Governing For Results 9

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

January 2000

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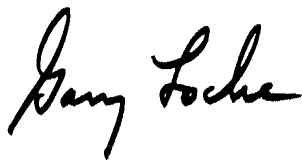
Taxpayers have demanded a better government and state workers have listened and are working hard to gain the public's trust.

Since the first publication of *Governing for Results* in December 1997, state agencies have reported results from over 1250 quality improvement projects.

Inside this booklet are highlights of those efforts from the fourth 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 efforts 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 great 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
Governor

Welcome to the Ninth Edition of
Governing for Results

Governing for Results 9 is the ninth 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 1,250 quality projects, saving the state over $55 million. As a result of these efficiencies, approximately 597,000 staff hours have been saved and redirected to other work or eliminated the need for overtime. In addition, these efforts have produced over $22.5 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 at www.governor.wa.gov.

Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement

The following teams were selected as winners of the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement for the fourth quarter of 1999. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of the *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams.

Team Name/Agency	Book Edition Number	Page Number
Audit Alternatives Team Department of Revenue	Book 8	44
Wood Salvage Project at North Cascades Gateway Center (NCGC) Team Department of General Administration	Book 6	29
Point and Click Team Department of General Administration	Book 3	18
Small Town Environment Program Team Department of Ecology	Book 9	9
Licensing Improvement Process—Phase 2 Washington State Lottery	Book 8	75

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

The following teams were nominated for the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement for the fourth quarter of 1999. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of the *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams.

Team Name/Agency	Book Edition Number	Page Number
"Northwest Family Resource Conference: Open Door for Families" Team Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	Book 8	74
Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration Mental Health Oversight Committee Department of Social and Health Services	Book 8	56
Factory Assembled Structures (FAS) Process Improvement Team Department of Labor and Industries	Book 9	18
ORCA, Occupational Researcher's Computer Assistant Team Employment Security Department	Book 6	14
POPS (Problem Oriented Public Safety) Washington State Patrol	Book 8	77
Clear Writing Guide Team Department of Labor and Industries		

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State Conservation Commission

Utilities and Transportation Commission

Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

Washington State Art Commission

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

Washington State Lottery

Washington State Patrol

Board of Accountancy

Friendly Reminder to Boost Compliance

Last year the agency made several quality improvements to our audit process. As a result we identified a number of licensees who did not fulfill the State's continuing education requirements.

The agency endeavors to encourage and also support licensee compliance with the education requirements. In an effort to deal proactively and positively with this compliance issue, we now send a friendly reminder to each licensee two months prior to their continuing education deadline date. The reminder is in the form of an easy to complete worksheet. The worksheet guides the licensee to determine what s/he needs to do to ensure compliance by the deadline. And, the reminder is sent early enough to allow licensees time to correct any problems.

We have received many "thanks" and compliments from our licensees who appreciate the proactive and supportive customer-service.

Results

★ Vastly improved customer service.

★ Increased compliance with Board continuing education requirements.

★ Improved licensee competency through increased compliance with education requirements.

★ Reduced staff time [sending a 'reminder' takes a lot less time than the amount of time required to enforce the requirements and to discipline a licensee for non-compliance.]

Team Name: Waiver Process Team
Team Members: Dana McInturff, Sandra Shoemaker, Winnie Swanson, Cheryl Sexton, Tim Hoefer, Michelle Paulsen, Orphalee Smith, CPA, Rufino Moraleja, CPA, Laurie J. Tish, CPA, James W. Caley, CPA, Elizabeth Luce, Dante Lee Montoya, CPA, Thomas J. Sadler, CPA

Contact: Tim R. Hoefer, (360) 664-9193

New License Forms: Cost Savings + Attractive

For years individual CPA licenses and CPA firm licenses were printed on a specialized, expensive Tally printer. As the Tally printer approached the end of its service life, we designed blank license forms which could be printed on a standard laser printer. By redesigning the licenses to be printed on our laser printers, the need to purchase a replacement Tally printer is avoided. The new licenses are colorful and much more attractive. Also, the wallet cards which previously were too large for a standard wallet, now fit!

Results

★ Eliminated the need to replace an expensive Tally printer.

★ Eliminated the need for office space for the Tally printer.

★ Eliminated the need for a file server to run the Tally printer.

★ Provide clients with wallet cards which (1) fit in their wallets and (2) have a signature block allowing for use as identification.

★ Issue attractive-looking professional licenses.

Team Name: License Redesign Team
Team Members: Tim Hoefer, Cheryl Sexton, Dana McInturff, Orphalee Smith, CPA, Rufino Moraleja, CPA, Laurie J. Tish, CPA, James W. Caley, CPA, Elizabeth Luce, Dante Lee Montoya, CPA, Thomas J. Sadler, CPA

Contact: Tim R. Hoefer, (360) 664-9193

Information Technology Acquisition Process

The Information Technology (IT) acquisition process has been long and tedious. The timeline from a customer requesting a purchase of IT hardware or software to the receipt of the product has taken up to several months. The IT staff in the regions have been required to do their own price quote bids and, in many instances, three quotes were required for a single purchase.

A fifteen (15) person process improvement team was formed to review the current process and recommend changes. The team first determined the goals and outcomes desired. They then process mapped the current process and worked on creating a new process that could be used throughout the regions and headquarters.

Results

★ For "standard and approved" IT items over $100,000, reduced the acquisition processing time by one – two weeks.

★ For "standard and approved" IT items under $100,000, reduced the acquisition processing time by four – six weeks.

★ Improved service to customers by providing IT standards, price quotes and vendor lists on the DOCNET.

★ Realized staff time savings through the DOCNET information posted about the process by an average of 8 hours per month – per region (total 40 hours per month).

Team Name: IT Acquisition Team
Team Members: Mary Lou Kennedy, Barbara Johnson, Debra Prichard, Richard Hewson, Don Ambrose, Rodney Andreas, Lesli Arney, Gary Banning, Marilyn Bowman, Brian Brown, Tim Combes, Karen Looney, Robert Pearson, Sandy Robertson, Steve Ryser

CONTACT: Mary Lou Kennedy, **(**360) 664-4613

Weapons Qualification

In 1997, 46 Correctional Officers out of 550 failed some part of weapons qualification. In 1998, 34 failed. Staff that did not qualify were not able to work an armed post. This impacted the entire shift. It decreased staff morale because the staff that were weapons-qualified were often required to work overtime at an armed post. It addition, staff that did not qualify incurred overtime by spending additional time at the range in order to qualify.

A committee was formed to review the problem. The committee included both subject matter experts and "customers" of the training. They brainstormed ways to improve the weapons qualification training program. The curriculum was redesigned to be more user-friendly and "success" focused.

Results

★ In 1999 only 10 Correctional Officers failed some part of weapons qualification (less than 2% in 1999 vs. 8% in 1997).

★ Staff morale has increased.

★ Overtime costs decreased approximately 216 hours from 1997 to 1999, resulting in an estimated cost savings of $5,214.

Team Name: WSP Weapons Qualification Team
Team Members: Robert Piver, Dan Tennant, Michael Reddish, Stefan Randolph, Craig Jensen

CONTACT: Robert Piver, **(**509) 525-3610

Department of Corrections and
Department of Social and Health Services

Agencies Join Forces to Resolve Problem

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has historically used The Allotment Preparation System (TAPS) supplemented by an upload process for allotment development. When a key DOC employee left the agency, DOC found itself with an inadequate, largely proprietary system with little documentation.

When Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Budget Staff heard of DOC's dilemma, they recommended a modified version of DSHS's allotment reporting program (WARP). Upon consensus, budget and information technology staff from both agencies worked to resolve potential issues and to customize the program for DOC's use. This collaborative effort resulted in an easier to use allotment system with a streamlined upload process, and adequate documentation.

Results

★ Enhanced communication and a strengthened relationship between the two departments.

★ DOC gained a valuable new application to assist with allotments which: (1) decreases staff time for submitting allotment by requiring less data entry; (2) provides the ability for more in-depth analysis of allotment data; and (3) streamlines the allotment process by providing the ability to develop and allot in one step.

★ DSHS gained a new perspective and feedback on potential enhancements to its version of WARP.

Team Name: DSHS – DOC Allotment Process Team
Team Members: DSHS Members: Robin Campbell, Brad Carlson, Patty Alvord, Bill Stender, Vic Alcantara; DOC Members: Vicki Rummig, Timothy Driver, Madeline Bishop

CONTACT: Robin Campbell, (360) 902-8179 (DSHS)
          Doug Hoffer, (360) 664-0802 (DOC)

Reducing Cell Phone Costs

Cell phone costs for Ecology's Washington Conservation Corps Program began to escalate. A review found cell phone use was increasing because of complex scheduling and the logistical needs of field crews (cell phones are their primary means of communication). Long-distance charges were also increasing.

After investigating the costs and service plan with our service provider, it was discovered that other plans were available to the state that could significantly reduce cell phone costs. Through a combination of more efficient use of cell phones and negotiating a different service plan, costs are projected to decrease by approximately 50% (per phone average).

Results

★ Projected annual savings of $9,000.

★ Reduce cost per cell phone approximately 50%

Team Name: WCC Cell Phone Costs
Team Members: Lorie Bamer

CONTACT: Lorie Bamer, (360) 407-7038

Eliminating Redundant Rule Making

Ecology and the Forest Practices Board were concurrently adopting forest practice rules that potentially impact the waters of the state. This duplication of effort caused delays and added work in rule development and adoption.

During recent Forest and Fish negotiations, Ecology proposed that forest practice rules with water quality implications be adopted by the Forest Practices Board (after review by Ecology). This eliminated the need for Ecology to run concurrent rule adoptions with the Forest Practices Board.

Results

★ Projected savings of .25 to .33 FTE in rule making.

★ Quicker response time to rule development since only one agency is adopting the rule.

★ Improved public image by eliminating redundancy that was highly visible to stakeholders.

★ Streamlined the process and reduced public confusion.

Team Name: Forest Practices Rule Adoption
Team Members: Doug Rushton, Dick Wallace

CONTACT: Dick Wallace, (360) 407-6489

Assisting Low-Income Vehicle Owners with Repairs

Vehicle owners in the Vancouver area are required to have their vehicles inspected every two years for excess exhaust emissions. If a vehicle does not pass the emission test the vehicle must be repaired and re-inspected. Authorities were concerned about the financial crisis that low-income households could face if their vehicles failed the test.

A partnership was formed between the Southwest Air Pollution Control Authority, The Salvation Army, the local automotive repair industry and Ecology to provide grants of up to $450 to low-income citizens for vehicle repair costs. The project is aimed at properly repairing the failing vehicles to achieve maximum air quality benefits.

Results

★ Since March 1999, 385 vehicle owners have received repair assistance through this program.

★ The repaired vehicles have achieved an average 65% reduction in air emissions.

★ Approximately 60% of the vehicle repair shops in the Vancouver area are participating in the program, some adding their donated time or parts for repairs exceeding $450.

Team Name: Emission Repair Assistance Program
Team Members: Ecology: Bruce Estus, Dale Jensen, Curt Piesch, Myron Saikewicz, Ray Russell, Linda Hall, John Raymond; SW Air Pollution Control Authority: Bob Elliott, Randy Peltier; The Salvation Army: Steve Rusk, Linda Elmore

CONTACT: Curt Piesch, (360) 690-7163

Department of Ecology

Self-help Approach to Improve Sewage Treatment

Small, rural communities are often faced with failing septic systems or aging sewage treatment plants. The costs to develop or upgrade sewage treatment systems can be well beyond the means of these communities.

Ecology initiated the Small Towns Environmental Program (STEP) model which is based upon a do-it-yourself approach of self-help to save money and time. Local residents bring their talents and resources together to plan, design and even construct many aspects of the sewage treatment system. Ecology provides technical assistance to ensure the state's water quality standards will be met.

Results

★ Six small, rural communities have used the STEP model to successfully upgrade their sewage treatment systems (Palouse, Blanchard, Edison, Wilkeson, Starbuck and Willochet Harbor Sewer District).

★ Cost avoidance of $4.4 million (Ecology grants and loans and local community dollars).

Team Name: Small Towns Environment Program
Team Members: Katharine Cupps, Christine Hall, Richard Koch, Stewart Messman, Dave Nunnallee, Janice Roderick, Cheryl Strange, Kenneth Ziebart

CONTACT: Janice Roderick, (360) 407-6541

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

Re-using Treated Wastewater for Non-potable Uses

As water sources get harder to obtain, it is becoming necessary for communities and businesses to safely develop reclaimed water as an alternative source for non-drinking water uses. Those uses include water for golf courses, parks and firefighting.

The Departments of Ecology and Health and a Water Re-use Advisory Committee worked together to develop standards for reclaimed water. Demonstration grants were provided for four projects in the cities of Yelm, Sequim, Ephrata and Royal City. The results of the demonstration projects are proving the feasibility of using reclaimed water from sewage treatment facilities.

Results

★ Reduces pollution to fish-bearing streams.

★ Increasingly an important alternative for addressing water needs.

Team Name: Water Re-use

Team Members: Jerry Anderson, Katharine Cupps, Chuck Hoffman, Melanie Kimsey, Mel Lick, Richard Koch, Jon Peterson, Wayne Peterson, Glenn Pieritz, Janice Roderick, Shara Stelling, Craig Riley (Health)

CONTACT: Katharine Cupps, (360) 407-6542

Department of Financial Institutions

Improved Information Services Support

Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) has 130 employees, including 60 field staff who receive computer support from 3.6 Information Services (I/S) staff. Users were experiencing minor problems that I/S staff were unable to quickly resolve due to more complex and pressing issues. Service delivery was improved by creating divisional quasi-technical staff and designating them as I/S Coordinators. The coordinators were given responsibility to prioritize and coordinate their division's support requests. The coordinators were also given the tools and authority to fix minor problems.
Baseline and follow-up surveys were conducted to measure improvement in user satisfaction of I/S support.

Results

★ User satisfaction improved by 14.7%.

★ Turn-around time for simple and complex problems improved by 41.2%.

★ Average time to fix computer problems was reduced by 22.3%.

★ Average number of requests in the queue was reduced by 21.8%.

★ Average number of requests closed/completed increased by 22.3%.

Team Name: DFI I/S Coordinators
Team Members: Patty Brombacher, Gloria McVey, Tina Philippsen, Nicole Scott, Chris Turcotte, Julia Boe, Tom Parma

CONTACT: Julia Boe, (360) 902-8728

Department of General Administration

Honorarium Team

Volunteer participants from the private sector are asked to serve on Architect/ Engineering firm selection panels. Historically each volunteer was paid $50 a day as an honorarium, with most panels lasting two days. Could we eliminate this fee and trim our budget? Would panelists continue to volunteer? Besides eliminating the fee payment, all of the associated time and expenses with cutting payment warrants would be saved.

We eliminated this fee and panelists continue to volunteer for these important selection panels. In addition to saving honorarium fees, we saved processing time for preparing the warrants to pay the fees.

Results

★ First quarter of FY 2000 has saved $2,640 in honoraria.

★ $600 saved in preparation of warrants to pay the honoraria.

★ One hour preparation time with two staff in Engineering and Architectural Services (E&AS) and three in the Financial Office required to cut a warrant - a total of 30 hours.

★ The volunteer panelists have been saved 15 hours time to prepare the warrant requests and $9.90 in stamps to mail it into GA.

Team Name: Honorarium
Team Members: Cheryl Royal, Kathi Fyfe, Lynda Hollinger

Contact: Cheryl Royal, (360) 902-7239

Department of General Administration

Improved PUSH Program

The PUSH Program is a system that allows the customer to place a "one time" order for continually ordered items and have them automatically delivered at prearranged intervals.

The order process was very time consuming for both the customer and Central Stores. A team was formed to review the current process and explore options. The team implemented a new and improved PUSH Program, and continued to revise the system based on additional customer feedback.

> The key improvements include:
> - enhanced delivery schedule to meet customer's needs,
> - printed calendar of the customer's personalized delivery schedule which also takes into account holiday schedule changes,
> - a flowchart and customer service desk manual were created to help GA staff provide consistent response to customers, and
> - internal system improvements which also resulted in education and understanding of the system for everyone involved.

The PUSH Program was added as a new feature of the Point & Click electronic catalog. A customer brochure has also been developed to market this time-saving feature.

Results

★ Annual savings of approximately $10,560 for emergency freight charges that have been eliminated.

★ GA staff saved approximately 20 days annually.

★ Each customer will save approximately 45 minutes per PUSH order which will result in saving customers that participate a total of 89 days per year.

★ Increased customer satisfaction with customization options and time savings.

Team Name: Improved PUSH Program
Team Members: Candas Wilson, John Cadoo, Chuck Hill, Jake Jacobson, John Klein, Corey Larson

Contact: Candas Wilson, (360) 902-7409

Site Applications Streamlined

The Higher Education Coordinating Board's Health Professional Loan Repayment Program repays some education debts for health care providers who serve in certain "medically needy" sites.   The Department of Health assists the Board by ranking sites by need. This ranking is used by the State Health Professional Loan Repayment Advisory Committee to identify and approve priority sites. The old process for approving the sites was complex, vague and lengthy. About 60 percent of applications had to be returned to the applicants and the application process took about 10 weeks. The team simplified the selection criteria, scoring system and application form, and updated mailing lists.

Results

★ Application process reduced from 10 weeks to two weeks.

★ 100 hours saved by reducing the number of forms with errors from 60 percent to just 17 percent.

★ $1,200 saved in reduced printing and mailing costs.

★ The number of sites applying increased from 84 to 120.

★ A customer satisfaction survey showed that 80 percent of the customers rated the changes a significant improvement.

Team Name: Health Professional Loan Repayment Team
Team Members: Troy Parks, Vince Schueler, Lorraine Edwards, Nicole McAllister, Kathy McVay (Higher Education Coordinating Board), and the State Health Professional Loan Repayment Advisory Committee which includes: Mary Looker, Ken Bahm (US Public Health Service/Region X), Diane Weeden (DSHS/Medical Assistance Administration), Laurie Wylie (Western Washington Area Health Education Center), Steve Meltzer (AHEC at WSU Spokane), Pam Snider, ND (Bastyr University), Talibah Chiku (Northwest Regional Primary Care Association), John McFatridge, DDS (Puget Sound Neighborhood Health)

CONTACT: Vince Schueler, (360) 705-6767

Department of Information Services

Automated Accounting Lookup Table

The Department of Information Services' (DIS) Accounts Receivable (AR) unit uses an Excel spreadsheet to record payment receipts from our customers. The spreadsheet requires an entry in the customer name and ID number columns. In the past, the AR unit would type each customer's name and ID number on the spreadsheet. Typing each name and number accurately took time in order to maintain a zero error rate. To improve our process, we are now utilizing our mainframe database through an Excel spreadsheet. The interface with the mainframe database allows for additions and changes to the customer base to be captured in seconds by pressing a button on the spreadsheet. This spreadsheet (Lookup Table) automatically fills in the customer's name with just a few keystrokes. This new process has eliminated at least 30 minutes per day of FTE time. It has also dramatically improved our error rate to virtually zero.

Results

★ Estimated savings of 30 minutes per day of FTE time.

★ Improved accuracy due to fewer keystrokes.

★ Increased customer satisfaction due to fewer accounts receivable errors.

★ Increased worker satisfaction due to convenience of fewer data entry key strokes.

Team Name: Automated Accounting Lookup Table
Team Members: Louis Dassow, Les Dawes, Jerry Messer, Chuck Smith

CONTACT: Carol Wozniak, (360) 902-3506; Louis Dassow, (360) 902-3455

Department of Information Services

Online Business Card Request

Department of Information Services (DIS) employees request business cards in various methods. Some employees email a request note, others write the information on a sheet of paper and send it through campus mail and some just call for the request. Each method proved to be time consuming and created a lot of confusion by staff, which resulted in unproductive work time. The request process also required a staff person to re-create a sample business card, which was then forwarded to the State Printer.

To reduce the amount of time and administrative paperwork necessary to request business cards, an online WEB form was developed. Employees now click the "business card" request key and a business card is automatically created using our employee database. Employees are able to make modifications to their business card, which automatically updates the agency's employee database. Employees finish the transaction by hitting the submit key. Their request is then forwarded to the State Printer.

Results

★ Reduced 25 FTE hours spent on processing business card orders.

★ Eliminated administrative paperwork creating a cost avoidance.

★ Improved accuracy and faster processing time of business card requests.

★ Improved accuracy of the employee database.

★ Improved customer convenience.

★ Improved customer satisfaction from the State Printer.

Team Name: Online Business Card Request Team
Team Members: Mike Elliott, Doug Golden, Don Coulter

CONTACT: Carol Wozniak, (360) 902-3506; Mike Elliott, (360) 753-4484

Reducing Warehouse Delivery Time

Warehouse staff wanted to reduce time spent delivering supplies to Central Office and improve morale. A team was formed, and it set its goals: reduce delivery time by 15 percent in eight weeks and improve staff morale.

At the end of eight weeks, the team had improved delivery time by 40 percent. Morale improved significantly. Warehouse staff are now able to focus their time on a backlog of tasks, such as ergonomic adjustments, assembling furniture and making minor repairs. This allows the department to save additional funds by not having to contract out these services.

Results

★ Reduced delivery time by 40 percent.

★ Developed and implemented a list of "best practices" for reducing delivery times.

★ Designed a tracking system for delivery times.

★ Developed an agreed-upon list of teamwork objectives.

★ Improved teamwork and employee morale.

Team Name: Warehouse Breakthrough Team
Team Members: Richard Detheridge, Willard Derouen, Dennis Munday, Philip Paduano, Michael Moreno, Richard Lingle, Gayle Wilde (Staff Consultant)

CONTACT: Richard Detheridge, (360) 902-5870

Factory Assembled Structures (FAS) Plan Review Effort Scores Big Gains

Modular building manufacturers were dissatisfied with Labor and Industries' (L&I) plan review process. Other problems were: the low acceptance rate (30 percent) of the first-time plans submitted for review, perceived lack of consistency, communications and perceptions about professionalism.

The Plan Review team collaborated with the manufacturers to improve communications, develop training and computerize processes. The team improved approval rates and enhanced customer service, all without lowering standards or sacrificing public safety and health.

Results

★ The plan approval rate went from an average of 30 percent for the 12-month period prior to the start of the project, to an average approval rate of 69 percent for the following 13-month period, an increase of 130 percent, without lowering standards.

★ Five training sessions were developed and presented, as well as one-to-one training was provided to manufacturers.

★ The review process was streamlined. Many problems were corrected over the phone, saving time and money for the manufacturer.

★ Customer service delivery was improved through collaboration between the manufacturers and FAS Plan Review staff, saving the customer time and money, and using staff time and resources more efficiently.

★ A database was developed enabling management to get immediate data on approval rates by manufacturer. Also, a Computer Aided Design (CAD) system was installed; staff now receives and reviews electronic versions of manufacturer's plans.

Team Name: FAS Plan Review Team
Team Members: Norm Williams, Kay Larson, Bruce Vogt, Craig Sedlacek, John Harvey, Dan Wolfenbarger, Ernie LaPalm, Larry Corbin (Staff Consultant)

CONTACT: Larry Corbin, (360) 902-4234

Fee Due Correction Notices to Electrical Customers

The process for notifying customers about outstanding electrical permit fees was lengthy and cumbersome. Inspectors wrote corrections at the inspection site and returned to their offices to calculate the amount of money owed. Inspectors had to get permission from supervisors before charging certain fees, and then support staff mailed out notices.

A team was formed to simplify the notification process. Now, the inspector identifies, documents and posts the correct fees right at the inspection site, using an existing form utilized by Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) electrical inspectors statewide. With the time saved, inspectors are able to complete more inspections in a timely manner.

Results

★ Increased by 8 percent the number of electrical inspections that are completed in less than 24 hours, going from 82 percent to 90 percent.

★ Reduced by 5 percent the number of electrical inspections that took more than 24 hours but less than 48 hours.

★ Eliminated the need for clerical time and postage costs.

Team Members: Jim Hinrichs, Don Millar, Conrad Freeling, Ron Sanders, Dobbe Spasojevich, Tim Jurkovich, Steven Shanholtz, Cassie Black

CONTACT: Jim Hinrichs, (425) 290-1320

Department of Licensing and Department of Veteran's Affairs

Verification of Veteran Eligibility

Certain disabled veterans are eligible to license one personal-use vehicle without payment of any license fee or excise tax. There are specific criteria that must be met to receive this free license. To apply, a disabled veteran requests a letter from the federal Department of Veteran's Affairs stating their eligibility. The veteran then forwards that letter, along with a copy of their registration, to the Department of Licensing (DOL)– which would then issue the exemption, add the information to the Disabled Veterans database and send the customer a letter. There was no procedure in place to verify that the letter was legitimate or that those individuals in the database remained eligible for the ensuing exemption years. The Disabled Veteran Team, a cooperative effort between employees of the DOL and the Washington Department of Veteran's Affairs (WDVA), developed a procedure whereby DOL would fax the letters from customers to WSDVA for verification. In addition, a database cleanup was run, eliminating 2,140 records of individuals who were either deceased, had outdated records or were no longer eligible for the exemption.

Results

★ Enhanced the quality of service to our veterans.

★ Established a process to eliminate the risk of DV plates being issued to individuals based on fraud or altered information.

★ Identified and eliminated 2,140 records currently in the DV database that were no longer eligible for the licensing exemption.

★ Generated approximately $130,000 in additional revenue by requiring those vehicles registered under the DV exemption – that were not eligible for that exemption – to be become registered under the "regular" process and to pay the excise tax.

Team Name: Disabled Veterans Team
Team Members: DOL Employees: Evelyn Barker, Trudy Wilson, Mike Lyon, Dale Moon, Laura Darby, Kim Bankuti, David Gilmore. WDVA Employees: Jim Rising, Alex Deluao, Ric Price, Sharon Lindley

CONTACT: David Gilmore, (360) 902-3776

Recognition Action Team (RAT)

According to the 1999 Employee Survey, the two lowest scoring areas in the Driver's Services Division were (with the average *below* the descripter "Occasionally"):

- "When I improve my performance, my accomplishments are recognized," and
- "My manager recognizes work groups/employees for their contribution to customer satisfaction."

In addition, many of our employees suggested that low morale was related to a lack of genuine, timely recognition by both supervisors and their peers. This team tackled the issue of recognition, determining that it is not just the responsibility of management, but is everyone's job to give recognition. The team developed and tested an informal/flexible recognition packet which is easily customized to fit the needs of a unit or an individual (including a suggestion list of no and low cost recognition ideas such as: thank you cards, pencils, bookmarks and pencils).

The packets were delivered to every Driver's Services team member and every manager/supervisor was challenged to "catch people in the act of doing something right" and in modeling good recognition techniques.

Results

★ Developed an informal recognition program and packet for the Division.

★ Presented ideas for recognition at the DOL Leadership Days conference.

★ Gained Executive Management support for a greater agency-wide effort.

★ Had information and blank certificates posted on the Intranet.

Team Name: R.A.T. Team

Team Members: Kathy Strand, Molly Larson and Vickie McDougall (co-team leaders), Joann Ryan, Joe Omlor, Ismael "Izzy" Anaya, Patrick Pockat, Ron Hamblin

CONTACT: Kathy Strand, (360) 902-4096

Personnel Resources Board Coordination

Preparation and follow-up of administrative requirements for the monthly meeting of the Personnel Resources Board were inefficiently coordinated and costly in terms of staff time and printing costs. To improve efficiency and the quality of the product, duties were consolidated and assigned to an existing position that would serve as Coordinator. This eliminated several administrative steps and freed hours of staff time for five employees. Materials were made available electronically in a user-friendly format, resulting in the reduction of printing costs. The new Coordinator function also provided a single, central source of information and assistance for customers.

Results

★ An annual savings of approximately $837 in printing costs.

★ The conversion of an existing position to the Coordinator function freed approximately 1,488 hours per year from other staff members at no additional staffing cost.

★ Improved quality and consistency of the Personnel Resources Board documentation, and improved electronic accessibility.

★ The duplication of efforts was eliminated.

★ Provided greater customer service to both internal and external customers by giving them a central source of information and assistance.

Team Name: Board Coordination Team
Team Members: Jamie Peck, Lisa Skriletz

Contact: Jamie Peck, (360) 664-6331

Inserting Samples Improve Communication

The Department of Printing mailing section refers to a sample provided by the customer to determine the proper inserting order of each job to be mailed in envelopes. In the past, this stapled sample traveled with the job through the entire printing and mailing process. Many times the inserting sample was separated and unfolded as other production departments referred to the sample during printing and folding. This led to delays when the mailing staff had to rebuild a sample.

The team revised the process for creating and distributing samples. Now, two samples are made with the customer, one for the printing process and one for inserting. The inserting sample remains with the mailing staff after being approved by the customer. Simple revisions in the planning process not only eliminated delays caused by the destruction of the inserting sample during the printing process, but also reduced errors by creating a process for customer approval of the sample when it is created.

Results

★ Decreases delays caused by the lack of inserting instructions, resulting in anticipated savings of 818 hours of staff time per year.

★ Speeds production, resulting in anticipated savings of approximately $7,500 per year in labor cost charges to customers.

★ Reduces inserting errors by 90%.

★ Facilitates production to decrease turnaround time and ensure that customer deadlines are met.

★ Streamlines processes so staff time can be redirected to other mailing jobs, increasing production capability.

Team Name: Department of Printing APM Team
Team Members: Tom Beattie, Rick Garcia, Jo Jilek, Kelley Kellerman, Niki Loftus, Leslie Oliphant, Chad Perschon, Erica Woodruff

CONTACT: Kelley Kellerman, (360) 753-6820

Paper Recovery

Excess paper ordered but not used on a print job is called, 'spoiled stock.' Reasons for spoiled stock are varied, including incorrect cutting or a customer change of mind. This paper had previously been used only for machine test runs. Stacie Wakefield, Estimator in the Production Planning department, recognized the need for change. She developed and implemented a new paper recovery program, whereby, spoiled stock is entered into our computer inventory and used for future jobs.

Results

★ Complete inventory figures now available for all stock.

★ Time saved if spoiled stock is used first before a 'special order' is placed.

★ Savings anticipated for this fiscal year of $12,000 by making use of previously unused paper.

Team Name: Use It – Don't Lose It!
Team Members: Stacie Wakefield, Paul Lofgren

CONTACT: Stacie Wakefield, (360) 753-6820

Department of Retirement Systems

Customers Benefit from Improved Appeals Process

When retirement systems members challenge a decision made by the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), they file a formal appeal. Prior to 1996, most pension appeals required coordination with other state agencies. The average processing time was 26.2 months from initial filing of the appeal to final resolution.

In 1996, DRS hired an internal Appeals Officer. Since that time, procedures have been developed and systematically improved to ensure a fair, impartial and efficient process for handling member appeals. Some of the changes include a standard scheduling protocol that ensures timely progress in all appeals. Informational materials were developed to educate potential appellants about the process, and a pre-hearing conference is held in every case within two months of an appeal being filed. Consistently since 1996, the Department has experienced continuous reductions in average appeal processing times. The average time for resolving new appeals filed in Fiscal Year 1999 was 7.7 months.

Results

★ Appeals are resolved quicker while ensuring fairness and impartiality; new appeals are being resolved in an average of 7.7 months, reflecting a 71 percent reduction in the average duration of the appeals.

★ Pension appeals are heard by a hearing judge who specializes in pension law.

★ Appellants are better informed regarding the appeals process and their rights and responsibilities.

★ Appellants' attorney fees are minimized by reducing the duration of the appeals process.

★ Future agency decisions involving similar circumstances benefit from the earlier resolution of contested issues.

Team Name: Retirement Appeals Team
Team Members: Ceil Buddeke, Karen Moore

CONTACT: Ceil Buddeke, (360) 664-7294

Department of Retirement Systems

Software Inventory Process Gets an Upgrade

The Department of Retirement Systems did not have an automated process in place for tracking and managing the PC software used within the agency. Documentation listed the purchased software and the corresponding individual. The records were tracked and updated manually. The process allowed for errors and outdated inventory reports.

Working on weekends to avoid disruption, Information Services (IS) technology staff visited every PC within the agency and conducted a complete inventory of installed software. At the same time, a software tracking application was installed on the network server to allow for automated inventories to be conducted in the future at regular intervals. This process allows for automatic data collection, avoiding visits to each PC.

Results

★ IS technology staff can readily identify which software is installed on every PC, improving the response to users' needs for support.

★ Having a complete inventory allows agency-wide software standards to be developed, increasing the agency's ability to provide internal technical support.

★ The new process allows for automated software audits, saving 86 hours per year which would otherwise have been spent visiting each PC and updating inventory records.

★ The system now provides a mechanism for producing up-to-date management reports that show what software is installed on each corresponding PC and its location.

Team Name: Software Inventory Team
Team Members: Thresa Ellis, John Ingram, Zodie Lindseth, Cindy Miller, Teresa Roddy, Pam Voss, Art Walker

CONTACT: Sheryl Hall, (360) 664-7143

Department of Revenue

On-Line Remittance Memorandum

Payments sent in by customers are matched and processed to invoices on the agency's computer system. At times, the payments arrive prior to the invoice being created on the system. When this happened, the processor printed a copy of the Tax Account screen and manually wrote all of the information on the copy to assure proper posting. This process was time consuming, inconsistent and had the potential for numerous time consuming errors. The new on-line Remittance Memoranda can be scanned by the data imaging system, is faster, more consistent and results in fewer errors.

Results

★ Eliminates the need for keeping paper files since the form is scanned into the computer automatically.

★ Automated form is more consistant and saves 520 hours each year by eliminating time consuming research of errors and mis-postings.

★ Eliminates information keying by Data Entry personnel by allowing automatic data capture.

★ A reduction in transposition errors results in more accurate records.

★ Customer service is improved by eliminating unnecessary requests to customers due to posting errors.

Team Name: Remittance Memorandum Improvements

Team Members: Mark Bigelow, Bret Bretthauer, Charlotte Craven, Anita Duemig-Fairbanks, Mel Kirpes, Mark Lewis, Peggy North, Nonnie Phan, Seawillow Rolly

CONTACT: Mel Kirpes, (360) 902-7123

Taxpayer Accounts Receivable Integrated System (TARIS) Focus Group

The Audit Division's TARIS Focus Group was formed as part of the Strategic Business Plan. Entitled "Re-engineer the Tax Assessment Front-end Process," the challenge was to align the audit assessment process with a new integrated agency-wide system. The team also focused on improving the timeliness and consistency of audits. The Audit 2000 Workbook program was created, piloted, implemented, and the assessment process was altered to work with the new format. The new Workbook system is currently used as a benchmark by other states and will most likely be presented as an 'exemplary practice' at the Federation of Tax Administrators Conference this year.

Results

★ Audit 2000 Workbook system standardizes schedules and automates the entire audit report; increases audit consistency to 100%.

★ Reduction in clerical processing time saves 5,700 hours, a 40% reduction in time spent processing audit reports.

★ Eliminating pre-printed forms for audit reports saves $10,500 a year.

★ 75% reduction in mechanical/math errors.

★ The Audit 2000 Workbook system is being benchmarked by other states.

Team Name: TARIS Focus Group
Team Members: Ken Capek, Mike Beith, Randi Johnson, Wendy Fraser, Marji Hendershot, Erlinda Salido, Sue Morris, Jerry Hammond, Dean Johnson, Jim Pizl, Kathy Oline, Bob Caetano, Diane Threatt, Scott Garrison, Ken Monson, Lee Gappa, Cherryl Scott, Forrest Bush, Lee Springer, Bev Medeiros, Pat Ancock, Debi Brower, Janetta Taylor

CONTACT: Mike Beith, (360) 753-5572

Department of Revenue

Automated Training Registration System

Employees previously requested approval for training by completing a pressure-sensitive, four-page registration form. The form is only slightly more advanced than the old carbon copies and if you don't 'press hard,' the last page is illegible. The form was then forwarded for signatures/approvals to the supervisor, manager and finally to the division's Assistant Director. Once all signatures/approvals were made, the form was finally sent to the Training Unit for processing. Many times the class was full before the Training Unit received the form. The new, fully automated system provides employees a method for submitting and receiving training request approval online.

Results

★ Eliminating paper forms saves $300 annually and 1032 hours of processing by the Training Unit.

★ New database provides statistical training information online saving 100 hours each year by eliminating manually created monthly reports.

★ Elimination of mail time allows training requests to be processed faster and gives employees a better opportunity to register before classes reach maximum capacity.

★ Registration forms cannot be misplaced or lost.

★ Supervisors have computer access to current registration information for staff.

Team Name: Automated Training Quality Team
Team Members: Tim Anderson, Mark Andrews, Sandy Davis, George Dewan, Bev Garrick, Connie Rossi, Dung Tong

CONTACT: Sandy Davis, (360) 664-0582

Department of Revenue

Uniform Interview Rooms & Lobby Project

The Department of Revenue's Tacoma lobby has many incoming telephone calls and customers requiring assistance. Some customers require additional assistance in the lobby's interview rooms. These rooms did not have all the materials needed to provide the necessary services for customers. The staff using the rooms passes through the lobby and into a secured area to obtain the necessary materials. Front-office staff had to leave their customers to open the security door, exasperating the lobby's traffic problem, as well as distracting the front-office employees and their customers. The team researched all potential resources needed in the rooms. They stocked, labeled and organized the materials into a uniform layout, saving time and increasing productivity.

Results

★ Saves 65 hours annually by not having to retrieve and locate needed materials.

★ Interruption minimized between office personnel allowing for more focused and individualized service to the customers.

★ Increased confidential atmosphere for customers' tax issues and concerns.

★ Less stressful, more professional atmosphere for customers and employees.

Team Name: Tacoma Interview and Lobby Improvement Team
Team Members: Karen Erickson, Becky Fernandez, Doug King, Kathy Knaus, Celeste Morgan, May Patajo, Carol Robinson, JoAnne Stoltz, Minh Tran, Joyce Veenstra, Mary Wilber

CONTACT: Becky Fernandez, (253) 593-2747

Confidential Tax Information Authorization

Many taxpayers request that the Department of Revenue (DOR) discuss or release directly to their authorized representative (i.e., tax attorneys and accountants) their confidential tax information. Various divisions require taxpayers to authorize the request in writing. This resulted in the same taxpayer completing several different forms of authorization for each division of DOR.

The team developed one standard form to ease the burden for taxpayers. The new form addresses each division's requirements. The future direction for the team is to make the information available to all employees online for instant accessibility.

Results

★ Standardized and simpler format for taxpayers to identify their authorized representative. The form is available on the Internet.

★ Online access through a centralized database permits all Revenue employees to identify authorized representatives -- rather than having to research throughout the Department.

★ Eliminated duplication of effort and taxpayer frustration (one form, one time).

★ Saves the time required to identify who is authorized to represent taxpayers.

Team Name: Confidential Tax Information Authorization Team
Team Members: Mike Beith, Cynda Johnson, Doug King, Kim Lee, Madelon Barton, Melinda Haeffele, Jerry Hammond

CONTACT: Jerry H. Hammond, (360) 753-5511

File Transfer Simplification Saves Time, Speeds Service to Long-term Care Clients

Long-term care clients who live in a residential setting such as an adult family home or assisted living facility, receive case management services from the local DSHS Home and Community Services Office. If they live at home, DSHS contracts with the local Area Agency on Aging to provide case management, and temporarily sends the client file to this agency.

Before the file transfer simplification project, tracking the movement of client records was cumbersome. For example, if a client in his/her own home moved from Yakima to Seattle, a bulky file had to be returned to the local DSHS Home and Community Services Office to log changes. It was then forwarded to the new local Area Agency on Aging which would serve the client at his/her new address.

A project team in Yakima created and tested a form that can be faxed to DSHS instead of returning the entire client file. With the information on the form, Home and Community Services staff can update information without the client record. As a result of this project, the client record can now move swiftly and directly from one Area Agency on Aging to another.

Results

★ Records move rapidly from one Area Agency office to another, allowing services to be opened in the receiving office faster.

★ $306 is saved each year in postage costs.

★ 90 DSHS clerical staff hours are saved per year.

Team Name: File Transfer Efficiency Team
Team Members: DSHS Aging and Adult Services Administration (AASA): Aileen Kulik, Anna Rodriguez , Jess Ygona. Area Agency on Aging (AAA): Merletta Roberts

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 493-2613

Department of Social and Health Services

Central Washington Region Adoption Consortium

Nationwide, child welfare agencies struggle with the length of time it takes to complete adoptions for children who cannot live with their birth families. Research continues to demonstrate that children do better in permanent living arrangements. The Central Washington Adoption Consortium team succeeded in streamlining the adoption process to achieve permanency for children in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

The team developed a region-wide adoption consortium, combining public and private resources within the Moses Lake, Wenatchee and Omak areas. The consortium was developed to serve children who are legally free for adoption and are not currently living with families who plan to adopt them. They meet monthly to compare information about children needing adoptive homes and possible adoptive families within the three communities. Consortium members then move quickly to place children when they identify a family match. Both process for concluding the legal work to finalize adoptions and the application process for adoption support funding for children with special needs were streamlined. Because of these improvements, children become permanent members of their new families much more quickly.

Results

★ Increased adoptions completed from 19 in 1998 to 33 in 1999.

★ Saved $22,161 in foster care costs.

★ Trained six adoption social workers to use a streamlined adoption support application process and to more efficiently conclude the legal process.

★ Planned training for 200 people on pre- and post-adoption issues.

Team Name: Adoption Consortium Team
Team Members: DSHS: Margaret Amara, Cecilia DeLuna, Kim Shively, Susannah Young, Maggie Mitschelen, Stacy Coronado, Kathy Howe, Connie Saracino, Kate Carrow, Sharon Ham, Jan Lammers. Community Members: Peggy Hallinan, Carren Summerfield, Gail McDonough, Alethia Wickstrom, Christi Killien, Katie Lawless

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Team Efforts Serve Thousands of Families & Save Hundreds of Hours

The staff of the Wenatchee Community Services Office (CSO) processes a minimum of 8,000 applications for assistance each year. With these kinds of numbers, even a low percentage of error can negatively impact clients and translate into many hours of rework applications. To address just such a circumstance, the Wenatchee CSO commissioned a cross-functional Quality Improvement Team made up of staff who initially gather information from clients, screeners and the financial workers who use this data while working with clients. Over a period of four months, the team identified a number of issues which contributed to the rework problem, and developed and tested several theories for change.

Three team recommendations were implemented. The steps taken improved communication between clients and screeners by providing client-friendly screening areas, enhanced teamwork between screeners and financial workers, and began the development of a desk reference to assist those who screen clients.

Results

★ Increased morale and efficiency of staff responsible for conducting client screening. Staff role has changed from clerical to customer service.

★ Greater accuracy of initial information has generated stronger cooperation and a spirit of teamwork between staff responsible for screening applications and financial workers.

★ Client feedback clearly shows an appreciation for the personal service and privacy that the newly developed procedures offer. As a result of this improved customer service, information provided by clients is more complete and accurate.

★ Improved customer service is also reflected in the applications for assistance processing rate. Applications processed without error have increased from 86 percent to 95 percent. Elimination of processing error re-work saves 440 hours per year that is being applied to enhance client service.

Team Name   Wenatchee CSO Screening Quality Improvement Team.
Team Members: Patty Flores, Rosemary Herrick, Alma Rivera, Gary Thomas, Roni Babcock, Sandy Webb, Bill Ansert
CONTACT: John Lein, (509) 662-0541

Continuous Improvement Proves Key to Maintaining & Building on Quality Gains

During the first half of 1999, the recommendations of a Process Improvement Team were applied to meet the emergency needs of qualifying Food Stamp applicants. Meeting this emergency Food Stamp needs is referred to as Expedited Food Stamp Processing. An effort is always made to complete these Food Stamp applications within five days. The initial recommendations of the Process Improvement Team resulted in 90 percent of Expedited Food Stamps being processed within the five days. In a classic application of the Quality Process, monitoring of the new procedures revealed opportunities for continuous improvement.

The Process Improvement Team used a locally developed procedure called FastTrack to further improve Expedited Food Stamp customer service. Recommendations from the team included reserving early appointment times for Expedited Food Stamp clients; refresher training on electronic processing procedures; and a method to daily monitor both pending and processed applications for Expedited Food Stamps.

Results

★ Significant improvements in customer service.

★ Faster processing of Expedited Food Stamp applications.

★ Results have improved steadily since August 1999 with 99.33 percent of Expedited Food Stamp applications being processed within five days over the last three months.

Team Name: Shelton Expedited Food Stamp FastTrack Team
Team Members: Denise Avery-Baeton, Lillian Douglas, Dennis Roice, Rod Sauer

CONTACT: Lillian Douglas, (360) 432-2047

Replacing Microfiche with CD Data Storage

Historically, the Division of Child Support (DCS) has used microfiche as the medium for archiving data. Microfiche require time consuming manual lookups. The distribution of microfiche is cumbersome and storage is awkward.

The team researched options and switched to a CD storage system. Changing to a CD system allows staff to search the data much more efficiently. Storage is also simpler.

Prior to changing to the new CD system, ISSD Data Control produced microfiche, verified the data and sent it to DCS. DCS verified the correctness of the information and distributed the information to the field. Now, the new CD system is produced from DCS data and sent immediately to the field by ISSD Data Control, therefore eliminating the duplication of verification efforts and additional handling. Additionally, moving to CD reduced the cost of archiving data by $535 per month.

Results

★   Distribution was improved by moving that responsibility to ISSD Data Control.
★   Access to the data was improved by using a search engine provided on the CD.
★   Storage of the data was improved. One CD is easier to store than several packets of microfiche.
★   Reduced storage costs by $535 per month.

Team Name: Microfiche QIT
Team Members: Kelley Romeo, Rod McNeil, Steve Wathne, Brian Main, Mike Hoder

CONTACT: Brian Main, (360) 664-5428

Department of Social and Health Services

Improving Full Party Status Child Support Establishment

The Division of Child Support (DCS) began including custodial parents as full party participants in the administrative establishment of support several years ago. However, the existing process was complicated, time-consuming, and delayed the entry of a final support order. This delayed the process when a child received support. Additionally, the process involved parents sequentially, rather than simultaneously. This created confusion to parents, administrative law judges, review judges, and DCS staff. DCS formed a team that simplified the process and eliminated five out of nine forms.

Results

★   Reduced time to issue a support notice from as much as 120 days to 18 days.

★   Eliminated five forms.

★   Estimated 7,595 FTE hours saved annually.

★   Reduced process steps by at least 50 percent.

★   Improved fairness to both custodial and non-custodial parents, creating parallel hearing rights.

Team Name: Full Party Status QIT
Team Members: Ellen Nolan, Janet Wallace, Erika Berg, Tom Rawlings, Jim Remsen, James Wong, Constance Mitro, Deanna Swanson

CONTACT: Ellen Nolan, (360) 664-5066

Quality Telephone Service Improvements

Have you ever tried to reach someone in a large organization only to be transferred from one person to the next? Have you ever received a voice mail response when you wanted to talk with a real person? As an employee, have you ever been frustrated by not having the information you needed to refer callers appropriately? These are some of the issues the Quality Telephone Improvement Project (Q-TIP) addressed at DSHS.

The cross-agency QTIP Team researched these problems and made multiple recommendations for developing tools, processes, and training to improve service to clients and others doing business with DSHS by telephone. As a result, an agency-wide policy has been issued requiring that callers always have the opportunity to speak to a live person rather than leave a voicemail message. Internal and community telephone directories are being improved to make it easier to find DSHS numbers; and a telephone service training program will be provided to all DSHS employees.

Results

★ Improved service and access to clients and others doing business with DSHS by telephone.

★ Improved directories to aid DSHS employees in referring callers appropriately.

★ DSHS employees will receive training and tools to help them provide excellent telephone service.

Team Name: Quality Telephone Improvement Project
Team Members: Diane Perry, Lyla Grimm, Nancy Gnepper, Aleta Quimby, Ziad Abusamha, Shelli McClafflin, Terre Penn, Sheryl Turner, Jill Montgomery, Ed Hundsnurscher, Michelle Mirante, Karen Rose-Smith, Jerry Cooley, Danny Pratt, Sue Breen, Barbara Glass, Amy Jutte, Diane Daniels, Brenda Reagan, Erin Sando, June Simpson, Christi DeWitt, Patti Westom, Dave Black, Vi Moody, Elyse May, Martha Janson, Marie Hendershot, Jack Morris, Mike Frost, Riane Perron, Robin Campbell, Tonia Frasier, Lynn Elkins, Barbara Conley

CONTACT: Aleta Quimby, (360) 664-5929

Top Team Puts A New Spin on Recoveries

The Tax Offset Program (TOP) is federally mandated to recover eligible food stamp debt by intercepting Internal Revenue Service (IRS) income tax refunds. The offset can only occur if the name and Social Security number (SSN) match on state and federal records. For example, a match would not occur if the wife's name was primary on the debt, but only the husband's SSN was on the IRS return. The Team discovered that a secondary match attempt on other names in the debt file increased the likelihood of a match. This innovation is expected to increase TOP recoveries by more than $90,000 for Year 2000.

Results

★ An additional $382,886 in debt was certified for participation in the Tax Offset Program. Based on previous experience with this program, actual recoveries are expected to increase by more than $90,000 for 2000.

★ The State of Washington was recognized by the IRS for being the first state to attempt this new approach, and is serving as a model for other states.

Team Name: The TOP Team
Team Members: Lyla Grimm, Ziad Abusamha, George Burden, Sandra Gosk, Barbara Ochs, Gill Fahrenwald

CONTACT: Ziad Abusamha, (360) 664-5520

Department of Social and Health Services

Streamlining the Incident Reporting Management System at Fircrest School

Every Residential Habilitation Center, which is a center for persons with developmental disabilities, must have a system to resolve individual complaints and investigate alleged abuse that ensures compliance to Federal Regulations.

Fircrest School had a system that required documentation of every injury no matter its severity. In addition, this system required documenting behavioral issues and listing any unusual situations. As a result of this system, a minor scratch received the same attention as a cut requiring sutures. The staff responsible for performing the investigations and implementing appropriate corrective action was falling behind in meeting the investigation deadlines.

To ensure that thorough and timely investigations are conducted on incidents that truly warrant them, the team redesigned the system. The new system includes clearer definitions and a checklist for investigations. The procedure requires staff to focus on spotting abuse or neglect. A process for trend analysis was formalized to ensure that minor incidents continue to be evaluated.

The state survey team felt that this streamlined system was effective in achieving the outcomes expected by the Federal Regulations and used the Fircrest "Event and Incident Manual" as an illustration of an effective system to other residential habilitation centers in the division.

Results

★	More time is available for intensive investigations.
★	A formalized process now can analyze trends and patterns in less serious incidents.
★	A system was created that complies with the expectations set forth in the Federal Regulations.
★	More thorough investigations are resulting in plans of correction that are more targeted to client needs.
★	There has been a reduction in incidents needing investigation, resulting in savings of 296 FTE hours annually. (Baseline - 1,532 incidents; Final - 94 incidents)

Team Name: Incident Management System
Team Members: Kevin Quinn, Jeanne Kennedy, Paul Murphy, Dan Sevigny, Lura Dunn
Contact: Lura Dunn, (206) 361-5262

Department of Social and Health Services

SSPS Invoice Express

The Social Service Payment System (SSPS), a Unisys mainframe program from the 1970's, provides payment for social services delivered to 110,000 DSHS clients. This mission-critical system authorizes $1.7 billion per biennium in state and federal funds. Each month, SSPS prints and mails 46,500 invoices to SSPS small service providers, 98 percent of the total providers. Invoices list the maximum service allowed. The provider fills in the actual service delivered and returns the invoice by mail. Each invoice is manually keyed for payment. The return postage and data transcription are very costly. Delays in mailing, stray documents and data entry errors irritate providers and create a large workload for SSPS and field staff.

The new statewide Invoice Express System allows small providers to dial via telephone into an interactive voice response system and report the services delivered. By reducing paper invoice returns, DSHS is saving $174,000 annually for return postage and data transcription. Invoice Express eliminates the three day return mail time, 1.5 days for data entry, and 2.5 weeks of delay due to mistakes on invoices. The increased accuracy of reporting reduces duplicate invoice requests by 20 percent and saves 120 hours of staff time annually in handling those requests. A reduction in mis-mailed documents and mis-keyed data saves another 660 hours of staff time annually.

Results

★ Reduced costs for return postage and transcription by $174,000 per year.
★ Reduced 4.5 days of cycle time per invoice by eliminating return mail time (three days) and data input process (1.5 days).
★ Eliminated 2.5 weeks of delay for incorrect invoice information or input errors.
★ Saved 120 hours of staff time per year in handling duplicate invoice requests.
★ Saved 660 hours of staff time annually in correcting mis-mailed documents and mis-keyed data.

Team Name: SSPS Improvement Team
Team Members: Stephen Anderson, Joe Barton, Melisa Berntson, Chris Bowman, Glenda Calderon, Lucinda Frazier, Collette Jacques, Phil King, Bob McBee, Adine Moody, Thanh Ngo, Tien Nguyen, Helen Patred, Ed Putman, Yvonne Renz, Courtney Schonberg, Clarence Shafer, Shirley Stirling, Ute Syben, Cheryl Threatt, Phu Vuong, Fran Wilson-Maudsley

CONTACT: Shirley Stirling, (360) 664-6149

Department of Transportation

Facilitators Come Together to Support Each Other

The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT's) facilitator resource pool was insufficient in the number of experienced and adequately trained facilitators to meet agency need and demand. As a result, some facilitators were overwhelmed with requests for their time, while others were virtually untapped.

The Planning and Programming Service Center's Steering Committee and Management Team sanctioned an independent facilitator support group for its service center. This group identified that a gap existed between inexperienced and experienced facilitators, many nearing burnout under such high demand. Service Center facilitators came together to explore ways of enhancing the skills of the facilitator resource pool in order to meet customer needs and avoid facilitator burnout. Interest in this group rapidly grew, and it has now become a resource to all WSDOT facilitators in the Olympia area.

Results

★ Employees develop skills in a supportive environment.

★ The agency benefits from these additional skills, particularly in expediting continuous improvement efforts in a comprehensive, yet highly efficient fashion.

★ The skills developed also help employees in their regular jobs and their personal lives.

★ The facilitation and instruction duties can be distributed to many people, circumventing "burnout," and achieving continuous/process improvement.

★ Overall cost of team efforts is reduced.

Team Name: Olympia Area Facilitator Support Group
Team Members: Ron Rolfer (Team Leader), Kathy Lindquist (Facilitator), Deb Gregory, Irene Hertwig, Lee Ann Mills, Pat Morin, Chris Schroeder

CONTACT: Chris Schroeder, (360) 705-7152

Department of Transportation

Improved Worker Safety and Processing Time at Materials Laboratories

Samples of aggregate (rock) used in asphalt and concrete were often too large or small. Samples that are too large and heavy can cause injury to workers. Samples that are too small don't have enough material to conduct required tests. Transmittal forms were also frequently missing information, delaying sample processing.

A standard sample bag size is now used statewide, reducing sample weight from approximately 100 pounds per bag to 30-50 pounds per bag.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Construction Manual has been updated to include maximum and minimum sample size requirements.

When transmittal forms are supplied to WSDOT project offices, instructions are now included with them.

Results

★ Lost time and restricted duty days related to sampling were reduced from 62 days per year to an average of two days per year over two years.

★ Uniform sample size eliminates wasted materials and reduces workload.

★ Turnaround time on sample testing is expected to improve by eliminating time spent correcting or completing transmittal paperwork.

Team Name: Sample Size and Transmittal Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Bill Heryford, Jim Weston, Joe DeVol, Dean Moore, Dave Sorensen, Larry Hateley, Jon Cichowski, David Jones, Terry Simmonds (facilitator)

CONTACT: David Jones, (360) 705-7832

E-Workbook Measures Up

The process for gathering, formatting and distributing WorkFirst performance measure data was inefficient and time consuming. Data was downloaded from several systems in various formats followed by extensive format changes for spreadsheet software compatibility. The reformatted data was then transferred to 62 Excel workbooks with links to 640 charts and mailed to 120 offices monthly. WorkFirst's Research Team coordinated with the Governor's WorkFirst Sub Cabinet members from Employment Security, Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Financial Management, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Community Trade and Economic Development to improve the process. They used brainstorming, consensus and research to display their data in a single workbook, which is now available on the Internet. It serves 135 regional, district and field offices with updated statistics and charts.

Results

★ Process time reduced by more than 50% - 2,248 FTE hours saved per year.

★ Saved $45,000 in paper, copying and mailing costs over 12 months.

★ Sixty-two Excel workbooks were reduced to one.

★ Increased customer satisfaction due to better product, fewer workbooks, better distribution.

★ Increased interagency cooperation.

Team Name: ESD WorkFirst Research Team
Team Members: Scott Clay-Poole, Bruce Parrish, Michele Petritiz, Greg Weeks

CONTACT: Bruce Parrish, (360) 438-4161

Colville KO's Counter

Colville customers waited at a front counter while a receptionist hand delivered routing slips to alert staff of their presence. The person at reception also had oversight of the Resource Center, which left both the reception and resource center unattended at times. Customers entering the Job Service Center would see the line and unattended reception counter and sometimes just turn around and leave. Unable to hire additional staff but wanting to improve services, Colville staff used team training and quality improvement tools for a solution. The receptionist's role changed to Resource Center Monitor, and the counter was removed. The Monitor is now located in the Resource Center to quickly assess customers' needs. Clients are directed to appropriate self-service resources, assisted personally or referred to computers for individual intensive services. This is done without leaving the Resource Center, so customers entering the office are greeted and routed to appropriate services, contributing to friendlier service and increased usage.

Results

★ Decreased customer wait time 63%, from an average 11 minutes to 4 minutes.

★ Eliminated unstaffed workstations.

★ Increased customer usage in the Resource Center.

★ Created a more customer-friendly environment.

★ Increased capacity to serve customers by 20%, or 8 hours per week.

Team Name: Colville Resource Center Redesign
Team Members: Kimberly Holling, Kathy McIntyre, Kenneth Walden

CONTACT: Kenneth Walden, (509) 685-2119

CAP-turing Aptitude

Historically, aptitude testing services for injured workers, WorkFirst clients and students were performed manually with reports printed and mailed to contractors or counselors. Many states had stopped using them because it was a time-intensive process. Without test results, counselors could not provide critical information to customers making occupational choices. The Test Scoring Service Team developed and negotiated a contract with Spokane Community Colleges and the Department of Corrections at Airway Heights. Employment Security hired inmate workers to perform test scoring, utilizing the Computer Applications Project (CAP) Lab. Inmate workers converted the previous DOS Reporting System to Microsoft Word and Excel by enhancing interpretive reports and adding graphs, making them easier to understand. They post test results to a local network so staff can download results and mail them electronically to counselors or contractors. Customers now have faster access to test results and even a new web site to market Test Scoring Services nationwide.

Results

★ Decreased the wait time for test results from 3 weeks to 4 days.

★ Reduced staff costs for scoring from $14 to $2 per hour resulting in a 280% reduction, or 887 FTE hours annually.

★ Saved $500 in postage and $10,000 in printing and packaging test results.

★ Redirected 900 FTE hours to other priority work in the Corrections Clearinghouse Unit.

★ A contract to score tests for New York's Department of Vocational Education generates revenue and Internet marketing will generate additional contracts.

Team Name: Washington State Employment Test Scoring Service Team
Team Members: Susan Cooper, Jeff Johnston, Ramona Dahl (Employment Security/Corrections Clearinghouse), Lynn Stettler (Community Colleges of Spokane), Al Ramos (Department of Corrections), Offender Staff at Airway Heights

CONTACT: Doug Jacques, (360) 438-4060

Employment Security Department

"Scan Me Up, Scotty"

The Office Services Unit is responsible for Employment Security's Inventory System.   In the spring of 1997, the system failed. Even when it worked, it was cumbersome and did not allow for extraction, addition or correction of new data. Although the failing system used bar-code tags, the agency did not have the technology and software to maximize its benefits. Consequently, serial numbers had to be manually entered on the inventory report form and then keyed into the system. The failure prevented the department from submitting an inventory report to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) as required by law. It also generated an audit finding by the State Auditor in 1998. In response, a team was charged with designing and implementing a new Inventory System. The Fixed Assets Inventory System (FAIS) was designed and implemented utilizing bar-coding technology that scans preprinted tags and downloads the data. The automated system is accurate, efficient and user friendly.

Results

★ Inventory was submitted to OFM in time to meet reporting requirements.

★ Decreased risk to the agency through effective management of inventory.

★ Changes and corrections to inventory are made easily and quickly using technology.

★ Management reports are available in several different formats.

★ Increased accuracy by eliminating errors with bar-code and scanning mechanisms.

Team Name: Fixed Assets Inventory System (FAIS) Team
Team Members: Pam Ames, Rick Littlejohn, Joe Greene, Josh Ford, Greg Taylor, Judy Jones

CONTACT: Rick Littlejohn, (360) 902-9444

Tracking and Coding Rescue

The Office Services Procurement Unit is responsible for acquiring, tracking and payment of supplies and equipment for the agency. The Fiscal Unit is responsible for payments to vendors and other accounting activities. The two units are housed in separate buildings. The process used in coding, tracking and paying vendors was time intensive and included double entries into a manual system, sometimes resulting in charging errors. The Procurement Unit maintained an electronic record of orders placed, but suffered a three-day delay when orders were sent to Word Processing for entry. Additionally, the old system lacked a common database accessible to both units, which created delays when responding to customer inquiries. A team from Procurement, Vendor Payments, Information Services and an outside vendor designed a new system with a Microsoft Access database. It streamlined coding, tracking and payment processes for field orders and storing support documents at a central location. The system is accessible to both Procurement and Fiscal staff, and team members can easily respond to a customer's status inquiry or a request from management for a specific report.

Results

★ Staff savings of approximately 30 hours have been redirected to other priority tasks.

★ Requests for vendor supplies and equipment reduced from 3 days to 24 hours.

★ Improved accessibility to order status information and management reports.

★ Records of charges and payments to vendors are more accurate.

★ Accounting system entries are made electronically from field order data and no longer have to be entered separately, eliminating duplication.

Team Name: Field Order System Improvement Team
Team Members: Mary Kristofferson, Ketsy Pitts, Charlotte Justice, Michelle Mattson, Steffan Chau, Marie Dunlap, Judy Jones, Rick Littlejohn, Jill Jorgenson, Gary Broers, Mike Varner

CONTACT: Jill Jorgenson, (360) 902-9445

Employment Security Department

Tax Credit Anyone?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides up to $3,816 per year to low-to-moderate income workers. A charge came from the Governor's Office to ensure that eligible workers understood EITC—how to claim it and access free tax assistance programs. Barbara Gorham of the Office of Financial Management (OFM), along with WorkFirst staff, set up the project. An EITC Unit was established with three tax credit agents, one support person and a program manager. In partnership with OFM, they strategized an outreach campaign, implementation plan and timeline. Ground rules on how the unit would operate were created and consensus decision-making was applied to develop a manual of Policy and Procedures. A task list to guide implementation of their four-pronged outreach strategy included establishing a toll-free EITC information and referral hotline for clients, marketing the EITC and hotline through mass media, and designing and distributing promotional materials to eligible workers.

Results

★ State had largest increase for EITC filers nationally in the 1998 tax credit season.

★ The initiative brought an additional $29.2 million into the state's economy in 1999.

★ $348 million total came directly as cash refunds to low-to-moderate income families.

★ Although not quantified, families saved monies previously spent for tax preparation.

★ Washington's EITC outreach campaign became a national benchmark as one of four states documenting increases in households benefiting from the tax credit in 1999.

Team Name: EITC Outreach Team
Team Members: Marty Duburque, JoAnn Hairston, Kathy Hunter, Yancy Rosado, Cynthia Sipin

CONTACT: JoAnn Hairston, (206) 766-7230

"Reaching Out" Gets a Grip!

Everett's "Reaching Out" project assists laid off Boeing workers back into the workforce. The goal is for workers to receive a minimum of 80% of their pre-laid off wages in new jobs. Initial intake and enrollment processes were averaging between 4 to10 days to complete, and required clients to make as many as four separate trips to the office. Clients risked losing financial benefits or critical school enrollment dates because of the lengthy process. A team brainstormed solutions to reduce intake and enrollment times. They developed an orientation that enrolled clients in one day, if necessary paperwork was complete. The orientation compressed a four-step process, taking up to 10 days, into a 2-hour presentation with individual follow-up sessions. The new process increased productivity, eliminated enrollment backlogs, overtime and the need for clients to return to the office.

Results

★ Clients can now be enrolled in the project after only one visit to the office.

★ Project enrollment backlog eliminated.

★ High quality client assessments are being maintained with clients afforded individual planning information and valuable labor market information.

★ Office accommodates increased activity without working overtime, saving $131,625 per year.

★ Efficiencies enable staff to manage larger caseloads and maintain capacity to process additional enrollments; productivity up from 6.5 enrollments a day to 20, a 307% increase.

Team Name: Everett "Reaching Out"
Team Members: Matt Bench, Pat Burns, Ron Byer, Tracy Doolittle, Pat Ingalls, Jan Stivers

CONTACT: Matt Bench, (425) 339-4918

Audit Smiles

The State Auditor's Office issued findings concluding Employment Security Department (ESD) lacked adequate controls over WorkFirst Program transactions and access to the JOBS Financial System (JFS), which processes program payments. The problem was created, in part, by a new automated system which made payments quickly and reduced paperwork. But because staff reponsibilites were not clearly defined for documenting internal contracts, there existed inherent risks for fraudulent payments and unallowable charges to the program. A quality improvement team was established that mapped corrections for a consistent, statewide process. A training curriculum was written and all staff with any WorkFirst Program responsibility were properly trained. Offices then developed written procedures, ensuring adequate internal controls.

Results

★ Auditor's Office completed audit for FY 99 indicating prior findings of inadequate controls were resolved and would not be reissued.

★ Prevention of audit findings and future audit savings of approximately $8,500.

★ Total staff savings—5,380 hours: review of documents 1,000 hours; document correction and re-submittal 4,320 hours; and document retrieval and reconstruction 60 hours.

★ Current audit showed only 7% of offices with exceptions, compared with 57% to 100% of offices over the last six years.

★ Cost avoidances in the future.

Team Name: WorkFirst Vendor Payment Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Nelson Meyers, Dianne Bongarts, Marchiea Anderson, Lola Barkley, Millicent Blocquer, John Gardner, Jeanice Jarvis, Skip Nordal, Janet Olson, Vickie Baxter, Vicki DeBoer, Kathy Ramoska, Kris Moritz, Jackie Bergener, Dennis Beatty, Rene Porche

CONTACT: Dianne Bongarts, (360) 438-4127

Evaluations Languish No More

The annual employee survey and a follow-up staff survey by the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division Quality Council resulted in low ratings for employee feedback about job performance and advancement. Results showed 51% of staff had no personnel evaluation during the last 12 months. The council charged a team with developing and implementing an improved process for the division. The team used continuous quality improvement tools (brainstorming, cause and effect, and surveys) to gather information, analyze the problem and develop a new tracking and monitoring system. After a six month pilot, the process was modified using customer feedback and then implemented. In the old system, a Human Resource Management notice went to division managers and sometimes never made it to the supervisors responsible for conducting evaluations. This caused evaluations to be delayed or not done at all. In the new system, 60-day and 30-day evaluation notices go directly to the evaluating supervisor and employee, and past due notices go directly to the Assistant Commissioner. An evaluation tracking management system was created in Access and is maintained by designated Performance Evaluation Coordinators to ensure updates occur regularly. It also allows for tracking and notifying supervisors and employees of evaluation due dates for trial, probationary and in-training review.

Results

★ Created an automated tracking and monitoring system.

★ Developed standard operating procedures for sending evaluation notices, receiving responses from evaluating supervisors and following up on overdue notices.

★ Increased the percentage of divisional employees receiving timely evaluations from 49% to 77%.

★ Increased opportunity for career development and advancement for UI staff.

★ Built-in accountability system for past due evaluations.

Team Name: UI Employee Survey Subgroup/Employee Development
Team Members: Tim Carrothers, Sharon Epperson, Sandy Hoar, Mary Kirker, Dennis Knopp, Rosie Lee, Marci Moore, Pat Langevin, Cathie Penrose, Becky Richards, Joanna Watson

CONTACT: Joanna Watson, (360) 902-9335

"First Call Resolution" Improves Customer Service

Prior to implementation of "first call resolution" at Basic Health, processing account adjustments received by phone required an electronic referral from call center staff to member services staff. This could take as long as five working days from the initial phone call to resolution of the problem.

Basic Health developed "first call resolution" to more efficiently assist applicants or members. Now, as problems are identified, they are corrected that day by call center/member services staff, eliminating the need to route an electronic follow-up to member services staff for processing.

Results

★ The processing time for account adjustments has decreased by as much as five days, thus greatly improving customer service and internal efficiencies. This also allows Basic Health staff to focus on other duties.

★ Staff morale has improved as a result of "first call resolution," as a number of employees were promoted to a different job classification because of additional responsibilities. Basic Health staff were also empowered to perform additional account adjustments.

★ Nearly 450 fewer electronic inquiries/requests for account adjustments had to be generated and routed each month because these requests were handled by phone.

★ Basic Health received 23,123 fewer documents from 1998 to 1999. This represents a savings of nearly $8,000.

★ First call resolution has resulted in a savings of .55 FTE to Basic Health.

Team Name: Basic Health "First Call Resolution" Team
Team Members: Preston Cody, Teresa Edwards, Lois Johanson, Katheryn Jones, Marianne Mason, Cindy McKinzie, Cherie Narrance, Darla Nelson

CONTACT: Cindy McKinzie, (360) 412-4260

Conversion to State Central Payroll System Increases Efficiency and Enhances Customer Service

Liquor Control Board (LCB) maintained a stand-alone payroll system for over 25 years that did not interface with the Washington State Central Payroll System or other state agencies which required payroll information. The agency spent labor intensive hours preparing and reporting payroll-related information to the Health Care Authority, Retirement Systems, Employment Security, State Treasurer and OFM. Additionally, LCB required its own IT applications support staff to maintain the system. Using tools and techniques for quality improvement, a Process Improvement Team assessed the need to improve the process, gathered data and recommended conversion to the State Central Payroll System. This improved internal and external customer service, and increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Results

★ Decreased in-house IT programming support time by 1,584 FTE hours annually.

★ Increased accuracy of reporting directly into AFRS. The 72 annual FTE hours routinely spent verifying and preparing FTE journal vouchers is redirected to duties created by central payroll conversion.

★ Statewide inclusion of benefits is now provided in the employee benefits statement when an employee transfers agencies, and legislative changes to the State Payroll System are immediately applied.

★ Conversion to the State Payroll System allows LCB to recruit from a large pool of qualified state applicants with payroll expertise. Previously, new payroll employees required several months of training on LCB's in-house system.

★ Efficiency and accuracy of payroll information has increased and is consistent with the rest of state government, thus eliminating the need for special reporting to the legislature for payroll-related information.

Team Name: Payroll Conversion Team
Team Members: LCB Employees: Fay Bronson, Curt Volland, Keith Greig, Jeannie Walker, Nancy Lin, Chris McCarthy; DOP Employees: Susan Sparks, Debbie Meach

CONTACT: Fay Bronson, (360) 664-1673

Conversion to Copy Center Saves Time & Money and Increases Productivity

The Liquor Control Board (LCB) Print Center's annual printing services activity was 20% in-agency and 80% outsourcing, and an expenditure for hazardous waste disposal was required twice per year. The off-set printing press and plate maker required recurring maintenance. The off-set printer capacity was limited to single sheet print jobs, and service delivery time from the print center was 8 to 10 hours. A Process Improvement Team gathered meaningful data, developed alternatives and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the Print Center process. The Print Center was converted to a Copy Center in October 1999.

Results

★ Reduced printing costs by 6% = $3,896 (from $68,540 to $64,644).

★ Eliminated recurring maintenance and hazardous materials disposal that saved $4,650 and enhanced employee health and safety in the workplace.

★ Redirected 726 FTE hours annually.

★ Increased annual productivity (copies printed) by 32% in the first 3 months since the improvement.

Team Name: Printing Cost Reduction Team
Team Members Steve Reno, Linda Paris, John Brinton, Fay Bronson

CONTACT: Steve Reno, (360) 664-1706

Point of Sale (POS) Equipment Repair Project Increases Efficiency

The Liquor Control Board (LCB) used three vendors to repair POS equipment, and all three vendors had a different work request process. Each request had an inefficient/cumbersome paper flow, and approval by multiple LCB divisions was required before a request could be sent to a vendor. This process resulted in equipment repair delays of up to six weeks from the time of the work request. A Process Improvement Team was formed which used quality tools and techniques to improve the process. The team's recommended improvement was to transmit all equipment repair requests with a telephonically approved field order.

Results

★ Reduced the processing time spent by 1 staff by 456 FTE hours annually.

★ Eliminated approval time spent by 1-5 division staff = 720 FTE hours annually.

★ Reduced POS equipment repair turnaround time from 6 weeks to 2 weeks.

★ Eliminated 10-day transmittal time for requests.

★ Improved internal customer service through efficiency and effectiveness.

Team Name: POS Equipment Repair Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Jana Cruise, Sue Korns, Maggie Flynn, Leslie Cummings, Ann Brown

CONTACT: Jana Cruise, (253) 395-5092

Office of Administrative Hearings

Development of Case Quality Review Process

The Office of Administrative Hearings did not have a process for measuring the quality of the hearings and decisions process, other than a federally mandated process for unemployment cases. Therefore, we developed a process to systematically evaluate our hearing procedures. Each quarter, files are selected at random by computer and evaluated on the basis of a point system. The overall agency target for meeting quality standards is that at least 80% of the cases reviewed would receive a passing score of 85% or better. The Office of Administrative Hearings has exceeded the agency target in each of the three quarters evaluated to date. The process has also been successfully used as a training tool for the Administrative Law Judges in our agency.

Results

★ Created an efficient process to evaluate our hearing procedures.

★ Established an effective training tool for Administrative Law Judges.

★ Improved customer service as a result of improving our hearings process.

Team Name: Case Quality Review Process Team
Team Members: Jan Grant, Barb Cleveland

CONTACT: Jan Grant, (360) 664-8717

Book Partnership Saves Money

Visitors to Washington State Parks have long expressed interest in purchasing high-quality interpretive books and other materials during their trip. Book sales can enhance the quality of a park visit and generate revenue for the park system. However, staffing levels prevented many parks from entering the book sales business because of the amount of paperwork involved in ordering and paying multiple vendors.

A new partnership between State Parks and the Northwest Interpretive Association (NWIA) has dramatically reduced the amount of paperwork required in the book sales function. NWIA is a non-profit corporation that manages book sales operations on federal lands, such as National Parks.

State Parks struck an agreement to use NWIA's procurement system for processing book orders and payments. Park Rangers can order books for resale from NWIA's catalog of almost 10,000 titles. The faxed order forms are processed by NWIA, which issues purchase orders to any of several hundred publishers. After verifying receipt of books, park staff simply send receiving reports to Parks headquarters for payment. In turn, NWIA invoices Parks headquarters corporately once a month for all books ordered by State Parks.

Results

★ Recently, State Parks paid an invoice from NWIA covering 230 purchase orders which would otherwise have been paid to multiple vendors via individual payment requisitions. Assuming a processing cost of $50 per requisition, this corporate payment system saved the agency $11,450, and enabled park staff to stay focused on serving visitors.

Team Name: Book Sales Team
Team Members: Tom Oliva, Steve Wang, Brian Carter, Debbie Hall, Harry Malloy, Mike Sternback, K.C. Scott

Contact: Tom Oliva, (360) 902-8527

Hiring Process

The Employee Survey of 1998 at State Parks identified employee concern over the process of filling temporary and permanent positions in various offices. There was no consistent agency process, as each division had its own way of filling positions. This caused confusion, particularly when one division had a lengthy written process while another did not have anything written at all. Some employees complained that it was unfair they had to follow a procedure when others did not. A team was organized to establish a clear and consistent process that would be adopted by the entire agency.

The team came up with new and consistent policies and procedures that ensure the hiring process of the most competent workers for the right job, and on time. The new process even provides a limit of two months for any given position to be filled.

Results

★ Provided a clear and positive response to the result of the Employee Survey.

★ Revised the agency hiring policies and procedures ensuring a consistent process to be used by all managers.

★ Established hiring checklists to assist managers when filling vacancies.

★ Established flowcharts that outline the process from start to finish.

★ Minimized complaints from employees regarding hiring.

Team Name: Hiring Process Team
Team Members: Chon Clayton, Terri Heikkila, John Johns, Judy Johnson, Dwayne Ratliff, Roxie Stancil, Christy Woodward

Contact: Christy Woodward, (360) 902-8566

Remote Control Aircraft Management Plan for Flaming Geyser State Park

Remote Control Aircraft (RCA) flyers were using park roads at Flaming Geyser State Park to take off and land their aircraft. They also flew their RCA over other park users and park neighbors' property which was both annoying and unsafe.

There was no Washington Administrative Code (WAC) to control this activity. On November 6, 1998, upon recommendation of the staff, the Commission adopted recommended changes to WACs 352-32-101 and -130 for recognition of RCA flying as a recreation activity in designated state parks. There was direction, as part of the Commission action, to develop a site-specific RCA flying management plan.

A team was organized to develop a management plan. The team, composed of 13 park users and agency staff, met and discussed all the aspects bearing on RCAs. In three months, the team developed the Flaming Geyser Remote Control Aircraft Management Plan. The Park Manager completed the determination of non-significance environmental checklist. In September 1999, the plan was submitted to the Director. The plan is now being observed at Flaming Geyser State Park. The process is due for replication in other parks.

Results

★ Demonstrated the positive contribution of a citizen-park staff team to effect changes in the park.

★ Organized an RCA work team to assist the Park Manager in implementing the plan.

★ Established a designated area from which a park visitor may fly RCA.

★ Delineated flying zones that curtail RCA from flying over other congested park areas and environs.

★ Set site-specific rules to encourage the safe operation of RCA.

Team Name: Remote Control Aircraft Committee
Team Members: Bryan Rosenkranz (Park Ranger) and the Parks Users Group composed of Steve Lusch, John Wilson, Everett Cox, Al Padrta, Harold Shamblin, David A. Thorson, James Jones, Chris Sanner, Randy Ling, Stan Simpkins, Duane Callemang, Kirk Poole, Ron Ranson.

Contact: Bryan Rosenkranz, (253) 931-3930

Fuel Reduction Project, Riverside State Park

State Park staff completed a draft version of the Riverside Management Plan. The plan spelled out several other component plans necessary to better manage the resources within the park. One such plan is vegetative management to limit wildfire potential, establish healthy habitats for native wildlife and protect unique biological relationships.

A project was proposed to demonstrate a method to reduce wildfire risks while maintaining the integrity of the overall vegetation management plan. A team was organized to develop the risk reduction demonstration project. The team included the participation of another state agency and the public as active team members, in addition to their involvement in general meetings.

The team approach undertaken for wildfire prescription was to remove all vegetation ten feet tall or less along the area identified, to chip all pruned materials, and to use the chips within the park for trail projects. Parks expert staff and DNR reviewed the project and found it to be workable and useful.

Results

★ Involved the public in problem-solving activities of their Park.

★ Showed the dynamics of team building to solve problems.

★ Reduced the fuel loads in certain portions of the Park.

★ Demonstrated a prescription on forest wildfire prevention, and its effect on the forest and scenery.

★ Prevented forest fire which would have caused innumerable damage.

Team Name: Riverside State Park Resource Management Team
Team Members: Tom Ernsberger, Jack Hartt and Ken Karg, from State Parks; Guy Gifford and John Stuchell from State DNR; Ross Hessletine from Fire Safe Spokane; Eric Erickson and Joni Sasich, local residents

Contact: Tom Ernsberger, (509) 665-3329

State Conservation Commission

Statewide Salmonid Habitat Inventory

As directed by the Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 (ESHB 2496), the Washington State Conservation Commission is conducting salmonid habitat impediment inventories in 41 of the state's 62 Water Resources Inventory Areas (WRIAs).

Each habitat inventory is a comprehensive document, averaging 100 pages in length, plus numerous color maps of varying sizes covering salmonid habitat impediments in a given WRIA. The Commission will make these inventories widely available to local governments and organizations statewide that are interested in protecting and enhancing salmon habitat.

The traditional method of printing and mailing this information was cost-prohibitive, so the inventories are being published on CD-ROM.

Results

★ A cost-savings of approximately $130 per set of eight reports. This translates to a savings of $53,430 on 411 sets of the first series produced to date.

★ There is no charge for the reports as the costs have been covered within the existing budget.

★ Improved usability and quality of graphics of color maps.

★ No large inventory of reports to maintain.

★ Additional savings are accomplished due to decreased shipping and handling costs.

Team Members: Ed Manary, Carmen Andonaegui, Don Haring, John Kerwin, Kevin Lautz, Carol Smith, Gary Wade, Mary Wilkosz, Bryan Cowan

CONTACT: Ed Manary, (360) 407-6236

Change Improves Access to Information

Companies seeking to provide transportation services to the public must apply to the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) for authority to do so. Before this project, these applications were managed and processed separately from how the Commission manages the hundreds of other filings it receives each year. Because of this, information about these applications was not available on regularly issued reports. This meant that it was difficult for staff to manage these filings and hard for stakeholders to keep track of their status. Having these applications handled outside our standard process also meant we had to maintain separate but parallel processes for managing these records and serving legal documents in these cases.

A staff team mapped out the process to gain a shared understanding of how the work was conducted. Using this flow chart, they agreed upon the changes that needed to be made.

Results

★ People interested in any applications can quickly and easily learn about the filing of new applications or outcome of existing applications by subscribing to a weekly mailing or by checking our website.

★ The public has better access to public records because the complete formal record is stored in one place.

★ We are better able to ensure these matters proceed in a timely manner because they appear on regular tracking reports.

★ Staff time required to serve documents to interested persons and to manage these records has been reduced.

Team Name: Transportation Applications Team
Team Members: Bonnie Allen, Linda Elhardt, Kathy Hunter, Bob Klein, Mike Kretzler, Lisa Lloyd, Tami Schultz, Terry Stapleton

Contact: Steve King, (360) 664-1115

Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

1997-99 Biennial Report/Consolidated Mailing Project

Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN) is required per RCW 40.07.040 to report each biennium to the Governor and the Legislature concerning the Council's activities. In alignment with our quality goal "to create greater visibility and awareness for prevention," we wanted to mail our 1997-99 Biennial Report to everyone in our database (4,569 people/organizations). However, our budget was based on the previous biennium's distribution of 1,000 reports. We also had a program survey and Y2K readiness disclosure statement to be mailed about the same time.

WCPCAN coordinated with Department of Printing (DOP) on the project. We were able to consolidate three print jobs into one! DOP produced our biennial report, report cover letter (with Y2K readiness disclosure statement), and a customized survey using our database. DOP coordinated the entire project including stuffing, addressing, and mailing the reports under its bulk mail permit. We increased our distribution by over 400% and saved money!

Results

★ Increased distribution of our biennial reports over 400%.

★ Saved over $7,896 in postage and labor costs and over 30 hours of staff time.

★ Updated our database with over 965 responses and with 93 addresses provided by the post office, improving the accuracy of our data.

★ Reached approximately 99% of our primary vendors and contractors with the agency Y2K readiness disclosure statement.

★ Invited customer feedback. "I think the annual report is wonderful. Perhaps you could get some business firms to adopt your format as it would be a big improvement over most reports issued now."

Team Name: WCPCAN
Team Members: Kikora Dorsey, Tim Gahm, Claudia Feigner, Toni Peycheff, Cheryl Reed, Fredi Rector, Kelly Stockman-Reid, Denise Hahn, Irene Wiryoatmojo

Contact: Cheryl Reed, (206) 389-2412

Contract Reports Streamlined and Computerized

Every Arts Commission grant contract closes with a Final Report to provide project and financial accountability for the use of federal and state funds. The Arts Commission staff revised the computer data editing and entry process, ending the duplicate entry in files on the former mainframe computer system. They eliminated an entire page of the report and the edit form for the old system. The report was redesigned using Excel software so clients can complete it on a computer, and Arts Commission staff can distribute the form to clients via the computer.

Results

★ Duplicate computer files for federal reports were ended.

★ A data edit form manually completed by staff was eliminated.

★ Clients can complete the forms on a computer in less time.

★ Clients can get forms immediately, by email or by download from the Arts Commission's web site.

★ Draft reports submitted by email speed up the federal report process for staff.

★ Tedious, monotonous work has been eliminated; staff can focus on higher priority work tasks and more direct public service.

Team Name: Awards Program Report Re-Visions
Team Members: Mary Frye, Josie Tamayo, Karen Hartman, Mary Yadon

CONTACT: Mary Frye, (360) 586-0424

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

Improve Customer Relations with Receptionist

The reception desk is open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., responsible for answering phones, in-person inquiries, mail and fax distribution, posting of the daily meeting schedules, maintenance of copy machine and postage meter, and scheduling classrooms and lodging. Data from customers indicated a lack of full coverage leading to customer complaints. A team identified which functions customers valued the most and identified a team approach to having "backup" and cross training for reception.

The team also identified an improved organizational structure with the receptionist joining the Operations Support Team (unit) to coordinate backup and sharing of responsibilities.

Results

★ The receptionist position is now part of the Operational Support Unit and not part of Human Resources.

★ The change in supervision immediately changed the level of support available to an important member of the organization.

★ Staffing that support the receptionist is integrated as a unit instead of being an additional task or responsibility.

★ Customers always have access to a well-trained receptionist.

★ This ensures that resources are available to our customers so they have consistent quality of service at the reception desk.

★ An increase in morale regarding the position and the functions served by the receptionist was an immediate result.

★ Customer feedback reflects the level of satisfaction has increased, as well as recognition of the important role this position fills.

Team Name: Reception TQM
Team Members: Shauna Wells, Bob Spaulding, Charlotte Bass, Prima Turczynski, Pat Lee, Darlene Tangedahl, Jessica English

CONTACT: Bob Spaulding, (206) 439-3740, extension 212

Report of Lottery Prizes Remaining

In order to provide excellent customer service to Lottery retailers and players, a report describing top prizes remaining for scratch tickets is produced. The report is very helpful to Lottery Sales Representatives, retailers and players because it provides current information about which high prizes remain. Historically, this report was created through a manual process which was very time consuming and lent itself to errors due to manual entry. To produce this report, one person printed a report of all the scratch games at Lottery retailer locations (usually between 35 and 40 games). From the report, they compiled a spreadsheet listing the games and the number of top prizes remaining. Then another individual provided additional data to the spreadsheet through another manual process. And finally, one person audited the information before it was faxed to District Sales Representatives who hand carried the reports to retail locations. Copies were also hand-delivered to Lottery Telemarketing Representatives. All total, this process consumed about 14 hours per month.

Through the efforts of staff from Information Services, Retailer Services and Financial Services, the team was able to completely eliminate the need for any manual effort to produce this information. The report is now automated to provide daily updates available through both the Intranet, and the Internet Lottery Webpage. This allows retailers and players to be able to access the information from a computer on a daily basis and retrieve current information about prizes remaining for scratch games.

Results

★ The information reported is accurate and more timely.

★ The amount of time to produce the report was reduced by 100 percent.

★ Customer service was enhanced through providing the information through a means where customers have direct access.

Team Name: Report of Lottery Prizes Remaining
Team Members: Jerry Zukowski, Duc Hua, Joel Thompson, Jennifer McDaniel

CONTACT: Joel Thompson, (360) 664-4775

Lottery Scratch Ticket Order Packaging

When the Washington State Lottery Marketing Department decided to distribute a scratch ticket game early due to sellouts in other scratch games, the new scratch ticket orders were much smaller than if the game had been distributed with four other games as originally planned. The warehouse supervisor, Rich Koochagian, determined that even the smallest boxes normally used for ticket orders would be too large and would be susceptible to collapsing during shipment, risking loss or damage to tickets. He decided to research alternatives. He and the warehouse crew identified the best alternative to boxes, which were padded envelopes. The crew tested the envelopes and found they did the job better than boxes, were cheaper and were preferred by Lottery couriers. Further, the envelopes ensure the scratch tickets were secure from theft or loss due to faulty packaging.

Results

★ All scratch ticket orders were distributed without damage or loss due to packaging failure.

★ Reduced expenses by $155 for the month of December 1999. An estimated $55 per month will be saved for future mailings.

★ Lottery retailers and couriers accepted the new packaging so well that envelopes will be used in the future on all small orders.

★ Reduced warehouse space required for storing packaging material.

Team Name: Scratch Ticket Order Packaging
Team Members: Rich Koochagian (Team Leader), Ken Balko, Gus Gustafson, Dustin Adams, Bruce Eisentrout (Sponsor)

CONTACT: Rich Koochagian, (360) 407-0635

Trooper Cadet Applications on the Net

Potential cadets for the Washington State Patrol (WSP) must pass an eligibility test before moving into the interview and selection process. Historically, in order to complete this first step, candidates had to request an application form, then wait for the request to be processed and the application delivered by U.S. mail.

At the same time, the Human Resources Division, extrapolating from current eligibility testing and application acceptance rates per 100 applicants, realized that it might not meet its upcoming cadet hiring needs. Speeding up the process was part of the solution.

By scanning and digitizing the cadet application form, the Human Resources Division now instantly transmits the form to an applicant via the Internet, sometimes even as a request phone call is in process. Mailing and processing costs are saved as a result of this innovation. Perhaps more significant in an economy where qualified new hires are scarce is the benefit of getting promising applicants into the hiring process sooner. Feedback from interested potential employees shows high satisfaction with the agency's response.

Results

★ $900 is saved in mailing and materials costs.

★ 210 hours of staff time is being redirected to other needs.

★ Job applicants note high satisfaction with quick response from this employer.

★ The change directly addresses WSP's strategic objective of '"identifying and removing obstacles and barriers to expeditiously meet staffing needs."

Team Name: Internet Cadet Applications Team
Team Members: Trooper Ron Sandberg, Trooper Greg Pressel, Sergeant Dan Devoe

CONTACT: Trooper Greg Pressel, (360) 438-5805