
Dear Fellow Citizens:

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

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



Since the first publication of *Governing for Results* in December 1997, state agencies have reported results from 744 quality improvement projects.

Inside this booklet are highlights of those efforts from the third quarter of 1998. They range from quality efforts to reduce the time a citizen waits for service, to providing clear rules and instructions, to increased revenues to the state while providing better service to citizens.

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

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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Locke".

Gary Locke
Governor

Welcome to the Fourth Edition of Governing for Results

“Governing for Results 4” is the fourth installment of highlights on quality improvement projects under way in Washington State government.

The projects reported here have already produced tangible results, including new revenue generation, resources and dollars saved, and streamlined processes providing better and quicker service.

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

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

Since that Executive Order was issued, Washington state agencies have reported 744 quality projects that have saved the state over \$22 million. As a result of these efficiencies, the equivalent of approximately 82 staff has been redirected to other work or eliminated the need for overtime. In addition, these efforts have produced over \$1,800,000 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 Subcabinet on Management Improvement and Results.

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

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Reducing Case Turnaround by Up to 50% to Improve Service and Effectiveness

Each year the agency receives over 100 complaints against CPAs and non-CPAs. When appropriate, a case is opened, the complaint is investigated, and the Board ultimately resolves and closes the case. Previously cases were closed only during Board meetings. Unfortunately, cases ready for closure could sit unresolved and unclosed for several months until the next Board meeting. In order to speed up resolution and processing of cases, the Board now considers and votes on case resolution via fax and mail.

Results

- ★ A dramatic reduction in case turnaround time. In some instances turnaround time has been reduced up to 50%.
- ★ Individuals filing complaints expect the Board's investigation and resolution to be prompt. Improving our turnaround helps to meet these service expectations.
- ★ CPAs under investigation get prompt and constant attention from the agency. This improves the Board's ability to be effective with sanctioning activities.
- ★ Additional Board Meeting time is now available for other regulatory activities.
- ★ Staff workload associated with case resolution has been stabilized and is continuous throughout the month.

Team members: Cheryl Sexton and Dana McInturff

CONTACT: Dana McInturff (360) 586-0163

BRIDGE: Transition from High School to College for Blind/Visually Impaired Students

This is the first program in Washington State to provide a summer quarter of college experience to blind/visually impaired students matriculating from high school into higher education. The project was the result of a collaboration between the Department of Services for the Blind, the Washington State School for the Blind and Edmonds Community College.

All students were enrolled in a general study skills class and one elective class with non-visually impaired students. They also participated in a specially designed "Introduction to College" course, which provided them with information and instruction in such areas as signing up for classes, purchasing books and supplies, ordering materials in usable format and hiring readers using adaptive devices. Participants lived in student housing apartments, shared with non-visually impaired students, and were responsible for maintaining the apartments.

Results

- ★ Of the 7 participants, 5 are currently enrolled as full-time students at various colleges and universities in Washington State.
- ★ When the first group of these students graduates from college and such comparisons can be accurately measured, it is anticipated that this project will result in
 - ★ a measurable reduction in Vocational Rehabilitation counselor involvement (time and expense),
 - ★ less interruption between high school graduation and enrollment in higher education,
 - ★ a higher percentage of blind/visually impaired students completing post-secondary education.

Team members: Howard Kovarsky, Child & Family Program Manager, DSB; Scott Truax, Statewide Coordinator-Blind/Visually Impaired, DSB; Carol Baron, Statewide Coordinator-Blind/Visually Impaired, DSB; Alan Garrels, Statewide Coordinator-Blind/Visually Impaired, DSB; Lori Pulliam, Vocational Education Coordinator, WSSB; Darci Kruzinski, Outreach Coordinator, WSSB

CONTACT: Howard Kovarsky (509) 456-3165

Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

OCVA Newsletter Mailing

Office of Crime Victims Advocate (OCVA) would send a master newsletter to the printer where 3500 copies were printed and returned. Mailing labels were then attached and the newsletters mailed out.

An electronic version is now sent to the printer along with a mailing address file. 3500 copies are now printed and directly mailed.

Results

- ★ Reduced distribution flowtime by 4-5 days
- ★ Eliminated 5 hours of staff time that is used for more value-added work.
- ★ Reduced actual mailing costs by \$2,000 per year.

Team Members: Office of Crime Victims Advocate, Tom Stilz

CONTACT: Tom Stilz (360) 753-4948

Redesigned Training Schedule Saves \$43,000— Improves Employee Satisfaction

Historically, 650 staff at Airway Heights Corrections Center attended annual “block training” during day shift—requiring the adjustment of schedules for evening and night shift employees for at least five consecutive days. Under this old system, the amount of overtime and complex scheduling had become problematic. These operating issues, as well as the disruption of employees’ personal schedules, prompted members of the Training Department to reengineer the entire annual training process.

The Team designed, delivered, and logistically handled training for each shift over several weeks, repeating the same class for a week. This allowed an employee to attend a required class one day a week, over five weeks until all the required training was accomplished, while remaining on their regular work shift.

The development of a “just-in-time” class roster and class schedule eliminated several process steps and allowed for a balance between operational needs and training attendance on short notice.

Results

- ★ Overtime expenditures for Corrections Officers attending training was completely eliminated.
- ★ Block Training for all staff was accomplished in half the time—from 10 months down to 5—yet with more training material than in previous years.
- ★ One class per week with different attendees provided a more diverse learning environment, with different co-workers in each class, instead of the same group for five days.
- ★ Employee satisfaction improved with less disruption to work and home schedules.
- ★ Internal processes were completely changed to streamline scheduling staff, training and instructors.

Team Members: Laura Soto, Laura Martinez, James Nozawa; Community Colleges of Spokane: Kelly Long (contract employee)

Contact: Laura Jense (509) 244-6761

Criminal Justice System Time and Costs Reduced by Holding Offenders to “Agreements”

A backlog of over 800 offender violation reports issued by Community Corrections Officers existed in the files of the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office. Unprocessed bench warrants and formal reports of offenders not meeting their responsibilities under community supervision created a significant portion of system bottlenecks. The sluggish process reduced the Officers effectiveness to hold offenders directly accountable to their court ordered sanctions for crimes committed.

The Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Prosecutor’s Office, developed a process to quickly address the backlog issue. A key factor in this redesigned process was the ability of Community Corrections Officers to negotiate a “Stipulated Agreement” with the non-compliant offender to resolve violations. These agreements are in lieu of “noncompliance” court hearings—provided offenders adhere to the stipulations. If the offender fails to live up to the agreement, a bench warrant and the possibility of jail time loom in the offender’s future, as stipulated in the agreement.

Results

- ★ Community safety is increased by enhanced accountability of offenders.
- ★ Collaboration between the Department of Corrections and the Thurston County Prosecutor’s office resulted in the resolution of almost all backlogged cases.
- ★ Time and costs of court proceedings, as well as other segments of the criminal justice system, are significantly reduced.
- ★ The process can be replicated in other counties.

Team Members: Department of Corrections: Paul Ockerman, Tina McBath, Thurston County: Jim Powers, Terri Noble

Contact: Thomas McIntyre (360) 459-6370

Ecology Goes Online with Recycling Information

Ecology receives an average of 2,136 calls per month to its 1-800-Recycle hotline. In August, 2,403 calls were placed to the hotline, and staff were able to answer 1,777 of those calls. Citizens who can not get through to a person do not receive recycling information.

Staff came up with the idea to go online with recycling information. Now, citizens have 24-hour access to recycling information via the Internet plus the 1-800 hotline. Citizens can get information by county and waste type, including recycling locations, hours of operation and even a map to the recycling location.

Results

- ★ Citizens have 24-hour access to recycling information.
- ★ Callers to the Recycling Hotline are given the Recycling Internet address if they are unable to get through to a recycling specialist.

Team Members: Steve Barrett, Jim Bill, Michelle Davis, Gloria Dreyer, Annette Gregor, Mike Sosnow

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale (360) 407-6986

Environmental Rules OnLine!

Ecology manages ten environmental programs and approximately 150 rules dealing with the preservation, restoration and management of our air, land and water. Citizens seeking information about proposed or existing laws and rules had to call, write or visit Ecology.

Now a citizen can access all laws and rules Ecology administers through their Internet site 24-hours a day. This site contains the complete text of laws and rules, preproposals and proposed changes, rule related documents and a list of related publications. In addition, WAC Track was added as Ecology's way of "taking government to the people." No longer will citizens need to contact Ecology for the most current rule development activity, they will contact citizens subscribing to their list.

Results

- ★ Citizens have 24-hour access to the rules Ecology administers.
- ★ The rule information online is always current and comprehensive.
- ★ Rules were accessed over 10,000 times in September 1998!

Team Members: Kathy Carpenter, Troy Dennis, Laurie Dumar, Michael Sosnow, Jerry Thielen

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale (360) 407-6986

Verifying Petroleum Tank Owners Are Properly Insured

Petroleum tank owners must submit annual proof of liability insurance to the Department of Licensing (DOL). Insurance documents were forwarded to Ecology for verification of tank locations on the 5 to 6 thousand facilities. Ecology would then forward the documents to the Pollution Liability Insurance Agency (PLIA) for verification of acceptable financial responsibility. In the meantime, DOL would issue a site permit, which meant many businesses were operating without known acceptable financial responsibility.

Licensing staff were trained in how to review annual business licenses for tank information and proof of liability insurance. This took Ecology completely out of the process of reviewing the 5 to 6 thousand documents each year.

Results

- ★ 95% of the license applications are verified by the Department of Licensing
- ★ 5% are verified by the Pollution Liability Insurance Agency
- ★ Licenses are issued *after* insurance is verified.

Team Members:

Department of Ecology: Peter Brooks, Chuck Hinds, Bill Meyer, Barry Rogowski, Lisa Shriver, Joyce Smith

Department of Licensing: Clyde Zahn;

Pollution Liability Insurance Agency: Sharon Martineaux

Contact: Dee Peace Ragsdale (360) 407-6986

Obtained Employment Explosion

At Employment Security, when a job-seeking client finds a job on their own after receiving services at a local office, we measure it as an "Obtained Employment".

Even though the Sunnyside Job Service Center had exceeded their OE (Obtained Employment) goal, the spirit of Continuous Quality Improvement inspired this Sunnyside team to do even more. They brainstormed, mapped and analyzed their process, scrubbing them to greater efficiency. By issuing and implementing new guidelines for documentation of Obtained Employments, the office jumped from 283 OE's to a whopping 1,380 OE's at the end of the program year.

Results:

- ★ Staff trained in work registration, documentation and tracking
- ★ Improved Labor Market Information for customers with self service and worker profiling
- ★ Produced high quality work registration process for file searching client employability

Team Members: Linda Rabe, Steve Lewis, Alfredo Cardenas, Kim Chapman and Oliva Mendoza

CONTACT: Linda Rabe (509) 836-1136 or Steve Lewis (509) 836-1115

Packets of Success

The Employment Security Department uses a Dictionary of Occupational Titles to code job seekers in its computer database. Inaccurate occupational coding of clients during the work registration process had created an under-utilization of recruitment services available through the Vancouver Office. Customers were increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of results in their work search and their ability to access employers. Gail O'Brien developed the "Self-Registration Packet" as a resource to properly complete work registration packets for customers. The packets are also distributed to community partners, schools and by phone request, to enhance the Job Service Center's ability to provide better services.

Results:

- ★ Improved occupational coding of clients
- ★ Customer survey indicates higher satisfaction levels with registration interviews and increased number of suitable job referrals
- ★ Packets provide comprehensive/consistent information
- ★ Staff savings due to better prepared customers in registration interviews

Team Member and Contact: Gail O'Brien, (509) 665-3712

Department of Employment Security

“Come Back, We Miss You!”

Agency services in Othello, Washington had been limited since cutbacks in 1993. Job seekers, employers and community-based organizations were crying out for help. The Employment Security Office in Moses Lake formed a team with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to examine the problem and propose a solution. The outcome—one full-time person assigned to Othello, to provide Unemployment Insurance and employment services, with the added benefit of a customer resource room and computers. DSHS was kind enough to contribute the office space!

Results:

- ★ Limited services restored and improved
- ★ Staff assigned to Othello in response to community need
- ★ Positive feedback from customers and partners
- ★ Travel costs eliminated for Moses Lake staff person
- ★ PC's in resource center

Team members: Carlos A. Martinez, Velma McKerlie, Lorenzo Rodriguez and Mary Riojas

CONTACT: Carlos A. Martinez, (509) 766-4108

Friday's Harvest

The Vancouver Job Service Center needed to increase job referrals for WorkFirst clients in the JobNet computer system in order to meet their goals. The office WorkFirst Team analyzed the problem, generated theories for change and ultimately tested two proposals. One solution was discounted as too time consuming and ineffective. They accepted and implemented the other—which was to provide at least two referrals to each workshop graduate at their Friday graduation ceremonies. Bountiful success has followed with an increase in reportable figures!

Results:

- ★ 250% increase in the number of referrals—from 171 per month to 438
- ★ Adjusting staff time to meet client needs has optimized the referral assistance process
- ★ Greater continuity of services for workshop graduates

Team members: Gary Kepler, Penny Hall, Molly Jeannet, Barb Bessett, Charla Bollman, Rod Carpenter, Lucy Amie, Darlene Friemuth, Marie Wodeage, Paula Hamilton and Steve Hansen

CONTACT: Steve Hansen, (360) 735-4965

Collection of Transfer Fees for Brokers and Salespersons

The Securities Division processes a large volume of salesperson applications and transfers each month; however, no system was in place to track mass transfers of salespersons between brokerages.

A review of the mass transfers revealed that a substantial amount of fees were not being collected. The staff member working with this system developed a process to efficiently track mass transfers then mail a standard letter requesting payment.

Results

- ★ An additional \$56,525 in mass transfer fees were collected between 1/1/98 and 7/31/98 through the new process.
- ★ An estimated \$96,900 in additional revenue will be generated annually from previously uncollected transfer fees.
- ★ Increased effectiveness and efficiencies in tracking of brokers and salespersons will be realized.

Team members: Victoria Sheldon

CONTACT: Greg Toms (360) 902-8776

Public Disclosure Request Response Time

There is great demand for written information concerning physicians and physician assistants who are licensed and disciplined by the Medical Quality Assurance Commission. The Public Disclosure Law requires that within five days either: 1) the information must be provided or, 2) the requester is told when they may expect the information. The previous process was incapable of meeting that five-day timeline and most customers didn't receive their information for 8 to 10 weeks.

A team of DOH staff developed a new process that provides express service for those needing the least amount of information. They also set up a system to fax requests and information and designed other systems to more specifically meet customer needs.

Results

- ★ Turnaround time has decreased from an average of 8 to 10 weeks to just five days in most cases. The longest wait is now three weeks.
- ★ File retrieval from the State Record Center, paper, copying costs, mailing costs and time have all been reduced by more than 50 percent, saving a projected \$14,102 per year.
- ★ Customizing responses has saved .5 FTE.

Team members: Mark Fox, Mike Kramer, Maryella Jansen

CONTACT: Maryella Jansen, 360-664-0244.

Departments of Information Services and Retirement Systems

Electronic Business Solutions

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), through a partnership with the Department of Information Services, the Department of General Administration, and Office of the Secretary of State, proved the concept of an “end-to-end” Internet transaction. The process has the potential to give its 1,300 state and local government customers the ability to download, complete, digitally sign, and transmit a secure electronic form used to report employees’ retirement related data.

DRS digitally signs the blank form, assuring employers who obtain it from the Web that the form is official. Software helps guide employers through the form, reducing errors and costly rework. Employers complete and digitally sign the form online and send it back to DRS. Once an employer’s own digital signature is verified, retirement data is automatically uploaded and updates DRS’ electronic records.

Results

- ★ *Current phase* - Proved the technological feasibility of the concept of secure “end to end” electronic commerce transactions – web to mainframe.
- ★ Initial test results indicate that employers find the form faster to fill out, accuracy is improved and time consuming re-keying is reduced for employers and DRS.
Phase II in development may yield the following results:
- ★ Increases customer service benefits to retirement plan members by ensuring timely, accurate account information is available to respond to immediate needs.
- ★ Reduces processing time with receipt of information in seconds rather than days as required by conventional mail.
- ★ Builds upon an electronic commerce infrastructure that will enable state agencies to enhance service delivery to their customers.

Team members: Scott Bream, Ron Cherturde, Carlene Covey, Dave Kirk, Agnes Nevins, Susie Rolland, Rand Daley, Cliff Schiller, Marc Tremblay, Larry Weber, Jeff Wickman, Linda Bennett, and Wilma Lymus.

Contact: DRS - Dave Geiger, (360) 664-2686 or DIS - Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

K-20 Video Network Collaboration

Washington is the only state known to interconnect all segments of education, and to use the widespread videoconferencing technologies in educational curriculum through the K-20 Network. A plan was needed to provide technical support and operational assistance to the K-20 Network's videoconferencing sites which include 70 Phase I locations and over 400 Phase II locations. To provide the needed services in each sector it would not only be expensive but it would be impractical since some of the sectors had little to no experience with this new technology.

A team of sectors representing public and private K-12 and higher education, state government, and the private sector, developed a cost-effective solution to consolidate resources and provide a single point of contact for customers through a one-stop shopping technical and video support center at DIS' Washington Interactive Technologies Division (WIT).

Results

- ★ Consolidation of video support eliminates duplication of services and is a cost avoidance for each sector.
- ★ The Video Help Desk provides one-stop shopping for technical support and scheduling statewide.
- ★ Customers get immediate response to resolve any issues.
- ★ A collaborative partnership continues to exist by involving each sector in the decision making process.
- ★ Developed a training and procedures process for sectors not experienced in delivering videoconferencing services.

Team members: Clare Donahue, Rhonda Polidori, David McDonald, Michael Flint, Sean Weakland, Wendy Marrs, Erin McGuigian, Scott Mah, Mike Scroggins, John Gray, Brian Hoots, Don Peters, Dennis Small, Len McComb, Norm Wisner, and Phil Tenkoff

Contact: Connie Michener, (360) 902-3471

Departments of Information Services and General Administration

Motor Pool, Motor Pool, Go So Fast

In partnership with Department of Information Services (DIS), the Department of General Administration (GA) reduced the time to approve and pay motor pool invoices from four week to hours. This significant reduction in processing time is expected to allow GA to take advantage of prompt payment discounts and decreases the potential for late payment penalties. It also decreases staff processing time by 20 minutes per transaction and increases accuracy of information on the A-19 invoice approval form.

Using digital signature technology, and electronic forms software, the agencies created an electronic A-19 invoice approval form that allows multiple digital signatures to be affixed to the form and electronically routed within GA for vendor payment approval. The electronic A-19 form initiated at the Motor Pool, is locked, digitally signed, and sent to each approval level before being electronically sent to the GA Financial Office for payment.

Results

- ★ First-ever state electronic business transaction to legally permit authorization of vendor payment.
- ★ Provides a security measure to the process to counteract fraud.
- ★ Dramatically decreases approval processing time from weeks to hours.
- ★ Timely payment of invoices increases prompt payment discounts and decreases late payment penalties.
- ★ Decreases staff processing time by 20 minutes per transaction and increases accuracy of information on A-19 form.

Team members: Dave Kirk, Scott Bream, Carlene Covey, and Agnes Nevins, Dale Abersold, Donna Allen, Kathy Cleveland, Hieng Dang, Kevan Evans, Annie Gonzales, Larry Hatch, John McMeel, and Chris Stevenson.

Contact Names: DIS - Connie Michener (360) 902-3471 or GA – Karen Pernerl (360) 902-7218

Reporting Changes Reduces Employer Debt

Employers in Washington report their worker hours and pay premiums for workers' compensation coverage on a quarterly basis. However, when an employer fails to report, the department makes an estimate of premiums due and the account is considered delinquent. Sometimes, the estimates are greatly overstated. This inflates the department's accounts receivable balance.

The department sought a way to reduce this balance owed. Revenue officers in Region 2, which serves the greater Seattle area, identified accounts with balances due of \$10,000 or more. Revenue officers made these accounts a priority for collections.

Results

- ★ Forty-two accounts were identified that owed \$883,400.
- ★ Outstanding debt for these employers decreased by 83 percent.

Team members: Carl Hammersburg, Irene Palmason, Fnot Lindgreen, Andrea LaFazia, Craig Crowley, Carmen Riojas, Marguerite Ballew, Jeanne Ramirez, Judith Craft and Linda Fitzgerald.

CONTACT: Chris Bowe, (206) 281-5485.

Better Targeting Of Caseloads Helps Unclog Jam

State law prohibits employers from discriminating against workers who have exercised their rights under state industrial insurance statutes. The backlog of discrimination cases being investigated by L&I's northwestern region had grown to 90 - preventing investigators from keeping pace with the dozen or so complaints that typically come in each month.

The improvement has been a restructuring of staff assignments and a review of processes, including report writing. Cases appearing to lack substance are assigned to various staff who do a quick screening. Cases appearing to have merit are then given to the case specialist. Report writing is also being kept to basics. Cases lacking merit are being closed.

Results

- ★ Within the first 30 days, 17 backlogged cases were closed, equaling a 16 percent reduction.
- ★ Report writing was simplified
- ★ Targeting the correct cases to investigate makes better use of staff time.
- ★ The initiative demonstrates management's support of the statute.

Team members: Bill Belniw, Kelly Artz, Bill Newman, Dennis Pendergrass, Barbara Berry, Linda Nikirk, Leora Mcanally, Tony Peva

CONTACT: Tim O'Grady (206) 281-5460, Kathleen Navarre (206) 281-5415

Billing Improvements Prevents Waste, Customer Frustration

L&I was not able to accurately identify its health care providers for purposes of enforcing payment policies and discounts. This inability resulted in some inappropriate correspondence and some inaccurate reimbursement, which in turn caused an unnecessary burden for some providers and wasted dollars on printing and postage. In addition, the situation was undermining some of L&I's cost-containment efforts. By updating the agency's provider identification system, L&I is now able to direct payment policies and reimbursements to the intended providers. In addition, the agency also is able to communicate directly with providers about issues that are specific to their specialty and license.

Results

- ★ Reduced billing and payment errors, saving staff time and provider frustration.
- ★ Improved customer service by enabling provider-specific communications.
- ★ Improved compliance and consistency with Medical Aid Rules and payment policies.
- ★ Ensures that the agency pays only for services from qualified providers.

Team members: Simone Stilson, Loris Gies, Evonne Peryea, Mary Cunningham, Barb Mayer, Carol Cloran, Wander Kimber, Cathy Howell and Sue Schroeder

Contact: Tressa Olson (360) 902-6336

Changes To Mail Handling Speed Processing, Accuracy

L&I mailroom staff needed to incorporate a variety of new processes to comply with OFM and internal procedures for opening mailing and handling cash. Working together, staff from the mailroom and the cashier's office developed a system for logging and verifying audit mail on a daily basis.

Results

- ★ OFM and internal procedures are met without additional staff or reductions in other mailroom processes.
- ★ The new system is used to process mail for 13 different program areas.
- ★ The new system resulted in improved efficiency in overall mail handling processes.

Team members: Diane Archibald, Cheryl Bowman, Tracey Chandos, Loretta Clark, Patricia Ebersole, Patricia Hansen, Linda Mcdowell, Jeffrey Moury, Annita Noah, Debra Openshaw, Robert Smith, Leona Stanley, Robert Urquhart

CONTACT: Pat Delaney, (360) 902-6793

Simple Office Changes Improve Service To Customers

Field offices were experiencing an increasing volume of walk-in customers creating a need to improve the flow of service and better inform the customers while they were waiting.

Offices improved signs in the lobbies and created information centers. Lobby furniture and staff were rearranged to improve customer flow and service. Staff made better use of telephone and paging systems.

Results

- ★ Reduced wait times for walk-in customers by 50 percent.
- ★ Reduced wait times for phone-in customers by 10 percent.

Team members: Wheatha Perdue, Kevin Summers, Carol Hinrichs, Susan Berger, Rich Metcalfe, Brad Davidson and Evelyn Balch.

Contact: Shari Purves-Reiter (425) 290-1305, or Mary Ann Kingma (360) 647-7277

Medical Bills Paid Sooner

Workers' compensation staff handling doctor bills for injured workers were receiving many incomplete bills and hard-to-identify information. Figuring out what to do with these "problem" bills created an ongoing backlog and slow service to customers.

An L&I quality team took a look at the agency's mail handling procedures and developed new instruction manuals for handling bills and attachments. Staff handling mail also received training in identifying bills and attachments and how to place telephone calls to medical providers and injured workers if more billing information was necessary.

Results

- ★ Handling and payment of "problem" bills and attachments has greatly improved. Turnaround time for these bills has dropped from three-plus days to a one-day turnaround.
- ★ Medical providers and injured workers are getting their medical bills paid faster and indicate increased satisfaction with L&I customer service.

Team members: Doug Connell, Bonnie Spaulding, Kathy Davisson, Marie Cuendent, Snow Bui, Susan Betts, Dora Strickland and Beckey Henry.

CONTACT: Beckey Henry (360) 902-6519.

Team Tackles Payroll Overpayment Problem

The department's payroll system relies on timely information submitted by supervisors to the Office of Human Resources (OHR). When information doesn't meet deadlines, a potential overpayment results resulting in inconvenience both for the agency and the employee.

A team looked at reducing the number of overpayments and increasing the accuracy of the payroll.

Results

- ★ Overpayments were reduced 80 percent during a pilot.
- ★ An estimated 148 hours of staff time saved can be redirected to additional customer service.
- ★ Communications improved between agency programs and OHR.

Team members: Mike Watte, Vanna Taing, Beb Gunther, Connie Lundeen, Becky Claxton, Deborah Cummings, Lester Dickson, Debbie Yantis, Marcie Frost and Dave Norman.

Contact: Tressa Olson (360) 902-6336.

Insurance Process Improvement Team (INSPIT)

To protect public safety, the Department of Licensing receives over 100,000 proof of financial responsibility forms and nearly 70,000 notices of cancellations of insurance annually. The methods associated with processing the notifications were manual and highly time consuming.

The INSPIT team collected data indicating three insurance companies generated 50 percent of the insurance transactions and recommended that the large insurance companies be allowed to electronically file the information. The team also streamlined the process by eliminating unnecessary manual steps such as the alphabetizing of documents prior to microfilming, and thereby reduced the length of time it takes to reinstate a driver or suspend a driver for failure to maintain required insurance.

Results

- ★ Projected savings of 4800 staff hours annually.
- ★ Enabled insurance companies to electronically file documents reducing data entry at DOL.
- ★ Eliminated alpha sorting documents prior to microfilming.
- ★ Modified current data entry procedures to reduce unnecessary keystrokes.
- ★ Streamlined manual process by eliminating unnecessary steps in process.

Team Members: Earl Phillips, Phyllis Colantuono, Doreen Beebe, Vickie McDougall, Terry Shew, Debra Then, Rita Warren, and Kelly Rosie

Contact: Debbie K. Schmidt (360) 902-3837

More Combined Fund Drive Dollars Going to Charities as Result of Reduced Printing Costs

Each year Washington State sponsors the Combined Fund Drive, which provides a convenient and cost-efficient mechanism for state employees to contribute to the charities of their choice. During the 1997 Combined Fund Drive campaign, 100,000 informational guides were produced and distributed to employees of state agencies and higher education institutions, at a cost of \$32,000. As an administrative expense, the cost of printing reduces the amount of the contributions received by the charities.

For the 1998 Combined Fund Drive campaign, the project team enhanced the Department of Personnel web site to make the informational materials more easily accessible to employees. By encouraging use of the web site, they were able to reduce the quantity of printed materials by 30% and saved \$10,000 in printing costs.

Results

- ★ State employees in all geographic locations have immediate and convenient access to information on the campaign and the participating charities.
- ★ The number of guides printed was reduced from 100,000 to 70,000, resulting in savings of \$10,000 in printing costs.
- ★ The money saved reduces administrative costs, which means that \$10,000 more is contributed to the charities.

Team members: Randy Ryan, Karyn Hartman, Donna Bogumill, and Deb Calderon.

CONTACT: Randy Ryan (360) 664-1994

Streamline Of Multiple Language Mailings

The Department of Social and Health Services produces a monthly mailing of informational pamphlets printed in 8 different languages. Previously, each mailing was separated by language to insure proper receipt. We have initiated a process whereby the monthly mailing is automatically divided by language, effectively combining eight mailings into one.

Results

- ★ Streamlined 8 different mailings into one
- ★ New process resulted in a \$2,400 annual savings to the Department of Social and Health Services
- ★ Redirection of FTE hour savings allowing additional response to other customer requests
- ★ Process has been adopted for other jobs requiring similar mailings

Team members: Chad Perschon, Phyllis Brotherton, Jim Rice and Steve Dowdell

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

Employer Information System Edits and Processes

Analysis of edit reports created by the processing of monthly member transmittals from employers helped to identify the most common reasons for rejecting member data. Correction of the data requires additional staff time. An added problem caused by rejected data was that for members of one retirement plan, the rejected data can cause the loss of investment returns from the point of the rejection to the point that a correction is received.

Focusing on these most common rejects, the team developed an enhancement to the supporting Employer Information System (EIS) that allows the unit to refocus resources to the point where rejections occur. This reduced the number of rejections, which in turn reduced the staff time spent cleaning up rejected transactions after they occurred. The system enhancement allows catching and correcting the rejected data before the system attempts to process the data.

Results

- ★ Improved service to DRS customers by avoiding the negative impacts that rejects create for the member accounts.
- ★ Eliminates a major step in the previous process to correct account balances after the fact.
- ★ For one retirement plan, eliminates an additional step to calculate lost investment earnings on contributions that had been rejected.
- ★ Each reject corrected either eliminates the employer edit reports or reduces one to three lines of edit text that appears on the edit reports.
- ★ The new process reduces staff time spent resolving these problems by 66%, an estimated annual reduction of 760 hours for this process

Team members: Donna Baker, Brian Berghoff, Denise Blosl, Carrie Boze, Ginger Malmin, Donna Reilly, Janette Witchey

CONTACT: Dave Geiger, (360) 664-2686

Member/Participant Address Change Process

In many cases, retirement plan members who are also Deferred Compensation Plan participants had to make multiple contacts to the separate programs within DRS to change their mailing address. Since the data must currently be maintained on two different data base systems, address change documents were processed by one program and then forwarded to the other program for processing there. This resulted in approximately 700 address changes each month being manually reviewed, sorted and processed twice.

The address change process has now been revised to allow dual access to both systems at each program's location. Communication between the units has improved and duplication of effort has been eliminated. Turnaround time was greatly reduced, document volumes being exchanged were reduced and the goal of a single customer contact to complete the transaction was met.

Results

- ★ Met the goal of ensuring address changes for customers with a single contact within the agency.
- ★ Reduced by 95% the sorting time for address changes by granting "read-only" access to each program for the other program's data base system.
- ★ Reduced by 95% the volume of address changes that must be exchanged between the two programs each month.
- ★ Reduced by 75% the processing time to accomplish address changes.
- ★ For one segment of the customer population, increased by 100% the number of address changes accomplished with a single contact to DRS. (Previously, address change information for this customer segment was not exchanged between units at all.)

Team members: Ginger Blair, Kris Fjalstad, Judi Gaul, Dave Geiger, Teresa Roddy, Claire Schwebke, Nicole Williams

CONTACT: Dave Geiger, (360) 664-2686

Fish Tax Program Improved

The Fish Tax Program was in disarray and the processes within the program were outdated. A total revamping of the process greatly improved the efficiency and reliability of the program, increased customer service and reduced processing time.

Results

- ★ Automated return process runs more often, reducing the number of follow-up calls.
- ★ Cleared 1,362 delinquent periods, collecting \$643,443.
- ★ Completed 221 desk audits resulting in \$73,817 in assessments on 23 accounts and \$6,698 in refunds on seven others.
- ★ Electronically accessing the Department of Fish and Wildlife's fish ticket databases to compare the individual taxpayers' activity reported to the Department of Fish and Wildlife with the activity reported on their fish tax return.
- ★ Closed 260 inactive accounts (48% of our accounts) with the taxpayers' knowledge.

Team members: Dave Johnson, Dee Cooper, Bill Chamberland.

CONTACT: Dave Johnson (360) 586-1433

Tax Decisions Provided Faster

The Appeals Division reviews and determines tax appeals. When they involve new issues of law or the application of settled law to an unusual set of facts, the Department publishes the determinations to provide guidance and information to the customers.

In 1997, Revenue published 31 determinations. In an effort to provide more timely guidance, the Appeals Division made changes to its processes and is committed to publishing more determinations in 1998.

To date 36 determinations were published in 1998 with 50 ready for publishing by early December 1998.

Results

- ★ Determinations increased from 31 in 1997 to 36 by September 1998. Anticipated number for 1998 – 90.
- ★ Implemented standards and procedures for issuing and publishing determinations.
- ★ Established an internal review panel to select and publish determinations.
- ★ Broaden the availability of tax determinations by making them available on the Internet, computer discs as well as providing full copies on request.
- ★ Using current Department publications to notify taxpayers and practitioners on the issued covered in the published determinations.

Team members: Darcy Bristow, Catherine Pree, Jackie Danyo, Jan Bianchi, Stephen Zagelow, Susan Price.

CONTACT: Catherine Pree (360) 753-5575

Appraisal Ratio Process Improved

The Property Tax Division performs 500-700 real property ratio appraisals annually. These are used to equalize state school levies and centrally assessed property values. In the past, specific due dates were uncertain and the format was not uniform. This year, all appraisals are reviewed to comply with Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices requirements and submitted by a uniform due date.

Results

- ★ More reliable, consistent and uniform appraisal reports.
- ★ Completed 88% of the assigned real property ratio appraisals by the due date.
- ★ All real property appraisals are submitted for review and meet Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices.
- ★ Over 67% of the appraisals met Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices standards at first review. The goal was 50%.
- ★ Sixteen appraisers have attended Appraisal Institute courses in the past two years.

Team members: Cindy Boswell, Dave Herrin, Howard Hubler, Pat McCabe, Mark Baca, Chris Borton, Bob Criss, Lynn Hilton, Carl Klingeman, Pete Levine, Dave McKenzie, Christa Roy, Dan Shroll, Steve Stamey, Pat Torretta.

CONTACT: Mark Maxwell (360) 664-3182

Appeals Handled Faster

Taxpayers and their representatives have complained about how long appeals cases take to process. Changes were made to the appeals process to ensure timely decisions that are based on information available to everyone involved. This will reduce delays as well as the need to file a petition for reconsideration.

The division will re-examine these changes every six months for efficiency and quality.

Results

- ★ Developed timelines to resolve 80% of the backlogged cases by July 1999.
- ★ Scheduling letters developed to obtain and exchange information between Revenue and the taxpayer to minimize delays and reduce costs.
- ★ Revitalized the small claims program. Decisions increased from 30 in Fiscal Year 1998 to 21 in the first two months of Fiscal Year 1999.
- ★ Issuing proposed Executive Level decisions for review by both Revenue and the taxpayer. This avoids Petitions for Reconsideration resulting in more Executive Level decisions.
- ★ Reducing the cases put “on hold”.

Team members: Susan Price, Jan Bianchi, Jackie Danyo, Steve Zagelow, Lisa Faker, Pegg Bauer, Darcy Bristow, Linn Capek, Chris Coffman, Dave Dressel, David DeLuca, John Gray, Carl Lewis, Jeff Mahan, Rex Munger, Kelly Murr, Randy Okimoto, Mark Pree, Catherine Pree, John Prusia, Fawn Sharp.

CONTACT: Jan Bianchi (360) 586-0372

Patients at Risk for Skin Breakdown Get More Protection

Loss of skin integrity causes patient discomfort and disability. It also increases the cost of care through more staff time, supplies, and equipment needed to deal with the problem.

Western State Hospital developed new procedures to identify and care for patients with fragile skin. Team-initiated improvements include: an assessment tool to identify at risk patients; purchasing special beds to eliminate more expensive costs of renting the equipment; changes in ward routines to more closely monitor at-risk patients; and formation of a multidisciplinary Skin Wound Assessment Team (SWAT) to advise physicians and staff on skin breakdown care.

Results

- ★ New Assessment tools implemented to identify at-risk patients.
- ★ An 11% decrease in the risk factor of patients initially assessed to be at high risk of pressure sores.
- ★ Projected savings up to \$100,000 annually in special bed rental cost. The savings can be redirected to patient care.
- ★ Pressure Sore Tracking Screen was added to the hospital computer system to monitor the incidence and progress of patients with skin breakdown.

Team members: Pam Lutter, Valerie Kot, Dr. Julio Buenaventura, Tessie Cueva, Linda Neilson, Laurie Legler, Hurkley Brown, Janet Porter

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Data Driven Study Results in Satisfied Customers and Zero Wait for Staff

The phone system for Support Enforcement staff is programmed to block staff phone numbers when making outgoing calls. However, many clients have their phone systems programmed to reject blocked phone numbers. Therefore, many support officers in the Spokane office found it difficult to return calls to their clients in a timely fashion. The only alternative available to them was one unblocked phone at the office, which all staff had to use, often creating long waiting periods before a call could be returned.

The Spokane “Blocked Call” Team used quality tools and techniques to gather data and extensively test multiple solutions to the problem. They determined that purchasing a new PBX telephone system and installing it in the DCS Region 1 field offices in Spokane and Wenatchee would solve the problem. The new PBX system will now allow unblocked calls to be made directly from the staff member’s desk, while still protecting the worker’s phone number. The system will also provide state of the art technology, adaptable for expansion, into the next century.

Results

- ★ Approximately 2,500 staff hours (estimated \$46,000/year) will be saved
- ★ Improved customer service answering system that more effectively directs customer calls.

Team members: Dan Petruso (leader), Steve Terry, Melody Hodgson, Rob Meese, Jerry Snyder, Mark Alexander

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Rapid Registration Reaps Good Customer Service

The registration process for staff training in the DSHS training office was antiquated and in need of improvement. When a customer called to register or for workshop information, it would take several minutes to find the information. Staff would have to physically get up and search through file cabinets in the next room.

A process that would allow rapid registration of an individual and provide quick access to workshop information was needed. A team researched new registration software and chose one that would allow all staff to have immediate access to information from their own PC's.

Results

- ★ Improved efficiency of registration process through semi-paperless process and registration software.
- ★ Workshop confirmation letters are done with mail merge and automatically print out on the date the workshop is to be confirmed. Workshop confirmations can be sent by e-mail, saving the office money on postage and allowing the customer to receive the information immediately.
- ★ Staff members can access workshop and participant information in 10 seconds.
- ★ Trainers are able to access enrollment information about their workshops from their own PC's to do planning.
- ★ The staff time and money saved is devoted to increased customer service and quality improvement.

Team members: Tonia Frasier, Wally Vlasak, Kathy Ermatinger, Beth Schilling, Cheryl Burdett, Brian Clark, Lori Childers, and Robby Robinson (Sponsor).

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Department of Social and Health Services

Electronic Fund Transfers Speed Payments to Vendors

Paying DSHS vendors involved much internal processing as well as reliance on the U.S. mail. Mailing time added at least two days to the process, and occasionally, warrants were lost or stolen.

Through collaboration with the Office of Financial Management, the Office of Accounting Services (OAS) of the DSHS Finance Division now remits payments to vendors via electronic fund transfers. This allows OAS to greatly improve customer service because the payments are delivered faster and more accurately, with reduced risk of lost or stolen warrants, and without additional cost to the department.

Results

- ★ Vendors receive payment at least two days faster
- ★ The state realizes a savings of \$.10 on each of 30,000 payments per year by EFT, for a total of \$3,000 annually
- ★ There is reduced risk of warrants stolen or lost in the mail
- ★ No additional costs are incurred by the department

Team members: George Segó, Sandy Mitchell, Aaron Butcher, Don Ahmuty, Phyllis Fountain

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Patients Falls Reduced at Western State Hospital

Injuries from falling cause pain and body weakness, and raise health care costs. This project identified factors associated with falls by patients in the Geriatric/Medical Unit which, when controlled, reduce the number of falls and their consequences on patients.

The team selected a tool to assess patients' gait and balance. Working with information systems staff, a computer program was developed to monitor patient falls and collect data on the factors related to the falls. This data is monitored by Clinical Directors and used by Treatment Teams to develop individual treatment plans to protect patients from falls.

Results

- ★ Comparing the first six months of 1997 and 1998 shows that this year's falls in the Geriatric/Medical Unit (GMU) were reduced by 21%, from 390 falls in 1997 to 309 falls in 1998, even though average daily census in the unit increased from 241 in 1997 to 257 in 1998.
- ★ The team implemented the use of a standardized tool (Tinetti) to assess functional mobility of balance and gait on all new GMU admissions, with periodic reassessment of progress or deterioration. Tinetti results are used to develop a patient's individual treatment plan.
- ★ A Falls Tracking Screen to monitor all falls and results of falls in the hospital was added to the hospital's computer system.
- ★ All GMU direct care staff were trained on the use of gait belts to safely and securely assist patients with transfers and movement. This resulted in 16% fewer L&I claims filed by GMU staff in the first six months of 1998.
- ★ 128 hours of staff time a year is saved by eliminating manually generated reports.

Team members: Myra Griffin, Pete Christensen, Ethel Ekland, Pat Pickett, Jane Gidney, Valerie Kot, Tessie Cueva, Dr. Rolando Pasion, Lori Naumcheff, Dr. Julio Buenaventura, Ken Kirkwood, Stephen Pence, Janet Porter

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Child Support Collection Team Exceeds Quality Goals

Collection Team 14 in the Tacoma Office of Support Enforcement had experienced staff absences and turn over that impacted their ability to effectively manage their workload. Team confidence and collections were exceedingly low.

Collectively, the team members were trained in communication styles, group dynamics, reaching shared agreement, goal setting and process improvement. The team determined “what they would consider success in the course of a year”, and then set the following goals utilizing quality tools and techniques: a) Increase collections by 45%; b) Reduce overdue reviews by 60%; and c) Increase the percent of paying case, as well as dollars per case.

Results

- ★ Increased overall team collections by 69%, from \$350,000/month to \$585,000/month. In June of 1998, the team realized collections of \$651,494.
- ★ Reduced overdue team review codes by 62%, from 1280/month to 589/month.
- ★ Increased the average collection per case by 38%, from \$83/case/month to \$115/case/month.
- ★ Increased team involvement and communications and developed a positive consensus, data driven environment.

Team members: Ruth King, Maryann Reinert, Bill Green, Charlene Greer, Traci Yerbich, Karen Williams, Lynn Weible, Diana Shaw, Nicholas Roark and Jennifer Books-Armstrong.

CONTACT: Bill Wegeleben (360) 902-0865

Utility Service Bills Reduced, Procedures Streamlined

The Department of Transportation's Northwest Region, pays nearly five million dollars each year for utility service to properties the department owns. The bill payment process for these utilities was time consuming and cumbersome. Staff suspected some payments were being made which were not the department's responsibility.

A process improvement team revised utility billing processes, identified water meters, electrical service agreements and services the department could eliminate or transfer to the responsible party, and developed a "toolbook" guide and flowchart for customers and department staff.

Results

- ★ Forty-seven water meters that are no longer being used have been removed. Savings in the first three months were \$10,650.
- ★ Utility bills that were no longer the Department of Transportation's responsibility have been transferred to the responsible party, saving \$3,000 in three months.
- ★ Electrical service agreements that are no longer in use have been retired, saving \$150 in three months.
- ★ Savings in the first three months were \$13,800. Projected annual savings will be \$54,600.
- ★ A toolbook has been developed, describing problems and solutions to utility billing issues and providing a checklist. Use of the toolbook is anticipated to nearly eliminate electrical change orders related to service agreements.

Team members: Terese Van Assche, Jack Bartman-facilitator, Rick Hardin, Dave Malsch (deceased), Pat Moylan, Cam Le Nguyen, Joan Oestreich, Joseph Orrico, Mark Shauer, Cathy Tao-Alexanderson, Maroa Velice.

CONTACT: Patrick Moylan (425) 822-4163

Washington Combined Transportation Inventory (CTI) Increases Accuracy And Data Sharing, Reduces Time

The WSDOT Transportation Data Office Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) section used to collect transportation data annually from Washington's 39 counties. Knowing that multiple agencies (WSDOT, the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), and the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)) collect similar data, they formed a team to improve the ways traffic and roadway data is collected, stored, and shared.

The team designed a centralized database, the CTI. The data is collected jointly and resides in the WSDOT Planning Office. The CTI process will end duplicative data gathering efforts and increase the accuracy of data by eliminating multiple data requests to local agencies.

Results

- ★ The Transportation Improvement Board will no longer have to maintain their own database, which required a bi-annual data request to cities and counties.
- ★ The Transportation Data Office will obtain county data directly from the CTI, eliminating a cumbersome 23-day annual data request process.
- ★ The WSDOT Planning Functional Class/Federal Aid section will save time and get more accurate information for the Federal Highway Administration.
- ★ CRAB suppliers will no longer process data requests from HPMS or TIB. Data from their annual information reporting to CRAB will be put into the CTI.
- ★ Any agency participating in the Washington Transportation Needs Assessment Plan will be able to draw data from the CTI.
- ★ WSDOT Bridge Preservation Database will be obtained from the CTI instead of multiple sources.

Team members: Pat Whittaker, LaMar Fenstermaker, Larry Veden, Ron Cihon, Greg Armstrong, Dan Rude, Dave Witcher, Sharon Dana, and Jaymee Keith.

CONTACT: Pat Whittaker, (360) 664-9681

Advocacy For Early Release Results In Treatment, Saves \$\$

The majority of veterans in the King County Jail system are incarcerated for one or combinations of the following reasons; possession or sale of drugs; assaultive behaviors; domestic violence; shop lifting; and/or DUI/public intoxication. More than 50% of these incarcerated veterans are African Americans. The common denominators focus on non-treated alcohol and drug issues, homelessness, poverty and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD.

Working together using data and quality tools the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs and King County coordinated their efforts on behalf of veterans and their families. With a major goal of helping veterans incarcerated in the King County Correctional Facility and giving them choices to incarceration this program provides veterans with temporary housing, employment services and referral for treatment.

Washington State and King County have a savings potential from early release, deferred, or reduced sentences which lowers incarceration costs by \$70 per day.

Results

- ★ Positive partnership with King County and Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ★ Incarceration cost reduction savings from June, 1998, to September, 1998, is \$187,978.
- ★ Veterans getting treatment and support for independent life.
- ★ Lower recidivism.
- ★ Repeatable program in any county of state.

Team Members: DVA employees: Gary Clark, Jerry Towne; King County employees: Joel Estey, Makeda Nandi, Marty Kaplan; VA Medical Center employee: Mark Correale

CONTACT: Gary Clark (206) 296-7564

Change In Computer Systems Saves Time And Dollars

Keeping accurate medical records for Veterans means bringing in increased Federal dollars to pay for cost of care in our two long-term care facilities. Dual entry of the same data was common, and the manual compilation of reports was required. Without accurate and timely data, we are not be able to be reimbursed for cost of care that saves state General Fund dollars. In addition, the year 2000 project has identified these programs as high risk and mission critical. With heavy stakeholder involvement, our two veteran long-term care facilities worked to streamline the workflow process and identify 3 possible choices to create a more efficient data collection system. Training begins later this month with estimated time to full program implementation in 5 months.

Results

- ★ A Year 2000 compliant package purchased at a fraction of the cost of fixing the existing systems.
- ★ A streamlined and efficient workflow model was developed for the medical records needs of both facilities providing more commonality between jobs at both facilities.
- ★ Employee participation and buy-in to a major change in their working environments.
- ★ A repeatable process created for use in future system replacement efforts.

Team Members: Ann Brown, Bob Jones, Brad Babayan, Byron Williams, Candy Chilton, Cheryl Rule, Christine Scott, Debbie Smith-Wray, Jane Bruster, Janet Manning, Joanne McInelly, John Jackson, Margaret McDaniel, Melissa Wilt, Nancy Lammert, Pat Palmer, Patricia Bergman, Sally Shunn, Tina McDonald

CONTACT: Brad Babayan, (360) 709-5236

Bremerton Field Office 60/60 Program Makes for Satisfied Customers

Using a good idea generated by the Governor's Quality Award winner Team Ft. Lewis, the Bremerton Field Office improved upon the process. Again, they used the opportunity to collaborate with the Seattle VA regional Office. Using the lessons learned with the Army they are now able to offer active-duty Navy and Marine Corps personnel a similar opportunity. Active-duty personnel who are within 60 days of the date of separation, and who will be in the area for all of those 60 days the opportunity to file disability claims with the VA before their separation date. In the past the wait has been up to 90 days after discharge and added a frustrating and non-productive waiting time for veterans. Keeping our customers (veterans) satisfied and income their benefits generate in the area is a big win for the state.

Results

- ★ Appeals have been reduced to zero.
- ★ Over 20% of veterans are accessing their educational assistance under the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program and staying in the state.
- ★ Increased efficiencies in claim development and processing results in greater customer satisfaction.

Team Members: Richard Stewart, Lynda Reese, Lena Swanson, Willie Slusarski, Steven Tate.

Contact: Richard Stewart (360) 478-4565

Focus on Diversity Awareness Yields Results

The Military Department focuses on recruiting to mirror the demographics of the communities within a 50-mile radius of the unit. The members of the National Guard are local citizens of Washington, and as such the Guard strives to represent the communities' people. The strategies and actions to achieve an awareness of diversity and the community demographics needed further development. The main thrust is to maintain a focus on making opportunities available to all interested recruits, including those persons of the under-represented groups. This focus is supported by strategic plans at the national and local level on diversity and mentoring. In the past the recruiting staff in the Air National Guard has not reflected the diversity of the units and communities to which they were assigned. Placement of recruiters who represent the diversity of the particular communities and units has been a focus in the last year. The Recruiting and Retention Superintendent, Senior Master Sergeant Paske, attributes the increase in the awareness of diversity to the members of the recruiting team, and to their commitment to the communities and recruits they serve.

Results

- ★ Increase in workforce diversity
- ★ Reflects the National Guard history of roots in the community
- ★ Increases capability in the present and the future
- ★ Enhances the partnership between units and communities
- ★ Sets the stage for an organizational culture where all members can fully realize their potential
- ★ Meets national goals and objectives

Team Members: SMS Larry Paske, Tacoma; TSG Warren Frazier, Seattle; TSG Liz Scott, Tacoma; TSG Greg Renz, Spokane; TSG Shane Schwendiman, Tacoma; MSG Sherri Bartlett, Spokane; TSG Tabatha Bennett, Bellingham; TSG Bob Tipton, Spokane

CONTACT: SMSgt Larry Paske (253) 512-3368, Capt Dana Sawyers (253)512-7790, E-mail sawyersd@cpmurray.army.mil

Teaming Together Restores Samish Bay Shellfish Beds

In 1994, high bacteria levels from failing sewage systems and farm animal wastes polluted shellfish beds in Samish Bay forced harvest restrictions on commercial growers. Over 2,700 acres of thriving shellfish beds were closed to direct harvest

Area residents in Blanchard and Edison joined forces to tackle the long-standing sewage problems that contributed to pollution in Samish Bay. With over \$2 million in public and private grants and loans, technical support from the Department of Ecology and invaluable effort of the citizens, the towns made great strides in fixing dozens of sewage system problems. Blanchard repaired and upgraded on-site sewage systems, and Edison constructed a new community wastewater system to prevent untreated sewage from entering the bay. Farmers, with assistance from the conservation district, also worked to reduce pollution from agriculture.

This summer, community members and public agencies celebrated the success of their efforts. By June, 1998, water quality had improved significantly and the Department of Health upgraded approximately 835 acres of shellfish beds.

Results

- ★ Reopening harvests on 835 acres of commercial shellfish beds has had a positive effect on Skagit County's shellfish industry.
- ★ Constructing a community wastewater system in Edison; and fixing on-site sewage system problems in Blanchard resulted in improved water quality that led to the upgrade.
- ★ Agricultural practices were improved on commercial and non-commercial farms.
- ★ The success of the Blanchard and Edison projects serve as national models for community action, creative problem-solving and private-public partnerships in environmental protection.

Team members: Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County, Washington Department of Health, Washington Department of Ecology, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, area residents, shellfish growers and participants on the Samish Watershed Plan and Skagit Implementation review Committee.

CONTACT: Duane Fagergren (360) 407-7303

Find-It! Makes It Easy To Access Government Information

Citizens who need information about issues related to state, federal and local government frequently must to go to several different agencies and sources to try to find information about a particular topic. For example, to find information about salmon management, one might have to visit counties, cities, state and federal agencies before finding the information needed. Since citizens often can't distinguish between jurisdictions, they may not even know if they are asking the right authority.

Find-It! is a web search engine developed by the Washington State Library to provide easy access to state and local government information and services all across Washington. Implementing it required that we bring together jurisdictions at all levels to agree on standards for document indexing and agency participation in order to make it as easy as possible for anyone to know that they had found the right information.

Results

- ★ User feedback confirms that Find-It! provides faster and easier access to government information: "It beats waiting on hold with some 800 number for long periods of time"
- ★ Use is growing at the rate of 12,000 hits per week
- ★ Access to information is provided "from the citizens point of view" - no need to determine how government slices the issue to search for it

Team members: Phil Coombs, Gayle Palmer, Mike Nelson, Susan Alden

CONTACT: Gayle Palmer (360) 704-5210

Book Order Streamlining Reduces Delays

When librarians placed orders for books and other library materials with acquisitions staff, they could never know how long the order would take. The variation in time required to place or cancel an order ranged from a few days to, in some cases, up to a year. Receiving the books (opening the boxes and invoicing the items) took an average of 25 days, resulting in late payments to vendors and further delays to the customer who placed the order.

The process improvement team consolidated ordering into a single queue, redesigned the order form to ensure that all information required to place the order was there, and instituted a feedback process to let people know when an item was unavailable. They also streamlined the invoicing and receiving process and identified backup procedures. They worked with customers to even out the ordering stream so that order volumes became more predictable with fewer peaks

Results

- ★ Average turnaround for order placement reduced from 30 days to 8
- ★ Average turnaround time for receiving and invoicing reduced from 25 days to 5
- ★ Average turnaround time for vendor payment reduced from 25 days to 5
- ★ Variation in the turnaround time for either placing the orders or notifying customers that the item was unavailable was reduced from several months to less than two weeks.
- ★ Because the volume of outstanding orders is lower, fiscal year closing was much easier

Team members: Glenn Parsons, Kelly Bond, Brooke Barnes, Charlotte Meyers, Jerri Bennett, Terry Braese

CONTACT: Kelly Bond (360) 704-5220.

State Lottery Commission

Product Implementation Team

The Lottery's mission is to "produce the maximum amount of net revenues for the state consistent with the dignity of the state and the welfare of the people." To achieve our mission, the Lottery needs to introduce new products and product enhancements to our players on a regular basis.

Historically, the Lottery had no formal mechanism in place to coordinate cooperative, proactive implementation of new products. In early 1998, the Product Implementation Team, which includes managers from all divisions that would be affected by implementation of new products, was created. In addition, representatives from our two key vendors (GTECH and Publicis) are included on the team. GTECH supplies the terminals that our retailers use to generate tickets for on-line games such as Lotto. Publicis is our advertising agency.

This team's efforts allowed the Lottery to provide players with a choice in how they receive their Lotto winnings. Now winners can choose a one-time payment worth half of the advertised jackpot, or receive their winnings in 25 annual payments.

Results

- ★ The introduction of Cash Option and an extended annuity period (25 years rather than 20 years) for Lotto jackpot winners, is expected to result in a savings of \$11 Million.
- ★ The anticipated Lottery savings of \$11 Million will go to the State General Fund and will help meet commitments to fund the new Mariners baseball stadium and new Washington State football/soccer stadium and exhibition center.
- ★ Improved communication and cooperative problem-solving identified and resolved issues at the front end of implementation and thereby decreased staff time by doing things right the first time.
- ★ Improved communication and involvement of agency staff and vendors to generate new ideas to improve our service delivery.

Team members: Mary Jane Ferguson (Chair), Tim Brown, Jean Caster, Kathy Kozu, Mara Sobel, Lyn Matson, Ron Robbins, Steve Patterson, JoAnne Smith, Mary Skube, Ann Clark, Kathy Jump (GTECH), Publicis staff: Larry Dietzel, Lara Stark, Adam Colby, Robin Bennett)

CONTACT: Mary Jane Ferguson (360) 753-1947

Revised Computer Report To Increase Responsiveness To Customers

The “computer terminal install report” informs Lottery staff when a retailer is scheduled for installation of an ISYS terminal. An ISYS terminal is a computer terminal that produces on-line ticket games such as Lotto, Daily Keno, Quinto, Lucky for Life, and Daily Game. The install report, which was generated about three times a week, was received in an unreadable format. This required staff time to reformat the report, copy it, and mail it to regional staff.

Lottery staff worked with GTECH, our vendor who supplies the report and the terminal, to modify the report so that it was usable for both GTECH and Lottery staff. The resulting report was not only easier to read, but it provided a way to quickly determine which retailers were scheduled to receive equipment.

Results

- ★ The report modification saved staff 672 annual FTE hours because the report could be produced and distributed more easily.
- ★ Our partnership with GTECH was strengthened because the vendor was involved with making the change rather than being brought in after the decisions had been made.
- ★ Retailers were more satisfied because Lottery staff was able to more accurately explain when the terminal would be delivered and installed.
- ★ Delivery priorities were clearly articulated to both GTECH and Lottery staff, which enabled more effective scheduling and enhanced communication.

Team members: Irene Ritchie, Kristi Seay, Shannon Moberly (GTECH)

CONTACT: Irene Ritchie (360) 753-1482

State Park and Recreation Commission

New Fixed Asset System Improves Reporting, Saves Time, And Reduces Cost

State Parks is a decentralized agency with 125 parks through out the state. Each area must be inventoried every two years.

The agency's inventory was tracked and entered into two separate computerized systems, an in-house system and a statewide system offered by the Office of Financial Management. Neither system contained all the information needed to locate inventory resulting in field staff having to rely on reports from two different systems and in two different formats. The in-house system required regular maintenance of the software from an outside vendor and was not year 2000 compliant. Costs associated with maintaining records on both systems continued to increase without any added benefits to the agency.

A new in-house system was created to maintain those records not required on the statewide system. This system also allows for inventory records to be transferred electronically from the statewide system so that reports meeting the specific needs of the Agency could be developed.

Assets meeting certain criteria were permanently moved to the in-house system to save on costs incurred by the statewide system.

Results

- ★ Annual statewide system cost savings of \$3,770.
- ★ Inventory not required on the statewide or in-house systems were removed from those systems, reducing the inventory count by 22%. This saves the Agency about 135 staff hours annually.
- ★ Only one report is needed to complete physical inventories, as compared to two or more separate reports in the past. Special reports are easily done in the new system.
- ★ The new system is supported entirely by internal staff, eliminating the need for outside vendor support.
- ★ The new system is year 2000 compliant.

Team members: Sandy Rees, Art Brown, Mark Bibeau, Mike Giovanni, Lynda Gee, Julie George, Cindy Cavanagh, Suzy Davis, Sally Holt, Noomi Dene

CONTACT: Sandy Rees (360) 902-8575

Utilities and Transportation Commission

New Collection Effort Brings In Overdue Reports And Fees

Companies regulated by the Commission are required to file annual reports and pay regulatory fees based on a percentage of their annual revenues. Many companies were out of compliance for failure to file an annual report and/or pay their regulatory fees.

A new call-back process was implemented to make one on one contacts with the companies and agree to resolution for overdue amounts. Written agreements were drafted where necessary and procedures for tracking out of compliance companies were increased.

Results

- ★ \$313,669 in overdue fees was collected due to call back system efforts, an increase of approximately 3% in total revenues collected by the Commission.
- ★ Overdue annual reports were reduced from approximately 500 overdue reports to 224 overdue reports, with efforts still continuing.
- ★ Records were cleaned up for inactive companies no longer in business.
- ★ Anticipated future benefit of increased compliance due to word of mouth of companies that the Commission is closely tracking non-compliant companies.

Team Members: Pat Dutton, Kim Dobyms, Melanie Lee, Carolyn Caruso

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez (360) 664-1157

Local Community Members Serving Schools

The state has provided arts in education programs to public school students for 35 years. Programs are administered from Olympia, with Arts Commission employees booking performing arts tours throughout the state. Students also travel to performances at symphony halls and theaters. The new service delivery model will increase community involvement in decisions. We want the services to be delivered in a manner meaningful to each participating school. Employees in the Arts In Education Program held focus group meetings in both western and eastern sides of the state. Based on the messages heard from schoolteachers and artists, they developed a new program which will replace three existing subprograms. The new program will encourage partnerships from schools, local arts agencies, parents, artists, arts organizations and local businesses.

Results

- ★ Local community ownership of arts in education programming decisions, from the planning to delivery of educational services.
- ★ Allows freedom of choice to select local artists or choose an artist from the Arts Commission approved roster of artists.
- ★ Encourages programming which will more directly support the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts.
- ★ Supports local community capacity building, rather than dependence on state administered programs. Increased commitment level of local partners.

Team members: Linda Bellon-Fisher and Arianna Dogil, with assistance by 25 valued customers: 5 educators, 7 staff from local arts agencies, 7 arts organizations, 4 artists and 2 statewide service organizations.

Contact: Linda Bellon-Fisher (360) 586-2418

Statewide Partnership With Local School Districts = Quality Services To Non Served And Underserved Blind And Visually Impaired Children

Services to blind and visually impaired children can be very difficult and expensive due to the low incidence of this sensory disability. One tenth of one percent of school age children or approximately 1,400 children are blind and visually impaired. This means that often communities throughout our state may have only one or two children with a visual disability.

The Outreach team at WSSB has developed contractual partnerships with 1/6th of the local public school districts in an attempt to provide services where they didn't exist, improve the quality where services were minimal, and put in place a service delivery system that the districts can afford.

Results:

- ★ Since 1990 - WSSB has increased the number of students it serves by 580%.
- ★ Approximately 493 children per month are receiving direct and consultative instruction and services without the expenditure of any new state funding. Local districts' funding was redirected to help meet unmet needs of these children.
- ★ Increased children's literacy through collaborative agreements and resource sharing. Cost effective and efficient services to blind and visually impaired children have been developed through quality partnerships in various locations throughout the state.
- ★ The outreach team has maintained a customer satisfaction rating of 4.5 on a scale from one - five (excellent).
- ★ The outreach process used by WSSB in partnerships with OPSI and local school districts is being viewed as a model for other states to follow.

Team Members: (Primary Team) Rod Humble, Darcy Krusinski, Dee Amundsen, Peggy Gallagher, Ted Hines, Catherine Golding, and Bruce McClanahan. (Support Team) All WSSB on campus education staff and local school district personnel.

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

Computer Access For Blind and Visually Impaired Students

Access to commonly used software, which is highly visual in nature, has often been viewed as not usable by people who are blind. Very few individuals throughout the United States have been successful in developing access software that allows mainstream computer products to be useful for the blind through Braille displays and synthetic speech. These access devices can also be expensive and require extensive training and therefore limited use existed throughout our state.

Through the efforts of the Technology Access Team at WSSB, students throughout our state have gone from almost no access to having in place some of the best access in the country. This has all been done through creative partnerships and resource sharing that have allowed products to move with children from district to district and standardization on various products that have reduced both the teacher and student learning curb.

Results:

- ★ Blind students in Washington have greater access to mainstream software than any other place in the USA.
- ★ Standardization of hardware and software (statewide) has resulted in improved literacy for blind children.
- ★ WSSB has implemented statewide site licensing of Job Access with Windows Software (JAWS), this has provided access for students throughout the state and has resulted in a savings of \$60,000 to local school districts.
- ★ Products that were listed as non-accessible for the blind (such as graphic based encyclopedias, and PowerPoint have been made accessible). This is a first in the country. This information has recently been shared at an international conference on access technology for people with disabilities.
- ★ WSSB has purchased access hardware through grant dollars with OSPI, private foundations, and LIONS Clubs, that is delivered or shipped to kids throughout the state. This allows quick access rather than having to wait as much as one year for the purchase of a device and/or training.
- ★ Statewide training for teachers and paraprofessionals have occurred on these access devices guaranteeing that Washington has some of the best trained vision teachers in the country.

Team Members: Bruce McClanahan, Colleen Heiden, and Ed Lukowski

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

“Capitalizing” on In-house Talent for Computer Training

The Human Rights Commission recently completed the transition of all computer workstations from DOS to Windows 95 and from WordPerfect to Microsoft Word. Along with that transition came the need to train staff, many of whom had never worked in a Windows environment or with Microsoft Word. The Computer Users Group, which was formed to address such issues, considered several training options. They decided that the most cost-effective way to provide such training would be for staff to develop and conduct it in-house. A curriculum subcommittee was formed to spearhead the process.

Members of the curriculum subcommittee, with assistance from the Users Group, developed and conducted a one-day all-staff training that was held at the Department of Revenue’s Computer Training Facility. This was hands-on training, with two staff (one more seasoned and one less familiar with Word) assigned to each computer. The training included an introduction to computer basics and Windows ‘95 and then more detailed explanations and exercises for various Word ‘97 functions. The group learned how to use Word ‘97 templates that staff had developed to ensure consistency of findings and support documents. “Tip sheets” were distributed, along with the names of individuals who will serve as resources while the transition continues.

Staff’s evaluation of the training indicated that it was well received. Individuals reported that they found the training to be very helpful and at its completion felt better prepared for (and less anxious about) the transition.

Results

- ★ Commission staff received training to enable them to make the transition to Windows ‘95 and Word ‘97.
- ★ The training and all follow-up support were developed and delivered in-house by Commission staff, at a savings of approximately \$8,000.
- ★ Templates were developed to ensure consistency and quality of findings and supporting documents.
- ★ A support system to ensure staff’s continued smooth transition was put in place.
- ★ As a result of the training and by using the templates, staff will spend fewer hours preparing findings and supporting documents. These efficiencies will result in improved customer service.

Team Members: Goodwin Trent, Martin Casey, Tanya Calahan, Rudy Chavez, Jean Ciallella, Edmon Lee, John Maxwell, Arthur Stratton.

CONTACT: Goodwin Trent, Chair of the Computer Users Group (360)753-7033 or Martin Casey, Chair of the Curriculum Subcommittee (360)586-5765.

Automated Inventory System Saves Time

The Property Management Section maintains 135 facilities and has approximately \$700,000 in inventory that must be accounted for annually. An automated consumable inventory system has been initiated and is functioning, eliminating the need to conduct a total physical count of all inventory items. The system also features automatic reorder. Annual savings is projected to be approximately 250 employee hours.

Results

★ 250 employee hours saved

Team members: Dennis A. Craig, Harold F. Denny, Michael J. Evans, Thomas A. Neff, Greg D. Parriott, and Jerry E. Tilson.

CONTACT: Thomas A. Neff (360) 412-8955