Governing For Results 6

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

April 1999

Dear Fellow Citizens:

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 results from over 900 quality improvement projects.

Inside this booklet are highlights of those efforts from the first quarter of 1999. They range from quality efforts to reduce the time a citizen waits for service, to providing clear rules and instructions, to increased revenues to the state while providing better service to citizens.

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. The good work of state employees is making Washington State a proud place to live, work and raise a family.

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

Gary Locke
Governor

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of *Governing for Results*

Governing for Results 6 is the sixth edition 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 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 900 quality projects, saving the state over $49 million. As a result of these efficiencies, approximately 446,000 staff hours have been saved and redirected to other work or eliminated the need for overtime. In addition, these efforts have produced over $18 million in new revenue.

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

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

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 first quarter of 1999. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams.

Team Name/Agency	**Book Edition Number**	**Page Number**
Alien Employment Certification Program Employment Security Department	Book 5	12
Receivables Management Project Team Department of Retirement Systems	Book 6	54
Vaccine Distribution Team Department of Health	Book 5	25
Alpha Collection Team 14, Division of Child Support Department of Social and Health Services	Book 4	39
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Embracing and Encouraging Stakeholder Participation in Regulation

To encourage and facilitate stakeholder participation in the regulation of accountancy, the Board scheduled its 1999 board meetings in four locations around the state. [Previously the Board met only in Seattle.] Additionally, the Board holds a Forum with Practitioners at each location to further invite participation in the regulation process. The forums are designed to provide local CPAs, accountants, and other interested individuals an opportunity to query the Board and provide input on (1) nationwide trends in professional services and regulation of accountancy, (2) rules under review or revision, and/or (3) recent rule changes. The Board also holds a luncheon meeting at each location with local area accounting students to provide an opportunity for students to meet the Board members and learn about the profession's entrance requirements.

Results

★ Improved communications with customers.

★ Increased Board awareness of stakeholder concerns, interests, and expectations.

★ Licensee participation in regulation of the profession.

Team Name: Seven Member Board of Accountancy
Team Members: Orphalee Smith, CPA, Rufino Moraleja, CPA, Laurie J. Tish, CPA, James W. Caley, CPA, Elizabeth Luce, Dante Lee Montoya, CPA, and Thomas J. Sadler, CPA

CONTACT: Dana McInturff, (360) 586-0163

HALT ILLEGAL SALE AND PRODUCTION OF *QUESO FRESCO*

Queso Fresco is a traditional soft white Mexican cheese produced usually from raw unpasteurized milk and untreated animal gut. It is illegal to offer Queso Fresco for sale using traditional manufacturing methods or for uninspected raw milk to be sold or given to others for any purpose.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) identified Queso Fresco as the source of several major outbreaks of antibiotic resistant forms of Salmonella in the Yakima Valley. A task force of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Yakima County Health District (YHD), Washington State University (WSU), WSU Cooperative Extension, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and a number of local community agencies collaborated to come up with creative solutions to provide safer homemade Queso Fresco and eliminate the illegal supply. The WSU and WSU Cooperative Extension enlisted the help of “Abuelas” (grandmothers) to help in educating the Hispanic women to use safe ingredients to make Queso Fresco.

Results

- ★ Conducted a program to educate and sensitize all of the members of the Hispanic community to the health dangers from eating traditional forms of Queso Fresco cheese.
- ★ Cooperated with the CDC investigation by processing milk samples for the presence or absence of Salmonella.
- ★ Implemented goals to stop illegal cheese production and sale.
- ★ Educated licensed dairy owners and milk cooperatives of the dangers of selling raw milk and the need to take steps to prevent the theft or pilfering of raw milk.
- ★ Provided several seminars to potential legal makers of the cheese to make a product that can be legally sold.
- ★ Developed a Spanish and English brochure to distribute providing information about making Queso Fresco.

Team Name: *Queso Fresco* Multi-Agency Task Force
Team Members: Washington State University, Yakima County Cooperative Extension: Theo Thomas, Anna Zaragoza, Frances Herrera, Dr. Lynnel Rowan, Margaret Viebrock, Betty Meloy, Lizann Powers-Hammond; Washington State University, Food Science and Human Nutrition: Dr. Virginia “Val” Hillers, Stephanie Clark, Ryan Bell, Mike Costello, Marc Bates, Lloyd Luedecke, Francisco Manzo-Robledo; WSDA: Gena Reich, Sherryl Stoltenow, Randy Utley, Joie Navarrete, Don “Skip” Steinmetz;

CONTACT: Gena Reich, (509) 546-2977

Increased Efficiency Results in Improved Customer Services by Data Entry Employees

On their own initiative two employees in the WSDA Certification & Training (C&T) section conceived of a more streamlined way to enter course information and attendance records into their database. The team consolidated information onto one screen and revised course attendance rosters to eliminate repetitive data entry. C&T accredits and maintains records for over 850 continuing education courses for pesticide license holders annually. Under the revised system, faster data entry of licensee attendance records allows for more accurate, up-to-date credit status records for licensees trying to renew their licenses. This change eliminated data entry redundancies--resulting in enhanced customer service and more effective and efficient use of staff time.

Results

★ This improvement, combined with others, allowed the C&T section to install a new phone system. Instead of reaching a recording and leaving a message, most callers contact staff directly and have their questions answered in real time.

★ Saves 45 hours of staff time and $700 annually.

★ Accredits courses in less time.

★ Reduces processing time for data entry significantly, reduces number of errors possible, and eliminates double entry of data.

★ Processes license renewals faster, especially when the renewal depends upon the number of credits an individual earned during the current year.

Team Name: Pesticide Division, Certification and Training staff
Team Members: Irene Beckman and Karen Butler

CONTACT: Margaret Tucker, (360) 902-2015

Exporters Prepare Phytosanitary Certificates for Signature by Licensed Nursery Inspectors

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is now entering into written contracts or agreements with licensed nursery exporters in order to expedite the nursery inspection process and effectively use current department resources. Export Nurseries are provided with unsigned phytosanitary certificates. Each nursery completes their own numbered certificates with all pertinent shipping information. WSDA officials compose and provide the required additional declaration to the exporter.

Upon verification that the certificate is complete and accurate, the certifying WSDA official signs and dates the certificate and distributes all copies. Because phytosanitary certificates are numbered documents that must be tracked, the exporter is responsible for returning all certificates to the issuing WSDA official, including those certificates which have been voided or otherwise ruined during completion.

Results

- ★ The primary purpose of the Nursery Program is to inspect and regulate licensed nurseries through facility and growing season inspections. By implementing this procedure, within one year 612 hours of nursery inspectors' time was transferred to field work conducting facility inspections rather than spent in the office doing routine paperwork. On site facility inspections performed for the Nursery Industry increased by 25% annually.
- ★ Improved customer service through better time-management and planning by inspection staff. Staff are scheduled more efficiently and effectively, providing better coverage of assigned geographic areas.
- ★ Reduced phytosanitary certificate processing time.
- ★ Exporters saved inspection fees totaling $15,300 annually.
- ★ Reduced overtime previously required to perform inspections and to deliver paperwork to meet shipping deadlines.

Team Name: Nursery Inspection Staff
Team Members: Tom Dabalos, Ron Loyd, Gary Whitwer, Richard Webley, John Wraspir, Scott Rose, Doug Colley, Dennis Mangun

CONTACT: Tom Wessels, (360) 902-1984

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Threshold Review

CDBG General Purpose applications are screened for compliance with application requirements, historically taking a team of four people 2-3 weeks to complete. This year, CDBG staff streamlined the screening process by eliminating or deferring a number of application elements that are redundant or unnecessary during the initial submittal steps. Citizen Participation activities required by statute have also been streamlined. The result is a simplified application process and significant reduction in the volume of data submitted to CTED for review.

Results

★ Overall review time has been reduced from 3 weeks to 1 week.

★ Staff time reduced by 160 hours.

★ Greater staff satisfaction from not having to review complex planning documents.

★ Applicant satisfaction greatly improved (specific data to be gathered via survey).

Team Name: CDBG Application Review
Team Members: Janet Abbett, Brent Bahrenburg, Stephen Buxbaum, Dan Riebli, Bill Prentice, Ed Barton, Jack Peters (HUD), Dana Buckner (HUD)

CONTACT: Stephen Buxbaum, (360) 586-1243

Historic Preservation Data Access and Management

Customer requests for exact locations of sites with historic significance were typically responded to by conducting a manual search of extensive map files and sending the appropriate copies to the requesting organization. A typical request would take a staff member approximately one hour to search the files and furnish the necessary information. By combining detailed state maps with comprehensive historic site locations in digital form, the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) can now make available precise Geographic Information System (GIS) data contained in, and accessed from, a central database. Customized extracts of the historic site locations are furnished to State agencies, local governments and tribes in about 10 minutes.

Results

- ★ Response time to requesting organizations reduced by over 90%.
- ★ OAHP staff time reduced from approximately 1 hour to 10 minutes per response.
- ★ Enhanced inter-agency responsiveness and cooperation.
- ★ Agencies conducting their own searches find better information faster.

Team Name: Historic Preservation GIS
Team Members: Sara Steel (CTED), Stu Smith (DNR), Sandie Turner (DOT)

CONTACT: Allyson Brooks, (360) 407-0826

Correctional Worker Core – Pilot Project

Department of Corrections uses an external training agency to provide basic skills training for custody staff. Oftentimes staff are not scheduled to attend this training for six to twelve months after they are hired. Sometimes intermittent and temporary staff are not able to receive the training. In addition, this training duplicates some of the courses given during new employee orientation, and requires relief placement while staff are away at training.

DOC staff formed teams in collaboration with the STEP institute at Peninsula Community College to develop pilot Correctional Worker skills training program for all new DOC hires. A five-week pilot program was developed. This pilot training was provided at the staff's job-site location. This allowed DOC to provide basic correctional skills to both custody and non-custody staff in a timely basis.

Results

- ★ College Credits are granted upon completion of training.
- ★ Curriculum specific to DOC requirements.
- ★ Non custody staff included in training.
- ★ Per diem costs eliminated ($8,909 for 17 custody staff).
- ★ Eliminated duplicate training and associated relief costs ($24,561 for 17 custody staff).

Team Name: Correctional Worker Core Development Team
Team Members: Jim Blodgett, Steve Blakeman, James Nozawa, Mervin Johnson, Jim Tucker, Charles Casey, Edward Giles, Jack Uglick, Breena Hurst, Pat Love, Connie Brown, Scott Brown, Mike Mitchell, Carol Evenhuis, Elaine Emery, Gordon Jay, Diana Martin, Phillip Young, Mike Watkins, Cheryl Dunning, John Cottom, Priscilla Haynes, Dirk Milici, Nancy Davies, Roy Ebert, Laura Thorson, Irvin Leister, Ron Fraker, Lori Telleria, Curtis Pate, Larry Norris, Ron Middaugh, Jeff Ellison, Sonny Hemmingway, Jocelyn Hofe, John Aldana, Jan Tweedie, Sheila Knapp, Dennis Simons, Ed Golla, Rodian Salinas, Terry Filson, George Brown, Dave Walker, Ray Gorzynski.

CONTACT: Jim Blodgett, (360) 427-4696

MICC/TPR Food Service

The Tacoma Pre-Release (TPR) had been purchasing lunches for offenders from an outside vendor. The cost of the food had been increasing yet there were numerous complaints and grievances regarding the quality of the food. A team was formed to study the problem. They developed a trial program in which TPR buys the food products in bulk quantities on a weekly basis from McNeil Island Corrections Center (MICC). The sack lunches are then prepared at TPR, reducing the time between meal preparation and meal service thus, increasing the quality of the meal. By purchasing food products directly from MICC, TPR not only improved the quality of the meals, but also realized a significant reduction in cost.

Results

★ Preparation time and delivery of lunches was reduced from 3 hours to 1 hour.

★ Grievances reduced by 100%, (from 9 to 0 in same time period).

★ Realized actual savings of $8,000 in first 40 days.

Team Name: MICC/TPR Sack Lunch Program
Team Members: Belinda D. Stewart, Pete Musselwhite, Dianne K. Doonan, Cathy Kildall, Donald Coots, Paul Temposky, Mike Sadowski, Kenneth Peterson, Bob McMire, Jerry Waise, Roy Dixon

CONTACT: Dianne K. Doonan, (253) 512-6510

State Archive Box

The State of Washington uses about 200,000 two-piece boxes per year. State agencies were paying $1 a box. Correctional Industries (CI), was asked if they were able to improve the box quality and reduce costs. A quality team was formed. The team developed a process to manufacture a high quality box, employing 2-3 offenders, at a lower cost.

Results

★ Reduced cost 4%. Saved $8,000 on a $200,000 contract.

★ Produced higher quality boxes.

★ Provided job skills to offenders.

Team Name: Correctional Industries State Archive Box Team
Team Members: Don James, Fred Straub, Cathy Moxley (GA)

CONTACT: Don James, (360) 586-1610

Saving Dollars Updating Guidance Manual

Ecology's manual on "Criteria for Sewage Works Design" had not been updated since 1985. This manual is used extensively as a guide for the planning and design of new, upgraded and expanded wastewater treatment facilities. It was originally estimated to cost approximately $250,000 to update the manual using a consulting engineering firm. The final estimate after this project was completed was $500,000.

In July 1997, Ecology initiated an innovative approach using a diverse group of public and private organizations and individuals who volunteered to help update the manual. Under Ecology's leadership, 130 volunteers joined in the effort representing Ecology, the Department of Health, 6 county governments, 13 cities and 22 private engineering firms.

Results

★ The manual was successfully updated after two years of intensive and dedicated work in December 1998.

★ The manual is available to state agencies, local government, consulting engineers and other stakeholders on Ecology's Internet home page or it can be purchased directly from the State Printer.

★ The largest indirect benefit was the collaboration and partnering of state agencies, local government and the consulting engineering community.

★ Cost avoidance to Ecology: $500,000 over a two-year period.

Team Name: Orange Book Update
Team Members: For Ecology: Jerry Louthain, Steve Carley; For Parametrix, Inc.: Doug Berschauer; For Montgomery Watson: Mark Cole; For King County: Jamie Foulk, Susan Lowe, Bill Nitz, Karen Olson; For Gary and Osborne, Inc.: Cam Meriwether, Tony Vivolo; For Lakehaven Utility District: Don Perry; For Skillings Connolly, Inc.: Tom Skillings

CONTACT: Steve Carley, (360) 407-6572

Saving Dollars on Print Jobs

Ecology expends limited operating funds to print large quantities of technical documents and guidance manuals through the State Printer. Ecology sells some of these documents to the public to recover printing costs. After the document is sold, the money cannot be used by Ecology for other priority needs during the biennium. This money is considered to be a receivable and is subject to future appropriation by the Legislature.

Ecology and the State Printer worked cooperatively to implement a pilot program similar to private print shops. The pilot, initiated in February 1999, is for the printing of Ecology's manual "Criteria for Sewage Works Design." The State Printer maintains a camera-ready copy of the manual and takes orders from the public. The State Printer recovers the cost of printing directly.

Results

★ Up-front printing costs to Ecology are eliminated, saving $15,000.

★ The manual is printed on an order basis only, eliminating the shelf time of printed manuals.

★ Changes or updates to the manual can be made without making previously printed copies obsolete.

★ Eliminates Ecology staff time taking orders, packaging and shipping the manual and taking payments, saving 53 hours.

Team Name: Orange Book Print Job
Team Members: Ecology: Marion England, Steve Carley; State Printer: Dan Swisher, Kathy Forbes, Neal Scannell, Steve Elder

CONTACT: Marion England, (360) 407-6091

Getting Grants to Local Government Quicker

Ecology awards grants to local government for toxic cleanup projects. In the past, many of these grants went to large, complex projects where an enforcement order or consent decree to clean up a site were in effect. Grants for smaller projects, such as those needed by school, fire and road districts, were hampered by the paperwork and process involved in negotiating formal agreements for clean up actions.

Ecology staff worked to:

- Streamline the paperwork and formal agreements needed to obtain a toxic cleanup grant for small projects.
- Allow local government to apply for a toxic cleanup grant after conducting the smaller cleanup.

Results

★ Percent of toxic cleanup grants going to small local government projects increased 46%.

★ The total average amount of grant dollars going toward small projects each fiscal year increased $917,892.

★ The projected avoidance of process costs to local government in fiscal year 1999 is $1.88 Million.

★ Cleanup of small projects are getting done faster = protecting the air, land and water of the state.

Team Name: Small Grants to Local Government
Team Members: Lynn Gooding, Kelly Susewind, Dave Jansen, Steve Loftness, Suzanne Crouch, Jay Shepard

CONTACT: Dave Jansen, (360) 407-6241

Where's the Data?

Ecology collects enormous amounts of monitoring data on the environmental quality of Washington's air, land and water. This information is used by staff who manage environmental projects such as cleaning up toxic waste sites and investigating sources of contamination. The data collected was generally not accessible to anyone except the project staff. In addition, historical data was often "filed-away" in file drawers.

In an ongoing effort to integrate agency information, all environmental data that Ecology collects or requires to be reported to us can now be entered into the agency's Environmental Information Management data system.

Results

★ Environmental data is accessible to all staff.

★ Environmental data is documented and consistent giving it greater credibility and quality assurance for current and future use.

★ Environmental data entered into the system will not be "lost" to other potential users. Estimates indicate that lost data (data "filed-away") costs the agency approximately $1.5 Million per year.

★ The need for many historical smaller data systems is being eliminated.

Team Name: Environmental Information Management
Team Members: John Tooley, Russ Darr, Lynn Singleton

CONTACT: Lynn Singleton, (360) 407-6610

ORCA Comes up for Air

Job seekers, dislocated workers, career counselors, students and others needed an easy-to-use tool for exploring occupational information. The Department of Labor had stopped producing and updating the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) book, replacing it with new electronic technology—O*NET. Computer software to access this new informational network needed development and distribution. The ORCA (Occupation Researcher's Computer Assistant) Team brainstormed options and chose to take advantage of an O*NET demonstration project funded in another state. By utilizing a "best practice" the ORCA Team saved the state $150,000 in development costs and delivered a system years before it would have occurred otherwise. Surprisingly, total costs for system programming and production of the 1,000 compact discs sent to offices was less than $10,000.

Results

- ★ Users now have access to O*NET information for 1,122 occupations.
- ★ Users can view the newest occupational projections and wages available from ESD's Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) branch.
- ★ Users can easily find specific occupations they are looking for. The system includes Search, Best Match, Compare, and Profile components.
- ★ Users can search for job openings on the Internet using the occupations of their choice through a hot link to America's Job Bank.
- ★ Users can complete the Work Importance Locator.

Team Name: ORCA Team from LMEA
Team Members: Michael Paris, Carol Stoker, Trish Norris

CONTACT: Michael Paris, (360) 438-4803

Color-Coding Success

The team was not meeting the Federal DLA (Desired Level of Achievement) rate of 80% for non-monetary timeliness—processing an Unemployment Insurance Claim within 14 days from the time a client first files. Using process improvement tools from QUEST 2001 training, the team introduced several changes, improving their DLA rate from 41.8% (1st quarter '98) to 91.6% (2nd quarter '98). Things improved most when they developed a method to measure timeliness on a *daily* basis rather than weekly, increasing their DLA rate to 96.7% (3rd quarter/'98). Using a special report and a new color coding system, the team now identifies their daily workload, then proceeds to prioritize and project work, which results in significant time management improvements.

Results

- ★ Improved the Job Service Center's DLA rate on 14-day Separation (Quit and Termination) issues from 41.8% (1st quarter '98) to 96.7% (3rd quarter '98).
- ★ Improved the Job Service Center's DLA rate on Non-Separation (Lay-Off) issues from 88.3% (1st quarter '98) to 95% (3rd quarter '98).
- ★ Decreased the number of FTEs needed to adjudicate non-monetary claims.
- ★ Increased predictability in workload has decreased staff stress levels and improved morale.
- ★ Work distributed to allow staff to participate in Job Service Center, regional, and statewide task groups; and provides full service to satellite location.

Team Name: Moses Lake Job Service Center Adjustment Team
Team Members: Caroline King, David Nava, Irene Valdez, Marge West

CONTACT: Caroline King, (509) 766-4118

Department of Employment Security

Feedback Reigns!

Members of the Olympic Consortium Employment and Training Partnership desired to develop a customer-driven One-Stop employment delivery system in the Kitsap, Clallam and Jefferson Counties. To measure customer satisfaction levels they designed a universal feedback form that was evaluated by members, tested with customers, revised, then put to print. Computer services staff from Olympic College, a partner member, designed a data collection process, relying on each consortium partner to collect data and forward it to the college for compilation. The college then generates a monthly report.

By using the form, partners are able to establish baselines of performance and identify areas for action and recognition. Customers appreciate being asked for feedback and cooperate filling out the form. Data driven improvements include modification to client intake procedures; changes to participant orientation sessions; and increased testing to identify client skill areas.

Results

- ★ Provides an avenue for customers to give input about services.
- ★ Feedback assists staff in setting priorities.
- ★ Provides data for informed decision making.
- ★ Data collection enables establishing baselines of performance.
- ★ Opportunity for partners to bond on a unified instrument.

Team Name: Olympic Consortium Employment and Training Partnership
Team Members: Ed Baker, Kitsap County JTPA; Sue Kitchel, Sound Institute; Jeff Bohman, Peninsula College; Cec Anderson, DSHS

CONTACT: Ed Baker, (360) 478-4620

Rapid Referral Rises in A.M.

At the Lewis County Job Service Center client customers entering the office were required to stand in line at the front counter. The wait used to be as long as 40 minutes for service. With a goal for improving customer service, the Placement Team reviewed the client/customer flow, brainstormed ideas and tested theories. The outcome was the implementation of a separate "rapid referral desk" for those clients seeking job search assistance only. This desk is open during peak client traffic hours 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. It has eliminated the wait for job seekers and allowed the Unemployment Insurance line to move more quickly. The desk allows staff more opportunity to update registrations and perform job referrals. The team has also improved signage in the lobby on use of resource areas, PCs, and the referral desk. Signs directing clients to these areas are also more visible.

Results

★ With additional instructions and staff in lobby to assist clients, there is a visible increase in the usage of self-service PCs.

★ With a smaller line and dedicated staff, there is more opportunity to explain services.

★ Decreased lobby congestion and improved customer service by reducing wait times from 40 minutes to 5.

★ More quality referrals to employers.

Team Name: Lewis County Job Service Center Rapid Referral Team
Team Members: Patricia Clark, Sue Feist, Gilbert Garcia, Joy Leubke, Gary Plendl, Pat Pratt, John Joseph

CONTACT: Patricia Clark, (360) 740-6864

Okanogan Develops Timely Solutions

Claimants with employer separations had to return to the office a second time to provide additional information for written decisions on their eligibility for drawing benefits. Because they were not given a specific date or time to report, customers usually had to wait in the lobby on arrival. Staff conducting the interviews had no ownership in timely decisions because they were not the one's responsible for *writing* the decisions, so interviews were sometimes incomplete. Even though Okanogan exceeded federal Desired Levels of Achievement (DLAs) for timeliness (87%), their goal was to achieve 100%. The team used team training and QUEST 2001 skills to develop a new process and improve timeliness. They mapped, brainstormed and reviewed existing customer survey data. By collaborating with the Spokane and Yakima offices, who already use *the telephone* for decision writing, they were able to develop an electronic scheduling tool and form letter that now sets up customers for phone interviews. And, the staff person conducting the telephone interview is *also* the one responsible for writing the decision, improving accountability.

Results

- ★ Resulted in 99.66% timely decisions from 4/98 – 9/98, up from 95.6%.
- ★ Saved an average of 10 minutes of staff time per interview - .6 FTE annually.
- ★ Eliminated customer waiting times and reporting back to the office.
- ★ Improved quality of written determinations and increased customer satisfaction.

Team Name: Okanogan Job Service Center Unemployment Insurance Team
Team Members: Pat Davisson, Anne Potter, Bruce Thornton, Barbara Garry, Miguel Garza, Monica Garza-Acevado, Daisy Gonzalez, Angel Michel, Lyslea Mizer

CONTACT: Linda Skinner, (509) 826-7543

Group Interprets Quality

In the Moses Lake area, language created a barrier to providing equitable services to Russian-speaking clients requiring job search assistance. Historically, counselors, with or without interpreters, would spend an hour or more per client to explain services. The team implemented a job search *group* orientation specifically for Russian-speaking clients, where an interpreter explained the guidelines and participant requirements of programs. In the orientation, clients asked more questions and provided more feedback than they ever did at the one-on-one sessions. To maximize benefits, Russian-speaking clients were encouraged to check the interpreters' posted work hours so they could report to the office on days when interpreters were available.

Results

★ Reduced intake time for Russian-speaking clients from 12 hours/qtr. to 1 hr.

★ Improved the quality of service to clients and created an awareness in the community of this hidden labor source.

★ More inter-action by Russian clients with the English speaking community results in learning the new language faster.

★ Created foundation and avenues for self-sufficiency with partners.

Team Name: Moses Lake WorkFirst Team Excellence 2000 (TX2K)
Team Members: Berta Clifton, Willie Holmes, Debi Keyzer, Manuel Felan Realme, Mary Riojas

CONTACT: Mary Riojas, (509) 764-5680

Combo Files Rock!

Many of the clients in the Dislocated Worker Program at the Lewis County Career Connections qualified for more than one program. Since 1992, separate files had been maintained for each program a client qualified for. The team brainstormed ideas for a process improvement. They documented the time it took to locate up to three files for one client. They tested and implemented a theory based on the simple concept that a single file would save time and enhance customer service. The new *combination* file is color coded according to program. Besides saving time, benefits include: consistent information across programs, one staff answering customer questions and the elimination of extra file cabinets.

Results

★ Staff time for retrieving multiple files reduced by one-third (370 FTE hours).

★ Saved $310 in materials by reducing amount of file folders.

★ Improved customer satisfaction with more responsive service.

★ Staff no longer makes copies of information for each file folder.

★ Reduced number of file cabinets.

Team Name: Lewis County Career Connections File Maintenance Project
Team Members: Jan Anderson, Bruce Hall, Carol Heifner, Theresa Wilson, Aaron Hensley, Sharon Neuert, Kay Skipworth

CONTACT: Aaron Hensley, (360) 748-2474

Uniformity—It's a Good Thing!

A lack of uniformity in preparing and processing vouchers for vendor payments at the Spokane, Clarkston and Pullman WorkFirst Offices created a risk for audit exceptions and the potential for fraud. The Spokane WorkFirst used team training and CQI tools to improve the process. They analyzed each office using a flow chart diagram and then brainstormed solutions. Their goal was to streamline processes, eliminate questionable handling of funds and generally ensure that internal controls were in place. With technical assistance from Central Office to clarify existing policies, the team developed written procedures for vendor payments and created guidelines for establishing vendor accounts.

Results

★ Accepted as "Best Practice" and mandated statewide 12/98.

★ Eliminated potential fraud opportunities and audit problems.

★ Streamlined the process, eliminating half the steps and multiple processes.

★ Saved 90 hours of staff time annually and eliminated staff confusion.

★ Created central systems accountability.

Team Name: Spokane WorkFirst Team
Team Members: Wilma Emerson, Maria D'Ambrosio, Dana Kozak, Sandra Maack, Velma Wyrick

CONTACT: Sandra Maack, (509) 483-5373

Getting Smart Eliminates CHAOS

Once a year, chaos occurs in Kelso when local timber employer NORPAC advertises and accepts applications through the Job Service Center. In a 3-day span over 600 applications are mailed out or distributed and received on-site. Placement Team II used team-training skills to brainstorm and develop improvements to this process. Historically, the order control and clerical staff were inundated with phone calls, so the team decided to use the office voice mail system to lessen the strain. A detailed message was recorded, and periodically during the day, a Work Experience (WEX) person responded to the messages and mailed out applications. Instead of clients having to stand in line to pick up applications and job descriptions, a special desk was set up in the lobby with information and forms. The WEX person staffed the desk, allowing permanent, full-time staff to resume their normal work activities.

Results

★ The new application process exceeded employers' expectations and improved customer service for job seekers.

★ Better able to manage staff impact when employer is recruiting.

★ Increase efficiency in self-service approaches.

★ Provides good work experience for WEX person.

★ Savings of 36 FTE hours.

Team Name: Cowlitz County Job Service Center Placement Team II
Team Members: Diana Bartlett, Pam Kedenburg, Marilyn Chow, Erin Chambers, Steve Martin, Diana Rojo, Vineta Thomsen, Elaine Harambasic, MaryLou Wellman

CONTACT: Marilyn Chow, (360) 578-4219

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, Same Day We Go

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicants were not able to access WorkFirst job search activities until eligibility was determined. There was an average wait of 15 days. Process improvement tools were used to develop new methods to serve job ready clients. Part of the process included consultation with DSHS partners. The designated staff used resource rooms and self-help tutorials to assist Same Day Job Search (SDJS) clients with resumes, JobNet and other resources. Service is now available one-on-one instead of having to wait for a workshop.

Results

★ Decreased average eligibility determination time from 15 days to 1 day for TANF applicants beginning job search activities.

★ Increased applicants' ability to search, find employment and become more self-reliant.

★ Enhanced service delivery by designating specific staff for immediate job search assistance.

★ Enhanced collaboration with DSHS inter-agency communication and expanded coordination on WorkFirst Program.

Team Name: Statewide WorkFirst SDJS Services for TANF Applicants
Team Members: Jeanice Jarvis, Viola DeOchoa, Fran Bradley, Roger Soug, Breckeen Anderson, Bonnie Ross

CONTACT: Bonnie Ross, (360) 438-4083

ACCESS-ing the Manual Madness

The Monthly Delinquency Report (MDR), generated by the Department of Information Services (DIS) and used by the District Tax Offices (DTO) to manage collection of unpaid employer taxes, caused madness for representatives and specialists who had to manually sort through this 1,050 page monthly report. Because work is organized by territory assignments, the MDR was sorted by territory, then sorted again for individual Tax Specialists. Tax Specialists in the Tacoma DTO spent five hours a month manipulating the MDR in order to use it. The Tacoma team had long theorized that efficiencies could be made if they received the report electronically. Working with their supplier, the Production Control Unit, they developed a method to e-mail the MDR to the DTO. Upon receipt, the information was moved to an ACCESS database where Tax Specialists could sort and begin their work.

Results

- ★ Eliminated $696 in postage, supplies and handling costs of the MDR.
- ★ Eliminated re-keying data from the Tax Information System to generate correspondence.
- ★ Decreased staff time spent generating correspondence from 6.25 hours to 5 minutes per MDR per staff. Automated manual process for greater data manipulation and increased efficiency.
- ★ Developed the ability to produce Management Information Reports to establish office priorities.
- ★ Serves as "Best Practice" for DTOs statewide.

Team Name: Tacoma District Tax Office 500 Club
Team Members: Fred Bell, Tanya Brewster, Phyllis Craig, Angie Crowe, Paula Ellis, Diane Gilcrease, Marcia Haglund, Carole Harrell, Betty Lane, Gen Miller, Jesse Pangelinan, James Sherls, Helen Sick, Pat Traulsen, Hao Duong

CONTACT: Tanya Brewster, (253) 593-7334

License Forms Streamlining

Customers indicated they were confused by the elaborate and complex licensing application forms as well as with the multi-page instructions. This often resulted in inaccurate or incomplete applications, in turn causing delays in processing.

The layout of the forms was changed, instructions were clarified, and requests determined not to be absolutely necessary for our mission were eliminated. The majority of required notarized signatures were not essential and were eliminated. Alternate methods of accessing information were identified thus streamlining the information the applicant is required to provide and reducing the amount of paper required for an application. In addition, it was found that in many cases of criminal background checks an Internet site provided the necessary information reducing the cost to many applicants from $25 to $10 per background check. Finally, the application instructions were reduced from six pages to one.

Results

- ★ Reduced steps reduced the average annualized number of hours required to process an application from 7.25 to 4.42 hours.
- ★ An annualized 50% reduction in the number of applications requiring additional contact--from 696 to 348.
- ★ During the data collection period while the number of background checks increased by 17% the total cost only increased 3%, a savings that has been passed directly to the customer.
- ★ Annualized average requests for additional information per application were reduced from 2.23 to 1.13 items per application.

Team Name: Mortgage Broker and Escrow Agent Licensing Team
Team Members: Kae McDonnell, Nicole Rems, Ann Woolsey, Linda Pasta, Pauline Yale, and Anni Ninen

CONTACT: Whittier Johnson, (360) 902-8755

Streamlined Incentive Payments

To encourage employees to use alternative means to commute to work the Department of General Administration (GA) implemented a new Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) incentive of a quarterly cash payment to employees who met the CTR incentive requirements. In the past, the payroll accountant cut special checks for the entire amount of the incentive earned by employees. The accountant was then required to manually calculate the required tax withholdings and enter the information into the payroll system. The tax withholding were then deducted from employees paychecks the following pay period.

To simplify the process, a natural work group found a way to streamline and automate the payment process and eliminate the need to prepare a separate check for the CTR incentive award. The new process includes the award payment in a regular quarterly paycheck.

Results

★ Reduced the payment process from approximately 24 minutes to 30 seconds.

★ The new process automatically calculates the taxes and includes the incentive payment in the employee's regular paycheck.

★ Saved approximately $0.75 per payment because separate checks are not produced.

★ Saved more than 30 hours staff time to prepare checks for 80 GA employees per quarter with an estimated annual savings of 120 staff hours per year.

★ Saved more than $60 in check expenses per quarter for an estimated annual savings of $240.

Team Name: Streamlined Incentive Payments
Team Members: Cheryl Crank, Becky Yarnell of GA; Millie Lund of OFM and Susan Sparks of DOP

CONTACT: Cheryl Crank, (360) 902-7326

On-Line New Employee Orientation

The department's traditional classroom style New Employee Orientation was offered 1-2 times each year and wasn't being very well attended. Employees were away from their job duties for as much as 4 days in 1992 while attending this training. In an on-going effort to streamline the training and improve attendance, the orientation was reduced from four days in 1992, to two days in 1994, to one day in 1996, to four hours in 1997.

The new on-line approach via the GA Intranet reduces the time to complete orientation from 4 hours in 1997 to 60 minutes or less today. The number of people involved has been reduced from 11 to 2. The new process provides immediate information about state employment and the department to new employees, and provides a resource of information that can be accessed at any time and as often as needed. New employees are now able to complete their orientation within the first 48 hours of being hired. This encourages them to be more functional in their early days of employment.

Results

- ★ Reduced the time needed to complete the traditional New Employee Orientation from four days in 1992 to between 30-60 minutes in 1999 via the GA Intranet.
- ★ Reduced the number of people involved in conducting the training from 11 in 1992 to 2 in 1999.
- ★ 38% of new GA employees have been oriented within 48 hours of their hire date.
- ★ Saved approximately $168 per year because new employee training packets are no longer printed.
- ★ Provides an information resource that can be accessed and printed by all agency employees at any time.
- ★ Provides employees not familiar with computer technology a quick tutorial on using a computer and familiarizing them with the department's intranet.

Team Name: On-line New Employee Orientation
Team Members: Pam Whitlock, Ken Skillen, Roxyne Bentley, Liz Maguire, Clarice Nnanabu, Cyndy Putscher, Laurie Smith, Debbie Poston, Gladys Guzman, Eric Hartley, Chris Martin, Becky Yarnell, Cheryl Crank, Linda Bennett

CONTACT: Pam Whitlock, (360) 902-7480

Bid Notification Process

In the past, the Office of State Procurement (OSP) mailed contract bid packages to selected vendors and Minority and Women owned businesses. Each bid notification took two to three days for printing and mailing. During a review of the Bid Notification process, staff identified several steps to improve and enhance the process of notifying vendors of bidding contract opportunities. Through the use of technology they developed a new system that proactively notifies vendors of future bidding opportunities using the Internet as first choice, fax machine as second choice, and mail as backup. This reduces the notification period from two days to 15 minutes. If a vendor is interested in a bid they can download a copy from the Internet or request a copy directly from OSP. These new improvements have reduced staff time, printing costs, postage, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Results

★ Reduced time to send bid notification from two days to 15 minutes.

★ Reduced annual printing and mailing costs from $18,605 to $9,302.

★ Eliminated a time consuming manual process and can now automatically capture disparity study information as required by OMWBE. Save $11,000 per fiscal year because temporary staff are no longer needed for this task.

★ Increased competition by having more vendors aware of the bid, and providing 24-hour access.

★ On-line bidding information is available to OSP staff. This allows staff to inquire on the activity that is taking place throughout the bidding process.

Team Name: Bid Notification Process
Team Members: Pam Warner, Cami Feek, Ivan Rammel, Steve Lovaas, Randy Bunker and Robert Jacobson

CONTACT: Pam Warner, (360) 902-7416

Wood Salvage Project

Storm damage and construction projects result in fallen trees at the heavily wooded, 225-acre North Cascades Gateway Center (NCGC) campus in Sedro-Woolley. Downed trees have to be removed. Instead of cutting, moving and burning (the traditional approach), each downed tree is now evaluated for its potential lumber value and, if economically viable, milled into finished lumber for use on construction and maintenance projects. The salvage of two oak and six cedar trees resulted in nearly $18,000 in savings for the state.

Results

★ Avoided $4,400 in labor costs to dispose of the trees by cutting and burning.

★ NCGC received finished, kiln-dried, oak and cedar lumber worth $17,000 for a cash outlay of $3,500.

★ Tenant customers received faster service on facility problems because staff were not tied up disposing of trees.

★ The environment benefited because fewer trees needed to be harvested and air quality was protected through reduced burning.

Team Name: Wood Salvage Project
Team Members: Ray Bryson, John Wiggins, Fred Galbreath, Dan Singleton

CONTACT: Ray Bryson, (360) 856-3162

Cost Recovery Process "Recovers"

The Department of Health (DOH) is required to report to the federal government staff time and related expenses for activities conducted at Superfund and state hazardous waste sites. These reports allow the Environmental Protection Agency to pass costs on to the responsible parties.

The process worked well until the responsible staff was reassigned to other duties in the department. As the duties were transferred, staff discovered the process relied on the memory of one individual and very little was documented. Staff, including the person previously responsible, worked to create a well documented, streamlined process that could be followed and understood by more staff. They cut the process steps in half, reducing turnaround time from up to10 days to just three days.

Results

- ★ Saved 104 staff hours.
- ★ Process is documented and no longer reliant on any one individual.
- ★ Reduced turnaround time on reports from up to 10 days to just three days. Process steps on routine requests were reduced form up to seven steps to just three steps, reducing staff time. Process steps on non-routine requests were reduced from up to 10 steps to no more than five.
- ★ The customer receives more timely and accurate reports and can more accurately pass costs on to responsible parties.

Team Name: Cost Recovery Reporting
Team Members: Clare Billings, Marlene Johnson, Rich Stedman, Trace Warner

CONTACT: Clare Billings, (360) 236-3390

Fair Funding for Regional Clinics

The grant funds for genetic health care services (i.e. genetic counseling, testing, evaluation) have not increased in over seven years. However, the demand for genetic services has increased and additional clinics have opened and requested state support. The process for funding required separate negotiations with each clinic and was left to the discretion of a single manager. This created questions of equity time spent justifying decisions.

The Department of Health's Genetic Services Staff worked with two key stakeholders groups to develop criteria for determining how funds should be distributed and which clinics should receive state support.

Results

★ 90 staff hours saved due to standardizing contracts and eliminating negotiations.

★ Regional Genetics Clinic Funding Formula established.

★ Sense of ownership of the planning for genetic services from all participants.

★ Improved relationships with genetic service providers with state contracts.

Team Name: Genetics Advisory Committee
Team Members: Debra Lochner Doyle, Cathy Wasserman, Jan Hicks-Thomson, Bob Fineman, Sue Hartman

CONTACT: Debra Lochner Doyle, (206) 464-7752

Pharmacy Board Prescribes New Process

The Department of Health's Board of Pharmacy licenses individuals and pharmacy locations, not corporations. Because of this, when violations occur, the agency traditionally charges only those individuals or locations.

In 1998, staff for the Board noticed a possible pattern of frequent violations by one particular chain of pharmacies. Staff gathered further data to confirm the pattern. Suspecting this was a system problem; the findings were presented to the corporation as a whole. When faced with the data, the corporation entered into negotiations with the State. The case was settled within weeks, rather than the usual months. This eliminated the need for the state to separately develop fifty-five to sixty-five cases and present them individually.

Results

★ Corporation agreed to pay a penalty of $10,000.

★ $70,000 saved in appeal cost avoidance.

★ Corporation agreed to pay an additional $40,000 to the State for the express purpose of health education. This is a new and unique approach in settling a case. These funds are directly and immediately available for health education.

★ The corporation agreed to review its existing policies, procedures, and practices including its personnel training practices. They agreed to review their current method of implementation of those policies and procedures.

Team Name: Pharmacy Board
Team Members: Grant B. Chester, James J. Doll, Randolph G. Flett, Richard L. Hoffman, William W. Kristin, Robert M. Mobus, Richard D. Morrison, Phyllis L. Wene, Scott Black, Sharon Cumming, Tim Fuller, Steven D. Hodgson, Becky Japhet, Susan Loutzenhiser, Georgia Robinson-Sage, Lisa A. Salmi, Kathleen Singleton, Susan M. Somers, Shannon Walker, Joseph M. Honda, Donald H. Williams. Board members: Cesar A. Alzola, Suann M. Bond, George L. Bradley, Karen H. Kiessling, Michael L. Kleinberg, Sharron Sellers, Arthur E. Yeoman

CONTACT: Joseph M. Honda, (360) 236-4825

Shipping Costs Trimmed

The Department of Health's (DOH) Shellfish Programs became concerned with the rising costs of shipping charges. As they were looking for ways to reduce costs, they discovered that charges from United Parcel Service (UPS) did not match the state contract prices. Staff audited all statements that had discrepancies, which led to a reimbursement of over $1700 for a 7-month period. Administrative staff have also worked with vendors to consolidate bimonthly or monthly invoice payments into a monthly, 2 month, or 3 month schedule in order to save processing and payment costs.

Results

- ★ Staff identified problems with UPS charges, which resulted in a reimbursement of over $1700.
- ★ Staff and volunteers who use UPS received training in proper shipping of documents.
- ★ Shellfish Program and DOH staff process fewer invoices, which saves about 40 hours per year in processing time.
- ★ DOH saves about $2600 per year in costs associated with payment of invoices.

Team Name: Shellfish Programs, Environmental Health
Team Members: Jo Anna Bell, Jennifer Tebaldi

CONTACT: Jo Anna Bell, (360) 236-3331

Meeting the Training Needs for Swing and Graveyard Shift Employees

The Department of Information Services provides service for our clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A majority of the staff and managers on swing shift and graveyard shift had not received first aid training. This was due to the difficulty in getting coverage for their positions, the high cost of completing the training during the daytime, and numerous scheduling constraints.

The team worked with managers on swing and graveyard shifts to determine which days to offer the training that would minimize coverage impact and allow more staff to attend. Then they identified, and negotiated an agreement with a certified first aid instructor to offer the training during the evening and graveyard shifts. A total of 39 out of 62 staff took the training.

Results

- ★ Increased morale from both shifts because their needs were being considered and met.
- ★ Cost avoidance for potential liability issues if an accident were to occur.
- ★ Cost avoidance for overtime pay of $7,925.
- ★ Cost avoidance of 351 replacement staff FTE hours.

Team Name: Training and Development
Team Members: Diana Corbin, Kris Baumgarten, Larry Dell, Ken Boling, Cliff Gott

CONTACT: Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

Portfolio-Based Information Technology Management

Information technology (IT) is central to the plans of the Governor and Legislature to improve the delivery of public services. To realize the benefits and to protect a significant taxpayer investment, the Management and Oversight division was tasked to implement a portfolio management model that was both disciplined and flexible in managing IT assets.

The team, in collaboration with the public sector IT community, implemented Phase II of the portfolio model that identifies:

- ♦ Links among agency strategies, business plans, and IT investments;
- ♦ Facilitates analysis of the risk management and risk mitigation associated with IT investments;
- ♦ Provides a baseline for agency and state-level performance reporting; and
- ♦ Helps ensure that the State IT infrastructure as a whole is effectively integrated.

Results

- ★ In the first two phases of implementation, 5 state agencies completed their portfolios (Employment Security Department, Department of Licensing, Department of Labor & Industries, Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Information Services).
- ★ DIS partnered with state agencies to use their “best practices” models in developing the Portfolio Management training curriculum.
- ★ State agencies representing 94% of the executive branch IT expenditures have taken portfolio management training.
- ★ DIS designed a Portfolio Management Web-site to provide agencies with information about the process for implementing portfolio management .
- ★ DIS designed a template that can be shared with other agencies that want to use the Web to post their portfolios.

Team Name: Portfolio Management
Team Members: Paul Taylor, Mary Lou Griffith, Lourdes Collins, Rich Martin, Darrel Riffe, Stan Ditterline, David Koch, Andy Marcelia, Mike Marshall

CONTACT: Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

Field Order Process Change

To process an order, valued at $200 or less, staff are required to complete and route a six-part field order form internally prior to submitting the order to Central Stores. The administration cost to process the field order is approximately $75 and averages 52 orders per year.

Staff recognized that the Central Stores on-line ordering system gave them options to use a different system to assign numbers to orders valued at $200 or less. Given that flexibility, staff mapped out and timed the six step field order process and determined that they could place the same order using a supply request numbering system which would track the order and eliminate the use of field orders. The new process change reduces the turn-around-time, eliminates four steps, and gives them the ability to assign numbers to a supply invoice for tracking and reconciliation purposes.

Results

★ Administrative cost savings of $3,900.

★ Eliminated 4 steps in a 6-step process.

★ 16 FTE administrative hours are saved and can be re-directed.

★ Quicker turnaround time has improved internal customer service.

Team Name: Field Order Process
Team Members: Doug Golden, Chuck Smith

CONTACT: Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

Asset Management

DIS has in excess of 5000 assets statewide, with an acquisition cost of approximately $101.7 million, that must be fully inventoried on a biennial basis. The old asset management system was maintained in a database that limited access to finance personnel only. If cost center managers wanted asset information they would submit a request to finance and wait for a hard copy report to be printed and routed. The system was archaic, not user friendly, and didn't maintain history on specific assets. The old system wasn't reconcilable to the Office of Financial Management's Capital Assets Management System (CAMS) because asset and feature information were combined.

The new Asset Management System is a secure web-based system that allows cost center managers and their designees to get immediate access to up-to-date asset information. The application provides the ability to track every asset change and retains the history record. The new system allows accurate asset reporting and the ability to reconcile with CAMS.

Results

- ★ Internal processes for asset reconciliation were streamlined.
- ★ Saves 12 hours of staff time that can now be re-directed.
- ★ Eliminated a 600-page quarterly asset management report.
- ★ Cost center managers have access to up-to-date and historical information.

Team Name: Asset Management
Team Members: Chuck Smith, Marcy Belles, Tricia Golden, Don Coulter, Darla Mann, Pauline McKusick, Bill Gilmore, Les Dawes, Vicki Martin, Scott Chapman, Amy Villanueva

CONTACT: Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

Change in Data Entry Cuts Error Rate by 80 Percent

Data entry for more than 150,000 employers' premium reports and payments for workers' compensation coverage had been manually keyed into a database since 1995 by U.S. Bank. Keypunch mistakes averaged 29,000 a month and required 32 hours monthly to correct.

A team at Labor and Industries changed the method of entering the information. This allowed for immediate checks for accuracy.

Results

- ★ The error rate dropped by 80 percent.
- ★ Saved $136,000 in annual data-entry expenses.
- ★ Time previously on correcting errors is now directed toward other activities.

Team Name: EASE Customer Support
Team Members: At L&I: Kent Schweikert, Mike Baker, Ana Link. At U.S. Bank: Sharon Richard, Alycia Stratton, Teresa Edwards. At Department of Information Services: Kris Scherz.

CONTACT: Kent Schweikert, (360) 902-5925.

Deposit Accounts Permit Contractors to Do Business by Fax

Electrical contractors must purchase permits before beginning any electrical work. Prior to this project, these contractors were required to either mail the permit with payment or visit a local office to buy it. Contractors are busy and many times far from a local office. The new electrical permits program created a way for contractors to set up deposit accounts with L&I instead of having to send a check with each permit. This allows contractors to fax their permit applications. Once received, L&I draws the appropriate funds from the contractor's deposit account.

Results

★ Contractors can save as much as two or three hours per day by faxing permits rather than traveling to an office.

★ Inspections occur sooner.

★ Errors have been reduced.

★ Administrative paperwork is reduced by 50 percent.

Team Members: Zona Powell, Leslie D. Imbler, Donna Lealos, Carolyn Randall, Bob Thomas and Steve Thornton

CONTACT: Leslie Imbler, (360) 902-5793

Reference Check Sheet Saves Customers/Staff Time

Almost half of all electrical permits received by the Tumwater service location counter contained errors. To help customers through the permit process, counter staff designed a reference check sheet highlighting the most important permit items and began providing the sheet to customers.

Customers now have a better idea of what exactly is required on the permit, and less time is spent by staff reviewing and processing the permit application.

Results

- ★ Correctly completed electrical permit applications received have increased from 50 percent to 97 percent.
- ★ Less staff time is required to assist customers in completing electrical permit applications.

Team Members: Debbie Carlin, Carole Jones, Lelfia Lhaleghi, Wendy Mayo.

CONTACT: Debbie Carlin, (360) 902-6626.

Code Change Saves $10,000 In Monthly Rental Fees

The department spent $14,800 a month to rent computer data storage tapes that are coded and kept indefinitely. However, data programmers learned that many of the tapes were not needed for an indefinite period. A code change allowed many of the tapes to be immediately deleted or retained for a specific time period.

Results

- ★ 80 percent of the tapes were immediately deleted.
- ★ A $10,000 savings per month in rental fees.

Team Name: EXPDT Cleanup Project
Team Members: At L&I: Sunny Cotey, Melinda Darmody, Kris Johnson, Kent Schweikert, Roy Jobe, Joel Barnes, Paul Huynh, Dave Nichols, Larry Brown, Boyd Betts, Don Smith; at Department of Information Services: Val Williams, Kim Starkey, Dave Smith

CONTACT: Susan Moriarty, (360) 902-5980

Imaging Process Improvement Frees up Staff

Information regarding industrial insurance claims is accessible only with a special imaging computer. In the past, callers needing imaging assistance were put on hold, then transferred to the imaging machine. If the caller spoke only Spanish, the terminal operator had to move to a different terminal while a bilingual employee took the call and another staff member looked up the information.

The workstation was moved and dedicated to only imaging calls.

Results

- ★ Eliminated the need for staff person to leave their workstation.
- ★ Eliminated the need for two people to assist one customer.
- ★ Increased the number of calls handled on the first contact.

Team Members: Veronica Gottschalk, Barbara Pyle, Chris Perales, Julie Perales, Donna Ray, Betty Costello, Joyce Sandefur

CONTACT: Veronica Gottschalk, (509) 764-6909

No More Long Waits for Software Reloads

In the past, when employee computers malfunctioned or needed new software, department technicians typically needed 3-4 hours to reload – or reconfigure – each computer's operating system. An in-house team recommended using a standard CD ROM program for this purpose, dropping computer reconfiguration times to about one hour per machine.

Results:

★ Reducing by three hours the time spent rebuilding each PC configuration on an estimated 2000 employee computers per year yields an annual savings of approximately 6,000 hours of productive employee time.

★ In the Computer Training Room – where computers must be reconfigured after each class – the training downtime has been dramatically reduced. More training hours have been freed up for employees.

★ Because all software reloads are consistent, the day-to-day maintenance of the department's operating software is easier and less time-consuming.

Team Members: Donna Cole, Don Wood, Mark Delaplane, Charles Salley, Cindy Price, Kathie Krogh, Shari Sutphin, Dave Roberts, Carol Butterfield

CONTACT: Don Wood, (360) 902-5883

Callers Receive “Hands-On” Attention in Region 5

Callers to Region 5 Factory Assembled Structure inspectors are hearing good news these days. The good news is a human voice for customers in Central Washington. In the past, FAS inspectors returned messages once they returned to the office. A simple change to the voice mail system now allows callers to dial “0” for an operator. The result is customers who need only a form or permit can have one mailed immediately. And the change meant a reduction in the number of phone messages for inspectors and allowed more time for work in the field.

Results

- ★ More timely service to the customer with immediate needs.
- ★ In November and December 1998, there were 221 fewer voice-mail messages for inspectors to return each day versus the same period in 1997.
- ★ During the same period, inspectors conducted 171 more field inspections.

Team Name: Region 5 FAS
Team Members: Tony Tomasino, Richard Haverfield, Jack Jones, Denny Neveu, Bruce Nighswonger, Don Taylor and Tim Clemens

CONTACT: Tony Tomasino, (509) 735-0136

Removing Refund Roadblocks

During the peak refund period of January through April each calendar year, 12,000 fuel tax refunds were processed. Due to the volume of daily claims received during the peak refund period, refunds were backlogged up to three months The high volumes and associated stress created inaccuracies in data entry. The unit's morale was low due to the constant pressure to clean up the backlog. It took six permanent and two temporary staff to process the refunds. The training time necessary for the temporary staff took time away from permanent staff from keying in the various claims. This created a delay in the return of refunds to customers, which in turn increased the volume of phone calls. The Unlicensed Refunds team felt that a better way to revise the process had to exist, allowing them to meet customer expectations and process refunds in a timely way.

Employees in another unit agreed to take on other license work from the team to enable members to focus on creating a streamlined refunds process. The team mailed customers a notice informing them that a refund request could be filed at any time within the 13-month claim period. This reduced the volume of unlicensed refund claims received January through April and leveled out the amount of refund claims received on a monthly basis.

Temporary staff were hired and trained prior to the peak refund period. Their training was expanded to allow them to work with many different types of refund claims before volumes increased. The team simplified the reference information used to process refunds: rather than using different values for fuel taxes and prices based on county, statewide averages were adopted.

Results

- ★ The three-month refund backlog has been eliminated.
- ★ A dramatic reduction in turnaround time for customers; reduced from 4 to 5 months to 2 to 3 weeks.
- ★ Employee morale has greatly improved and stress has decreased.
- ★ In response to and in anticipation of new legislation, 800 hours of staff time annually were redirected to a new program entitled "Tax at the Rack".

Team Name: Fuel Tax Unlicensed Refunds Team
Team Members: Maria Balentine, Susan Gordham, Renee McCarty, Betty Euteneier, Oanh Pham, Wendy Seid, and Dale Middaugh.

CONTACT: Barry Crook, (360) 902- 3610, Sherri Black, (360) 586-3543

Fuel Tax Customers Get Smooth Service

Fuel Tax Customers were required to call two different units to inquire about their tax returns, refunds, and general questions. Shifting the files back and forth between units became an increasing problem. Employees couldn't answer customer questions because someone else had the file they needed to provide answers. This caused customers and staff to become frustrated and took too much time to complete.

The new process shifted the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) and "Special Fuel User" customers to be processed by one unit, instead of being shuttled back and forth between two units. This shift provides improved customer services and the ability to verify gallon and dollar figures reported on both the IFTA and Special Fuel User returns. A process that once took 80 hours each quarter now takes only 10 hours. Communication between the customers and Tax Service Representatives improved, and the benefits are supported by improved accuracy of the tax returns submit by customers to the department.

Results

- ★ Improved customer relations and more efficient service.
- ★ Fuel inventory is easily checked for reconciliation between returns.
- ★ Refunds that were once delayed 3 months are now completed within 3 weeks.
- ★ Improved accuracy in the tax returns originally submitted by customers.
- ★ 1750 hours are saved annually in research time spent by staff.

Team Name: IFTA Special User Team
Team Members: Carol Durham, Jody Bates, Donna Hedgers, and Don Housden.

CONTACT: Barry Crook, (360) 902-3610, Sherri Black, (360) 586-3543

Communicating Tax Rates

The tax rate schedule required for use on International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) tax returns was mailed to customers with their quarterly tax returns. The jurisdictions submitted tax rate changes to IFTA, Inc. and a final matrix was sent to DOL/Prorate & Fuel Tax. The process used to put the changes into DOL's printed format, getting the information reproduced, and then mailing the returns was time consuming and inefficient.

The IFTA Tax Rate team made up a complete matrix for the year and sent it to customers. Now, only changes to the matrix are sent to customers, making it easier for them to make computer changes. The new process decreased staff time spent preparing the schedule, and decreased reproduction time and costs.

Results

- ★ Decreased the number of customers using an incorrect rate; from 25% to 5%.
- ★ Calls concerning the tax rate have decreased from 5 calls per day to less than one call per day.
- ★ Mailing and reproduction costs decreased by $3682 annually due to reductions in paper.
- ★ Time spent preparing the tax rate schedule decreased from 8 to 2 hours.
- ★ The time spent proofing the tax rate schedule decreased from 4 hours to 1 hour per quarter.

Team Name: IFTA Tax Rate Team
Team Members: Carol Durham, Jody Bates, Donna Hedgers, Don Housden, and Judy Harlow.

CONTACT: Barry Crook, (360) 902-3610, Sherri Black, (360) 586-3543

Recruitment Cycle Time Project - Phase One Update

State agency customers have been dissatisfied with the length of time it takes to recruit, test, and set up registers with qualified job candidates. The average time has been approximately fifty-five days. Our original goal was to reduce this time by at least 10%; however, the project team re-established the reduction goal for 25%.

In September, the project team began implementation of Phase One improvements. In December, the first landmark measurement showed a 33% reduction in recruitment cycle time. As of March 1999, the team reduced the recruitment cycle time by 35% (from 55 days to 36 days). This is a sustained improvement. The improvements include: processing applications upon arrival instead of batching, establishing and adhering to turnaround timeframes, and streamlining test procedures.

Results

★ A nineteen day or 35 percent reduction in recruitment cycle time.

★ Reduced timeframes for agency customers to receive a referral of eligible candidates which will also reduce lost productivity due to position vacancies.

★ Will assist the state to compete for hard-to-fill and high demand positions.

Team Name: Recruitment Cycle Time Project Team
Team Members: Christina Valadez, Teri Thompson, Terri Morris, Gary Ernest, Melia Olsen, Art Irving, Connie Smith, Joan Darin, Theresa Eckroth, Patti Sherer-Abear, Jim Fitzgerald, Delia Balatbat, Joe Burgess, Bob Hahn, Rhonda Gibbs, Tom Rawlings, Rhonda Bell, Cathy Cardinal, Wendy Geist, LaQuira Perez, Sherrie Ilg, Fern Morrow, Bob Murff, Wendy Philbrook, Margaret Piephoff, Dorian Sanchez, Brad Bingham, Sally Grele, Georgia Frazier, Leta Danielson, Teresa Dillon, Mary Maine, Ann Valeos, and Mary Rodriguez

CONTACT: Teri Thompson, (360) 586-6742

Referred Candidate Availability Project

Customer feedback indicated a significant problem with agencies receiving names of available candidates to fill vacant positions. Even though candidates were on the register, many would indicate that they were not interested in and/or not available for the job opening once they were referred for an interview. This has been a particular problem for high volume classes such as office support jobs and those in certain geographic locations.

In October 1998, with an established goal of reducing candidate waivers by 20%, the project team began improvements by identifying and removing unavailable candidates prior to sending the referral to the requesting agency. By March 1999, there have been over 2,200 unavailable candidates removed from the registers which resulted in a 30% reduction in the number of waivers for the office support classes.

Results

★ Unavailable candidates for the office support job classes have been reduced by 30%.

★ Reduced hiring time for agencies to fill vacant positions.

Team Name: Referred Candidate Availability Project Team
Team Members: Teresa Dillon, Joan Darin, Rhonda Bell, Wendy Geist, Angela Petty

CONTACT: Teresa Dillon, (360) 753-2372

On-Line Access to Job Class Specifications and Personnel Rules

The Department of Personnel (DOP) had available the job class specifications and rules in an electronic format, but in order to access it, users had to download and install a massive computer help file, even if they only needed one document in the file. This process took from 7-40 minutes, depending on the computer system of the user. In order to have the most recent information, the customer would have to use this time-consuming downloading process on a monthly basis.

The project team converted the files to an Internet-friendly format and set up an interface so users can access the information directly off DOP's website. Customers can now access the specific document they need, rather than the entire file, and it now takes less than a minute to do so.

Results

- ★ The process is much easier and less time consuming.
- ★ There is more time available for DOP staff members to quickly respond to other customer requests.
- ★ Immediate savings of time and money on printing and mailing costs.

Team Members: Dawn Baker, Ann Valeos, Yvonne Poe, Randy Ayers, Deb Calderon, and Sherrie Ilg.

CONTACT: Donna Bogumill, (360) 586-0402

Job Ticket Organization

Every print job has a corresponding “job ticket” which is a printed envelope containing all information necessary to run and bill a job. The envelope often contains samples and examples necessary to insure accuracy. These tickets are regularly accessed for production and billing purposes. It is not uncommon for outside inquiries to come from multiple sources on the same job to different Printing personnel.

A great deal of time was lost, searching for tickets which had been removed from the main filing system. The solution to this problem was the creation of a job ticket check out method. Shelf cards for this purpose were produced in-house and are now printed with the date, user’s name and location. This enables each staff member to know immediately where the customer inquiry information is located, retrieve the file and answer the inquiry.

Results

- ★ Rapid response to customer inquiries.
- ★ Duplication of effort eliminated.
- ★ Elimination of overtime and staff time savings of 15%.
- ★ Annual savings in staff overtime of $5,522.

Team Name: Check It Out
Team Members: Phuong Tran, Jo Jilek, Jolaine Swanda

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

Forms On the Internet Reduces Turnaround Time for Deferred Compensation Program Customers

Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) customers previously had to wait one to three days to receive enrollment forms or other forms they had requested by mail, then type or write in the information necessary to complete the form. In March 1999, DCP implemented an improved process to provide forms to customers instantaneously, on-line, via the Internet. Six forms are available to customers in portable document format (PDF) which allows the user to fill in the form on-line, then print the completed form, ready for signature and mailing. The result is reduced processing time for the customer and reduced errors through improved clarity of information submitted.

Results

★ Improved customer service through reduced response time for customer transactions.

★ Forms can be drafted, corrected, completed on-line and printed, ready for mailing.

★ Saves $1850 annually in postage costs.

★ Saves staff time through the reduction in phone calls to request forms and time to process outgoing mail.

★ Increases attention to agency Web site providing other information through that media.

Team Name: Deferred Compensation Program Forms on the Internet
Team Members: Kris Fjalstad, Garth Johnson

CONTACT: Dave Geiger, (360) 664-7285

Automating Letters Saves Time, Improves Accuracy

Dependent Care Program clients must be notified by letter when they are in danger of losing or forfeiting their unclaimed contributions if they do not submit an itemized list of expenditures. The old process of generating these letters was labor intensive. Steps required included printing and copying letters, printing mailing labels off site, waiting for the labels to be delivered through campus mail, counting labels, manually entering data, and stuffing the envelopes for mailing.

The improved process eliminates most of the manual steps and the need to produce mailing labels. A merge letter automatically enters addresses and forfeiture amounts, and an authorized electronically scanned signature.

Results

★ Reduces staff time required to produce the final product by 98 percent.

★ Incorporates a “best practice” use of an authorized, electronically scanned signature for use in repetitive correspondence and one automated process to print the entire batch of letters from an on-line report.

★ Eliminates manual steps of copying each letter, checking forfeiture report for correct data, entering forfeiture amount, recopying letters and affixing labels on letters.

★ Eliminates possibility of error during manual matching and entering of forfeiture amounts with correct addressee and allows for editing of individual letters.

Team Name: Dependent Care Forfeiture Letter
Team Members: Jennifer Fielding, Don George, Emily Nichols, Dina Morrow

CONTACT: Johanna Shick, (360) 664-7287

Team Designs A Better Way to Manage Receivables

This project team designed and implemented a new computer system to better manage money owed to the department. The new system provides better access to current account information for DRS staff and for employers who report to the department, more consistency in handling past due accounts, lower operating costs, and generates additional interest and earnings for the pension trust fund.

Results

- ★ Streamlines processes, saving staff time which can now be redirected to provide better and faster customer service and focus on a larger percentage of past-due receivables.
- ★ Generates $504,000 the first year in projected earnings and interest to the pension trust fund.
- ★ Reduces system-operating costs by $60,000 per year as a result of more efficient programming and integration with other DRS systems.
- ★ Reduces the time employers spend reconciling accounts by providing a revised statement format with more information.
- ★ Provides better internal controls, preventing errors early in the process and reducing the need for corrections and rework.

Team Name: Receivables Management Project Team
Team Members: Ellen Ellis, Jennifer Fielding, Jim Gunn, Doug Heaberlin, Chris Hendrickson, Garth Johnson, Pati Milewski, Hung Pham, Carol Reed, Martha Roney, Jilene Siegel, Chris Spaulding, Jim Stanton, Binh Tran, Long Trinh. Contractors: Ken Baldwin, Brett Brewer, Ric Doerflinger, Chris Lamb, Dave Richard, Gary Trumbull, Art Uchytil.

CONTACT: Chris Spaulding, (360) 664-7269

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

New Hires Hit the Ground Running

Agency staff responsible for providing equipment, system access and supplies rarely received timely notification when employees are hired, relocate, or leave the agency. As a result, new employees have had to wait for these items, and employees who no longer work for DRS sometimes retain keys, access to systems, or equipment.

Using Quality principles, the team determined the root causes, researched best practices, and improved the process by designing an on-line checklist of all services and equipment possibly needed; eliminating six forms; eliminating unnecessary notifications and ensuring necessary ones; establishing a central point of contact for supervisors and service providers; and educating current and future leads, supervisors, managers, and administrative assistants on the new process.

Results

- ★ Decreases time spent requesting and setting up the services and equipment by 42 percent.
- ★ Eliminates six forms and one required authorization memo, and reduces the need for one form.
- ★ Stores the set-up information electronically so supervisors and service providers can see what has been completed when a new employee is starting, and what needs to be canceled when the employee leaves that position.
- ★ Improves internal customer service by ensuring staff will have the services they need on the first day of employment.
- ★ Increases agency security of equipment and data by ensuring access privileges are terminated.

Team Name: Uniform Resource Tracking Initiative
Team Members: Teresa Roddy (Team Lead), Zanie Crow, Dick Ellis, Jenny Kalous, Mary Kenmir, Sandy Ledesma, Shirley Legg, Rob Long, Jody Simmonds, Margaret Wimmer, Cathy Wolfe

CONTACT: Johanna Shick, (360) 664-7287

Contractor's Bond Referral System

One method The Department of Revenue uses to collect unpaid taxes is by filing claims against contractor surety bonds and assigned savings accounts. Originally Revenue Agents used the public phone lines to reach The Department of Labor and Industries to verify the existence and dollar value of a bond. After completing the appropriate paperwork it was sent for management approval and then forwarded to the Attorney General's office.

Agents now access bond information from their computers and mail or fax the requests directly to the Attorney General's office. Additionally, a certified copy of the filed tax warrant (lien for unpaid taxes) was required to file a legal action against the bond. This step was also eliminated saving $2 and 10 to 20 minutes per request.

Results

- ★ Eliminated added levels of management approval saving 42 hours annually.
- ★ Elimination of certified copies of tax warrants accompanying bond actions saves 52 hours annually and $418.
- ★ Simplifying request process results in an increase of 60 additional referrals in one year and increases revenue by $212,179.15 in 1998 and an anticipated increase of $413,661.57 in 1999.
- ★ A faster, more efficient process that generates income from previously uncollected bonds.

Team Name: Contractor's Bond Referral System
Team Members: Stuart Thronson; Office of the Attorney General: Rich Zwicker, Dina Yunker-Frank, Bobby Covach

CONTACT: Stuart Thronson, (360) 586-2977

Returned Items Database

Frequently items are sent to The Department of Revenue in error. These items are returned to the taxpayers before they are processed. A form was completed, copies were made, and the information was entered into a spreadsheet. Copies were mailed to the taxpayer but the form didn't indicate what the item was. This generated many phone calls requesting clarification. Additionally, the office phone number was listed not the employee that processed the paperwork. This resulted in taxpayers speaking with someone unfamiliar with their returned item.

A database was created to track returned items and giving employees instant access to the records. A custom notice is created that allows direct contact between the taxpayer and the processing employee.

Results

★ Customer service increased by customizing forms.

★ Eliminating photo copies saves $21.80 annually.

★ Customized notice eliminates more than 50% of incoming phone calls saves over 60 hours each year.

★ Reduction in processing time saves 291 hours annually.

★ Average customer phone conversation reduced from 10 minutes to 2 minutes because of the "instant access" database.

Team Name: Returned Items Database
Team Members: Silvia Reyes, Anita Duemig-Fairbanks, Min Mguyen, Alejandra Kelly, Roxanna Heitz, Kristine Rompa, Thu Trang

CONTACT: Silvia Reyes, (360) 902-8875

Geographic Information System (GIS) Internet Rate

Businesses with retail sales have difficulty complying with Washington's multitude of local tax rates, especially when they sell at multiple locations. There are over 330 local cities, counties, transit, and public facilities districts with varying rates and frequent tax law and boundary changes adding to this reporting burden.

Staff from 5 divisions formed a work group to develop and market an easy-to-access address system. Within months, all the boundary maps maintained on paper were converted to the GIS mapping system, and the Department developed a database using GIS technology to overlay taxing districts on U.S. Postal Service delivery addresses.

Results

★ Location codes and tax rates for U.S. Postal Service delivery addresses in all 39 counties available on the Department's Internet website free-of-charge in self-extracting zip files.

★ Improved accuracy in coding local sales and use taxes by businesses and reduces distribution errors to local governments.

★ Up-to-date annexation and incorporation information to notify businesses impacted by tax law and boundary changes.

★ Accurate and easy-to-use tool for answering difficult taxpayer location and tax rate questions faster saving 1560 hours annually and improving service of businesses and local governments.

★ Automated mapping system replaces cumbersome paper maps.

Team Name: GIS Work Group
Team Members: Sharon Brown, Mary Welsh, Tremaine Smith, Janetta Taylor, Ray Philen, Steve Desselle, Sandra Yuen, Dean Carlson, Marty Parsons, Cynda Johnson, Cheryl Moss, Tiffany Johnson, Bao-Kai Chen, Jim Harden, Helen Miller, Bryce Dorey, Sue Graham, Roger Dodd, Vikki Riffe, Mel Kirpes

CONTACT: Mary Welsh, (360) 753-5542

★ ***Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award*** ★

Property Tax Imaging/Document Management System

The Exempt Property Section determines the tax status of property owned and used by nonprofit organizations throughout Washington. Over 700 exemption applications and 9,000 renewal notices are received and processed annually. Files are maintained on each of the nonprofit organizations that currently have property exempt from property tax. Property tax auditors, located in Seattle, Spokane, and Tumwater need access to these files so duplicate files were maintained by photocopying them and routing copies to each field office. The new imaging/document management system provides field auditors access to electronically stored records within 20 minutes of initial receipt.

Results

- ★ Filing cabinets and other storage systems are eliminated.
- ★ Potential loss due to fire/water damage minimized by back-up tapes stored off site.
- ★ Almost immediate access to information allows quick response to taxpayer questions.
- ★ Applications and documents are imaged as they are received, eliminating the need to photocopy the documents saving $1000 annually.
- ★ Saves 100 hours annually in time spent photocopying, routing and filing the documents.

Team Name: Property Tax IDOC's Team
Team Members: Kathy Beith, Mark Baca, Michael Braaten, Velinda Brown, Vickie Glover, Mary Skalicky, Harold Smith, Kevin Timson, and Peri Maxey

CONTACT: Peri Maxey, (360) 753-5558

Purchasing Quality

Administrative Assistants and Taxpayer Service Representatives order nearly all the services and supplies in the agency. Employees had to look for these services and supplies in ten different locations. When forms are ordered, some are maintained by the agency warehouse, some by various divisions, and some come directly from the state printer. In addition, there are Central Stores purchases, local vendors, State, and agency contracts. The purchasing processes was clarified, simplified and streamlined. The warehouse now consolidates the components of the New Business Packets sent to newly registered businesses eliminating the “middle person.”

Results

- ★ Reduced the number of initial contacts/starting places from ten to five simplifies the process.
- ★ All Agency divisions now part of Central Stores on-line purchasing system.
- ★ Increased credit card purchasing from local vendors saving several days off the original process time.
- ★ Consolidated components of New Business Packets at warehouse save 12 hours annually and will save $8820 annually by moving the warehouse to a smaller facility.

Team Name: Purchasing Quality Team
Team Members: Marv Ostby, Priscilla Wee, Le Perry, Karen Jackson, Binh Vu, Erick Kniestedt, Diane Mielke, Marsha Williams, Diane Gibbs, Chris Younger, Sherree Christiansen

CONTACT: Le Perry, (360) 902-8882

Work Experience First

We continue to serve a population with an unemployment rate of 75%. Many of those we see for the first time have never before held a job. Orientation and Training Center staff member Bronson Goo proposed to get our participants into their first jobs by placing them in short-term work experiences first. In this manner, they would get work experience that would teach them workplace skills and help qualify them for permanent jobs.

Bronson approaches businesses in the Rainier Valley to offer them a temporary employee whose salary we will pay. He tells the employer that we have screened this new employee, who happens to be blind, and ensure that the employee's skills are suitable to that company's needs. Not only do we offer to pay that employee's salary, but we will also take care of all that employee's Assistive Technology equipment.

Results

★ Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are referring their participants to the project in such numbers that they have more participants in the project than those from the Orientation and Training Center for whom the project was designed.

★ Bronson currently has 12 OTC students and VR participants at work and four have completed their short-term employment successfully.

★ We have found that 50% of the employers decide to pay the salary themselves, an extremely good sign that our approach is right.

★ These are some of the employers who have accepted a participant of the Work Experience First project who was also their first blind employee, breaking new ground for blind people: Crossroads Elementary, McDonalds, QFC , Safeway, Salvation Army, SCAT, Twinkles Child Care, Wades' Gun Shop.

Team Name: Orientation and Training Center
Team Members: Bronson Goo

CONTACT: Keiko Namakata, (206) 721-6466

Fraud Investigations Team Contributes to Improved Food Stamp Accuracy

The state has been under federal sanction for its food stamp error rate. The error rate for 1996 was 14.8 percent. Governor Locke set a goal for an error rate not to exceed 7 percent. In the past, the Division of Fraud Investigations (DFI) customarily used one investigator per Community Service Office (CSO) to handle all of the office's case referrals where there was a question of potential fraud. To address a significantly higher volume of referrals due to food stamp accuracy issues, a new approach was needed.

The Food Stamp Statewide Accuracy Team concept utilizes a team of investigators to handle a number of high error prone cases as identified by a CSO. The size of the team is dependent on the volume of cases referred by that office. Scheduled into an office for a two or three-day period, the team investigates all of the office's referrals. Investigations are completed, written up, and returned to CSO staff within one week, and investigators return to their own offices to resume work on their individual cases. Investigative findings are used by CSO staff to reduce, terminate, or approve cases.

Results

★ 2,014 referrals were generated and completed by the team. These referrals were in addition to the investigators regular caseload.
★ 46 percent of those referrals resulted in termination, reduction, or denial. In the remaining 54 percent, client circumstances were as reported.
★ Team projects resulted in annual projected savings in financial, medical and food stamp dollars of $5,435,581.36.
★ Team projects resulted in annual projected savings of 8,265 FTE hours.
★ Elimination of potential errors results in less likelihood of additional federal sanctions.

Team Name: DFI Food Stamp Statewide Accuracy Team
Team Members: Rob Andrezejewski, Mark Anderson, Bill Bentler, Lowell Bieber, Jerry Chastain, Ed Dahlquist, Rick Gaynor, Lisa Harvill, Cheri Lucas, Patti Martinez, Pat Park, Greg Powell, Cheri Ramirez, John Thompson, John Williams.

CONTACT: Patrick E. Park, (425) 744-3129

Warehouse on the Intranet and on the Highway

Redistribution of surplus equipment and temporary storage of usable equipment has been a costly transaction. Equipment was taking up office space or required the rental of a storage unit. Offices were responsible for the transportation of surplus equipment to General Administration. In March 1998 DSHS was renting approximately 60 warehouses statewide which cost $60,000 per month. The Warehouse only picked up equipment in the Olympia area.

The DSHS Warehouse staff met with their customers and as a result the Warehouse now picks up surplus equipment in all of Western Washington. The equipment is stored in the DSHS Warehouse where it is advertised on the DSHS Intranet and shown at a weekly open house for all DSHS programs. In addition, they provide a nine month free temporary storage of usable equipment.

Results

- ★ The department saves $108,000 annually by eliminating nine rental storage units in Western Washington.
- ★ Picking up surplus equipment in Western Washington relieves the programs' needs for office storage ($300,000 annually), transportation, and FTE expenses.
- ★ The department saves 6,468 FTE hours annually by eliminating time for preparation and moving of equipment to GA which include: removing state tags, filling out GA surplus tags, loading and unloading trucks, and driving to and from Fife to deliver the equipment.
- ★ The department is able to realize the full value of its fixed assets before sending it to GA by advertising surplus equipment on DSHS Intranet and holding weekly Warehouse open house.
- ★ By stopping only at the DSHS Warehouse instead of going to many storage units to retrieve surplus equipment, GA saves transportation and FTE expenses.

Team Name: DSHS Warehouse Improvement Team
Team Members: DSHS/ASD: Wanda Emmick, Paul Nicholson, Rick Meyer, James Watson; GA: Neil House; DSHS Warehouse Focus Group: John Tyson, Kathleen Brockman, Sue Breen, Mary Vernetti, Randy Sparks, Phil Harrison; and Sponsor: Phil Wozniak

CONTACT: Wanda Emmick, (360) 902-7541

Improving Medication Distribution at Western State

A Western State Hospital pharmacy and nursing staff team focused on improving the process of refilling patient medications. Before this project, each patient's medications were refilled once a month, a process that for the 40 wards took 200 hours of pharmacy staff time. Ward medication nurses had to deliver and pickup the containers to be refilled requiring 33 hours per month. Wards were without the medications about six hours each month while being refilled in the pharmacy. Packaging of refills was not consistent. Many packages were physically difficult to open. Thirty days supply of medications took up a lot of ward space and increased the potential for errors. To improve the process, a machine was purchased that automatically fills prescriptions with 99% accuracy using easy-to-open packets. With the time saved, pharmacy staff could refill medications weekly, deliver the refills to the wards and still take less time than the prior process.

Results

- ★ Eliminated the need to hire five additional pharmacy staff who would have been required in order to manually fill prescriptions on a weekly schedule, thereby saving annually 10,570 hours of staff time and $254,254 in salaries.
- ★ Saves 84 hours of existing pharmacy staff time per year in filling and delivering refills while increasing the number of refills.
- ★ Packaging medications by machine saves approximately $40,000 dollars a year in drug costs.
- ★ More patient care time (396 hours) is available each year due to nurses not needing to deliver or pick up medications from the pharmacy.
- ★ Over 70% of the nurses rated the prescription refilling process and the new packaging as convenient as or more convenient than the previous process.

Team Name: WSH Medication Distribution Team
Team Members: Stacia Gahms, PhT, (Team Leader); Julie Neff, RPH; Joni Rudin, PhT; Don Dicks, CAP4; Wanda Ray, LPN; Cliff Stewart, LPN; Connie Roth, RN3; Pat Pickett, ADNS; Katy Williams, Pharm.D.; Judy Miller, LPN; Pauline Montances, LPN; Suzette Reyes, RN3; Jessica Grant, RPh; Dan Sanford, RN3; Amos Brinkley, LPN

CONTACT: Carol Knobel-Ames, (360) 902-0832

DCS Disbursement Operations Eliminates Overtime

The Division of Child Support (DCS) is federally required to process and disburse child support payments within 2 working days. Processing time is directly related to the volume of checks received. The average monthly volume is 115,000 checks, which equates to 165,000 payments, valued at $49 million dollars.

On Monday's, 65% more checks arrive than any other day of the week. DCS had resorted to overtime to stay current and meet the federal mandate. The DCS State Disbursement Unit realized that the workload was not unique to peak times and gathered data to support a second shift of regular employees thereby eliminating overtime.

Results

- ★ Uninterrupted workflow for opening, scanning, indexing and identifying payments Monday through Friday.
- ★ Exceeded the federal requirement for processing payments for disbursement. DCS now processes and disburses payments within one day for 87% of paying cases and well within 2 days for 99% of paying cases.
- ★ Eliminated the use of overtime to process payments and meet federally mandated time frames and thereby saving $67,000 annually.
- ★ Allowed flexibility for staff in the processing unit to experiment with flextime, take scheduled holidays and participate in staff development.
- ★ Eliminated most phone inquires from customers requesting information about when payments were received and processed by DCS.

Team Name: Financial Services Operation Unit
Team Members: Lynnie Larsen, Tammy Dorfner, Wendy Cole-Deardorff, Dan Wilcox, Charlie Hall, Pat McGlennon, Laurie Rawlins, Jon Fry, Bobbie Gerdts, Becky Sutton, Diana Young, Deloris Nichols, Tom Kendrick and Don Hawley.

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben, (360) 902-0865

Lobby Changed to Improve Customer Service

The physical lay-out of the Bellingham Community Service Office lobby did not fit the type of services being provided to the customer. Essential information was available in the Resource Room adjoining the lobby, but was not being accessed by customers. Customer Service Specialists needed additional training so they could handle more client questions without involving the Financial Eligibility staff.

Improvements were made and the Job Resource Room is now fully staffed with one permanent staff person who is assisted by a work-study student and a volunteer. Customers are able to access useful information such as wage progression information, resume development, job announcements, family planning information, and information on Diversion Cash Assistance. The Customer Service Specialists received additional training and are now able to work more independently, handling more client questions for the Financial Eligibility staff; this gives them more uninterrupted work time and increases their accuracy. The waiting room was redesigned with small round tables and chairs to create work space for clients and reduce disruption from children running in the lobby.

Results

- ★ Improved customer access to job information.
- ★ Increased ability to serve clients at the front counter and cause less disruption to staff who are processing cases. Saves approximately 40 hours per week, or 2112 FTE hours annually.
- ★ Customers receive more comprehensive service from the front counter staff.

Team Name: Bellingham Customer Service Improvement Team
Team Members: Cary Chizer, Chris Rahkonen, Rachel Riggles, Marijo Olson, Hollis Jackson, Mary Kruzich, Jean Pittman, Heather Robertson, Anita Stolpe, Linda Weed: facilitator

CONTACT: Margaret Vogeli, (360) 413-3013

More Protection for Nursing Home Residents

If you or a loved one has ever suffered from pressure sores ("bed sores") you know the pain these skin ulcers can cause. Although pressure sores are easy to get when someone spends a lot of time in bed, they can usually be prevented. Nursing Home Quality Assurance staff in the Aging and Adult Services Administration check for unnecessary pressure sores as part of ongoing monitoring activities.

Recently, staff in the Seattle area became concerned that some patients seemed to be getting unnecessary pressure sores during temporary hospital stays. However, to take any action, staff needed to go on more than a "hunch," and to collect some hard data. They carefully tracked incidence of pressure sores, to determine whether some hospitals discharge patients with a higher number of these skin ulcers.

Results

★ System established which successfully tracks pressure sores to the originating hospitals.

★ 9 federal investigations, 5 completed to date, with 3 hospitals already involved in plans for correction.

★ Continued investigations and follow-up, with plans to expand this project statewide.

Team Name: Nursing Home Resident Protection Team
Team Members: Susan Abrisz, Susan Ghoddousi, Shirley Kurz, Mary Jo Lara, Peggy Mates, Frances Pedersen, and Jill Stevens

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Same-Day Help at King Eastside CSO

Previously, people applying for public assistance turned in an application form and scheduled an interview date that averaged 6.5 days later. No-shows and reschedule requests were time consuming for clerical staff, caused delays in appointment availability, and made time management difficult for the staff.

The process was changed to allow clients to walk into the office during specified times to submit an application. Clients then decide to wait for an available interview on that day or return on another day, whichever is convenient. No-shows and reschedules have virtually been eliminated saving 1030 staff hours annually. Reception staff have time now to give more individualized service and interviewers have more time to process paperwork for issuing benefits.

Results

★ Cycle time between application and appointment dates decreased from a range of 2-22 days, with an average of 6.5 days, to walk-in scheduling on a first come first serve basis.

★ No show rate which was previously 26.5% is virtually eliminated and is now at less than 5%.

★ Reschedule rate which was previously 22% is virtually eliminated. Occasionally a client requiring an interpreter will reschedule an appointment.

★ Equity of appointment availablity improved for applicants.

★ Time savings of 1030 hours annually for clerical staff in application tracking and scheduling/rescheduling activities.

Team Name: Application Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Carol Schmidt, Sue O'Riley, Joyce Hensen, Gloria Hanson, Gail Miller, Beverly Rhodes, Yvonne Orlinski, Carolyn Glenn, Leslie Patten, Linda Jacobsen and Angel Walker

CONTACT: Margaret Vogeli, (360) 413-3013

ESA Saves Money, Time & Trees

State agencies that regulate the public through Washington Administrative Code (WAC) rules are required by law to mail out copies of proposed rules. To comply, agencies like DSHS keep dozens of mailing lists and may copy and mail thousands of pages a year. The Economic Services Administration (ESA) Regulatory Improvement Team surveyed customers, then updated obsolete mailing lists, replaced some mailings with a one-page summary, and set up an email group. These few changes allow ESA to save thousands of dollars every year in copy and mailing costs (summaries and email use far less paper and postage), and send information only to people who really want and can use it, keeping expensive, unwanted copies out of recycle bins and trash cans.

Best of all, the changes were made without requiring any new or extra work from rule-writers and support staff. Several other DSHS administrations have expressed interest in applying these kinds of changes to their WAC mailings; this would spread the savings across the entire department.

Results

★ Saved $22,700 annually in the cost of mailings.

★ Improved customer service by allowing people to choose their preferred format for requested information.

★ Established consistency in how mailings are done and who receives them. Established a system to keep ESA mailing lists updated.

★ Applied less expensive Internet technology to our rule-making efforts for the first time.

Team Name: ESA Regulatory Improvement Team
Team Members: Roy Rocchi, Milladean Clark, Amy Daland, Judith Richard, Paula Pelletier, Faye Kitna, Kay Hanvey, Kevin Sullivan, Mark Westenhaver, Ian Horlor, Mark Redal, Carolyn Horlor, Nancy Koptur, Val Ivey, Tom Medina, John Kelly, Sydney Doré

CONTACT: Margaret Vogeli, (360) 413-3013

Confusing Letters Simplified, Saving $, Time, Frustration

Older persons and adults with disabilities sometimes qualify for help with personal care (COPES). Those living in community settings (Adult Family Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, and Boarding Homes) get two letters about eligibility and the part they must pay, one from a financial worker and one from a social worker. The participation amounts in the two letters are different, because the social worker includes costs for room and board. The letters cause a lot of confusion, and Aging and Adult Services (AASA) staff gets many frustrated calls from clients trying to understand their payment obligations.

AASA Home and Community Services staff in Region 6 (Southwest Washington) decided to test a possible solution to the problem. They came up with a plan to consolidate all the information in one letter, issued by the financial worker. Special information is entered into each client's letter, "customizing" the message. While this is time consuming for financial staff, they volunteered to "go the extra mile" in order to reduce confusion for clients.

Results

- ★ $913 and 380 staff hours saved per year, by eliminating four letters per client per year.
- ★ Improved communication with clients and providers, and significant reduction in frustrated calls.
- ★ Plans for expansion statewide, enabling computer efficiencies to reduce workload impact for financial workers.

Team Name: Application Workgroup
Team Members: Penny Black, Lori Hammons, Linda Dieter, Sandy Lail, Bill Moss, Maureen Richter, Marrianne Backous, Lori Rolley, Barbara Follett, Helen Hodgson

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Cooperation between Units Reduces Errors

If the correct amount of the co-pay a client receives for day care expenses is not entered into the computer data bank, then the Food Stamp benefits are not correctly computed. The food stamp error rate for the King East CSO was 16% in August 1998.

A Process Improvement team with representatives from three units designed an improved process. Social Services now provides the Financial Unit with a copy of the Daycare Co-Pay list, which is printed each month.

By using the co-pay list, the financial worker does not have to go to the social service worker or social service clerk to get the information needed when processing a case. This cuts down on the time needed to process a case, and reduces the interruption of the social service worker and/or social service clerk. The savings in processing time is an average of 1.5 hours a day for all units involved. That covers 30 workers who do not need to go to someone else to get the correct information needed to do their job.

This improvement contributed to the current food stamp error rate of 5.41% for the King East CSO.

Results

- ★ Correct Daycare Co-Pay list, which has decreased the number of case errors due to daycare up to 81%.
- ★ Saved 396 FTE hours annually.
- ★ Overall food stamp error rate for CSO decreased from 16% to 5.41%.
- ★ Greater understanding of importance in working together to increase the Food Stamp accuracy.
- ★ Better communication between units in the office.

Team Name: Food Stamp DayCare Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Denise Melton, Carol Westcott, Jeri Rootjes, Pat Bloom, Arthur Ruger, Linda Cheney

CONTACT: Margaret Vogeli, (360) 413-3013

Child Abuse Initiative Educates Professionals

While certain professionals are required by law to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect, many do not have a clear understanding of how and what to report, leaving children at risk of abuse and neglect. A team of staff from the King East Office, Division of Children and Family Services, and from the Children's Response Center developed an initiative, with funding from *Partners for a Healthy Community*. The team analyzed source data regarding referrals to Child Protective Service (CPS) in previous years, and concluded that health care professionals were underreporting, and that educators had the most questions about and difficulty with reporting. These groups were prioritized for training.

The team developed a training curriculum, based on survey data, which covered incidence and prevalence of child abuse, common definitions, indicators and recognition of abuse and neglect, how to make a report, how CPS responds, and agency and community resources. Training began in late 1997 and continued through 1998. Referral source data was collected, along with participant evaluation forms, to determine the effectiveness of the training.

Results

★ 242 health care professionals and 174 educators trained in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

★ 30% increase in referrals to CPS from health care professionals, and 21% from educators.

★ Increase in awareness, skill and comfort in reporting for Health Care Professionals: 81% improved ability to recognize indicators of maltreatment; 100% increased knowledge of community resources; 89% are more able to make a report to CPS; and 44% are more likely to intervene when abuse is suspected.

★ Increase in awareness, skill and comfort in reporting for Educators: 94% improved ability to recognize indicators of abuse; 98% increased knowledge of community resources; and 90% are more likely to intervene when child abuse is suspected.

Team Name: Region 4 Child Abuse Initiative
Team Members: Sheree Andrews, Naomi Childs, Paula Nordby, Shirley Forsman, Chris Trujillo, Debbie Doane, Colleen Hinton

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

LifeBook Project

A LifeBook is a therapeutic life-story book for a child being adopted that helps build a bridge between the child's past and future. The Children's Administration requires that all children going into adoptive homes be provided with LifeBooks, but this was not easily met because the process of creating a book was complex and filled with obstacles. The books that were produced varied significantly in quality, and often did not include discussion of sensitive issue due to the difficulty in composing painful information in a therapeutic manner.

A team of volunteers and staff from the King East Office, Division of Children and Family Services, developed a manual that allows volunteers and staff to create LifeBooks in a consistent, simpler and faster manner. The manual provides a simple step by step process, with easy to use sample paragraphs which address the sensitive issues that result in permanent alterations in the lives of children and families. Adoption workers, assistant attorney generals, foster parents and child therapists reviewed the initial draft manuals and the final draft was field tested for six months.

Results

★ Completed "How-To" Manual and secured funding in King County for high quality albums and supplies.
★ Increased the number of LifeBooks produced from three to 36 during the six month field test.
★ Decreased the number of hours required to complete a LifeBook from 72 hours to an average of 12.5 hours.
★ Stabilized the quality of the LifeBooks regarding appearance and the information contained in the books.
★ Replicable and sustainable, as the manual is being printed for statewide distribution and is available on disk and the shared drive.

Team Name: LifeBook Project Team
Team Members: Laurie Mayer, Chris Trujillo, Carol Schmidt; and Marta Willson, Russ McClintick, Eddie Underwood, Leslie Meik, Rico Cayetano, Jane Christensen (Leadership Institute volunteers)

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Project SAFE Leads to More Treatment for Parents

As many as 75% of parents referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) have problems with substance abuse, which frequently interferes with their ability to adequately parent. The 1995 Legislature allocated funds for Children's Administration and the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) to work together to improve chemical dependency services for families.

The Snohomish County Alcohol and Other Drugs (SCAOD) and four Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) offices developed project SAFE, Substance Abuse Family Evaluation. As part of the effort to improve collaboration and training, a chemical dependency outreach worker is available in each office one day per week to assist social workers in identifying substance abuse issues within families.

Results

- ★ 437 substance abuse assessments completed, approximately 33% more than the average completed in other counties.
- ★ Length of time to complete assessments reduced from three months to two weeks.
- ★ 263 parents engaged in treatment.
- ★ Increased social worker skills in identifying substance abuse in families, resulting in improved child safety through speedier case planning.
- ★ Improved parenting abilities which reduces length of time for children to be in out of home placement.

Team Name: Project SAFE Collaboration Team
Team Members: Barbara Meyers, Sue Welch, Dick Jones, Cammy Hart-Anderson, Marty Bishop, Deborah Brown, Diane Lowry

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Customer Service Team Reduces Point-of-Contact Processing Time

At the customer service counter of the Vancouver office of the Division of Child Support (DCS), customers experienced excessive processing time for point-of-contact assistance. The reception lobby was not customer friendly and presented a very stark and sterile atmosphere.

A dedicated Customer Service Team was commissioned to improve customer service and reduce the point-of-contact processing time. Comprehensive one-stop services significantly reduced the number of steps taken to process and serve the customers. In addition, the lobby atmosphere was enhanced to provide comfort, friendliness and utility for the customers.

Results

★ The process for assisting walk-in customers was reduced from 90 steps to just 5 steps.

★ The time required to serve customers, with an existing DCS case, was reduced from 20 minutes to an average of 10 minutes; and the time required to serve customers establishing a DCS case or making an inquiry was reduced from 25 minutes to an average of 15 minutes. (Average of both = 12.5 minutes.)

★ Plants, rugs, tables, music and more comfortable seating were added to the lobby to offer customers more privacy and comfort when visiting the Vancouver office.

★ Shelves and coat hooks were added in the lobby restrooms.

Team Name: The Vancouver Customer Service Point-Of-Contact QIT
Team Members: Joe Mendoza, Linda Cothren, Karolyn Fox, Kay Gehle, Julie Gonzales, Jan Karcher, Lisa Markegard, Debra McEldery, Joe Mendoza.
Resource members: Vicki Cates, Wayne Cowley and Steve Lovell

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben, (360) 902-0865

Eliminating Costs Saves $

Some residents of Adult Family Homes who have exceptional care needs spend a part of each week in the care of another paid program, referred to as Adult Day Health. In certain cases, the Adult Family Home provider is already paid additional dollars to meet the exceptional needs of the resident. Using both of the services to meet client needs may at times be necessary, but Adult Family Home exceptional care payments need to be adjusted.

A project team in the Aging and Adult Services Home and Community Services Office in Region 5 came up with a tracking system and a formula to adjust payments to the affected Adult Family Homes. These adjustments had to be done efficiently and accurately. The team developed a computerized payment calculation, which efficiently factored in the Adult Day Health hours and made a corresponding reduction in the Adult Family Home exceptional rate.

Results

- ★ Payments to Adult Family Homes in Region 5 were reduced by at least $165,132 in a year.
- ★ Impact on staff time was minimized, due to creative use of computers.

Team Name: Adult Family Home/Adult Day Health Team
Team Members: Rick Bacon, Kim Song, Barbara Engle, Barbara Hanneman, Cheryl Allen, Kay Lawson, Richard Sauls

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Social Workers Trade Paperwork for More Time Serving Clients

In both government and the private sector, it takes continuous monitoring to keep paperwork under control and manage it efficiently. Aging and Adult Services social workers in Region 5 (Tacoma area) decided they were spending far to much time filling out a lot of forms and going around a large office picking up and distributing documents at various desks. Every minute spent on this paperwork was taking away precious time helping seniors and adults with disabilities.

A team decided to try a centralized "HUB" for all the movement of paperwork, to see if "one-stop-shopping" would save time for social workers, financial workers, clerical workers, and even outside agencies. They also looked at time social workers were spending filling out five different forms, and tried consolidating the five into a single document. While the form consolidation did not result in any time savings, the HUB definitely did.

Results

★ 2948 social worker hours saved per year, redirected to time spent with clients.

★ Time savings for other staff, providers, and the public, because documents are consolidated in one place.

★ Encouragement for others trying out quality improvement for the first time, because this project demonstrates a practical, straightforward approach.

Team Name: Social Work Productivity Team (HUB)
Team Members: Barbara Okeson, Pat Rutledge, Margaret Lockhart, Michael Edmonds

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Faster, Better Benefits for Persons with Disabilities

People under 65 with disabilities may need medical and personal care services. To get this help, some may qualify for federal Medicaid coverage through a medical disability determination. Those who are eligible benefit from a wide number of medical services including mental health and dental. The disability determination may also qualify them for help with personal care. Establishing eligibility for these important services is complex and can take time – between 90 and 180 days. During the wait, some people must enter a nursing home to get much-needed care, and lose their community living situation.

Aging and Adult Services staff in Region 6 (Southwest Washington) decided to see if the eligibility determination could be speeded up. The team simplified certain aspects of the application process and prepared instructions that were much easier for staff to follow. The team also met with the DSHS Medical Assistance Administration, Division of Disability Determination, and came up with a package of agreements involving better, more regular information exchange and faster disability determinations.

Results

- ★ Disability determinations have been dramatically reduced from 90-180 days to 1-30 days.
- ★ Clients have continuity of care, rather than going without care or entering a nursing home (at almost twice the cost of in-home care) during the waiting period.
- ★ Medical providers are paid more promptly, because once eligibility is determined, bills can be paid retroactively for 90 days.

Team Name: Medical Disability Decisions Improvement Team
Team Members: Terry Marker, Debra Knauf, Penny Black, Marrianne Backous, Osse Skarpengland, Lois Simko

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Team Clarifies State Development Review Process, Establishes Policy Recommendations

Development Services has the role in WSDOT of forming partnerships with the development community and local governments. Proposed developments are reviewed by staff to determine any impacts they may have on the State transportation system. Staff then works with developers and local governments to ensure a balance between land use and needed infrastructure.

In the past, there was no consistent method or process for development review. This led to unequal treatment, confusion and frustration on the part of all concerned.

This team's objective was to establish departmental policy recommendations to guide the ongoing implementation of Development Services. The policy was designed to maximize statewide consistency without sacrificing the flexibility of each Region to meet its unique goals.

Statewide Development Services process direction and funding source were established. Development mitigation linked to potential WSDOT projects with these potential results:

Results

★ Projects funded sooner.

★ Projects benefit the developer who provides mitigation dollars as well as the traveling public, local governments, and WSDOT.

★ Development Services manual to be published in future.

Team Name: Development Services Policy Natural Work Group
Team Members: Jim Toohey (Process Owner), Todd Carlson (team co-leader), Gary Farnsworth (team co-leader), Mark Rohwer, Bob Josephson, Shuming Yan, Mary Legry, Troy Suing, Dave Bierschbach, Doug Brodin, Randy Deer, Chris Picard, Kathy Lindquist (Facilitator)

CONTACT: Todd Carlson, (360) 705-7967

Here A Vet, There A Vet, Everywhere A Vet, Vet…

The Medical Transportation Program at the Veterans Home in Retsil is over 9 years old and "running out of gas." It used to be that a veteran's medical appointments in the community were first e-mailed to the Transportation Department and then printed out and entered into their old system. Now, with the addition of a new software program, all medical appointments and information needed for billing appropriate agencies and vendors for the approximately 325 veterans at the Home are included into one package. The new program is customized to fit the needs of the Home, able to track resident appointments individually as well as by groups, publish daily appointment schedules at each user station (rather than by hard copy), produce needed reports for Medicaid reimbursement, and is Y2K compliant!

Results

★ A new program has been designed, formatted, and is in operation.

★ The new process is currently being reviewed by the Quality Initiative Team at Retsil.

★ The Food Service Department has been able to identify food wastage and labor savings with up to date information.

★ The ward clerks are now able to access up to date information, print out schedules, and enter new information into the system.

★ Business Services can now attach copies of individual resident appointment schedules when billing Medicaid.

Team Name: Retsil Quality Team
Team Members: Trish Bergman, Fred Browning, Ed Dolle, Josie Esguerra, Chris Scott, Bob Murphy

CONTACT: Fred Browning, (360) 895-4341

A "STAR" is Born

We conducted an Employee Satisfaction Survey and found that an area that was in need of help was our Rewards and Recognition program. A committee was formed and found after reviewing our existing policy that it was cumbersome, inconsistent, and seldom ever used. Our agency had a policy on recognition that contained *five* different levels of recognition.

Through a team effort, we have come up with a new policy that condenses the recognition levels down to three and re-establishes committees using Appointing Authorities as an approval level. The new policy also ties the "Director's Award" presentation with the annual Public Service Recognition Week celebration.

Results

★ We now have more rewarding levels of recognition.

★ There is a "Shining Star Award" which can be delivered at any time by peers, supervisors, or managers.

★ There is a "Distinguished Service Award" which is awarded quarterly by an Appointing Authority through our recognition committee.

★ And last, but certainly not least, is the "Director's Award" which is given annually.

★ These simple timeframes should allow for easy implementation and being able to stay on track with policy in giving the awards to staff on a timely basis.

Team Name: Employee Recognition Committee
Team Members: Ed Dolle, Michelle McMeel, Shannah Rongren, Linda Sharpe, Miriam Young

CONTACT: Ed Dolle, (360) 895-4358

An Rx for Savings

Our computer system for the billing and reimbursement of prescriptions at the Veterans Home in Retsil needed a booster shot. We were able to dispense medications but not bill the appropriate vendors. Since we lost our abilities to create reports, it made it virtually impossible to even bill manually for medications dispensed. We replaced the system with RNA, which brought us back online for billing and reporting, however, we needed to recover the lost revenues from October 1996 through July 1997.

With the help of temporary staff, work studies, and the pharmacy staff, we were able to gather the data for prescription billings. This project has resulted in a billing of 7,714 prescriptions, for a billing amount of $267,647. The agency has recovered $182,500 to date and more funds are yet to come.

Results

- ★ Recovered $182,500 lost revenues to date.
- ★ A streamlined and efficient pharmacy program (RNA) was established at Retsil that is Y2K compatible.
- ★ Using limited resources, we were able to access temporary staff and use work studies which further saved state dollars.

Team Name: Restil Pharmacy Recover Team
Team Members: Donna Grazzini, Kas Green, Joshua McMeel, Susan Ramsey, Larry Sage, Virgil Santos, Charlie Yoon, Brad Babayan

CONTACT: Susan Ramsey, (360) 709-5239

Expedited Appeals Process for Non-payment Suspensions

Because of the need to gather information, convene a formal appeals board, and give a Washington Basic Health Plan member "due process," an appeal can take two weeks to adjudicate. In the majority of instances, this process is most appropriate. However, should a member have his or her Basic Health coverage suspended for non-payment of premium, such an appeal could take place during the suspension month. In this case, the normal appeals process would not be rapid enough to deal with the immediacy of the issue. Our solution was to develop an expedited appeals process for these types of events. In such cases, the process has been reduced from several weeks to seven workdays.

Results

★ In cases where the appeal is upheld, the process enables the member to receive uninterrupted care coverage.

★ A local hearings officer has been appointed to render a decision rather than having to convene a three-member appeals committee to hear the case.

★ For these particular cases, the process has been reduced from 3-4 weeks to seven workdays.

Team Name: Basic Health Expedited Appeals Process Workgroup
Team Members: Willie DeVone, Shari Rose, Rosanne Reynolds, Janet Peterson, Jerry Barnett

CONTACT: Jerry Barnett, (360) 412-4274

Washington State Interagency Outpatient Prospective Payment System

At issue was how to maintain quality communication regarding the oupatient prospective payment system (OPPS), on a limited budget, with hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, freestanding clinics, and interested medical practitioners across the state. OPPS is a major interagency effort involving the Department of Social and Health Services' Medical Assistance Administration (MAA), the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), and the Health Care Authority's (HCA) Uniform Medical Plan (UMP).

The solution has been the use of PC FAX and the creation of an OPPS Web site (www.wa.gov/hca/hprd/opps.htm) containing project information, updates, and 24 hour e-mail capability for stakeholders to provide input to the project.

Results

- ★ Keeping Costs Down: The OPPS TAG receives input from stakeholders, then in turn, shares importation information about the project with other outpatient services providers. Costs for transmitting information to the OPPS TAG has been minimized through the use of PC faxing.
- ★ Improved Communication: The OPPS project Web site is being used to reach practitioners across the state and expand the opportunities for sharing information. The HCA communications staff, with assistance from MAA, L&I, and the UMP, maintains the Web site. The Web contains information about the project; allowing stakeholders to better understand the nature and technical aspects of an outpatient prospective payment system, and ask questions of the project staff.
- ★ Improved Access: Besides immediate access to the HCA, the OPPS project Web site offers stakeholders "hotlinks" to MAA, L&I, ORION Consulting, Inc. (the project consultant), and the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA).

Team Name: Washington State Interagency Outpatient Prospective Payment System Workgroup

Team Members: L&I: Marilyn Gisser, Diane Reus, Mark Hawkins, Jim Dick, Mary Cunningham; MAA: Tom Johnson, Thaivan Nguyen; UMP: Cheryl Mustard, Cynthia Ray, Sharon Thompson; ORION: Mike Mahoney; HCA: Cynthia Smith, John Bowden, Jenny Hamilton, Frank Rutherford, Michelle Harvey; Michelle George, Diana Lessard

CONTACT: Cynthia Smith, (360) 923-2731

Commission Expands Its Outreach & Education Efforts

As illustrated in previous editions of *Governing for Results*, the staff of the Human Rights Commission has taken many steps to reduce the agency backlog, improve complaint response time, and streamline the complaint investigation process. The success of these efforts has resulted in more time to devote to outreach and education efforts.

The Commission's Education and Outreach Committee has met regularly to brainstorm about how to best inform and educate residents of Washington State about their rights and responsibilities under the Washington State Law Against Discrimination and related federal and local statutes. They recently developed an action plan to provide training and education opportunities to individuals and organizations throughout the state for the remainder of 1999.

Results

- ★ The training action plan allows investigators and specialists to plan one year out on dates, locations, and topics for various training seminars and workshops.
- ★ The action plan also includes enhancements to the Commission's program of monthly outreach clinics. The clinics provide an opportunity to access agency services in areas distant from the Commission offices. The Commission has added a fourth location in Bellingham to the existing clinics located in Vancouver, Pasco and Mt. Vernon. The clinics are established in partnership with other agencies. (E.g., in Bellingham, Labor & Industries provided the physical space and equipment.)
- ★ By providing more convenient access to services and information, we reach a wider segment of the public and speed the process by which people can learn about their rights and responsibilities under the Law.

Team Name: The Education and Outreach Committee.
Team Members: Barbara Stroughter (Chair), Regina Hook (Co-chair), Marilyn Akita, Myrna Archambeault, Dorothy Brooks, Diana Guzman, Paul Hernandez, Bruce Redding, Frank Trevino, Eleanor Winkler

CONTACT: Barbara Stroughter, (360) 664-2819.

ISRB/DOC Interagency Agreement

As a result of a reorganization, the newly-created Regional Administrator for the Department of Corrections did not have available office space within existing local DOC facilities.

The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board is a small independent agency which is dependent on the Department of Corrections' computer system for both e-mail and for offender information. Once the Department of Corrections completed upgrading the system to Local Area Networks (LAN's), the ISRB would not be able to access the system without upgrading to a LAN. The cost would have been prohibitive.

Working together to provide a solution to both problems, the DOC has agreed to provide access to the LAN currently being installed in the Sixth Avenue Center Building. This building houses both the ISRB (3rd Floor) and various sections of the Southwest Region DOC (1st Floor). In exchange, the ISRB has agreed to provide available office space for the Southwest Regional Administrator and staff at no cost.

Results

★ The ISRB will save monthly costs for computer system access, will have a fully operational LAN, and will have access to DOC technical support.

★ The DOC will save monthly rental costs for office space and utilities for three employees, as well as use of conference room and other ISRB facilities.

Team Name: ISRB/DOC
Team Members: ISRB: Kathryn S. Bail, Russell Snelson, Dennis Marsh; DOC: Marianne McNabb, Cora Lee Johnson, Nancy Abbott

CONTACT: Dennis Marsh, (360) 493-9266

Preparedness Train-the-Trainer Initiative

Previous preparedness training has been accomplished in each division of the military, but without an integrated approach there was no standardized baseline of curriculum. This QIP used a team approach to set a standard initial training in personal preparedness for self and family. Each division builds onto the initial training given their specific role in the response system. The goal of Readiness includes the commitment to prepare our members, families, neighborhoods, communities, government agencies, and supporting systems. All levels of preparedness must be addressed to ensure a timely, coordinated, sustainable response if needed to preserve the lives and safety, property, environment and economy for the citizens of Washington.

Most importantly, when the desired level of readiness is prepared for the emergency response systems are better postured to respond and prioritize effectively. There are many stories nationwide that validate this approach to mitigate against overloading the response systems in the initial hours and days following a disaster. This QIP is the result of integrating the planning of the initial preparedness training to ensure a reliable measure at the initial training level establishing a common baseline between the divisions. The train-the-trainer program is led and standardized by the Emergency Management Division.

Results

★ The improved process established a basis to ensure the initial goal of 3 days of self- reliance training objectives were on target and measurable.
★ A team of state and military employees planned the curriculum to provide a customer focused, motivating and interesting training program that works in a variety of settings.
★ The format and the trainers have received rave reviews in town hall meetings, community councils, and family support "open-houses" in the military units.
★ Results have fulfilled objectives outlined in the strategic planning process, as well as all focus areas of the Director's Performance Agreement.

Team Name: Emergency Preparedness Train the Trainers Team
Team Members: John Volmer, LTC Lindgren, LTC Worthington

CONTACT: John Vollmer, (253) 512-7046

Cross Functional Expectation Clarification Team

Many organizations experience a lack of common understanding and lack of communication clarifying the roles and responsibilities between the various levels and departments of the organization. In the military, which is historically a vertical, top down driven management model the quality initiative has allowed for an open process to dialog to clarify these competing expectations. This QIP highlights the improvement process embarked on in a two-day retreat of 9 members, including group headquarters leadership and first line managers and supervisors. The commander initiated the process in an effort to increase teamwork, trust and collaboration.

The team at the 252 Communications Operations Group worked to establish and diagram processes to improve and enhance communication, clarify expectations, delineate between redundancies and specific actions in mission critical processes, inclusive of units located in WA and OR. The improvement is increasing efficiencies, and generally improves the overall climate of collaboration in the work environment between headquarters and geographically separated units.

Results

★ Increased awareness of the “parts” and the “whole” of the organization.

★ Increased communication, and clarified roles and responsibilities.

★ Focused on the mission and the personnel.

★ Set the standard and example for collaboration and customer focus.

★ Sets an organizational culture encouraging contribution and continuous improvement.

★ Several processes, from parts acquisition to local policy design, were collaborated on.

Team Name: 252 Combat Communications Group, Air Support Operations Group

CONTACT: Capt Dana Sawyers, (253) 512-3368

Development of Special Case Tracking Database

In FY 1998, the Office of Administrative Hearings received nearly 46,000 referrals of contested case appeals. While the bulk of these cases came from the Department of Social and Health Services and the Employment Security Department, approximately 800 were "special" case referrals from a wide variety of state agencies and local governments.

While OAH has developed automated case tracking systems for DSHS and ESD cases, there has been no systematic way to track special cases. Some caseloads were tracked through computer spreadsheets; others were tracked on paper in spiral notebooks.

Using the agency's existing software, a team of OAH employees has developed an easy-to-use Paradox application that consolidates all special caseloads into one dynamic database.

Results

- ★ Improved ability to track special caseloads for timeliness and quality.
- ★ Improved service delivery by providing more accurate and timely information to client agencies and appellants.
- ★ Improved efficiency and effectiveness of agency staff by decreasing paperwork and improving accuracy of case tracking.

Team Members: Jeremy Hagquist, Zee Hix, Frank Mighetto, Darla Aumiller, Mary Radcliffe, Jan Grant

CONTACT: Barbara Cleveland, (360) 586-3169

Intranet Access to AFRS Financial Information

The Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS) provides the official accounting records for Washington State. Agency customers have praised AFRS for its reliability and integrity, but criticized the lack of flexible, ad-hoc financial and management reports.

Effective November 1998, the Fastrack Project is delivering AFRS financial information over the state intranet. Requested reports or downloads are available within minutes. Downloads go directly to a customer's desktop right into their Excel templates. No more waiting for hard copy reports, no more frustration with the data limitations of hard copy reports, and no more manual re-entry of data into spreadsheets.

Results

- ★ Delivers the latest financial information to the desktops of financial managers, financial analysts and fiscal staff within minutes of the request.
- ★ Reduces time spent gathering data for analysis.
- ★ Provides quick and accurate data for analysis.
- ★ Reduces time spent re-keying information from AFRS reports into agency specific reports.

Team Name: Fastrack
Team Members: Glen Tapanila, Muoi Nguy, Terry Liberty, David Leister, Rick Castro, Don Morris, Keith Cooper

CONTACT: Glen Tapanila, (360) 664-7711

Routine Technology Purchases At A Faster Speed

It was too cumbersome a process and taking too long to order routine technology items. In this age of "virtual", instantaneous response, the OFM Purchase Design Team decided that taking two to three days to get an internal order out the door just wasn't fast enough.

The team made several improvements. The most dramatic was rethinking how a field order was prepared. Instead of having three people involved in the preparation, they reduced the process to one preparer, using a template. The paper shuffling diminished noticeably, duplicate entry of information was eliminated, and, most important, the turnaround shortened to 2 or 3 hours instead of days.

Other improvements included: establishing an "Order Mail Box" on the e-mail system for requestors to use; increasing the on-hand supply of certain items; and using regularly scheduled purchases and credit card purchases as appropriate.

Results

- ★ Quicker turnaround of technology purchases.
- ★ Reduced the number of preparers from three people to one person.
- ★ Improved convenience for the requestor by establishing an "Order Mail Box" on the OFM e-mail system.
- ★ Continued to use credit card purchases as appropriate when a field order is not required.

Team Name: Purchase Design Team
Team Members: Kelly Bradley, Mark Fortier, Sharon Gleason, Carol Jenner, Joy King (facilitator), Rudy Kleinhans, Randy Lance, Laurie Lien, Judy Phelps, Gary Robinson, Jim Scheibe, Barb Skinner, Pam Vessey

CONTACT: Kelly Bradley, (360) 902-0533

Disparity Study

The disparity study is the data collection process and analysis intended to: 1) identify the numbers of minority and women's businesses available to perform public works projects and provide goods and services to state government, 2) identify the government's utilization of these businesses, and 3) determine whether discrimination in state procurement/contracting exists. OMWBE is identified as the lead state agency to conduct the study on behalf of all state agencies and institutions. The original data baseline (Phase I) for the disparity study is now complete. The data collection for the baseline for the disparity study took over two years. The data update (Phase II) is now underway. Based on agency experience and state agency and institution customer feedback on Phase I data collection, OMWBE identified a number of efficiencies during Phase I to be tested during Phase II, including using the same fully trained data collection team throughout the process and test sampling work product. The disparity study itself is a program enhancement to facilitate improved compliance with U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

Results

★ Time spent collecting data from each agency is reduced. Phase I data collection took over two years to complete. Phase II data collection is anticipated to be completed in less than one year.

★ To date, each state agency that has completed Phase I and II of data collection is committing fewer employees and full-time equivalent hours (FTE hours) to the data collection task resulting in better cooperation with OMWBE. State agencies estimated Phase I used in excess of $250,000 in FTE hours. Phase II is estimated to save approximately half the FTE hours estimated for Phase I, or approximately $125,000 in FTE hours.

★ Centralizing the data collection increases accuracy and consistency. Temporary data processors assist the team members in the data collection. Each person received classroom and field training, and data collection equipment. For further quality assurance, work product is periodically sampled and tested. In addition, a designated hotline facilitates prompt resolution to field problems.

Team Name: Disparity Study Data Collection Team
Team Members: Juan Huey-Ray, Anita Jones, Gina Redman, Jean Wheat, Peter Wishau, Jim Medina - Management sponsor

CONTACT: Juan Huey-Ray, (360) 704-1186

Implementation of Initiative-200 (I-200) Interim Changes

OMWBE is an active participant in the Governor's task force covering I-200 issues. The task force was created after I-200 passed, November 3, 1998. The purpose of the task force is to assist the Office of the Governor with determining possible I-200 impacts on state programs. The target date for determining program impacts of December 3, 1998 was met. This task force assisted the Governor with the issuance of Governor's Executive Order 98-01, contract language for voluntary goal-setting for certified firms, and interim guidelines for state agencies concerning I-200 impacts on state programs. OMWBE also devoted staff time and resources for a "hot line" and public speaking engagements to address customer inquiries concerning I-200 impacts.

Results

★ The risk of lawsuits concerning the interpretation and implementation of I-200 is reduced.

★ Opportunities for communication with external customers concerning impacts are increased.

★ Printed documents, including "Questions and Answers" ("Q & A's") of frequently asked questions, instructions, scripts and designated personnel provide consistent and accurate information and interpretation of I-200 impacts in contracting and goal-setting.

★ The data collection from the survey of state agency goal setting and bidders' responses in the post I-200 environment enables the task force to identify and assess I-200 impacts and propose further I-200 implementation guidelines and program changes.

Team Name: I-200 Team
Team Members: Cathy Canorro, Juan Huey-Ray, Jim Medina - Management sponsor

CONTACT: Jim Medina, (360) 753-9679

Improved Household Goods Rules Good for Consumers

Existing household goods carrier rules did not adequately protect consumers nor provide consumers enough choice in selecting a carrier to provide moving services. A team was formed to draft new rules to solve this issue. The new rules provide for more relaxed entry for new household goods carriers and provide more protection for consumers when using household goods carrier services.

Results

- ★ 240 hours saved per year through elimination of 10 to 15 formal hearings.
- ★ Consumers have greater choice in selecting household goods carriers.
- ★ Consumers are protected, through rule, by an established maximum percentage a mover can charge above an original estimate.
- ★ A revised entry process now allows carriers to successfully enter and expand their markets.
- ★ Movers may now offer a firm bid (binding estimate) to their customers.

Team Name: Household Goods Rulemaking Team
Team Members: Kim Dobyns, Bonnie Allen, Carolyn Caruso, Cathie Anderson, Diana Otto, Foster Hernandez, Gene Eckhardt, Thomas MacLean, Marjorie Schaer, Mary Sprouffske, Pat Dutton, Ray Gardner, Anne Rendahl

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 664-1157

Environmental Cleanup Standards

For the past three years, the Department of Ecology has conducted an extensive review of the Model Toxics Control Act. Of particular interest to the Pollution Liability Insurance Agency (PLIA) was a review of the cleanup standards for petroleum contamination. As a result, PLIA's Environmental Engineer completed extensive research and analyses, and collected and tested soil and water samples from throughout the state to provide data for Ecology's review. Because of the significant research, data collection and analysis by PLIA, and collaboration with Ecology's Toxics staff, significant changes to cleanup standards are now being proposed. These changes will ensure that cleanup standards will allow for corrective action to be accomplished at the lowest cost to the consumer, but are protective of human health and the environment.

Results

★ The cleanup standard for soil contaminated with heating oil will be changed from 200 mg/kg to 2000 mg/kg. The change will result in dramatic savings to homeowners and small business operators. PLIA's data demonstrates that application of the new standard will result in average savings of 48% for every cleanup of soil contaminated with heating oil. More important, the application of the new standard will eliminate the requirement to conduct 70% of the cleanups.

Team Member: Hun Seak Park

CONTACT: Jim Sims, (360) 586-5997

State Library Makes Desktop Access Priority One

Our 1994 survey of state employees and legislative staff revealed overwhelming demand for electronic access to our library catalog, as well as to online editions of journals and newspapers. Because of this clear customer requirement, our 1995 Strategic Plan focused on electronic service delivery. Resources – both dollars and FTE's - were redirected to this end, which represented a fundamental shift from our traditional focus on service delivery onsite or by telephone consults.

Our membership in the CLIO consortium (a partnership of TESC, St. Martin's and Washington State libraries) allowed us to jointly acquire a new catalog system that supported Internet access, which became operational in 1997. We also developed contracts with vendors for journal article databases, which involved overcoming thorny issues such as password authentication.

While it took some time, our persistent adherence to a customer driven strategic plan - and the alignment of resources to that plan - resulted in fully functional Web access to library resources for state government in 1998, bringing the concept of an "electronic library without walls" from a vision to reality.

Results

★ State employees can now search the WSL catalog, place holds, and enter requests for other materials 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Team Name: Innovative Development and Enhancement Team, Electronic Journals Team
Team Members: Kelly Bond, Kristy Coomes, Fumiko Coyne, Shirley Dallas, Claudia Devlin, Laurie Fortier, Ellen Levesque, Glenn Parsons, Becky Stewart, Jeanne Crisp, Anne Metzler, Steve Metcalf

CONTACT: Kristy Coomes, (360) 704-5240 X163

Washington State School for the Deaf and Washington State School for the Blind

Enhancing Customer Based Input

The School for the Blind and School for the Deaf are unique state agencies in that they are also public schools. It is the mission of both schools to provide services to children throughout the state who are either deaf or blind. Historically, the way these services have been provided from the two residential schools has been quite different. This often confused local school districts and caused not only a break down in the service delivery model, but a misunderstanding on how to access services.

The superintendents from both schools have been conducting unified public information and awareness meetings to gather input from the consumers throughout the state. This is being used to help shape the future directions of both schools and standardize the process of enrollment and working relationships with local districts and parents. This has resulted in regularly scheduled Summit meetings between teams of individuals from each school that are examining processes, resource sharing, and partnerships.

Results

- ★ Improved public awareness.
- ★ Increased partnerships.
- ★ Reduced confusion of how to access services.
- ★ Development of a stronger partnership between the two residential schools.
- ★ Process modification for enrollment – both schools using similar process.
- ★ Gained efficiency through resource sharing – beginning to see some efficiencies. Through changes in process and procedures the teams anticipate fiscal savings which will go to direct services for children.

Team Names: School for the Deaf/School for the Blind Summit Team
Team Members: Julie Papalia, Tommy Meehan, Sue Bishop, Jim Bickford, Bill Krusinski, Larry Drotz, Len Aron, Dean O. Stenehjem

CONTACT: Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, (360) 696-6321

Training Staff to Facilitate Better Meetings/Process Improvement Teams

There are a wide range of private consultants available to state agencies for training facilitators of meetings and process improvement teams. In order to obtain all the basic skills, employees normally spend up to two weeks in training, which costs hundreds, even thousands of dollars.

It became apparent that spending this type of time and money would not be feasible for many smaller agencies with limited resources. The Quality Consultants for the Washington State Lottery (WSL), Veterans' Affairs (DVA), General Administration (GA), and Department of Health (DOH) created a class to provide this training quickly at minimal cost to their agencies. The result is a two-day class with a half-day follow-up. The course objectives are to learn how to guide process improvement teams through solving problems, decision making, and action planning.

Results

★ The four agencies have 21 new facilitators trained to facilitate teams.

★ Facilitator training is available to smaller agencies at minimal cost. One agency, which had already budgeted for facilitator training for FY99-01 will save about $10,000.

★ New facilitators are equipped with survival facilitation skills in two days rather than two weeks. A buddy system within the new group of facilitators was established to help them network and enhance their skills.

★ Customer satisfaction with course content was high as demonstrated by the following evaluation results "Best class I have attended in 27 years of state government." "The instructors knew how to make it real with real life examples." "I liked the opportunity to practice skills as the class progressed."

Team Name: Facilitator Training Team
Team Members: Mona Moberg (WSL), Barbara Burgener (DVA), Karen Pemerl (GA), Carol Knight-Wallace (DOH)

CONTACT: Mona Moberg, (360) 664-4805

Lucky for Life – Implementing a Successful Game Launch

The mission of the Washington State Lottery is to "produce the maximum amount of net revenues for the state consistent with the dignity of the state and the welfare of the people." In a continual effort to provide game choice for our players, a new on-line game called Lucky for Life was launched in September 1998. The game was launched based on research and evaluation of like-games in other states and input from statewide player focus groups. The focus groups also gave input on the name of the game.

Elements for the success of this game launch included innovations such as retailer forums held at 15 different locations throughout the state. The forums were conducted by Lottery and GTECH staff (the vendor who supplies the terminals for on-line Lottery games). Lottery employees also had a role in which they traveled to retailer locations and distributed complimentary ticket coupons to invite players to try the new game and to help explain the game to retailers and players.

Results

★ Increased communication with the Lottery retailers when introducing a new game or major change. Retailer/Player calls about the new game were reduced by about 75 percent compared to previous game modifications.

★ Increased customer satisfaction. Retailers received information in multiple languages, and simulate playing the game to learn how to play.

★ The entire process of having a cross-functional team meeting on a weekly basis received high recognition by Lottery peers from other states who want to adopt the approach.

★ At a minimum, 230 hours of staff time was reduced due to upfront coordination and planning of how the checks would be issued to winners.

Team Name: Product Implementation Team (PIT)
Team Members: Mary Jane Ferguson (Chair), Tim Brown, Jean Caster, Mara Sobel, Lyn Matson, Ron Robbins, JoAnne Smith, Mary Skube, Ann Clark, Kathy Jump (GTECH), Linda Williams (GTECH), Lara Stark (Publicis), Julie Hart (Publicis), Adam Colby (Publicis)

CONTACT: Mary Jane Ferguson, (360) 664-4833

Scratch Ticket Order Processing

Labels for shipping Lottery scratch tickets to retailers were printed and attached to the cardboard boxes containing the order. Approximately 45 percent of the orders are shipped via UPS. Preparing the boxes to be shipped by UPS required the boxes to be moved across the warehouse, placed on a scale one at a time, scanned to generate a UPS shipping label, and then re-stacked after the second label was applied. This process was inefficient because of the extra handling required.

A team consisting of Lottery, GTECH (one of our vendors), and UPS employees developed software to automatically select the correct box, calculate the package weight, generate an integrated shipping label with both Lottery and UPS bar-codes, and generate a shipment file to be uploaded to UPS. This software eliminates all extra handling of UPS orders.

Results

- ★ A savings of 0.5 FTE in the Lottery Warehouse.
- ★ Eliminated discrepancies between shipping address databases.

Team Name: Scratch Ticket Order Processing Team
Team Members: Rich Koochagian, Ken Balko, Andre Pool, Karl Seitz, Bruce Eisentrout, Rich Downing (GTECH), Mike Buechel (GTECH), Gary Robinson (GTECH), Vijit Coomara (GTECH), Kristal Stahl (UPS), Vince Derubeis (UPS)

CONTACT: Bruce Eisentrout, (360) 664-4790

Program Materials Inventory Review

The agency utilizes a wide variety of program materials in conducting traffic safety programs throughout the state. Those materials must be constantly updated or replaced to reflect changes in demographics, the economy and the law. This constitutes an ongoing workload for the agency's shipping and receiving area as well as increasing demand for inventory storage. The program staff along with the Deputy Director and the Stock Clerk formed a work group and conducted a "hands on" review of all program materials inventory.

Results

★ Approximately 30% increase in storage space.

★ A more orderly inventory.

★ Increased efficiency in providing program materials when needed.

★ Outdated materials surplused, recycled or thrown out.

★ Stock Clerk estimates approximately 30 minutes per day saved in shipping, receiving and stocking inventory.

★ Stock Clerk able to assist other support staff and provide additional telephone coverage.

Team Members: Steve Lind, Jonna VanDyk, Mark Medalin, Letty Mendez, Les Pope, Dick Nuse, Marv Ryser

CONTACT: Mark Medalin, (360) 586-3871