additionally, hand calculation of penalties and interest also caused potential errors on legal documents. The District Tax Office now submits data for employers using UI FastTax and also trains employer customers on its applications and benefits. Automated processing saves the office time and money, but more importantly improves customer service and satisfaction.

Results

❖ Saves an average 248.63 FTE hours per year.

❖ Decreased processing time from 2 weeks to 2 days, reducing re-determinations by 29%.

❖ Aids in collection process by reducing legal document errors from 5% to zero.

❖ Saves agency an average $81 in postage costs annually.

❖ Faster processing improves customer services to both employers and claimants.

Team Members: Gale Avila, Willis Hopkins, Lorenda Lillard

CONTACT: Gale Avila, (509) 574-0135

Keyword Index for Rules Manual

The Gambling Commission's rules manual is 215 pages long and divided into twelve chapters. The commission had received comments from licensees and staff that the rules manual was hard to use since information was difficult to locate. The difficulties were a result of: related topics being found in multiple chapters, topics being obscured within a rule of a different title or in a rule dealing with a different subject matter. Therefore, topics are not always in the chapter or place where the user may think.

In response to users needs, a Key Word/Subject Index was developed. Topics are now arranged in the index alphabetically by subject and if applicable, under several key words. The Index is posted on the agency's website and was published in the agency's Rules Manual and distributed to all licensees.

Results

❖ Significantly reduced the time spent by all users, internal and external, looking up state laws and commission rules.

❖ Improved customer service by considerably minimizing the time it takes staff to provide law and rule based information that customer's request.

❖ Created a user-friendly manual, which has received numerous positive comments from staff and licensees.

❖ Created 24-hour access to information through the Internet on the agencies website.

❖ Simplifying use of the manual encourages voluntary compliance with state laws and commission rules.

Team Name: Key Word/Subject Index for Rules Manual
Team Members: Susan Arland, Sherri Winslow

CONTACT: Susan Arland, (360) 486-3466

Simplified Gambling License Application Process

When individuals apply for a gambling license, the applicant completes a personal and criminal history form. The forms required them to provide a ten-year history of where they had worked and lived. The information was then used to manually conduct point-to-point police checks, to ensure the applicant qualified to hold a gambling license. However, approximately 80-90% of license applications had a portion of the ten-year history missing. Before checks could be conducted, staff spent a significant amount of time sending letters and making phone calls to collect this omitted information.

Over two years ago, an automated police check system was implemented and the manual point-to-point checks where the applicant resided or worked were no longer done. However, the agency continued to require the ten-year history. The team proposed elimination of this requirement and revised the application form accordingly. This change maintained the integrity of the background checks, while greatly improving customer service and saving money and staff time.

Results

❖ Improved customer service by simplifying the application process.

❖ Reduced the average process time so licenses are issued faster.

❖ Saved 893 staff hours annually, time previously spent obtaining omitted information.

❖ Provided a $2,000 annual savings in postage, printing, and scan charges.

Team Name: Individuals Application Team
Team Members: Dawn Warren, Sharon Matthews, Cathee Gottfryd, Bridget Ortiz, Jessica Iyall

CONTACT: Dawn Warren, (360) 486-3546

Supplemental Criminal History Information Resource

Acquiring accurate, timely and complete criminal history information is important when evaluating an applicants/licensees suitability to hold a gambling license. However, applicants and licensees frequently misrepresent or fail to disclose criminal history. In the past, after receiving initial information about an individual's specific criminal history record through the State Patrol's system, Commission staff contacted the different courts directly. The courts typically charge $1 per page to obtain these records.

During the past year, Commission staff began collecting this information by using a computerized system, Judicial Information System (JIS) administered by the Office of the Administrator of the Courts, rather than by sending letters or travel to the courts to obtain the information.

Results

❖ Reduced evaluation time from two to three weeks to one day because we can obtain the information directly, rather than requesting it from the applicant or court.

❖ More accurate analysis of applicants and decisions on whether to license are made faster, which enables people to go to work faster or businesses to begin operating sooner.

❖ Administrative charges are based on the most current and accurate information available, which have increased settlement options favorable to the agency.

❖ Reduced number of requests for information made to prosecutors and court clerks related to an applicant's current criminal case status and reduced number of letters requesting additional/clarification of information.

❖ Significant reduction in the amount of travel by Agents because they no longer need to travel to individual courts to obtain records.

Team Members: Mona Nelson, Dave Trujillo, Arlene Dennistoun, Tom Means, Neal Nunamaker

CONTACT: Neal Nunamaker, (360) 486-3569

Improved Hiring Process Improves Employee Satisfaction

Recent employee surveys revealed that Basic Health employees had concerns regarding the hiring process within their division. Among their concerns were inconsistent hiring practices, lack of standardized processes, and a perception of favoritism or unfairness.

A team was formed to review the process and they recommended abbreviating the hiring process; standardizing procedures; providing training on the hiring process for panel members; and developing a pool of trained panelists to be randomly drawn for panels. The adopted recommendations were implemented on a six-month trial basis beginning in January 2001 and reviewed in June 2001.

Results

- ❖ The most recent employee survey indicated that staff approves of the new process. Scores in this particular area went from 3.5 in 1998, to 3.98 in 2000 when the changes began, and 4.14 in 2001 following full implementation.

- ❖ Consistency in interview questions and documentation of the hiring process.

- ❖ More knowledgeable panel members representing a wider cross-section of the division.

- ❖ Increased awareness of promotional opportunities.

Team Name: Hiring Process Improvement Team

Team Members: Gail Burris, Rebecca Burch, Paulette Handley, Kathy Harding, Shari Howe, Kimberly Hoy, Angela Japhet, Firas Makhlouf, Marianne Mason, Kathy Newman, Diana Parkison, Becky Sullivan, Tom Timmons, Nicole Williams; Team Facilitators: Laurie Milligan, Kelly Gwin

CONTACT: Kelly Gwin, (360) 923-2809

Elimination of "Middleman" Streamlines Process

The Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program offers medical, dental, and Life and Long-Term Disability (LTD) coverage to more than 312,00 active state employees and retirees. Organizational priorities forced PEBB to leave only two employees to manage Life and LTD support instead of the previous eight staff. The resulting overburdening of remaining staff created backlogs and slower service to enrollees.

A review of the process determined that the two PEBB staff were serving as little more than "middlemen," passing information back and forth between enrollees and the contractors. This work was given directly to the contractors, and PEBB has monitored their performance to make sure that high service levels were maintained.

Results

- ❖ Customer service improvements were accomplished despite decreased staff.
- ❖ Enrollees were served in a timelier manner.
- ❖ Eliminated 60-day backlog in claim processing and decreased phone calls by 18 percent.
- ❖ Reallocated two full time staff to critical customer service functions.

Team Name: Life and LTD Team
Team Members: Jayne Wallace, Sandra Lakey, Renee Bourbeau, Monica Hines-Given, Betsy Prehm, Carolyn Hennigan, Richard Disbrow, Mary Whittle, Frances McDaniel

CONTACT: Jayne Wallace, (360) 923-2620

Simplified Process Saves Time

Annually, Basic Health offers open enrollment for a 30-day period for subscribers to add family members to coverage and/or change health plans. Each family receives a booklet containing a change request form, on which they can add family members to their coverage or change plans. Often members return these forms even if they are not requesting changes. These forms were then processed along with those forms requesting a change. This year rather than forwarding these forms for further review by Health Insurance Benefit Specialists (HIBS) our support staff identified forms with no changes. This was easily accomplished by visually identifying the forms during the sorting process. This *simple* process change reduced the number of forms routed to the HIBS by 30% and saved approximately 181 hours in HIBS production.

Results

❖ Eliminated the routing of 1,441 forms for processing, saving 181 hours.

❖ Eliminated several steps in the overall process.

❖ All forms were scanned, maintaining an image of the document for future use.

Team Name: Document Control Unit
Team Members: Terry Townsend, Preston Cody, Arlett Cardenas, Audrey Price, Stephanie Wagner, Megan Garside, Bente Stockton

CONTACT: Preston Cody, (360) 412-4361

PAR Form (Personnel Action Request) Available Electronically

The PAR form (Personnel Action Request Form) is a 4 part (NCR) hard-copy form that must be completed and approved by Supervisors and then submitted to the Human Resource (HR) Division and then on to Payroll. Approximately 1200 forms are used per year by the liquor stores located throughout the state, in addition to those used by headquarters staff.

Completion and routing of the PAR form is a lengthy process and sometimes the form is not received in payroll on time for issuance of a correct paycheck to the employee by the next payday. In certain instances, if the information is not received in payroll on time, a special check must be issued. Utilization of special checks incurs additional costs for the agency: $10 for next day turnaround; $50 for same day service.

A cross-divisional process improvement team analyzed the process and recommended an electronic routing process. An electronic PAR form was made available agency-wide. The PAR form can now be accessed and completed electronically, then routed to all the required recipients via e-mail. This improved form accessibility and routing and has reduced the number of steps in the process from six to four.

Results

- ❖ Reduced number of PAR forms used annually by 1200, saving $864 in printing costs.
- ❖ Reduced processing costs of special checks by $1,560.
- ❖ Redirected 168 FTE hours to other agency priorities.
- ❖ Increased accuracy and timeliness of paychecks especially for staff in remote locations.

Team Name: Electronic PAR Form Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Chris McCarthy, Brodie Nelson, Curt Volland, Monika Taylor, Jonathan Harkness; Liaison: Lacinda Thomas

CONTACT: Chris McCarthy, (360) 664-1685

Weather Warnings

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) Communications Division's front line workers across the state must coordinate and distribute critical traffic information quickly and accurately. Severe weather warnings from the National Weather Service (NWS) are part of that information. Historically, NWS sent warnings by Teletype into each of the eight WSP Communications centers for broadcasting as needed. However, the messages were often embedded in volumes of non-relevant information. Unless officers regularly interrupted their minute-to-minute duties to check the Teletype, a risky delay in information transmittal was always a possibility. The almost continually running printers were also noisy, making it difficult to hear critical radio messages from officers, and constant use made them prone to repair.

To improve matters, the Yakima Communications Center adopted the role of centralized weather information source. The Military Department's Emergency Management Division (EMD), which receives and relays the NWS weather warnings on its dedicated telephone circuit, agreed to include WSP's Yakima Center in their distribution, allowing for central sorting and notification of other WSP centers as appropriate. Work interruptions and background noise are reduced in all Centers, improving officer safety and Communications employees' work environment. Critical weather information is routed to end-users more quickly. And as a bonus, the Communications division is saving approximately $3,000 per year in supplies and maintenance costs.

Results

❖ 2,200 hours of staff time previously spent sorting through routine messages are redirected to essential duties.

❖ $2,744/year in Teletype supplies is saved, and reduced use extends printer life.

❖ Troopers are deployed earlier and are better prepared for severe working conditions.

❖ Reduced background noise improves the quality of critical radio communications and stress levels of employees.

Team Name: Weather Warnings Team
Team Members: CO4 LaDonna Browell; EMD: Don Mille

CONTACT: CO4 LaDonna Browell, (509) 249-6751

Public-Private Land Exchange

In 1949, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) built a 40,000 square foot facility in Olympia to house Fleet, Supply, and Engineering/Maintenance services for its 500 employees. An additional facility was later built in Bellevue for installing light bars, radios, etc. in patrol vehicles. Gradually Olympia facility space became seriously inadequate, yet by now the small Property Management facility was expected to support over 2000 employees.

The WSP Property Manager, exploring the possibility of a land swap, identified a private sector developer willing to discuss some options. Mutual interests emerged, so Attorney General (AG) and General Administration Department (GA) staff joined the team. Navigating uncharted territory required five years of persistent breakthrough thinking. The end result was a direct asset exchange wherein the original property, worth $5 million, was traded for a much larger piece of land plus three new buildings valued at $10 million. Land and structures have been acquired at no cost to the public. All WSP property support functions will now be co-located in a light industrial neighborhood. The former Bellevue space will be reallocated to highway safety personnel in that rapidly growing district office.

Results

- ❖ $5 million net property acquisition savings to taxpayers.
- ❖ Net gain of 55,000 square feet of floor space for property support functions.
- ❖ Biennial savings of $20,000 by eliminating the need to transport patrol vehicles to Bellevue for equipping.
- ❖ Avoidance of significant capital request for expanded Bellevue district offices.
- ❖ Reduced heating/lighting costs with modern, energy-efficient structures.

Team Name: Public-Private Land Exchange Team
Team Members: Tom Neff; Department of General Administration: Grant Fredericks; Office of Attorney General: Marjorie Smitch, Mary Ellen Combo; Private Sector/Martin Way Associates: George Osborne, Tim Casad

CONTACT: Tom Neff, (360) 570-9820