
Dear Fellow Citizens:

As in my previous reports to you during the past year, I am pleased to report once again that state agencies are continuing to make improvements to our government that save us money, generate revenue and provide better service for all of us.

Taxpayers have demanded a better government and state workers have listened and are working hard to gain the public's trust.

Since the first publication of *Governing for Results* in December 1997, state agencies have reported 655 quality improvements.

Inside this booklet are highlights of those efforts reported in the second quarter of 1998. They range from quality efforts to reduce the time a citizen waits for service, to providing clear rules and instructions.

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

I applaud each agency's contributions to the quality of service we offer and commit to you that these efforts will continue. Our goal remains firm: make government work better, renew respect for public service and secure the public's trust.



Gary Locke
Governor



Welcome to the third edition of Governing for Results

“Governing for Results 3” is the third installment of highlights on quality improvement projects under way in 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 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 that Executive Order was issued, Washington state agencies have reported 655 quality projects that have saved the state over \$9 million. As a result of these efficiencies, about 69 staff has been redirected to other work. And, these efforts have produced over \$1,600,000 in new revenue.

The projects in this booklet were selected from the quarterly quality reports submitted by agencies. These quality efforts are lead by the Governor’s Office, with oversight by the Subcabinet on Management Improvement and Results.

Agency contacts are listed if more information is needed. Additional copies of this publication are available through the Governor’s Office or on the Governor’s Home Page www.wa.gov/governor.

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Telephone Application Service Eliminates Virtually All Paper, Reduces Applicant Time And Frustration

The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination is a very complex and extremely difficult two-day exam. It takes an average of three times to pass the exam.

Individuals applying to re-take the exam were sent an eight-page application packet and required to complete several application forms. The stress of re-applying for the exam was magnified by the fact that applications and fees must be submitted by a specific date in order to be considered eligible. One-third of Washington's 3,000 annual applicants are foreign candidates and unreliable foreign postal service further complicated the process.

In partnership with the agency's exam contractor, we established an extremely simple 1-800 over-the-phone application process for these re-exam applicants. Payment via credit card is now offered and we anticipate 90 percent of the applicants will utilize the new process.

Results

- ★ It takes about three minutes to reapply for the CPA exam.
- ★ Re-exam applicants no longer have to wait up to five weeks to learn whether their application was complete and received by the deadline. For those paying by credit card, confirmation takes a few minutes.
- ★ Re-exam applicants are not required to sift through eight pages of complicated instructions and forms.
- ★ Virtually all paper has been eliminated.

Team members: Joe Cote (contractor staff), Bridget Candler (contractor staff), and Dana McInturff

Contact: Dana McInturff (360) 664-9194

Responding To Client Requests For Assistance

Each year approximately 6,000 individuals (many of them college students) are planning, studying, and preparing to take the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination. To be eligible to take the exam, these individuals must fully meet Washington's education requirements. The agency receives many requests for a pre-evaluation of education prior to applying to take the CPA exam. The agency does not have resources to perform pre-evaluations; and, our assistant attorney general advises such a pre-evaluation would be inappropriate.

To respond to client needs, we developed and now distribute a simple, easy-to-use, Education Self-Evaluation Worksheet. Individuals also receive a copy of the Board's new education policy, which describes, in needed detail, the education requirements and related Board interpretations.

Results

- ★ Instead of hearing 'we are unable to help you,' our clients are provided a tool with which to pre-evaluate their education.
- ★ Individuals can pro-actively review their education to ensure they are eligible to sit for the exam.

Team members: Tim Hoefler, Cheryl Sexton, and Dana McInturff

Contact: Dana McInturff (360) 664-9194

30 Percent Reduction In Turnaround Time To Process First Time Exam Applications

Every year approximately 1,000 individuals apply to take the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam for the first time. Most have been preparing for years, close to one-third travel from other countries, and many must take leave from work. Applicants need timely notification of eligibility in order to arrange travel, time-off from work, child care, etc. Applicants also need timely notification of ineligibility in order to utilize the statutorily provided appeal process.

The turnaround time for first-time applicants was extremely slow - up to 5 weeks. And, due to the time lag from foreign postal services, many times foreign candidates did not receive notification of their acceptance until just days before the exam. As a result, applicants experienced significant stress, confusion, and frustration.

Results

- ★ Working with contract staff, we reduced the turnaround time for processing first-time applications by over 30 percent.
- ★ Greatly enhanced client service and satisfaction.
- ★ First-time applicants receive timely confirmation of their admission to the CPA exam with sufficient time to make personal arrangements.
- ★ Applicants denied admission to the exam now have sufficient time to appeal the denial.
- ★ Reduced contractor and staff time required to administer the exam.

Team members: Cheryl Sexton, Dana McInturff, Joe Cote (contractor staff), and Bridget Candler (contractor staff)

Contact: Dana McInturff, (360) 664-9194

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals

Elimination Of Separate Notice Assigning Industrial Appeals Judge

When a case was assigned to an industrial appeals judge for hearings in Tacoma and Seattle, a paralegal/docket manager held a scheduling conference to identify witnesses, set hearing dates and times, outline issues, and inform parties of the assigned judge. An "Interlocutory Order Establishing Litigation Schedule" was prepared and given to the processor with a certificate of mail included for mailing to the parties. The file was handed off to the secretary who then prepared and mailed a separate "Notice of Assignment of Judge" to the parties.

The two notices were combined into one: "Interlocutory Order Identifying Hearing, Dates, Times, Issues and Notice of Judge Assignment." The additional line, which assigns the case to the industrial appeals judge, satisfies the "Notice of Assignment of Judge" requirement that was previously contained in a separate document that required additional human and material resources to prepare.

Results

- ★ The litigation order establishing written notice of assigned judge will reach parties earlier in the process. Under the provisions of RCW 4.12.050, affidavits of prejudice must be filed within 30 days of receipt of notice of the assignment of the appeal to the industrial appeals judge. By eliminating the separate mailing of "Notice of Assignment of Judge" to the parties, this process change minimizes the potential for procedural confusion and achieves greater certainty for parties exercising their rights to an affidavit of prejudice.
- ★ By combining the two notices into one order, the agency will realize a projected \$2,016 reduction in postage costs per annum. In addition, staff time for processing orders will be reduced.

Team Members: Danielle French

Contact: Melody Younglove (360) 753-6823

Processing Registrations; Making Special Local Needs (SLN) Pesticide Labels Available On The Web

WSDA Pesticide Registration employees process Special Local Need (SLN) 24(c) pesticide registrations whenever appropriate federally-licensed pesticide products are unavailable for existing or imminent pest problems. Applicants, often national and international companies, mail hard copies of labels to WSDA. Pesticide Registration staff made label changes and mail revised labels back after their review.

Beginning in March 1997, WSDA received its first SLN application electronically. Staff from the Pesticide Information Center at Washington State University/Tri-Cities cooperated with WSDA to add the electronic SLN labels to the "Pesticide Information Center On Line" (PICOL) database and web site making them available to producers and others who need the information.

Results

- ★ Availability of Special Local Needs Pesticide Labels in electronic format saves time processing paper, helps standardize labeling statements, and makes labels readily available to WSDA employees and customers.
- ★ Washington agricultural producers, WSU staff, and WSDA employees can access up-to-date, labeling information any time from any location.
- ★ Submissions and responses during the application process are more convenient and are received almost instantly even across time zones and internationally. (Labels received electronically are easier to read than faxes.)
- ★ As of May 1998, 20 percent (64) of the SLN labels received have been sent to WSU for posting through the web site.
<http://picol.cahe.wsu.edu/~mantone/pnnwa.html>
- ★ In a September 1997 customer survey of 43 SLN registrants, the WSDA rated above average or excellent on its SLN label processing, timeliness, accuracy and fairness, and professional, knowledgeable staff.

Team Members:

WSDA: Ted Maxwell, Joel Kangiser, Steve Foss, Clinton Campbell, Erik Johansen, Reola Loomis, Shannon Lumsden, and Claudette Needham

WSU/Tri Cities: Catherine Daniels, Mark Antone, Jane Thomas

Contacts: Steve Foss (360) 902-2049, or Christie O'Loughlin (360) 902-1975

Business Assistance Hotline

The Business Assistance Hotline is a toll-free telephone line that provides business owners and entrepreneurs with basic information and referrals related to starting and operating a business in Washington. At the beginning of the current biennium, the Hotline was shifted from a staff-intensive model to one in which a menu-based system is backed up by staff and student interns. Callers can now access information on a range of state services and departments from the scripted menu, or they can opt for “live” assistance.

Results

- ★ Since the automated system was implemented, the number of calls getting through increased from 1,200 to 2,700 per month as callers are no longer being blocked out by an overloaded system. Callers now successfully reach the system 98.5 percent of the time as opposed to the 45 percent success rate prior to the change.
- ★ Staff time required to maintain the Hotline has been reduced because the scripted menu handles 70 to 75 percent of incoming calls.
- ★ The automated system has resulted in a savings of \$70 per month on telephone costs.
- ★ The use of a work-study student has resulted in salary savings since Community, Trade and Economic Development is reimbursed for 33 percent of the student’s gross wages. With interns attending the Hotline, more experienced Business Assistance Center staff are available for other duties.

Team Members: Business Assistance
Josey Young and Kathy Chance

Contact: Kathy Chance (360) 586-4848

Computer Training For Film And Video Staff

Film and Video's computerized database maintenance and internal creativity work was being done at a high cost by an outside consultant. A member of the staff has been trained to maintain and upgrade the web page, provide customized scanned images for rapid response to filming requests, and be able to develop marketing material and print ads without the extra cost of using an advertising agency. The database has also been consolidated into one state-of-the-art location using the most current software.

Results

- ★ Avoided \$10,000 annual contract with outside consultant to update our database and \$20,000 to \$30,000 in ad agency support because we are able to create our own Internet advertising.
- ★ Improved our response time for customer requests from nearly a day to approximately one hour.
- ★ Our database can be accessed by several Film and Video staff at the same time, eliminating the sometimes day-long wait for access.

Team Members: Film and Video
Suzy Kellet and Kristina Erickson

Contact: Suzy Kellet (206) 464-7148

Visitors To Corrections Center Encounter Less Red Tape

Persons wishing to visit a family member who is incarcerated at the Washington Corrections Center for Women will no longer face a number of questions and forms each time they come to visit an inmate. Streamlining the visitation process, including the consolidation of several forms into one, has eliminated a cumbersome process allowing visitors quick access to the institution while ensuring security standards are achieved.

A process improvement team reviewed each step of “visitation” from the perspective of a “citizen customer” focusing on what information was essential - especially from repeat visitors. In addition, changing procedures and reducing paperwork has afforded corrections officers the opportunity to provide faster and more complete service to each visitor. Through the new process, officers can now place greater focus on the introduction of security threats by visitors rather than paperwork and long lines.

Results:

- ★ Decreased visitor frustration with paperwork.
- ★ Faster access for visitors.
- ★ Reduced nearly 50 process steps through red tape reduction.
- ★ Saves 137 hours annually of staff time by processing repeat visitors once.
- ★ Provides officers more time and opportunity to seek out security threats.

Team Members: Curtis Hoffman, Margaret Hoyer, Larry Davis, Ruth Hanson, Phil Cripps, Lori Linenko, James Schofield, Blessing Guillermo, Rannie Vickers, Warren Walner, Anne Shoemaker, Sew Elegant, Sara Hamblen, Jean Hampl

Contact: Alice Paye (253) 858-4200

Filing Cash Receipts Electronically Saves Dollars And Work

Payments received in cash, money orders, or checks were entered into an outdated cashiering system; then, re-entered into a receivables data system. This information was sent to the State Treasurer's Office, where the data was hand entered, for a third time, into another system, the state's accounting database.

Working in partnership with the State Treasurer, Ecology developed the state's first electronic cash-receipt system, allowing information to automatically be transferred from Ecology to the Treasurer's Office. Cash payments are entered once using a coding system that has saved money, reduced errors, eliminated the need to re-key the same data and saved staff time.

Results

- ★ \$700 saved each month by eliminating maintenance of the outdated system.
- ★ Four hours per day saved in data entry.
- ★ Ten hours per week saved by not having to re-enter cash receipt data.
- ★ Eight hours per week saved in reconciling the Cash Receipts Unbalanced Report.
- ★ Increased capability to meet the needs of managers with more reliable reports.
- ★ Reduced errors.

Team Members:

Ecology Fiscal Office: Patty Warren, Lisa Darnell, Bernadette Williams, Floyd Fesler, Jack Coleman, Gary Zeiler,

Ecology Information Services: Lisa Wilson, Vic Alcantara, James Webster, Debbie Stewart

State Treasurer's Office: Brad Grothaus, Connie Scheller, Treena Piepgras, Virginia Farr, Dan Mason, Jackie Biss, Vicki Harrod, Jeff Sharp

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale (360) 407-6986

School Sweeps' Nets Improved Handling Of Toxic Chemicals

Community and technical colleges use and dispose of toxic chemicals in the classes they teach (e.g. auto mechanics and wood-working). Visits to these colleges showed that some were not handling or disposing of toxic chemicals in a safe manner. Potentially dangerous situations existed for students and teachers. In addition, students were not learning how to properly handle and dispose of toxic chemicals.

Ecology visited colleges statewide to assess how toxic chemicals were being handled and disposed (except in King County where the county worked with the colleges). Each visit was followed by a detailed campus report describing improvements the college should take. Technical assistance was provided to make necessary changes and follow-up visits were conducted a year later.

Results

- ★ Required changes were made 87 percent of the time.
- ★ Best management practices were implemented 75 percent of the time.
- ★ Average overall compliance rate improved by 80 percent.
- ★ At least 12,000 bottles of old/unusable chemicals were legally disposed.
- ★ 97 percent of the contacts said they were better able to comply with hazardous waste regulations as a result of *School Sweeps*.

Team Members: Patricia Jatczak, Scott Lamb, Christa Colouzis, Margit Bantowsky, J.C. Armbruster, Dave Saunders, Helen Pressley, Hugh O'Neill, Camille Frensdorf, Jim Pearson, Alicia Barraza, Hideo Fujita, Robin Harrover, Byung Maeng, Sally Safioles, Galen Tritt, Dean Yasuda

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale (360) 407-6986

Training Partnership Results In Savings

Staff who inspect hazardous waste facilities are required to take training on current safety, regulations, and inspection policies on handling toxic chemicals. In the past, staff traveled to other states for training which, although adequate, was expensive and not tailored to the situations encountered in our region.

Ecology partnered with Oregon and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop and conduct tailored training for staff in Washington and Oregon. Because the costs were lower, more staff were able to receive the training they needed to do their jobs safely. This partnership was so successful, it may be repeated next year.

Results

- ★ \$15,325 saved at Ecology (similar savings were realized for Oregon and the Environmental Protection Agency).
- ★ New partnerships were created among the two states and federal government.
- ★ Staff were able to share similar information and learn from each others experiences.

Team Members:

Ecology: Julie Carrasco Pietz, Jim Sachet, Tom Morrill, Tom Cusack, Tom Eaton, Ty Thomas, Miles Kuntz, Tom Loranger, Dennis Johnson

Oregon: Elaine Glendening, Jim Vilendre

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Jack Boller

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale, (360) 407-6986

Wait Not, Whine Not

It was no surprise that staff were concerned about unhappy customers. Unemployment claimants at the Sunnyside Office were waiting up to three hours to obtain paperwork, and another hour and a half in group presentations.

After gathering input from coworkers, a task team flow charted, problem-solved, brainstormed, and tested ideas. They chose to reconfigure the reception area, adding work stations and a client self-help desk. Tasks for the reception staff were redefined and claims taking was streamlined in a one-on-one process, allowing for information to feed directly into the data system.

Results

- ★ Wait times reduced from two to three hours to an average 15-20 minutes, claims processing from 75 to 15 minutes.
- ★ \$35,994 realized staff savings, \$47,926 projected annualized savings.
- ★ Satisfied customers save time and money and eliminate need to return to office for second interview.
- ★ Staff are relieved by fewer customer complaints.

Team members: Albert Garza, Carmen Partida, and Robert Vigil

Contact: Pete Saenz (509) 836-1125

Do Da Data Shuffle

WorkFirst staff in Aberdeen were struggling with a variety of more than 25 reports on the status of clientele, with no easy way to track their progress through the new Welfare-to-Work program. The WorkFirst team applied the “plan-do-check-act” tools, from their Quest process improvement training, to identify problems and resolve the related tracking issues.

The outcome was a new, and previously unavailable, database that monitors the client’s participation activities as well as providing other pertinent information. This less cumbersome system has produced improved program management for the department and its partner agency, the Department of Social and Health Services.

Results

- ★ \$11,545 realized staff savings, \$28,122 projected annualized staff savings.
- ★ Immediate access to critical information.
- ★ Increased tracking efficiencies identified over 100 clients who might not have otherwise received services in a timely manner.
- ★ Improved services for external *and* internal customers.

Team members: Darlene Brado, Tina Edwards, J’Neil Lee, Mimi Perry, Debbie Richters, and Jo Vanucie

Contact: Lee Stevens (360) 538-2367

Adios Manual

A *manual* record-keeping system was not meeting requirements and internal control standards for the nearly 1,400 checks received daily by the department's Treasury Office. The system was labor intensive and increased the potential for errors and audit exceptions.

The Treasurer's Office "Fund Bunch" team analyzed the process and collaborated with internal customers to identify needs and apply them to a more desirable process. The Fund Bunch said "good-bye" to the manual by replacing it with a newly constructed personal computer database for check entry. The new system allows the team to search for data using several criteria, including social security check digit identifiers. Automation eliminates duplication, providing accurate keying and bank reconciliation.

Results

- ★ \$4,812 realized staff savings, \$19,248 projected annualized staff savings.
- ★ Improved retrieval of financial information for auditors and other users.
- ★ Minimized errors and audit exceptions.
- ★ New system meets requirements of internal control standards.

Team members: Steffanie Chau, Gary Cox, Quy Huong Dang, Phil Jones, Fely Meixsel, Linda Rutledge, Deborah Underwood, and Bob Wassenaar

Contact: Phil Jones (360) 902-9401

An ‘*Excel*’ent Spread

Twice every quarter, as many as 150 invoices to Spokane Community College were paid using a separate “payment voucher.” The process required the handling of vouchers and invoices by four different staff members, and was very labor intensive.

Using continuous quality improvement tools, the Job Training Partnership/Trade Act Team gathered input from internal and external customers. Their goal was to reduce the paperwork and handling relative to the voucher process. An “Excel” spreadsheet was developed which captures all pertinent data from the invoices.

Results

- ★ \$987 realized staff savings, \$1,632 projected annualized savings.
- ★ Processing time reduced by 91 percent quarterly.
- ★ Best practice with broad application to other programs.
- ★ Improved collaboration with community college and central office.

Team members: Frankie Arteaga, Louise Greenfield, Angela Hughes, Pete Karlsten, Robert Massie, James Matzinger, Mason Petit, Rosemary Reagan, Clyde Runkle, and Pat Waldron.

Contact: Don Ott (509) 532-3030

Departments of Corrections and General Administration

Central Stores Backhaul Project

Central Stores trucks deliver office supplies to Department of Corrections institutions and usually make the return trip with an empty truck. Correctional Industries is a program in the Department of Corrections that manufactures products at most institutions. It is necessary to transport their manufactured products to a central area in Tacoma, and then to customers.

An agreement between General Administration and Correctional Industries has been developed to avoid trips without a load. When a truck delivers goods, there is coordination between the two agencies to pick up items that need to be delivered to another part of the state. In emergency situations, such as vehicle breakdowns, the drivers have partnered to meet delivery deadlines.

Results

- ★ A total of 39 trips have been avoided by the two agencies.
- ★ Both agencies have been able to redirect their employees to provide improved customer service in other programs.
- ★ By not hiring commercial companies to transport goods, General Administration and Department of Corrections have realized combined savings of \$2,784 over the past nine months.
- ★ The two agencies have saved approximately 335 employee hours in the first year of this joint project.
- ★ Through the partnership, both agencies were able to stay on schedule when two different emergencies arose.

Team Members:

Department of Corrections: Sospeter Anunda, and Manual DelaCruz

General Administration: Dan Soper, Brad Eby, Kelli Corbin, and Clark Dodd

Contact: Clark Dodd (360) 902-7445

Department of General Administration

Point and Click Order System

Ordering supplies from Central Stores required the customer to look at a paper catalog and then place the order via telephone, in writing, via an older computer system, or via the Internet. The current paper catalog is sent to customers and is quickly out of date. The older computer system will have difficulty when January 1, 2000 arrives.

A new electronic supply catalog called "Point & Click Order System" was released on June 8, 1998 on the Internet. This new electronic catalog will eliminate mailing the paper catalog to many customers and provide access to the most current version of the catalog. A built-in search mechanism assists customers in locating items quickly. Customers are delighted with the new electronic process.

Results

- ★ Currently 44 percent of all catalog orders are coming in via the Internet. Our customers are saving approximately 880 hours each year.
- ★ Customers save approximately 14 minutes per order because the computer program helps them search more quickly for items in the catalog.
- ★ Approximately \$75,000 will not be spent to upgrade the old computer system.
- ★ In addition, the state will save approximately \$48,000 annually for maintenance fees on the older computer system.

Team Members: Brian Richardson, John Cadoo, and Clark Dodd

Contact: Clark Dodd (360) 902-7445

Departments of General Administration and Information Services

Washington Is The First State To Receive A Bid Over The Internet

Through the Electronic Bid Project, the departments of General Administration and Information Services used information technology to streamline government processes that provide better, quicker and more convenient service. The pilot project involved a bid for a contract to supply recycled paint products to the state. The bid from Paint Solutions in Kent, WA – which turned out to be the winning bid – was in the form of an electronic document with a digital signature.

The project is an important step in developing the technical, legal and policy framework that handles sensitive data – both proprietary business and personally identifiable information in a safe and secure manner.

Results

- ★ First state to receive a legally binding bid over the Internet. This project positions state agencies to expand access to electronic commerce.
- ★ New electronic bid process is more convenient for all parties than the manual process. Vendors won't need to drive to Olympia to deliver their bids and will save about \$3 postage for each bid that would have been mailed.
- ★ Bids submitted electronically require one printed copy compared to ten with the manual process. Bid information will only be typed once. Reduced paper will require less storage space in the future.
- ★ The bidder saves approximately 50 percent of the time when submitting bids electronically. General Administration staff save approximately 50 percent of the administrative time required to complete an acquisition. A template is being developed for submitting bids to save even more time for everyone involved.
- ★ Digital signatures provide a secure method for submitting bids electronically.
- ★ Increased competition in the bidding process potentially will mean better pricing and savings of taxpayers dollars.

Team Members: Dave Kirk, Scott Bream, Carlene Covey, Susan Rolland, Scott Smith, Pat Kohler, Chuck VanHall, Phil Grigg, Brian Richardson, Linda Mackintosh, and Matthew Haines

Contact Names: Connie Michener (360) 902-3471, and Karen Pernerl (360) 902-7218

Contracting Process Gets “Contracted”

The Consolidated Contract is a document that specifies the conditions/terms under which Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) use money provided them by the Department of Health. The original contract had a lengthy application process and was not tailored to the individual community’s needs. It also contained onerous internal and external reports, along with reviews and monitoring that devoured internal and external resources.

Separate teams were formed to work on two processes critical in managing the contract.

Results

- ★ Eliminated the application document and process by half.
- ★ Processing time cut in half. The 1998 contracts were delivered to the LHJ’s about six weeks earlier than normal.
- ★ Department of Health’s Contracts Office saves about 40 hours per week.
- ★ Useful data concerning customer needs is now available for the process of monitoring contract performance.

Team members: Joan Brewster, Mary Borges, Suzette Frederick, Lucia Miltenberger, Rhonda Reinke, Mary Borges, Deb Fouts, Suzette Frederick, George Haase, Brad Halstead, Sharon McAllister, Christopher Jones, Janie Patterson, Carol Knight-Wallace, Kathy Spoor, Jan Thurston, Roberta Leonardy, Sharon Beckett, Kristin Sasseen, Bonnie Scott

Contact: Suzette Frederick, (360) 236-3901

On-Line Information Technology Avoids Training Cost

DIS' Customer Advisory Board, which is comprised of state agency information technology managers, were asked to identify and prioritize on-line training services that would provide the greatest training benefit to their information technology personnel.

As a result of their feedback, DIS signed a two-year subscription contract with Gartner Group that allows any state agency, board or commission employees access to selected services available on the Internet, video tapes, computer based training, and multi-media for minimal charges.

Results

- ★ Cost avoidance for nine state government agencies using the service.
- ★ State agencies, boards, and commissions have access to a variety of selected services available on the Internet, video tapes, computer-based training, and multi-media at minimal charge.
- ★ The Customer Advisory Board receives quarterly performance reports and provides continuous feedback to meet the on-line technical training needs.

Team Members: Todd Sander, Mary Lou Griffith, Christine Dolan, and Bob Horner

Contact: Connie Michener (360) 902-3471

Human Resource Division Simplifies Process and Saves Money

Results from the Human Resources Division customer satisfaction survey and other suggestions from staff indicated the need to re-focus their role to better serve the agency's needs and methods to improve processes for recruitment needs and personnel related forms.

Results

- ★ Saved \$4,051 in recruitment advertising costs by improving the internal process. Cost savings for Fiscal Year 98 is estimated at \$30,598.
- ★ Reduced recruitment processing time by two weeks.
- ★ Reduced the amount of paperwork.
- ★ Redefined the role of Human Resource professional staff from that of a rule interpreter to a consultant.
- ★ Streamlined and simplified forms and internal processes to allow easier access to information on-line.

Team Members: Teresa Peffley, Shalice Ando, Jan Cabe, Nancy Widders, Devi Watson, Diana Corbin, Kris Baumgarten

Contact: Connie Michener (360) 902-3471

Change Boosts Understanding Of Audit Process

Labor and Industries regularly audits employers to ensure they pay correct premiums for workers' compensation coverage for their employees. A survey of employers showed that 42 percent of employers found that written information sent by the department after an audit was difficult to understand.

As a remedy, the department created a brightly colored quarter-page summary form that tells, in easy-to-understand language, how much a firm owes in premiums following an audit.

Results

- ★ In a follow-up survey, more than 75 percent of the employers said the summary form increased their understanding of the audit process.
- ★ Employers gave rankings of "good" to "excellent" for the change, compared with "poor" to "good" rankings of the previous notices.

Team Members: Alan Paja, Caroline Johnson, Larry Schenck, Tom Carter and Alan Nesseth

Contact: Alan Paja (253) 596-3834

Flexible Hours Better For All

Compliance inspectors were unable to call the Seattle regional office for information from the field before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. since no one was there to answer the phone. This meant frequent trips to the office or delayed inspection activities. And, customers requesting materials were not receiving them in a timely manner.

Staff expressed the desire to work flexible hours. A team was formed to test support staff working four 10-hour days per week.

Results

- ★ Inspectors can call for information from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., making more efficient use of their time and improving customer service.
- ★ Expanded hours free .75 FTE to assist in other areas where needed.
- ★ Customer requested materials are sent the same day rather than delayed several days.
- ★ Increased staff morale.
- ★ Fewer commuting days reducing traffic and air pollution.

Team members: Cheryl Sterling, Bonnie Hintz, and Andrew McLellan.

Contact: Cheryl Sterling (206) 281-5490

Manual Saves Staff Time, Eliminates Incorrect Fees

Mishandling of factory-assembled structures permits, insignias, and fee collection was resulting in lost revenue and staff time trying to collect fees in Region 5. (Region 5 service centers are located in Okanogan, Ephrata, East Wenatchee, Yakima, Kennewick and Walla Walla.)

A team developed a new procedures manual and launched a three-month pilot project in Region 5.

Results

- ★ Consistent service and information is provided in all six offices.
- ★ Eliminated incorrect fees, recovering \$1,716 in lost fees in the pilot project.
- ★ Eliminated staff time spent trying to collect fees, saving three staff hours a month.
- ★ Reduced permit errors from one error every three permits, to one every 33 permits.
- ★ Inspectors able to do 120 more inspections and generate \$9,700 in additional revenue per year.

Team members: Tony Tomasino, Don Taylor, Lou Hawkins, Linda Amundson, and Peggy Menning

Contact: Tony Tomasino (509) 735-0136

Information Booth

The customers at the East Seattle Licensing Service Office are more diverse in language and culture than any other Licensing office in the state. Although the staff have worked hard to meet this challenge, customer comment cards from East Seattle were overwhelmingly negative. This was due, in part, to an average wait time of 35 minutes. Often the customer didn't have the correct documentation when they finally reached the counter. This meant another trip and further delay for the customer, and wasted time for the Licensing Service Representative.

Understandably, improving service to the customers while reducing wait time were the priorities for this team. Their solution was to develop an information booth to handle certain services that could be diverted from the main counter. Customers are served more promptly, information is more easily and quickly obtained, and customer comments are more positive.

Results

- ★ Average customer wait time is reduced by 30 percent.
- ★ A booth, with international signage to provide quick service for address changes, record look-ups, documentation reviews, sales of Abstracts of Driver's Records, and Q-matic assistance has been established.
- ★ The majority of customer comment cards are now positive.
- ★ Customer access is easier due to rearranged furniture and improved interior and exterior location signage.

Team members: Narasimhulu Arani, Martina Carranza, Jeanne Clark, Manuel Dominguez, Karen Fields, Tod Hargrove, Lorie Nelting, Mary O'Connor, Ellen Pope, Annie Seto, Matilda Smith, Ricky Wong, Glenda Yamasaki. Team sponsors: Sheila Musgrove, Scott Swann

Contact: Nancy Botaitis (360) 902-3610

➤ Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award ➤

Customer Comment Cards

The agency provides customer comment cards in each of the 63 Licensing Services Offices. Agency policy has been to answer every card, even those where customers indicate “no response needed”. Ten people were handling the documents; multiple copies were made and routed to several people for input. Response time was nearly three months. Customer feedback to the field offices took close to six months. Additionally, the cards were perforated to provide a mailing flap, but many customers tore them off, causing additional rework.

Information from the customer comment cards is now entered on an Excel database. Everyone who needs to provide input has access to the database, which eliminates paper shuffling and saves time. Guidelines were developed to standardize agency responses, which are directed only to negative comments. Customer comment cards are being printed without perforations at cost savings.

Results

- ★ Response to customer complaints reduced from three months to ten days.
- ★ Savings of two FTE months and \$3,391 annually in scan bills, printing, postage, envelopes, and copying costs.
- ★ Electronic data storage resulted in streamlined and reduced paper flow.
- ★ Database provides management reports and tracks customer satisfaction.
- ★ Guidelines established for resolving and responding to negative customer comments.
- ★ Customer feedback to the License Service Representatives and their managers reduced from six months to less than three weeks

Team members: Patricia Lasley, Sherry English, Kathey Piepgras Carlson, Wilma Eby, Pat Schmidkofer, Meredith Jennings, Sandi Britton, Shelly Schmitt, Kim Widders, Kelly Rosie, Rosa Kimmerly, Carla Sontag, Kirk Kaiser, Karen Fields

Contact: Nancy Botaitis (360) 902-361

Criminal History Background Check

The Security Guard, Private Investigator, and Bail Bond licensing programs conduct criminal history background checks on all applicants through the Washington Crime Information Computer using an ACCESS terminal. Because of heavy daytime usage, the system was very time-consuming for the single staff person. Turnaround time is critical, since security guards can be hired with a temporary license until the background check is completed and the permanent license issued.

The agency Communications Unit also uses ACCESS, so the background checks were redirected to that unit. They could spread the workload over their swing and graveyard shifts when less system usage caused the process to be more efficient. The ACCESS terminal was eliminated from the Security Guard, Private Investigator, and Bail Bond programs, staff time was redirected, and public safety was improved by reducing the turnaround time of critical information.

Results

- ★ Reduced background check processing time by 50 percent.
- ★ Saved \$3,600 in maintenance costs by eliminating one ACCESS terminal.
- ★ Reduced the workload of a previously over-burdened staff of one by redirecting it to a unit that could absorb the comparable work with no additional cost.
- ★ Improved safety for the general public by reducing the turnaround time of criminal history background checks .

Team members: Pat Brown, Dave Purtee

Contact: Nancy Botaitis (360) 902-3610

Newsletters On The Internet

The agency produces and mails a newsletter twice a year to the 45,965 Real Estate and Engineer/Land Surveyor licensees. The annual budget for these two publications is \$64,000.

The most recent editions of the newsletters were placed on the Department of Licensing website as well as mailed to the licensees' addresses. Recipients were given the website address and advised that future editions would not be mailed unless specifically requested.

Results

- ★ Projected savings of up to \$64,000 in printing and mailing costs per year.
- ★ Increased consumer education as the public becomes aware of the website and can access information previously available only to Real Estate and Engineer/Land Surveyor licensees.
- ★ Recipients have access to the newsletters as soon as they are produced

Team members: Nancy Varnum, Shanan Gillespie, and Dolores Casitas

Contact: Nancy Botaitis (360) 902-3610

Software Saves Time Developing Affirmative Action Plans

Higher education institutions develop affirmative action plans which require between 40 and 300 hours to complete, depending on the size and resources of the institution. The department developed a software program which analyzes the data and produces all required statistical reports, cutting processing time by 50 percent to 75 percent.

Results

- ★ Processing time for the institutions is significantly reduced.
- ★ Review and approval time for the Department of Personnel is reduced.
- ★ Electronic calculations provide the highest level of accuracy.
- ★ Institutions can redirect staff resources to other human resource support needs.

Team members: Randy Ayers, Ed Bently, Kris Brophy, Peter Tamayo, Teri Thompson

Contact: Kris Brophy (360) 753-3819

New Evaluation System Reflects Contemporary Work Practices, Facilitates Quality Performance Among State Employees

The state's performance evaluation system impacts nearly 50,000 employees and supervisors. The old system was 20 years old and did not reflect modern workplace practices, technological advances, and quality improvement expectations. Nearly 93 percent of employees and supervisors indicated dissatisfaction with it and felt the system should be revised.

The Employee Development & Performance Plan (EDPP), has been developed to replace the old performance evaluation system. Feedback from the piloting of the EDPP was overwhelmingly positive - approximately 97 percent feel that the EDPP is a vast improvement and facilitates effective employee-supervisor communication about past and future performance and productivity.

Results

- ★ Improved service to customer agencies, supervisors, and employees.
- ★ Increased supervisor and employee satisfaction with performance feedback and planning.
- ★ Facilitation of improved productivity, performance, and customer service to Washington State citizens.

Team Members:

Julia Graham (DOP), Ken Harden (DSHS), Joy St. Germain (Ecology), Gary Lamberson (DOL), Karen Durant (OFM), Gladys Burbank (WFSE)

Contact: Julia Graham (360) 753-5406

🏆 Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award 🏆

Revised Print Set Up Saves Time And Money

A New Hire Reporting Form for the Department of Social and Health Services involved printing and mailing. Previous set up required that the job be run twice to add the address. This increased the cost of production significantly. To reduce cost, it was suggested to the customer (DSHS) that we move the address to a print position at the bottom of the page. This change enabled running the job two at a time versus one at a time, and when folded, allowed printing the address on the front fold for easy mailing.

Results

- ★ Initial cost savings to the customer of \$16,000.
- ★ Future savings to customer of \$368 per month.
- ★ Faster turnaround time – savings of 50 percent.
- ★ Simplified mailing process.

Team members: Dick Yarboro, Ron Mosman, Mike Cole

Contact: Dan Swisher/Kathy Forbes (360) 753-6820

Teacher's Retirement System - Benefits Recalculation Process

Each year, the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) staff faces an increase in volume of retirement applications submitted by K-12 members, coinciding with the end of the school year. The customer is provided timely benefits payments soon after retirement; however, the initial payments are based on estimates of benefits. The final recalculation of benefits cannot be performed until complete data needed from the employer and/or the member is received.

The result of the high volume of retirements in a short period of time is a backlog of customers awaiting recalculation of their benefits. The need for improvement to reduce processing time for these recalculations for final benefits was recognized during review of the backlog data.

Results

- ★ Backlog processing time has been reduced from 24 to 18 months and will be reduced to 12 months or less with implementation of processes developed and verified by the team.

Team members: Jamie Carl, Kirk Deming, Dana Fassett, Dave Geiger, Marlann McLucas, Geri Mortenson, Sally Nichols, Donna Reilly, Ken Woods

Contact: Dave Geiger (360) 709-4756

Department of Retirement Systems

Monthly Disbursement Reports Project

Each month the Department of Retirement Systems sends approximately 90,000 retirement checks (disbursements) to retirees. Reporting and reconciling the monthly disbursements was a cumbersome process. The Department of Retirement System's Administrative Services staff and systems development staff worked together to improve the process.

Results

- ★ This improvement has resulted in the elimination of reporting redundancies achieving cost avoidance of approximately \$13,800 per year.
- ★ This process now provides an extensive breakdown of deductions, providing precise balancing to ensure accurate information to the IRS, Health Care Authority, and other stakeholders.

Team members: Kevin Gripp, Bill Hallett, Cathy Wolfe, Marlann McLucas

Contact: Rand Daley, (360) 664-0275

Business Owners Receive Tax Credit Quicker

Owners of multiple businesses were required to wait until the end of the year for the application of the Small Business Tax Credit(s). The type of business determined reporting period requirements—and if they differed, the owner had to wait until all accounts were checked at the end of the year to see if they received the tax credit. This was time consuming and frustrating for the business owner and department staff.

Changes were adopted to the rule allowing the tax credit to be taken on all accounts as they are filed.

Results

- ★ Taxpayers now receive the credit when the tax liability is due, instead of waiting until the end of the year.
- ★ 5,200 businesses are affected by this change.
- ★ Approximately 1,250 hours of staff time will be saved annually.

Team members: Sharon Brown, Alan Lynn, and Karen Yandle

Contact: Karen Yandle (360) 902-7000

Improved Identification Of Bankrupt Taxpayers Leads To Increased Revenues

Bankruptcy filings are up 70 percent from three years ago. A new court rule reduced the time frame for filing claims in a bankruptcy case from 180 to 45 days. Because of the potential of losing earned tax dollars, the Attorney General's Office required the Department to identify taxpayers filing for bankruptcy who owe \$8,000 or more in taxes and penalties—within 48 hours. This identification process normally took the Department 30 days and there was a backlog.

A quality team recommended changes to the notice processing and communication improvements between the courts, the Attorney General's Office and Revenue staff.

Results

- ★ Improved identification of bankrupt taxpayers from 30 days to 48 hours.
- ★ Staff time saved 240 hours a year.
- ★ Increased revenue projections to the state by \$250,000 a year.
- ★ Communication and coordination with Attorney General staff increased.

Team members: Sally Bennett, John Bugge, Doug Houghton, Dennis Redmon, Susan Roland, David Thomas, Bill Waters, Mary Lobdell (AGO) and Andrea Moturi (AGO)

Contact: Dennis Redmon (260) 389-2708

➤ Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award ➤

New Automated Warrant System Saves Time, Money, And Increases Accuracy

Issuing tax warrants was very time consuming. Revenue agents determined and calculated the tax, penalty, and interest due. Information was manually entered on a separate form and then presented for typing on the tax warrant document. Actual time spent on this process was approximately one hour for each warrant. With time delays in typing, the finished warrant could take up to two weeks to be completed.

With the automated tax warrant, the agent brings up an account's liability on the computer system. The system automatically calculates the tax, penalty, and interest due, and creates a receivable with all pertinent information. This automated process can be completed in less than ten minutes.

Results

- ★ Tax, penalty, and interest is automatically calculated eliminating most errors.
- ★ \$1,750 is saved annually from printing.
- ★ 4 FTEs a year are saved from reduced processing time.
- ★ One hour of processing time now takes less than 10 minutes per warrant.
- ★ The warrant is automatically entered on the department's receivable system.
- ★ The Revenue Agent can print all necessary forms using the Intranet in a matter of seconds.

Team members: Bret Bretthauer, Leonor Castellanos, Tom Davis, Lesley Forbes, Ross Garrison, Sharon Kifer, Mark Lewis, Dana Lynn, Bev Medeiros, Tammy Meyer, Linda Nelsen, Karen Oakes, Mike Schwab, Jeff Swanson, Janetta Taylor and Debbie Young

Contact: Mark Lewis, (360) 586-2773

Notice Change Leads To Better Utilization Of Resources

Taxpayers are mailed a computer-generated *First Notice* for any balance due when a tax return has not been paid in full. Balance due invoices of *less than \$500* which remain unpaid after the due date are then sent a computer-generated *Second Notice*. Those that are *\$500 or more* left unpaid after the due date are referred directly to revenue agents for collection.

By increasing the threshold to \$2,000 or more in unpaid tax obligations to immediately collect, Revenue Agents can focus collection activities on higher dollar accounts.

Results

- ★ Revenue agents can focus collection efforts on higher dollar liabilities therefore using agency resources more strategically.
- ★ Approximately 1,084 hours of staff time will be saved annually.
- ★ The final number of referred balance due invoices is reduced by 50 percent.

Team members: Dean Carlson, Kim Fitzpatrick, Don Gutmann, Gerald Helper, Sandra Hurley, Nicole Judson, Mark Lewis, Rob Rice, David Saavedra, and Janetta Taylor

Contact: Mark Lewis (360) 586-2773

Extended Office Hours For Clients Who Work

Clients who work had limited access to the critical services offered by the Community Services Office (CSO) in Alderwood. Surveys of clients and staff indicated that having the office open late just one day a week would be helpful to 81 percent of the clients. By rearranging staff schedules, the Alderwood CSO is now open on Tuesday nights until 7:00 p.m.

Results

- ★ Increased availability of services offered at the CSO.
- ★ Increased client satisfaction.

Team members: Carrie Williams, Katie Kerfonta, Judy Boston, Gail Brown, Jan McClintock, Dong Nguyen, Karen Peyton, Wendy Bove, Maxine Barstad, Malgorzata Kowalczyk, Jean Kimes, and Cyndi Schaeffer

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Programming Changes Saves Thousands Of Hours

The current process for requesting the status from another state on any of approximately 66,000 interstate child support cases requires that a worker first gather information from the Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS), and then enter that information into a form generated by a different computer program.

A team from the Kennewick Office of Support Enforcement created a SEMS based form, generated within the SEMS database that will automatically input case information, thus eliminating review and printing of two data screens, use of an additional set of forms and software, inputting of duplicate information, and manual printing of the completed form.

Results

- ★ Full implementation will save an average of 9,747 staff hours per year statewide, for projected savings of \$155,952.

Team members: Kristi Christensen, Gayle McCollum, Kevin O'Neil

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

No More Lost Equipment

Previously, the Maple Lane School Security/Transportation Unit used a small closet for equipment storage. The closet was too small to store the Unit's equipment so excess equipment was stored in various cabinets and drawers throughout the office, which made it difficult to secure and account for keys and equipment. Also, staff had unlimited and unsupervised access to equipment, making it difficult to hold staff accountable for lost or damaged items. The only accountability measure in place was an equipment list for staff to sign, and its use was sporadic.

On a team's recommendation, the office was remodeled to make better use of the available space and included a designated equipment room. Shelves, a pegboard, hooks, and key boxes located throughout the office were consolidated in the equipment room. Access to this area is now controlled.

Equipment is accounted for through a supervisor or shift coordinator signing out equipment; a log of the equipment and name of staff assigned the equipment; and a "chit" system to identify who has a particular piece of equipment.

Results

- ★ 730 hours per year are saved because of quick equipment check-in and checkout and because each staff has assigned equipment.
- ★ Two to three staff per shift are able to begin their shift immediately. This resulted in a quicker response from Security for staff/youth safety.
- ★ Since the creation of the equipment room there have been no losses, as opposed to over \$1,600 in losses between January 1996 and December 1997.
- ★ The renovation of the Security Building interior has resulted in a more efficient work environment.

Team members: Dennis Harmon, Paul Knight, David Raines, H.D. Romero, and Glenn Teeter

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Shrinking Manuals Speeds Services

Workers in local Community Services Offices (CSO) had been forced to use several manuals to determine client eligibility for cash, food stamps, and medical benefits. The multiple volume manuals, totaling over 2,700 pages and referencing over 500 rules, were difficult for both clients and workers to understand and interpret.

By eliminating duplication and rewriting in simpler language, the Program Simplification Team dramatically reduced the number of rules and pages in the manuals and made the job of determining benefits easier.

Results

- ★ Reduced the number of rules by 44 percent and made them easier to use and understand.
- ★ Eliminated three procedural manuals.
- ★ Reduced the number of pages in the manuals by 82 percent.
- ★ Developed an integrated manual that combines rules and program procedures in one single location.
- ★ Used new methods to involve clients and the public in rule development.
- ★ Project savings of \$182,000 annually in printing and administrative costs plus one FTE.

Team members: Cindy Anderson, Veronica Barnes, John Camp, Rod Coatney, July Cook, BJ Erickson, Tom Everett, Wendy Forslin, Mike Freeman, Dennis Goldsby, Sue Langley, Rena Milare

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

➤ Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award ➤

Medical File Accuracy Enhanced

Documentation in the medical files at Maple Lane School must be accurate and complete. Under the new process, the Clinic staff reviews a sample of charts at least every two weeks to monitor the care rendered by health providers. Every tenth file is reviewed to determine: the adequacy of treatment plans; the extent to which physician's and dentist's orders have been carried out; completeness and legibility of the health record; compliance with policies regarding pharmaceuticals; and appropriate implementation and countersigning of standing orders when utilized.

In addition, the physician reviews and co-signs all physical examination forms completed, and the psychiatrist reviews all charts on referrals.

Results

- ★ Medical files are more complete and accurate, with the accuracy percentage increasing in a number of medical criteria.
- ★ Allergies are now listed on Medication Administration Records (MAR) at almost 100 percent accuracy, up from only 47 percent.
- ★ Enhanced information-finding capability helps to better inform parents or guardians about their son's medical condition.

Team members: Scott Best, Robin Bredfield, Deb Burney, Stacy Durham, Marj Haviland, Jason Johnson, Jan LeDoux, Barb Ringel, Connie Scheel, David Simons, and Rose Vu

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Reducing Redundancy Yields Results

The method of processing most computer generated forms in the Vancouver Office of Support Enforcement required up to 20 steps performed by three different classifications of personnel. Many of those steps were redundant tasks that required excess time and personnel.

The process was changed by removing the redundant steps in the process, re-organizing workstations, and implementing a different computer forms program for return receipt cards.

Results

- ★ Turn around time was reduced by two-thirds, reducing one eight-hour step in the process to four hours, and another 20-hour step to 12 hours.
- ★ Workload savings within the unit are equivalent to one FTE.
- ★ Errors virtually were eliminated.

Team members: Denice Sparley, Sharon Hitchens, Lisa Stewart, Toni Hinckle, Marjorie Millner, Kay Gehle, Amy Stanton

Contact: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Region Wide Mail And Delivery Service

Historically, the Department of Transportation's South Central Region, headquartered in Yakima, used many different methods to deliver mail and other packages. High cost and poor customer satisfaction accompanied them all. These problems came to a head when region staff members were told by the U.S. Post Office they were required to use the Post Office's services for all mail delivery unless region staff delivered it themselves.

The improvement to hire a mail delivery person who will:

- Pick up the mail from the Post Office
- Deliver the mail to the Regional Office
- Pick up the regional mail and other parcels for delivery throughout the region (three trips north and two trips south.)

Results

- ★ Increased customer service for mail senders and receivers.
- ★ Decreased turn-around times of deliverable goods including mail.
- ★ Increased efficiency of deliveries through communication with senders and receivers.

Team members: Angela Beeman, John Byersdorf, Jim Dwyer, Jim Henderson, Steve Huntamer, Joe Jorgenson, Mike Kukes, Jerry Mearns, Bobbie Scott

Contact: Eilert Bjorge (509) 575-2565

Reducing Stress and Saving Staff Time

Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and King County work together in partnership to provide programs for veterans in King County. One program that targets the homeless veterans enrolls them in a program to provide a place to live with meals while looking for full-time employment.

Veterans are allowed to stay at the William Booth Center for meals and housing but were to be searching for employment during the lunch hour. Veterans would then sell their lunch tickets for cash and upsetting other homeless residents. Working together, King County and WDVA developed a solution that allows Veterans to access meals and not have the opportunity to sell tickets. An easy and simple solution to solve a stressful solution.

Results

- ★ Eliminated the sale of meal tickets by Veterans to unauthorized users.
- ★ Reduced tension among Veterans and other homeless people living at WBS during the day.
- ★ Improved employment rate for homeless Veterans in our program.
- ★ Cost savings by reducing lunch expenses.

Team members: Jerry Towne, Kenny Sawyer, Jo Estes

Contact: Jerry Towne (206) 296-7576

Improving Fiscal Customer Service With A Survey

The fiscal team was getting complaints about their service, staff availability, and purchasing procedures. They wanted honest and accurate feedback and proceeded with a customer survey that gave them data for a clear improvement plan.

Results

- ★ The team received a 53 percent return rate on their survey.
- ★ The most frequent issues were identified and responded to.
- ★ Customers were informed of the ACTION Plan to work with issues of concerns.
- ★ Data lead to a agency-wide Business Review Process to look at processes agency-wide.

Team members: Debbie Randall, Michelle McMeeel, Kim Tran, Erwin Vadallon, Glenn Raiha, Donna Grazzini, Barbara Burgener, George Barnes, Jerry Quintus, Joanne Galva, Susan Ramsey

Contact: Donna Grazzini (360) 709-5246

Improving Resident Census And Improving The System

The census of residents at our Veterans Homes contains information regarding patient location, admission information, and discharge information that was erroneous. Incorrect information was collected on numerous forms and written in a log book that nobody looked at. Asking the why question assisted staff to look at the process of census information and find out who needed the information and in what form. Savings of staff time and the reduction of paperwork were the big winners.

Results

- ★ Reduced phone calls among staff.
- ★ Reduced use of paper and staff time reproducing forms never read.
- ★ Decreased errors in reporting census data which generates reimbursement.
- ★ Reduced databases to one with only two staff.

Team members: Melissa Wilt, Linda Sharpe, Cherise McArthur, Janet Manning, John Jackson, Larry Smith, Peggy Challman, Ed Dolle

Contact: Melissa Wilt (360) 895-4675

Helping Veterans Access VA Prescription Medication

Staff at one of the state's long-term care Veterans Homes were looking for ways to save dollars while providing quality patient care. They discovered all Veterans were eligible for free or reduced cost prescription drugs, but only if they were prescribed by a VA physician. Driving Veterans to the VA hospital in Seattle was a timely and costly process and not a viable solution. Working with other states in our region (Idaho, Alaska, and Oregon) and challenging this age-old thinking resulted in all Veterans receiving this benefit and prescriptions could be written by any physician.

Results

- ★ Approval will allow all eligible veterans to receive drugs directly from the VA.
- ★ Will provide better, comprehensive, and less expensive direct medical care.
- ★ Save Washington state from purchasing and issuing drugs.
- ★ Veterans will not have to go to the VA facility to request and/or receive their drugs.
- ★ System will allow non-VA physicians to sign prescriptions

Team members: Bob Jones, Carlos Sanes, Sally Shunn, Larry Smith, Ben Pineda, Dot Gaston, Bob Braybrook, Byron Williams

Contact: Bob Jones 360-895-4706

Encourage Greater Participation By State Agency Directors And Elected Tribal Leadership In State-Tribal Partnerships

In the summer of 1997, the majority of tribes participated in a survey requesting that they list the top governmental priorities of their communities. Based on the survey information, as well as state and tribal commitments to economic vitality, the Governor and state agency directors met with tribal leaders and economic development staff to discuss economic conditions which impact Indian country. This meeting was the Tribal Economic Vitality Summit, which evolved into the Economic Vitality Initiative (TEVI). The Governor invited and encouraged the tribes to work together with the state in designing initiatives and joint problem-solving strategies to revitalize and diversify state-tribal economies. The tribes submitted reports in the following areas: Economic Study Plan, Financing, Taxation, Tourism and Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO).

Results

- ★ Following the summit, tribal subcommittees met and drafted the TEVI Report, which was submitted to the Governor and state agency directors.
- ★ In response to the TEVI report, state agency directors drafted responses to the identified issues of concern and proposed action plans.
- ★ As a result, the TEVI Fall Conference was scheduled for October 1, 1998, with the overall theme known as State-Tribal Economic Partnerships (First STEP).
- ★ Additionally, in an historic partnership, a study was jointly funded by the state and tribes to examine the areas where Indian tribes usually have the greatest economic impact on the state's economy. One use of this economic study will be as an aid to educate legislators and the public about the tribes.
- ★ Within one year, our office was instrumental in executing the Tribal Economic Vitality Summit, the Tribal Economic Vitality Initiative, the TEVI Fall Conference (First STEP), and the historic Economic Study.

Team Members: Debora Juarez, Jennifer Scott, Rebecca Nichols, and Tara Blair

Contact: Debora Juarez (360) 753-2411

New Enrollment Rosters Save Time, Materials, and Dollars While Improving Customer Service

Twice a month, enrollment rosters were produced and sent to contracting health plans to indicate and validate their Basic Health membership. The printing of these rosters had to be coordinated with the Department of Information Services (DIS) and resulted in approximately 90,000 pages (990 lbs.) of paper that needed to be sent to the health plans every month.

We eliminated the paper format and replaced it with magnetic tape media. This not only eliminated the monthly paper, printing costs, and postage, but also reduced staff time and eliminated an entire day of processing. It also improved our customer service by allowing any enrollment changes to be identified sooner by the health plans and provide for more expeditious coordination.

Results

- ★ Eliminated 90,000 pages of paper documentation per month.
- ★ Replaced the paper with a single computer tape format.
- ★ Saved the state over \$30,000.00 per year in printing, postage, and miscellaneous costs.
- ★ Eliminated reliance on DIS to produce paper documents.
- ★ Provided enrollment information to the health plans more quickly to identify member changes sooner.

Team Members: Mike Angel, Jerry Barnett, April Inchausti, Trish Mackin, Tom Neitzel, Kathy Newman, Elaine Nolan, Will Treinen, Shane Verley, Nikki Woehl

Contact: Max McMullen (360) 923-2752

Technology Reduces Paperwork And Reduces Staff Time

All beer, wine importers and distributors in the the state of Washington must post their prices with the Liquor Control Board prior to selling their product. This process is commonly referred to as “price posting.” There are over 800 licensees which are required to post their prices and receive approval. This generated over 3,000 pieces of paper each month. It was impossible to review each piece of paper with only 3.5 FTEs, which led to a random check process with less than 20 percent of prices being verified.

Board staff working with a consultant and committee comprised of staff and customers designed an electronic posting method.

Results

- ★ Paper flow was reduced from 3,000 pieces per month to less than 150.
- ★ License approval was reduced from a two-week wait to immediate notification of approval or denial.
- ★ The 3.5 FTEs have been redirected to other functions.
- ★ Review of application went from 20 percent to 100 percent insuring compliance with the RCW.
- ★ External customers were involved in the design.

Team members: Dave Goyette, Craig Wilson, Rich Raico, Heidi Whisman, Dave Marty, Craig Janitscke, Bob Jordan, Penny Jones, Tim Fielsend, Michelle Grip. Fern Norton, Heidi Carter, Kathleen Magee, Sheila Griffin

Contact: Dave Goyette (360) 753-2724

Streamlined Fiscal Processing

Before July 1997, most of our agency's payments, such as travel vouchers and leases, and purchases, such as equipment, general supplies, etc., were processed by the agencies for which we provide services.

Beginning in July 1997, our four-person fiscal unit assumed responsibility for processing all the agency's payments and purchasing all agency supplies and equipment. This amounted to a 150 percent workload increase with no increase in staffing.

Realizing we had to change the way things were done, fiscal staff redefined tasks, streamlined and improved business processes, replaced many manual accounting systems with computerized systems, and designed and implemented a computerized purchasing program.

Results

- ★ Increased workload to 250 percent of previous year, including assuming responsibility for leases and facilities, with no increase in staff.
- ★ Reduced time required to type purchase orders by 75 percent.
- ★ Reduced time necessary for processing purchases by 40 percent.
- ★ Increased productivity in processing warrants (payments) by 40 percent.
- ★ Increased accuracy, speed, and ease of record keeping and information retrieval with use of computerized systems and forms.

Team Name: Howard's Heroes

Team Members: Monica Howard, Karen Ince, Terri Keech, Valena Heathorn.

Contact: Bob Liston (360) 586-4949

Information Available Faster, Workload Declines

Members of the public and state agencies receive information faster and more accurately as a result of four recent efforts of the Office of Financial Management's Communications Support Team. In the past, requests for information were often delayed by the need to print paper copies, then mail or fax the copies to the person requesting the information. The information was further delayed because mailing lists kept by different divisions caused mail to reach the wrong destination. Electronic release was also delayed due to the work necessary to prepare documents for the Internet.

The Communications Support Team streamlined the process by training staff members in each division to prepare documents for posting on the agency's home page. A fax server was installed so staff could fax documents directly from their computers, rather than printing each document, walking to a fax machine, and sending it. A uniform mail list system was developed so all divisions would have access to current addresses and group mailing lists. A central reference information system was established so questions could be directed to appropriate employees.

Results

- ★ Documents are posted on the Internet within hours of completion, often long before printed copies arrive.
- ★ The workload for Information Services staff is back on track. Posting time for one publication alone was reduced from 15 days to just 2 days.
- ★ Direct fax capability is saving paper costs, mailing costs, and distribution time. Annual savings for a single monthly mailing is estimated at \$500 in paper and envelopes and an additional \$1,800 in staff time.
- ★ Mailings reach their destination, duplicates are eliminated, and return postings are minimized.
- ★ Outside parties are referred directly to persons who can answer questions, and the need to maintain several different distribution lists is greatly reduced.
- ★ Information released is more consistent and customers are more satisfied with the response.

Team members: Debbie Hoxit, Cyndee Baugh, Yvonne Makoviney, Debbie Hoines, Vickie Larkin, LaVern Todd, Cindy Fetterly, Craig Bartlett, Barb Felver, Lori Jones, and Mark Fortier.

Contact: Debbie Hoxit (360) 902-0536

Cooperation Revitalizes Shellfish Habitat

The past 15 years saw the decline of shellfish harvesting in Eld Inlet, west of Olympia. High bacteria levels from sewage and stormwater runoff polluted shellfish beds, resulting in contamination.

The tools and techniques provided by the *Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan* armed Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team agencies, local governments and citizens with a remedy. A local watershed committee developed an action plan; the state Department of Health and county staff provided technical help and conducted sanitary surveys; the county created a fund-raising shellfish district; residents and businesses repaired septic systems; and farmers, assisted by conservation districts, prevented stream pollution. On February 20, 1998, the Washington Department of Health upgraded the harvest classification of 450 acres of shellfish beds in the Inlet. A community festival organized in late March gathered together some 200 watershed residents to celebrate the plan's success.

Results

- ★ Harvest restrictions lifted on 450 acres of shellfish growing area are advantageous to the two commercial and numerous noncommercial shellfish growers in the area.
- ★ Proof that cooperative programs among local government, state agencies, business and homeowners can restore environmental quality.
- ★ Valuable return on expenditure of state funding dollars.

Team members: Eld Inlet Watershed Council, Thurston County staff, Thurston Conservation District, state Department of Health, local citizens and businesses, and area shellfish growers

Contact: Duane Fagergren (360)407-7303

Technology Improves Accessibility, Saves Staff Time

The Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's (WCPCAN) request for proposal (RFP) process is very detailed and comprehensive. Numerous applicants frequently have many questions. Only one staff member (Program Manager) is in a position to respond to these questions and provide necessary technical assistance. Due to a demanding workload, however, the Program Manager is often difficult to reach.

To maximize WCPCAN's responsiveness to applicants' requests, the Program Manager and Master of Social Work Intern scheduled a weekly conference call so many applicants' questions could be answered at one time. WCPCAN came on-line and applicants were also able to e-mail their questions this year.

A written Grant Application Evaluation Survey was sent to each applicant upon receipt of a proposal to gather feedback on the level of satisfaction with technical assistance received from WCPCAN. A second survey was distributed to applicants to determine their level of satisfaction with the RFP *process*.

Results

- ★ Approximately five hours of staff time were saved as a result of the new means to respond to grant applicants.
- ★ More people were served than in previous years. This data establishes a baseline which will be measured against in future years.
- ★ Data collected this year will establish a baseline for customer satisfaction with technical assistance provided by WCPCAN and with the RFP process. This data will continue to be collected, monitored, and acted upon over time.

Team members: Fredi Rector and Jonathan Stacks

Contact: Debbie Anastasi Black (206) 389-2412

The Commission Reduces Its Housing Complaint Backlog And Improves Response Time

Through a contract with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Commission was able to establish a fair housing unit to investigate complaints of housing discrimination. As a condition of the contract, and pursuant to federal statutes, housing discrimination complaints are to either be resolved through mediation or investigated within 100 days.

With establishment of the unit, housing discrimination complaints filed with the Commission from throughout Washington State increased dramatically, as did the corresponding backlog. The two investigators who staffed the unit soon found themselves overwhelmed by the volume of complaints. It was apparent that steps needed to be taken to ensure compliance with the terms of the contract, which would in turn effect future funding.

As a result, management decided to train investigators who had formerly investigated employment complaints to also investigate housing discrimination complaints. A collaborative approach was developed and investigative teams were formed. Their shared goal was the thorough, expeditious investigation or resolution of housing discrimination complaints. This team approach and goal are now being applied to the investigation of all discrimination complaints.

Results

- ★ Investigators reduced the number of aging housing cases by more than 50 percent.
- ★ The terms of the contract with Housing and Urban Development were met. This positions the Commission to receive additional funds, which will help to offset previous federal funding cuts.
- ★ The new team model fosters and supports a more collaborative investigative approach, resulting in the investigation and closure of old, complex cases.

Team Members: Marilyn Akita, Cynthia Alvarez, Myrna Archambeault, Dorothy Brooks, Julie Bussard, Rudy Chavez, Dennis Davis, Dean Hirst, Regina Hook, Sue Jordan, Patti Kieval, Edmon Lee, Tammy Lee, Lisa Marquette, Mona Maxwell, Michael Murphy, Avis Plough, Bruce Redding, Susan Ramsauer, Idolina Reta, Heriberto Ruiz, Brian Seidman, Randi Sibonga, Barbara Stroughter, Goodwin Trent, Frank Trevino, Eleanor Winkler.

Contact: Edmon Lee 360/753-4830

Procedures For The Reconsideration (Review) Of Investigative Findings Are Streamlined

Complainants and respondents who disagree with an investigative finding may request that the Commission reconsider its finding. The procedures for responding to reconsideration requests were cumbersome, and it was taking approximately 75 days to process the requests. Staff streamlined the procedures. As a result the backlog was eliminated and reconsideration requests are now processed within 30 days of receipt.

Results

- ★ The time to process a reconsideration request has been reduced by approximately 40 percent.
- ★ The backlog of reconsideration requests was reduced by approximately 61 percent.

Team Members: Idolina Reta, Marilyn Akita, Heriberto Ruiz, Tanya Calahan.

Contact: Idolina Reta (206) 464-7500

Commission Significantly Reduces Its Backlog Of Discrimination Complaints

The large volume of discrimination complaints and the corresponding backlog have been a long-standing challenge for the Commission. In May 1997, the statewide backlog, or pending inventory, stood at approximately 1,518 cases.

Although procedures to streamline case processing were already being developed, those efforts were revitalized in response to Governor Locke's Executive Order 97-03. As part of its quality improvement plan, staff continued to implement existing procedures and developed new ones to reduce the backlog. As a result, the Commission has successfully reduced its case backlog by more than 600 cases.

Results

- ★ Staff reduced the backlog of pending cases from 1,518 to 886 — a reduction of 57 percent.
- ★ Complaints without merit are closed out more quickly. This allows investigators and managers to focus on cases with merit and results in more time to devote to other important efforts such as outreach.
- ★ The number of aging cases was reduced by approximately 53 percent.

Team Members: Marilyn Akita, Cynthia Alvarez, Myrna Archambeault, Linda Autry, Dorothy Brooks, Julie Bussard, Tanya Calahan, Martin Casey, Rudy Chavez, Jean Ciallella, David Clayborn, Dennis Davis, Maja El-Taji, Diana Guzman, Terri Hansen, Dean Hirst, Regina Hook, Sue Jordan, Patti Kieval, Renee Knight, Edmon Lee, Tammy Lee, Lisa Marquette, John Maxwell, Mona Maxwell, Michael Murphy, Trish Murphy, Avis Plough, Bruce Redding, Susan Ramsauer, Idolina Reta, Heriberto Ruiz, Brian Seidman, Randi Sibonga, Jolene Sonesen, Janie Soto, Arthur Stratton, Barbara Stroughter, Goodwin Trent, Frank Trevino, Eleanor Winkler

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Long-Term Energy Reduction Program Reduces Dollars, Waste

The energy consumption in facilities was skyrocketing, and the trend indicated the consumption would exceed the budget for energy costs. Innovative state employees working for the National Guard Facilities Management Office proposed an energy management system that would correct the trend and provide improved service to users of Armories across the state.

The system can be controlled on site, or accessed remotely for a more timely response. During the period of 1996 to 1998, \$676,587 has been saved in energy and equipment costs at 38 locations used by the schools, scouts and other community groups, in addition to the military units on National Guard weekends.

The energy management system was developed in a collaborative effort between facilities managers with the Washington State Military Department, Puget Sound Energy, and Delta Energy Management Systems.

Results

- ★ Despite increasing costs per unit of energy, the long term energy reduction program has produced consistent cost avoidance.
- ★ Estimated \$28,000 saved in installation of the system.
- ★ Staff time savings are realized by reduction of on-site personnel during times that would normally incur overtime pay.
- ★ Increase in customer service and equipment monitoring is realized with remote access features.
- ★ Currently identified as a benchmark system being adopted in other states.
- ★ Winners of Department of the Army Energy Conservation Award.

Team Members: Mr. Bob Green and Mr. John Carlton

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Y2K Project Reorganization Avoids Costs, Meets Deadline

The Washington Crime Information Center (WACIC) is a data repository for contemporary crime data for all law and justice agencies in the state. The Washington State Identification System (WASIS) is a data repository containing criminal history records of all persons who have been charged with felonies and gross misdemeanors in the state. Law enforcement agencies use the information provided by both systems on a daily basis, making having the systems be Year 2000 compliant extremely vital. After identifying all necessary tasks to make the systems Y2K compliant, a time line that extended until the year 2004 was developed. This completion date was unacceptable.

The Information Services Division formed a team to look at the problem using a "factory process." Using a pilot set of programs, they were able to determine where delays were occurring and where would be the best placement of resources to alleviate the problem.

The result of this Y2K process improvement allows the State Patrol's Y2K Mainframe Team to perform the conversion, testing, and implementation steps concurrently. With the addition of two programmers, the "factory process" allows the work to be accomplished by June 1999. Additionally, there is an estimated cost avoidance of \$360,000 in overall project costs.

Results

- ★ The Y2K re-organization avoids \$360,000 in costs.
- ★ The WACIC will be Y2K compliant by June 1999.
- ★ The WASIS will be Y2K compliant by June 1999.

Team Members: Marlene Boisvert, Sean Clowers, Amal Devasagayam, Bob Marlatt, Chuck McCall, Vishnu Pemmasani, Ruskin Rayen, Rajneesh Sharma, Viviane Stead, Ramanath Sudhaker, and Stanley Venthu

Program Contact/Number: Mr. P. Douglas Sund (360) 705-5383

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

A Smoother Publication Process Saves Waste

In its mandated mission as the state's planning and coordinating agency for workforce training, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) produces many documents for broad distribution, including reports, brochures, and booklets. Recipients include the Governor, the Legislature, schools, training providers, and students.

Although the documents were of consistently high quality, the process of production itself needed to be less costly and more efficient. There were too many delays, often caused by a confusing internal review process. Also, the document ordering process sometimes resulted in under- or over-ordering.

Staff at the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board revised the process to make it smoother and more cost-efficient. It also initiated customer feed-back systems to improve document quality and usefulness.

Results

- ★ The agency's process for producing documents is now more formalized. Staff members are clear about production timelines and their respective roles.
- ★ By carefully controlling production schedules and activities, it is projected the agency will save about \$5,500 per year in staff time.
- ★ Reduced printing costs will save \$14,000 per year.
- ★ Customers will receive publications in a more timely fashion and customer-friendly format.

Team members: Rob Fieldman, Mark Stewart, Shirley Sorrell, Deaun Welch, and Bryan Wilson

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