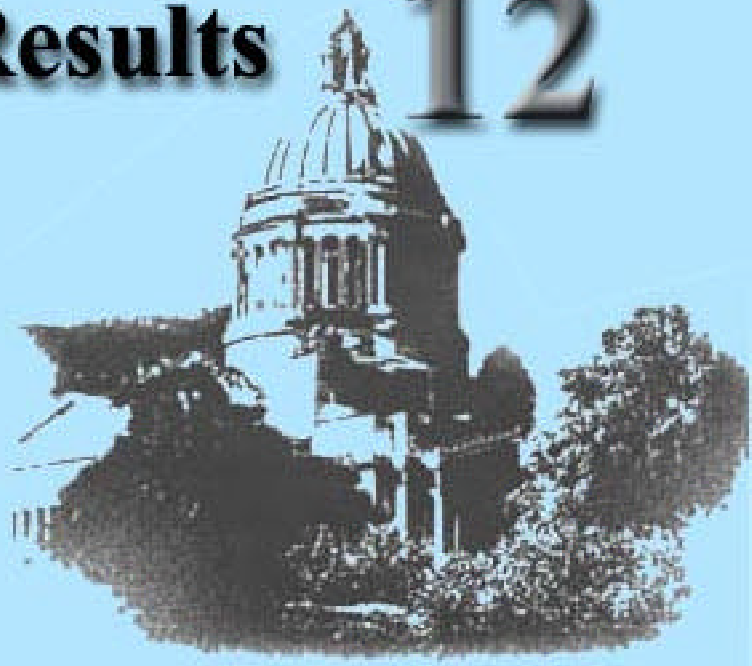
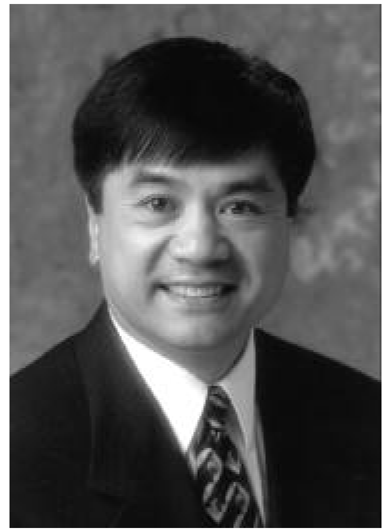
Governing For Results 12



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

October 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 1590 quality improvement projects, saving $66 million.

Inside this booklet are highlights of those efforts from the third quarter of 2000. 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 Twelfth Edition of *Governing for Results*

Governing for Results 12 is the twelfth 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 1590 quality projects, saving the state over $66 million. As a result of these efficiencies, approximately 831,000 staff hours have been saved. This represents overtime hours eliminated or hours redirected to other work. In addition, these efforts have produced over $28 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 third quarter of 2000. The story of each team's success can be found in the edition of the *Governing for Results* book indicated below. Our congratulations to these outstanding teams for winning this prestigious award.

Team Name/Agency	Book Edition Number	Page Number
Statewide Database Licensing Project State Library	Book 11	91
Online Ordering System Team Department of Printing and Employment Security Department	Book 11	42
Community Litter Cleanup Program Departments of Ecology and Corrections; Jail Industries Board	Book 12	14
Bellevue Breakthrough Team Department of Licensing	Book 11	36
Corporate Jobs Challenge Project Employment Security Department	Book 12	74
Getting Services to Eligible Customers Health Care Authority	Book 12	87

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 third quarter of 2000. 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
Incoming Sort Project Team Department of General Administration	Book 10	16
Everything Including the Kitchen Sink Team Department of General Administration	Book 10	17
Unemployment Insurance FastTax/ICESA Magnetic Format Employment Security Department	Book 11	66

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Salting Out Violators

The Board is statutorily required to provide lists of licensees and their addresses to educational and professional organizations. Although these licensee lists cannot be used for commercial purposes or resold, the agency did not have a mechanism to track or monitor use of the lists. More importantly, the agency was unable to identify if any of the organizations used the lists for unauthorized purposes.

Last May we developed a method to "salt" the licensee lists provided to educational and professional organizations. Each licensee list is "salted" with an identifier unique to that individual licensee list. A fictitious name/address is included in the licensee list, and correspondence mailed to this fictitious name/address is diverted to the agency. This allows the agency to receive, and then review, correspondence mailed to our licensees. If an inappropriate use of the licensee list is identified, we are able to identify the organization misusing the list by way of the "salt-code." Violators can be identified and addressed.

Results

★ A tool for monitoring compliance with statute.

★ Documentary evidence to support enforcement action.

★ Enhanced privacy of licensee information means improved customer service.

Team Name: Salt Code Team
Team Members: Tim Hoefer, Sandy Shoemaker, Dana McInturff

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

Instantaneous Access Triples Customer Service

Proactively meeting customer expectations means constantly enhancing our award-winning website.

Last December to streamline customer access to forms, we consolidated all application forms into a separate forms page on the website. Prior to this enhancement, our customers accessed individual application forms through separate website pages. In other words, the firm license application was accessed through the firm license page; the certificate license application was accessed through the certificate page, etc. If a customer was unable to locate a form, they had to call and request a form directly from the agency.

By consolidating all forms onto a forms page, customers entering the website can go directly to the desired form without having to page through additional information.

In the nine months since the forms page was launched, client downloads from the website have tripled. For example, last August 3,000 forms were downloaded from the website. This is 4.6 times the number of forms downloaded in August 1999. Each form that is successfully downloaded results in one less phone call to the agency and one less envelope to address and mail.

Results

- ★ Self service is built into our customer service. [Our clients, in particular our international clients are demanding self service.]
- ★ Instantaneous access to desired information.
- ★ Reduced staff time to respond to customer inquiries, and prepare correspondence.
- ★ Reduced supplies and postage cost.
- ★ Agency pride.

Team Name: Forms Page Team
Team Members: Cheryl Sexton, Carl Lew

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

Eliminating Use of Certified Mail for Proposed Orders

In fiscal year 2000, we issued over 2,000 Proposed Decision and Orders (PD&Os). By statute, a party who is not satisfied with a proposed order must file a petition for review within 20 days of receipt of the order. To ensure the agency had a record of when PD&Os were received by parties in the event a petition was received, proposed orders were sent to all parties by certified mail, return receipt requested. Since petitions are received on only approximately 36-40 percent of all proposed decisions, we eliminated the use of certified mail on all proposed orders and now require parties to file affidavits of receipt of the PD&O if they petition for review. This change results in substantial savings of agency staff time and mailing costs, and also eliminates an unnecessary requirement for the parties to return the certified mail card if they are not filing a petition for review.

Results

- ★ Reduction in staff time needed to process and mail orders, approximately 646 hours annually.
- ★ Significant cost savings in postage, approximately $21,711 annual savings. (2,056 PD&Os issued, averaging 3 pieces of certified mail each at the rate of $3.52 postage each.)
- ★ More efficient utilization of staff time.
- ★ Parties (i.e. customers) are not required to complete and return certified mail cards. In approximately 40 percent of proposed orders issued, parties may be required to file a verification of receipt of PD&O.
- ★ Morale boost for employees.

Team Members: Becky Davis, Joel Shillander, Kim Bellamy, Charlotte Reynolds, Deidre Mathews, Pam Crowley

CONTACT: Pam Crowley, (360) 753-6823, extension 175

Copies of Orders

When a Proposed Decision and Order (PD&O) is issued, copies of the order are made not only for the parties, but additional file copies are made for a number of internal purposes as well. In addition, 8 copies were made to expedite processing in the event a petition for review was filed. A petition for review is filed on about 36-40 percent of PD&Os issued. Following an evaluation of our process, we determined that we could reduce the number of file copies made from from 8 to 1 master copy. If a petition is filed, copies can be made at that time. Through this process improvement we have reduced the number of file copies made from 8 per PD&O to 1. This represents a savings of both staff time and paper.

Results

- ★ Reduction in staff time to copy and file orders on approximately 60 percent of proposed orders (72 hours annually).
- ★ Savings in paper costs of $1,311 annually for 2,056 PD&Os issued, each averaging 18 pages in length, saving approximately 518 reams of paper.
- ★ More efficient use of staff time.
- ★ Mitigates the constant pressure of the mailing deadline each day for staff.

Team Members: Pam Crowley, Becky Davis, Joel Shillander

CONTACT: Pam Crowley, (360) 753-6823, extension 175

Transmittal of Certified Appeal Record Streamlined

After an appeal is filed to a superior court from a Board decision, we certify a copy of our appeal record and transmit it to the court and to each party to the appeal. A postcard was sent to each party with the copy of the record for the party to note the date the record was received and return the card in the mail to the Board. The cards were filed and used as verification that each party had been provided a copy of the record. The practice of sending these postcards duplicated entries made into the agency's database on the date a record was sent. Eliminating use of the cards and relying instead on electronic data recording the date transmitted covers our legal obligations, reduces costs, and saves staff time.

Results

★ Staff time needed to prepare the cards and file the returned cards was eliminated without loss of the significant information that had lead to the institution of the process in the first place, i.e., the need to create a record that the parties had been supplied with a copy of the appeal record. (52 hours annually.)

★ Postage and printing costs for the cards was eliminated. Approximately $300 annually.

★ Agency customers are relieved of obligation to fill out the card and ensure its return to the Board.

Team Members: Deidre Mathews, Karen Wilson, Sherry Ison

CONTACT: Deidre Mathews, (360) 753-9646

Professional Subscriptions Reviewed

As the state's administrative tax court, the Board of Tax Appeals (Board) uses subscriptions to legal, tax, and appraisal publications to keep abreast of changing issues and to conduct research for writing decisions. However, as programs change, there may be a need for new subscriptions though old subscriptions are seldom canceled. The Board performed a complete review of all its subscriptions to determine if current subscriptions were still necessary. Following the review, several subscriptions were canceled and the savings were used to purchase network CD versions of other paper publications.

The on-line capabilities provided by the CDs allow the Board to quickly access research and reference materials from their desktop. This saves time in researching and writing decisions.

Results

★ Saved $420 per year on subscription fees.

★ Used savings from canceled subscriptions to purchase CDs for on-line research capabilities.

★ Time spent by the Board doing research for decisions has decreased.

Team Members: Susan Riddle, Carol Lien, Richard Virant

CONTACT: Susan Riddle, (360) 753-5446

Inspecting Your Vegetables More Efficiently

Fruits and vegetables are among the major agricultural commodities produced in this state. Suppliers and consumers want the best quality possible so the state Department of Agriculture's Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program provides an inspection service for grading and determining quality levels for growers.

Six potato packing houses are participating in a pilot program that allows industry representatives to perform inspections with our agency providing oversight to ensure that state and federal regualtions are followed. Our inspectors provide training for the Customer Assisted Inspection Program (CAIP), which was developed as an alternative inspection program to reduce costs. Food samples are recorded on approved notesheets that are used to certify produce by state inspectors as agency personnel inspect and certify the commodities prior to shipping. The program reduces agency overtime and inspection costs.

Results

★ Team members developed a comprehensive training program, utilizing computer-based, classroom, and on-the-job training, for industry inspectors.

★ State Department of Agriculture inspectors provide technical expertise and ensure customers and suppliers that the product certified meets all federal and state requirements.

★ Industry inspectors receive training in the interpretation of federal and state grade standards for fresh products.

★ Participants of the CAIP program realize savings in two ways: by using their own employees to perform inspections (reduced inspection costs) and by not having an increase in fee service that non-participating customers may experience.

Team Name: District 3 CAIP Training Team
Team Members: Clyde Wraspir, Lee Hall, Ken Tuttle, Bob Perkins, Jody Haddican

CONTACT: Clyde Wraspir, (509) 765-9121; Jim Quigley, (360) 902-1833

Brownstone Community Service Sanction Program

As a sanction for committing major infractions, Work Release offenders were getting their sentence extended from 5-180 days, at a cost of $55 per day of extension. Sanctioning offenders in this manner was very costly and, in the case of lower risk offenders, did little to enhance community safety.

The staff at Brownstone Work Release worked with the City of Spokane to address this problem. The Community Service Sanction Program was designed to offer a viable alternative to extending offender incarceration as a sanction, while at the same time, provide an opportunity for offenders to perform service for their local community. Low risk offenders were ordered to perform community service hours on the Department of Corrections Work Crew. Instead of taking up bed space and costing taxpayers more money, offenders are now performing service for the community they intend to rejoin.

Results

- ★ 864 hours of community service were performed for the City of Spokane.
- ★ $5,940 was saved in incarceration costs for work release beds in nine months.
- ★ A viable sanctioning alternative to extending incarceration of low-risk offenders was developed.

Team Name: Brownstone Community Service Sanction Project
Team Members: Andy Conard, Debra Conner, Kim Elwood, Grace Engelhard, Charlan Gerrior, Debra Short, Patricia South, Alice Watts, George Jones, Linda Ketcham, Kathy Lundy, Christina Patton, Joanna Prideaux

CONTACT: Debra Conner, (509) 456-6326

Computerized Case Law for Inmates

In order to provide legal access to prison inmates more efficiently, in less time, and to save space, this team investigated computerized case law systems. Our goal was to find a company who would provide case law without giving inmates access to the Internet.

The team worked with a company and developed a pilot project to provide case law to prison inmates for the Supreme Court, the 9th Circuit, all the jurisdictions within the 9th Circuit from 1970 forward, the current Washington Administrative Codes (WAC's) and Revised Codes of Washington (RCW's). Monthly updates by CD-ROM are also provided.

The information is loaded to a remote server and the inmates access the information by using “dumb” terminals. “Recycled” computers that had been stored during an upgrade were used, (further reducing start-up costs). The system uses a natural language search and searches by name of case or by type of offense. It is very simple to understand and use. The inmates have used the system and found it very helpful.

Results

- ★ Saved $10,670 in book subscription costs from 1997-1999.
- ★ Reduced backlog of case law requests from three months to three days.
- ★ Reduced demands of case law from the Washington State Law Library.
- ★ Utilized recycled computers.

Team Name: Computerized Case Law Team
Team Members: Maggie Miller-Stout, Elaine Thomas, Lynne Phipps

CONTACT: Lynne Phipps, (360) 426-4433, extension 5503

Personal Computer Replacement at a Reduced Cost

Employee reliance on having access to adequate computers to do their job has grown significantly over the last several years. At the same time, advances in hardware technology and networking capacity has resulted in the need to replace personal computers about every four years. Employees from our information services team developed a replacement program that has saved Ecology money and is working to achieve a high priority environmental strategy of waste reduction.

Results

★ Through a sustained purchase of approximately 30 computers per month, staff were able to negotiate a contract that saves $217 per computer - at 350 computers per year the savings is resulting in $75,950 per year.

★ Standarized agency computer purchases has resulted in a savings of 3 hours per computer set-up time or 1050 hours per year.

★ The contract with the computer company is for 6 months, allowing us to take quicker advantage of reductions in computer costs and advances in technology.

★ The information services team is working to reduce the packaging that comes with each computer (to reduce our costs for recyling the waste). We have recycled 1,500 pounds of styrofoam to date.

★ The current contractor is the most environmentally friendly computer manufacturer in terms of energy efficiency and amount of pollution emitted from their plant.

Team Name: Computer Customer Services Team
Team Members: Joe Baker, Mary Ellen Bradley, Edgar Casitas, Eddie Crespo, Dan Fears, Jim Griffith, David Hovik, Jim Kozisek, Ruth Korynta, BJ LaLonde, David Laws, Daniel Lopez, Dennis Lorton, Judy Mattingly, Bill Myers, Jeff Noddings, Kim Pierson, Sy Polzin, Ron Riedner, Teresa Roddy, Jane Smith, Sue Smith, Ken Stowell, Eric Strom, Linda Talen, Randy Walen, Chuck Wilkowski

CONTACT: Jane Smith, (360) 407-6951

Coordinated Environmental Review of Financial Assistance Programs

Several state and federal agencies provide grant and loan assistance to local governments and tribes for the planning, design and construction of water pollution control systems. Each agency independently reviewed projects for environmental considerations against their own criteria. Five agencies worked together to foster cooperation and coordination in structuring and implementing the environmental process associated with water quality projects:

- US Departments of Agriculture Rural Development and Forest Service;
- Washington State Departments of Ecology, Community Development and Public Works Board.

Results

★ Coordinated processes by the five agencies to ensure the environmental review is consistent with the requirements of state and federal environmental standards.

★ Promotion of the most affordable, cost-effective projects in a manner that provides advantages to the environment and the community.

★ Each agency is providing information about financial and technical assistance available from the other agencies.

★ Streamlined and simplified environmental review processes required of local governments receiving grants and loans from these funding agencies.

Team Name: Environmental Review of Financial Assistance Projects
Team Members: Ecology: Steve Carley, Brain Howard, Janice Roderick; Community Development: Dan Riebli; Public Works Board: Pete Butkus, Joe Heller; US Department of Agriculture: Laurel Andrew, Jack Gleason

CONTACT: Steve Carley, (360) 407-6572

Improved Processing of 2,200 Stormwater Permits

Every five years businesses operating under a permit to discharge treated stormwater for the removal of contaminants must renew their permit. The permit information is maintained in an Ecology database. Recently, 2,200 permit renewals were due to Ecology. To save time and money, Ecology generated permit renewal applications that were already filled out using the existing information in the database. These applications were mailed to the permittee for review and signature. The permitee was instructed to make the needed changes to the permit application and return it to Ecology.

Results

★ Sending the permittee an application that only needs to be updated saves the applicant time - improving customer service.

★ By using the data base to generate the application we are automatically confirming the accuracy of our permit information.

★ Data entry time was reduced by 550 hours.

Team Name: Stormwater General Permits
Team Members: Keith Johnson, Linda Matlock, Bill Moore, Warren Opfer, Marc Pacifico

CONTACT: Bill Moore, (360) 407-6444

Improving Environmental Performance at the Department of the Navy

The Department of the Navy has several installations in the state that are equivalent to small, and sometimes not so small, cities. As a result, they have the entire infrastructure to support the armed services necessary to meet their mission and that of a city (i.e., sewage treatment and solid waste disposal). Much of the support activity associated with the armed services is industrial in nature. As a result, facility installations confront a variety of environmental issues, including air and water pollution and the generation of solid and hazardous waste. In the mid-90's, Ecology employees and the Navy collaborated more closely to improve environmental performance at the Navy's Washington installations.

Results

★ Solid waste recycling: In 1999, Navy Region Northwest diverted 35.81 percent of the total solid waste stream through recycling (total volume - 14,144.1 tons).

★ Oil spill prevention: In 1999, the Navy reduced the total volume spilled by 56% and reduced the number of spills by 26% compared to 1998. As of July 2000, the total volume spilled was reduced by 96% and number of spills reduced was 64% compared to the same period in 1999.

★ Toxics reduction: The cumulative amount of hazardous waste reduction between 1990 (baseline) and 1999 was over 40 million pounds.

Team Name: Partners for Environmental Sustainability
Team Members: Ecology**:** Paul O'Brien, Robin Harrover, Steve Hunter, Dennis Johnson, Dave Misko, Stan Norman, Lisa Perle, Rob Reuter, Julie Sellick, Bob Stone, Michelle Underwood, Scott Zimmerman; Navy: Linda Boyer, Tammy Brown, Robert Cipra, Jack Goertz, Linda LongCrane, Duy Pham, Rod Schnorenberg, Gerry Sherrell, Steven Swanson, William Conbere, Michael Matta, Karen Holmes, Michael Tucker, Chuck Hendrickson, Michael Sheperd, Susan Anderson, Michael Butterfield, Richard Comfort, Marvin Frye, Jennifer Marquez, Mike Scott, Hayden Street, Terry Black, Lee Bradley, Julie Brillante, Gene Ellis, Dale Hunt, Dean Kohn, Reinout van Beynum, Kathryn Souders, Mary Lou Gonzalas, Bob Campagna, Ed Lukjanowicz, Melissa Palmer, Mark Patterson, Greg Levcun, Roberta Beery, Matt Jabloner, Jonathan Rogalsky

CONTACT: Dennis Johnson, (425) 649-7040

Departments of Ecology and Corrections; Jail Industries Board

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

State and Local Offenders Cleaning up Litter and Illegally Dumped Materials

Data indicate that the litter problem in our state has been steadily increasing in the past four years. In a recent report released by Ecology it was estimated that 25 percent of the litter and illegally dumped materials is being picked up. In one effort to increase the amount picked up, Ecology created the Community Litter Cleanup Program. This program provides funding to local governments to prioritize litter clean up in their communities. The Department of Corrections contracts with local governments to provide the equipment, tools, supplies and offender crews to clean up litter and illegal dumps. The Jail Industries Board provides technical assistance to communities to start local jail-based cleanup programs.

Results

★ A 352 percent increase in the pounds of litter picked up, a 479 percent increase in road miles cleaned and 1170% increase in acreage cleaned.

★ In calendar year 1999, correctional crew hours worked 117,450 hours to pick up litter and illegally dumped materials.

★ Jail bed days saved: 4,893 at $50 per day = $244,650

★ Labor value to the communities; 117,450 hours at $5.70 per hour = $669,465

Team Name: Community Litter Cleanup Program
Team Members: Ecology: Mikel Baxter, Peter Christiansen, Mariann Cook Andrews, Pat Dice, Glenn Duncan, Michael Drumwright, David Giglio, Dan Koroma, Steve Loftness, Diane Singer, Marni Solheim, Jay Shepard, Cullen Stephenson, Cheryl Strange, Megan Thomas; Corrections: William Boyle, Lars Carlsen, Tom Gillam, Dave Granger, Kathleen Lundy, Karen Portin, Troy Styles; Jail Industries Board: Bruce Thompson, Jill Will

CONTACT: Jay Shepard, 360-407-6071

Agencies Join Forces to Clean Up Records

The Department of Financial Institution's (DFI's), Division of Credit Unions worked with the Secretary of State to clean up records regarding state-chartered credit unions. The Secretary of State maintains a database on all corporations approved to do business in the state of Washington. The Department of Financial Institutions discovered that the Secretary of State's internal and web site records were incomplete regarding lists of active state-chartered credit unions. This resulted in the public being provided inaccurate information when searching for credit unions for purposes such as clearing liens from property. DFI worked with staff from the Corporations Division of the Secretary of State to correct their database. In addition, the two agencies created a new legal document, that notifies the Secretary of State's Office of status changes for Credit Unions thereby providing consistent records between the two agencies. Nineteen credit unions were moved from active to inactive lists. Two credit unions were added to the active credit union list.

Results

- ★ Better customer service because the public is no longer given inaccurate information when searching for credit unions.
- ★ More accurate record keeping and communication between the two agencies.

Team Name: Records Clean Up Team
Team Members: Doug-Lacy-Roberts, Parker Cann, Linda Jekel

CONTACT: Gloria Papiez, (360) 902-8820

Consolidating Permit Applications Improves Customer Service

Department of Fish and Wildlife had two different special permit hunt application cards. One included permit applications for deer and elk hunts; the other included mountain goat, big horn sheep and moose hunt applications. It was very easy to get the booklets of these different applications confused. It required constant checking and rechecking to make sure the correct permit application was being completed for a customer. Customers were also frustrated that the exact same information would need to be reentered on the second set of permit applications if one of each was requested. To address this, the customer service staff consolidated all of the species onto one application card making it much easier to focus on the customer rather than shuffling booklets of permit applications.

Results

- ★ Saved time in completing applications.
- ★ Improved product.
- ★ Eliminated confusion on the part of the customer.
- ★ Made bookkeeping easier by reducing the numerous series of document numbers.
- ★ Reduced number of applications that were voided due to incorrect permit applications.

Team Name: Regional Office Managers
Team members: Lois Blanchette, Kathy Ballinger, Judith Otani, Anita Davies, Traci Sowder, Judy Guy

CONTACT: Judy Guy, (360) 249-1219

Custodial Supply Ordering

The former procedure of ordering custodial cleaning supplies often resulted in over stocking of identical and or similar cleaning items. This ineffective practice resulted in some stock never being used and much needed storage space being wasted. Due to lack of storage space, items were stacked so high that it created a safety hazard for custodians using the supplies. Also, this procedure was not economically sound. After analyzing the problem, staff learned that lack of communication between day shift and night shift supervisors and custodians was a problem and there was a need for a supply ordering and inventory control system. One major challenge was getting information back and forth between day and night shifts.

A team was formed and custodial supervisors and employees worked together to review the current inventory and reduce the number of brands of cleaning products to one product for each type of cleaning. Outdated products were surplused. Mixing solution centers were created to help employees use the right amount of cleaning products. These centers provide a place to mix chemicals in an environmentally safe way. Custodial supervisors began reviewing bi-monthly product orders. A supply order form was developed for all standardized products, inventory control sheets and logs were placed in all store rooms and custodians were asked to track and log supplies as they used them. Monthly inventory is now being taken by night supervisors, and reported to the custodial manager. Supplies for all buildings are ordered bi-monthly by one person, and supplies are shared when areas run short. This saved time and eliminated duplication of orders. There is an inventory of emergency items housed in a central supply storage to ensure that our customers are properly served. By reducing the inventory, the safety issues were also addressed.

Results

- ★ Products were standardized and inventory was used up saving $17,200.
- ★ Order process change managed by one supervisor saving 29 annual staff hours.
- ★ Eliminated safety issues when “Just in Time” ordering was implemented.
- ★ Solutions centers are being used to measure cleaning chemicals eliminating waste and guess work. Solution center use saved $7,900.

Team Name: Custodial Supply Ordering
Team Members: Carol Elliott, Donna Gullet, Connie Ward, Jerry Dimmick, Kathy Coleman, Jane Riley
Contact: Sherm Heathers, (360) 725-0016

Warrant Insertion Team

Payment of vendor invoices, warrants are produced by state treasurer and sent back to originating agency. Accountants match up remittance advices and give them to the receptionist to put into envelopes for mailing. The receptionist then puts them in the mail bin. They are picked up by Consolidated Mail Service (CMS) and sent out with regular post office mail.

Changed warrant batch process from stuffing and mailing warrants in our office to warrant insertion where the warrants go directly to CMS and are stuffed and mailed through them. Also encouraged vendors to use Electronic Fund Transaction (EFT), where money is sent directly to the vendors' bank account and no warrants are issued. Saved time because receptionist would not have to stuff warrants in envelopes and with EFT, vendors get money sooner, no risk of losing warrant.

Results

- ★ Saved $4,091 in system costs per year.
- ★ Reduced cycle time from 3 hours to zero.
- ★ Each of 11 accountants saved 20 minutes per month for a total of 44 staff hours saved.

Team Name: Warrant Insertion Team
Team Members: Helen Martz, Cam Tran,Hien Dang, Donna Allen, Kim Lai, Craig Parse, Dale Abersold

Contact: Helen Martz, (360) 902-7363

Online Publication Distribution

GA has been producing and distributing the GAzette and the Journal newsletters in hard copy form to employees, customers and stakeholders. The publications are also made available on the Agency's Intranet, which is accessible to GA employees. The proposal was to reduce the amount of hard copies produced and distributed by sending an email to GA employees with a link to the publications available on the Intranet.

Results

- ★ Reduced number of annual hard copies of monthly GAzette from 8100 to 4200.
- ★ Reduced number of annual hard copies for quarterly Journal newsletter from 5200 to 2800.
- ★ Saved 12 hours per year.
- ★ Saved $1,209 in materials and printing costs.

Team Name: Online Publication Distribution
Team Members: Chris Martin, John Honnold, Brian Richardson, Steve Valandra

Contact: Chris Martin, (360) 902-7470

WIC Fraud Detection Goes Cyber

The Women's, Infants, and Children's (WIC) Program is required by the federal government to conduct fraud prevention and detection activities. Efficient and effective investigative techniques are important due to limited resources in the program. While browsing Internet auction sites on home computers, program staff came across listings of infant formula for sale and became concerned that these might involve formula obtained through the WIC Program. Infant formula purchased with a WIC check must be used only by the infant for whom it is prescribed; selling or bartering unused infant formula is a fraudulent activity. With cooperation from a senior investigator at one of the Internet auction sites, WIC investigators were able to prevent completion of four attempted fraudulent sales that might have gone undetected. Prior to the discovery of this quicker and more direct investigative technique, WIC staff relied primarily on third-party reports of fraudulent activity.

Results

- ★ A new cost-effective investigation technique has been developed.
- ★ The limited resources of the WIC investigation unit are more efficiently deployed.
- ★ The incidence of fraud in the WIC Program is reduced.
- ★ This technique can be used by WIC Programs in other states.

Team Name: WIC e-Fraud Detection
Team Members: Tim Hustead, Pat Jordan, Becky Waite

CONTACT: Tim Hustead, (360) 236-3601

Agency Rules Development Process

The process for developing rules and regulations is lengthy due to statutory requirements. The Department of Health's review process and requirements further increased the length of time involved. In addition, the rule review process was not consistent across the agency. The Rules Process Quality Improvement Team examined the problem, with the goal of creating a consistent and efficient process.

Results

★ Eliminated redundant analytical requirements, saving six to eight hours of staff time on analysis of more complex rules; one to two hours of staff time in developing a request to proceed memo; and one to three weeks of internal review time.

★ Compressed the review and routing time by creating rule review meetings for discussion of rules and policy issues.

★ Updated and clarified required paperwork and improved accuracy in determining program costs in rules development.

★ Improved the ability to track rules that are amended, in compliance with Executive Order 97-02, Regulatory Improvement.

★ Early identification of packaging errors, which previously would have delayed the development of rules.

Team Name: Rules Process Quality Improvement Team
Team Members: Susan Anthony, Kelly Cooper, Michelle Davis, Denise Finch, Carol Knight-Wallace, Teresa Lohr, Pam Lovinger, Rick McNeely, Jennell Prentice, Allen Richards

CONTACT: Michelle Davis, (360) 236-4044

Procurement of Information Technology Equipment

Program managers had expressed concerns about the time it took – 16 days – from the date that they ordered new computer equipment to the date the new equipment was on their desk and ready for use.

The quality improvement team identified the most probable cause of the delay to be the time it took to obtain the equipment from the vendor (i.e., from the point the order is received in the procurement office to the point when the equipment is delivered). The team instituted a new measure that keeps a supply of "standard' equipment in stock. This measure reduced the overall turnaround time to two days and reduced the time spent on bidding and tracking purchases by approximately 260 staff hours per year.

Results

- ★ Reduced turnaround time from the time the order is submitted to the time the equipment is received from 16 days to two days.
- ★ Reduced time spent preparing bids and tracking purchases, resulting in approximately 260 staff hours saved per year.
- ★ Improved relations between the agency procurement office and their program customers.
- ★ Improved relations between the agency's information technology support teams and their program customers and procurement staff.

Team Name: I.T. Equipment Procurement Team
Team Members: Patti Larson, Loraine Shann, David Williams, Keri Stayton, Wendy Huff, Tom Wittenburg, Dean Galvez, Deb Fouts, Yvette Lenz, Nola Sommer, Tarey Bergen, Jim Robertson

CONTACT: Suzette Frederick, (360) 236-3901

Information Technology Portfolio Management

The department's Information Technology (IT) Portfolio was not being kept current. Information in the Portfolio was updated annually, creating a static document. At the same time, information technology project managers were required to submit quarterly reports of activities that were separate from the agency's IT Portfolio and were often duplicative. Further, projects included in the agency's IT Portfolio were not consistently chosen for reporting to the Information Services Board.

The Portfolio Workgroup instituted a number of improvements, including maintaining the IT Portfolio in an electronic format, which can be updated when needed by IT project managers; thus, making it a "living document."

Results

★ Improved quality and timeliness of information about IT investments by maintaining the Portfolio in an electronic format that is accessible to IT project managers.

★ Elimination of the requirement for IT project managers to submit separate reports and allowing them to update their Portfolio information when changes occur.

★ Elimination of copying, collation, and distribution of hard-copy project reports.

★ Continuous updating IT Portfolio allows timely oversight of IT investments, in accordance with state IT investment standards.

Team Name: Portfolio Workgroup
Team Members: Kathy Pickens-Rucker, Gayle McGee, Buzz Hettinger, Verne Gibbs, Carol Knight-Wallace, Eric Slagle, Fran Muskopf, Doug Buster, Dean Galvez, Jennifer Bouvier, Faye Olson, Cliff Schiller, Dan Francis, Janet Scheel, Ron Seymour, Gregg Smith, Kathryn Querry, Pat Holm

CONTACT: Fran Muskopf, (360) 236-4422

CHILD Profile Mailings

The CHILD Profile Program coordinates mailings of 17 different age-appropriate materials to parents throughout the state, totaling 17,000 pieces of mail weekly. By implementing an automated address correction system in January 2000, the program increased the accuracy of mail reaching parents, improved the efficiency of the program's mailing system, and reduced staff time needed for data entry. Mail volumes are expected to increase gradually, ensuring continued savings.

Results

- ★ Reduction in annual mailing costs is estimated at 5.3%, from $32,500 to $30,790.
- ★ 1.75 FTE savings are expected as a result of the improvements instituted.

Team Name: CHILD Profile Health Promotion Team
Team Members: Rachelle Foley, Lou Phillips, Raquel Loyola, Blake Harrison, Shary Robinson, Susan Hurst

CONTACT: Rachelle Foley, (206) 296-2795

Health Professions Quality Assurance Mentoring Program

A section in the Health Professions Quality Assurance Program was having a difficult time with internal communications, training of new employees, and a lack of cohesiveness. A quality improvement team was tasked to develop solutions to these problems. The team developed a mentoring program that assists new or newly promoted employees to transition successfully into the section or into other positions within the section. Mentors also facilitate the sharing of information, skills, and expertise of section staff.

Results

★ Maximized resources by sharing skills and expertise, providing guidance, and enriching professional and technical skills.

★ Encouraged the development of professional and interpersonal relationships that will promote cooperation and teamwork.

★ Enhanced staff morale by acknowledging the valuable skills possessed by staff.

★ Increased avenues of communication for staff.

★ 120 staff hours are saved annually by section managers and supervisors who don't have to deal with communication and training problems.

★ 156 staff hours for new employee orientations are saved annually.

Team Name: HPS2 Mentor Team
Team Members: Susan Anderson, Betty Bird, Carroll Hopkins, Rochelle Mathis, Shellie Pierce, Sharon Strachan, Diane Young

CONTACT: Diane Young, (360) 236-4917

Online "Ethics Challenge" Training Course

Ethics training is mandatory for DIS employees and encouraged for all state employees. DIS has staff on duty 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. It is difficult to provide swing and graveyard staff the required training. In partnership with the Executive Ethics Board, DIS developed an online ethics training course. It is now available to all state employees through the state's Intranet portal, *Inside Washington* at **http://inside.wa.gov/content/channels/training/ethics.asp**
This training course will afford all state employees, regardless of work shift, the opportunity to participate in ethics training free of charge. This course can also be used as a refresher or resource for those who have already taken an Ethics training course. This joint effort is another example of how agencies are breaking down boundaries and working together to provide efficient online digital government services.

Results

- ★ Increased accessibility of ethics training opportunity (available 24 hours).
- ★ Eliminated travel and per diem expenses.
- ★ Increased consistency of ethics training content and ethics law knowledge among state employees to prevent or decrease ethics violations.
- ★ Eliminated training registration course fees (approximately $30 per employee) resulting in cost avoidance of $12,000 ($30 x 400 DIS employees).
- ★ Other State agencies that utilize the free course will benefit from the cost savings and will be able to redirect their training budgets to other course offerings.

Team Name: Online "Ethics Challenge" Training Team
Team Members: Carol Wozniak, Ro Marcus, David Norman, Renee Klosterman, Jonathan Krack; Executive Ethics Board: Meg Grimaldi

CONTACT: Carol Wozniak, (360) 902-3506

Statewide E-Forms Academy Course

State agencies were adopting competing electronic form (E-form) tools to deliver similar digital government services to citizens, businesses and employees. This would have confused and hindered our citizen's ability to talk to the state and see Washington as a single enterprise. Through the state's Digital Government Applications Academy, more than 20 agencies collaborated to define the evaluation criteria and acquire a statewide, single electronic form (E-form) solution. The resulting Master Contract aggregates the E-forms purchasing volumes of Washington's approximately 155 state agencies, its 2000+ cities and other local government entities. The use of one E-form application tool enables the proliferation of cross agency applications and the sharing of common programming components. The E-form speeds automation of manual transactions, improves service value, authorizes Internet transactions, provides a common tool agencies can use to serve citizens and provides a single face to government.

Results

- ★ Statewide agreement on a single E-form tool.
- ★ Reduced development time and cost by sharing programming components.
- ★ Improved common look and feel among state government.
- ★ 20 agencies saved 9,600 total staff hours by collaborating in the research and preparation of a competitive E-forms RFP acquisition.

Team Name: Statewide E-Forms Academy Course
Team Members: DIS: Dave Kirk,Paul Piper,Carlene Covey,Ro Marcus, David Norman; AGR: Jeff Larson; DFW: Shaun Brown,Jim Eby, Mike Keeling; DOC: Pam Dittman; DOH: Jim Bellinger,Jan Jacobs,Cindy Lindley,Marina Thompson, Clyde Wilson; DOL: Bruce Clark,Larry Frodsham,Phuong Huynh, Margaret Mink, Marc Truett, Larry Weniger; DOR: Chuck Bowers, Becki Bretthauer; DRS: Nancy Borst, John Specht; DSHS: Ken Adney,Robert Beets, Millie Brombacher,David Brum-mel,Wendy Huff,Charles Hunter,Sue Langen,Amy Pearson,Shirley Stirling, Ute Syben; ECY: Randy Moore,Debbie Stewart; ESD: Carolyn Collins,Hal Greenbaum, John Ludwig,Angela Siegel,Dale Wallace; GA: John Honnold; L&I: Kevin Carney, Melinda Darmody,James Dolliver,Loren Gee,Bill Hill,Carol Hill,John Kalat,Janet Riley,Peri Smith,Sara Spiering; OAC: Elise Robinson; PARK: Lisa Dunn,Linda Gee Joe Rogoski; SAO: Jim Brittain,Dan Contris,John Ginther,Dai Le,Glenn Shepherd, Susan Smith; SEC: Phil Coombs; WSP: Nancy Davis,Ken Keiper, Pat Ramsdell

CONTACT: Dave Kirk, (360) 902-3561

Financial Statement Form Aids in Collecting Money

Financial statements are used by Revenue Officers to assess an employer's financial situation when a payment agreement is needed for past due accounts on industrial insurance premiums. The financial statement form available was outdated and wasn't used by staff.

The team developed new forms that include information necessary to determine repayment ability of the employer. The new forms include fields for the employer's other sources of funds, assets and unfinished jobs from which they may receive future payments. With more information, Revenue Officers can more accurately determine repayment ability of delinquent employers.

Results

- ★ 90 percent of employers completed the new form during the 6-month test period.
- ★ Employers provide collection information previously unknown to the department.
- ★ 100 percent of employers were current on payment agreements during the test period, a 27 percent increase from the previous 3-months.

Team Members: Bob MacPherson, Rick Brock, Judy Neilson, Jan Robinson, Steve Beaty

CONTACT: Jan Robinson, (509) 324-2596

Identifying Hazards and Saving Lives

Saving workers' lives and preventing injuries is one of L&I's highest priorities. Identifying an employer's serious workplace hazards and getting them corrected is an effective tool in injury and illness prevention.

Safety and Health Consultation/Risk Management staff in Region 4 believed that they could do a more effective job of providing these valuable consultative services to employers by identifying those who would benefit the most. Staff used workers' compensation claims information and data to identify employer groups with suspected serious hazards. The data suggested that focusing on small cities and municipal departments would yield positive results. The goal was to increase serious hazard identification by 10% over the average by focusing on small cities and municipalities

Results

★ Ten consultations were completed with small cities/municipality departments.

★ A total of 69 serious hazards were identified.

★ The average for serious hazards identified per consultation increased 250% from 2.0 to 6.9 serious hazards.

Team Members: Marcia Holt, Chuck Holmquist, Erin Nutter

CONTACT: Marcia Holt, (360) 902-5472

Informed Employers Provide Accurate Industrial Insurance Reports

Accurate industrial insurance reporting by employers is essential to the integrity of the state-run workers' compensation system. A customer survey by L&I's Field Audit program indicated that only 80 percent of the agency's customers understood the post-audit letter they received explaining the results of their audit.

A goal was established to increase the number of customers who understood the post-audit letters in Region 3 by 10 percent (to 90 percent). Working with Public Affairs to develop a format that is simple, to the point and easily understood, the team developed a vastly improved letter. All audit staff in Region 3 used the new format for a six-month period. The goal was exceeded handily.

Results

★ A customer survey indicated that 97% of our customers understood the new letters.

★ The improved format made it easier for the auditors to compose their letters.

★ Others who review audit files will have a better understanding of the results of our audits from the customer's perspective.

Team Members: Tom Carter, Frank White, Caroline Johnson, Dana Botka

CONTACT: Caroline Johnson, (253) 596-3837

Contractors Comply and Reduce Audit Backlog

Region 4 field auditors were experiencing an increasing backlog of audits. These audits check the accuracy of employers' industrial insurance reporting.

A 10 percent audit backlog reduction goal was set. Auditors identified contractors on the backlog list who were not registered with the department. Without an appointment, auditors visited or called the unregistered contractors, to persuade them into compliance. They offered employers the opportunity to file master business applications and amend quarterly reports for the prior four quarters, in lieu of an audit.

Results

- ★ Reduced audit backlog 29 percent — from 300 to 214 during a 2-month period.
- ★ Redirected 1,017 hours toward further reduction in audit backlog.
- ★ Methods used in this project now are used by all L&I auditors.

Team Members: Kathy Vargas, Robert Cole, Linda Williams, Willa Deane Stoops, Linda Conley, Sharon Vlastelica, Linda Hathaway, David Molinaro, Patti Munroe, Ron Secrist

CONTACT: Kathy Vargas, (360) 896-2326

Web Site Opens New Path to Prevention of Fraud

As the manager of a multi-million dollar fund that pays benefits to workers hurt on the job, Labor and Industries must take steps to prevent worker's compensation fraud and investigate allegations of fraud. While the agency's fraud unit routinely publicizes the results of its investigations, the investigations do not often get much notice in the media. The fraud unit created a web site that both details recent investigations and provides the public with a means to report fraud allegations online. In the course of developing the site, the unit expanded its scope to include all types of workers' compensation fraud as well as construction contractor fraud.

Results

★ Improved internal and external customer service by providing around-the-clock access to information related to fraud.

★ Provided a means by which concerned citizens could easily and anonymously report suspected fraudulent activity.

★ The site has been accessed almost 4,000 times in the five months since it was launched in April 2000.

★ The department has received over 200 on-line referrals since implementation. Preliminary estimates are that the web site will result in over $200,000 in savings related to Workers' Compensation Fraud alone in FY2000. Contrator Registration and Employer Premium Violation referrals from the website will account for additional savings. The savings in stoppage of payment of on-going benefits in Workers' Compensation Fraud cases is also substantial.

Team Name: Fraud Web Team
Team Members: Lynda Cochran, Denise McKay, Brian Dirks

CONTACT: Terry McMaster, (360) 902-5157

Deleting Old Data Saves Big Dollars

Storing data on mainframe computer disks costs money, and storing data that isn't being used is like washing dollars down the drain. In December 1999, L&I paid $79,748 for storage—the highest monthly charge ever. A team went to work to try to slow this growth. A little detective work turned up several thousand dollars' worth of data sets that either were obsolete or could be compressed. After first checking with the data "owners," the team was able to purge or archive these files, leading to a monthly savings now averaging more than $5,000. At the same time, L&I updated its billing system for data storage, making improvements in tracking and accountability.

Results

★ Reduced the amount of Mainframe Disk Storage being used now, and in the future by use of the data compression.

★ Reduced the average monthly Mainframe Disk Storage cost from $73,099 through December 1999 to a year-to-date 2000 average of $67,820. Establishing an average monthly cost savings of $5,279.

★ Established better cost-tracking capability due to corrected billing.

★ Established tracking tools to identify potential cost avoidance opportunities and keep our Mainframe Disk Storage growth rate at a reasonable rate.

★ The reduced storage costs allows for the storage growth of future projects without adversely impacting operational expenditures.

Team Name: Review Mainframe Disk Storage Utilization
Team Members: Carl Cooper, Patsy Quintus; DIS: Linda Luebcke

CONTACT: Carl Cooper, (360) 902-5884

Steps Make Claim Information Available Quicker

Industrial insurance claim information is entered into the department's computers and then copied monthly into the agency's data warehouse database. The data warehouse database enables staff to query the information to make decisions, to report on their work and to achieve agency priorities. Transferring the data was taking two weekends, requiring staff to work beyond a 40-hour week. Data availability was delayed by at least a week, which delayed decisions and status reports.

The Data Warehouse Technical Team modified some of the programs and job streams used to extract the information. By coordinating the extracting, file transfer and loading, the data transfer now can be done in steps beginning earlier in the week, rather than all at once. The entire process now is completed over one weekend.

Results

- ★ Copy and loading processes are completed the first weekend of each month.
- ★ Reduced overtime hours from 93 to 54 per month.
- ★ Improved customer service from data being available a week sooner.

Team Members: Andy Jackson, Maureen McNamara, Judy Malamphy, Nopadol McNiel, Paul Huynh

CONTACT: Maureen McNamara, (360) 902-5930

Pensions Awarded Months Sooner

The Pension Benefits Program was averaging an eleven-month turnaround from the receipt of a referral for benefits to the award of pension benefits.

The program collaborated with other work groups to temporarily reallocate resources to accelerate and refine pension reviews. They made forms available on the Internet. They now are sending attorneys pre-pension notification that their clients may be eligible for benefits, which allows earlier document gathering and expedites benefits. And, claim managers now have a clearer understanding of the qualifications for pensions and make referrals quicker.

Results

- ★ Cut pension benefit turnaround time 68 percent to 3.5 months.
- ★ Claimants have financial assurance 7 months earlier.
- ★ Doubled the number of pensions processed per month.
- ★ Claims receiving time-loss (wage replacement benefits) that are appropriate for pension are converted 7.5 months earlier, aiding in the departments goal to reduce the time-loss duration index.

Team Members: Teresa Bartholomew, Roger Bryant, Lori Chenoweth, Deb Christopherson, Mitch Dunlap, Laura Farley, Sarah Frederick, Emma Laber, Catherine Mangino, Barb Mickelson, Julie Newby, Rita Norton, Shanon Taylor, Sandra Torstenson, Lynn Wiltman, Suzanne LaBranche

CONTACT: Barb Kendrick, (360) 902-5155

Audits Increase Due to Intra-agency Cooperation

The Labor and Industries Field Audit program audits employers to ensure accurate reporting to the state's industrial insurance system. Many construction firms with employees do not have an industrial insurance account or report that they have no workers. As these firms do not pay their fair share of industrial insurance premiums, it puts law-abiding firms at a disadvantage. L&I's safety and health (WISHA), construction compliance, and employment standards programs each interact with non-compliant employers. As a result of this project, those programs are now referring these suspect employers for an audit.

Results

★ Achieved 120% increase in referrals to Region 3 Field Audit (Region 3 covers Pierce County and northern Olympic/Kitsap peninsulas).

★ Assessed $171,728 in premiums from the referrals in the second quarter.

Team Members: Richard Kerr, Tom Bunten, Caroline Johnson, Janet Duke

CONTACT: Caroline Johnson, (253) 596-3837

Crime Victims Get Benefits Quicker

The Crime Victims Compensation Program provides benefits to victims of violent crime. The program aimed to process 86 percent of claims within 60 days of receiving an application. Faced with a significant budget reduction and nine vacancies, the claims process needed to be streamlined.

The program set a new goal, to process 86 percent of claims within 50 days. An aging report was developed so staff can see the length of time each claim has been in the process. Staff reduced the amount of time waiting for information before asking for it again. And, claims now are assigned to claim managers after one attempt for information, rather than several.

Results

★ Reduced claims processing time to 90 percent in 50 days.

★ Reduced benefit eligibility decision from 70 percent in 10 days to 84 percent in 5 days.

★ Customers have access to benefits earlier.

Team Members: Valerie Estes, Linda Messick, Karen Ahrens, Diane Mudge, Fred Reed, Miriam Matos, Gabby Yarboro

CONTACT: Valerie Estes, (360) 902-5369

Dealer & Manufacturer Services Credit Checks

In the Dealer and Manufacturer Services Program, the Licensing Unit must analyze and approve customer applications for opening an automobile or manufactured home dealership. This requires the unit to verify and analyze credit and financial statements. There was one staff person responsible for requesting the credit checks from Equifax. This person at times was backlogged with the numerous requests.

The Licensing Unit realized that, with training, they could all request and review credit reports as they processed the license applications. The training was provided and now credit reports are requested and reviewed as needed. The entire process of application approval, including financial statement verification, has improved and the applicant is receiving the license more quickly.

Results

- ★ Quicker customer response.
- ★ Timely processing of applications for license issuance.
- ★ Credit checks are in real time.
- ★ Information anaylzed efficiently

Team Name: Credit Check Team
Team Members:. Winnie Killian, Ann Nielsen, Cherie Bullett, Phyllis Braget, Becky Alcorn, Candy Barnes

CONTACT: Candy Barnes, (360) 664-6464

Internet Vehicle Information Processing System

Before the Internet Vehicle Information Processing System (IVIPS), account customers accessed vehicle record information by a menu-driven, interactive voice telephone system called VIPS, or Vehicle Information Processing System. Certain public agency account customers were sent microfiche records on a weekly, bi-weekly and annual basis. Individual account customers, such as financial institutions or insurance companies were required to either contact the VIPS phone system, call and talk to a Records Unit staff member, or send a representative to the Public Disclosure Room located in the Highways/Licenses Building (HLB) in Olympia, where they accessed vehicle record information off microfiche.

With the Internet Vehicle Information Processing System, data security and accountability of use has greatly increased. Each account customer not only is required to access the system via their account number, but also with a security password which must be changed every 90 days. Data is maintained on every record accessed, and this information is retrievable by vehicle owner or by IVIPS user, thus allowing immediate retrieval of any information necessary to determine how the system is being used. With IVIPS, account customers can now access vehicle record information in a much more efficient, user friendly and secure manner. The system is so easy to use that most account customers are able to learn by review of a manual.

Results

★ The average record look-up has been reduced from 2 minutes and 20 seconds to 28 seconds.

★ The amount of time it takes to investigate inquiries received from customers on who accessed their record has been reduced from as much as 4 hours to less than 1 minute.

★ Most individual account customers no longer need to come into the Public Disclosure room located in HLB or access VIPS to verbally obtain the information needed.

Team Name: IVIPS Design Team
Team Members: . Linda Rae, Dianne Foster, Kirk Kaiser, Dean Schwickerath, Mike Coyner, Jim Turcotte, Shirley Ostergren, Sheri Barnes, Pat Zlateff, Bob Randolph, Sandra Parr-Rogers, Pat Nelson, Rachel Robertson, Karen Bates, Annette Davis

CONTACT: Shirley Ostergren, (360) 902-3760

Prorate & Fuel Field Office Transactions

Field Office Prorate/Fuel Tax daily customer transactions were handwritten on paper "Daily Transmittal" sheets by field office staff. This required that the sheet pass back and forth among staff, with multiple photocopies being made for distribution to the Field Office Help Desk, Revenue Accounting, and one to be kept at the field office location. Also, International Registration Plan (IRP), International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA), Help Desk, and Motor Carrier Financial Unit staff had to wait several days to receive these transaction sheets, or call the field offices, if they needed to know information regarding an account that had gone to a field office.

This process has now been automated. Bristol Court staff worked with field office and IS staff to create an Excel spreadsheet for each field office that is immediately available on the "G" drive, eliminating the handwritten paper sheet. The spreadsheet collects more specific transaction information for statistical purposes and automatically totals them, making this process faster and efficient. Field office staff does not have to pass this paper back and forth. Multiple copies have been eliminated---only one paper copy is now generated and sent along with paid invoices to Revenue Accounting (at their request). The Help Desk no longer has to keep a paper copy, reducing storage space requirements and cost. It also benefits IRP, IFTA, and Help Desk staff who can go in right away to the Excel spreadsheet and determine if a particular transaction has been performed. They all have immediate access, aiding in research.

Results

★ Motor Carrier Financial Unit (MCFU) staff no longer have to wait several days or call the field offices to find out if a customer who is past-due has made a payment at a field location.

★ The MCFU now checks these spreadsheets prior to sending out "Notice of Intent/Cancellation" letters or calling customers, saving them time.

★ Simplified collection of data for statistical use.

Team Name: Field Office Transaction Team
Team Members: Dora Duval, Lora Jungmayer, Mark Roberts, Patricia Marzwick, Mark Zuchlewski, Jim Turcotte; Olympia: Stacy Stepetin, Carolyn Kuyper, Vicki Hicks; Spokane: Pam Wilson, Bob Oster, Sherry Merritt; Vancouver: Pam Meyers, Blaine Haustveit

CONTACT: Dora Duval, (360) 664-1841

Traffic Safety Education Certificate

Annually about 50,000 students complete their traffic safety education (TSE) programs and seek their first license. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) issued a certificate of completion for the course. The back of the TSE document was left blank. When the young adults arrived at a Licensing Services Offices, they would often times forget crucial information needed to secure their first license.

We now have placed the information for applying for the license on the back of that TSE certificate so students have the information -- on a document they will carry -- that they need to present to DOL to secure their license.

Results

- ★ DOL printing costs avoided in the amount of $5,600.
- ★ Increased Partnership between the Department of Licensing and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- ★ Decreased number of trips to Licensing Service Office by applicants because of forgotten documents.

Team Name: TSE Certificate Team
Team Members: Steven Sorini; SPI: David Kinnunen

CONTACT: Steven Sorini, (253) 931-6332

Vehicle Licensing Postcard Renewal Forms

The previous renewal notice was a two-part form that included a return envelope the customer could use to mail in their renewal payment. This complex renewal notice cost the department $0.40 in postage and printing costs for each notice mailed. However, only about 25% of the provided envelopes were used by customers to renew their tabs. An average of 430,000 notices are mailed to customers per month, which means that approximately 342,500 of the return envelopes provided were not utilized. It is anticipated that with the up and coming internet payment option, the percentage of customers renewing through the mail will drop even more.

The Department of Licensing worked closely with the US Postal Service and Moore Business Communications to modify the vehicle and vessel notices sent to customers. By designing a 2-part, postcard style renewal notice, the department was able to realize a net savings of 7.5 cents per notice. It includes information on where to send the payment for customer convenience, and also provides a "comments" area to encourage customer feedback.

Results

★ A projected $400,000 per year will be saved by modifying the license tab renewal notice.

★ Additional savings will be realized in April 2001 when notices are sent for the June vessel expirations.

★ The notice provides the customer with a comments area for sending in feedback.

Team Name: Vehicle Licensing Postcard Renewal Team
Team Members: Bob Turcotte, Rachel Nedrow, Larry Frodsham, Evelyn Barker, Eric Andersen; Moore Business Communications: Charles Hobson; US Postal Service: George and Charlene Renquist; Mason County Auditor's Office: Al Brotche, Jackie Burnett; Kitsap County Auditor's Office: Karen Flynn; King County Auditor's Office: Roxanne Bese, Carol Cartwright; Pierce County Auditor's Office: Patricia McLean; Hawks Prairie Licensing: Ronalee Mattern

CONTACT: Bob Turcotte, (360) 902-3716

Preflight

Frequently the Department of Printing (PRT) would receive digital format documents that are incomplete or unusable. PRT is not aware of the digital content until the scheduling and production of the print job has begun. At that time, discovering the need for additional information and/or replacement information resulted in production delays and the inability to meet customer deadlines and expectations. This team recommended a Preflight procedure, which enables Pre-Press to view digital documents for accuracy and usability, prior to planning and scheduling. This increases awareness of potential problems with files for both the customer and PRT. Solutions can then be implemented without disrupting the production schedule and workflow.

Results

- ★ Saves an estimated 618 FTE hours per year.
- ★ Enables PRT to increase customer awareness and knowledge.
- ★ Decreases bottlenecks and delays in production schedules.
- ★ Supports our objective to ensure all jobs are "right and on time."

Team Name: PRT Customers Fly First Class
Team Members: Scott Keith, Linda Darragh, John Smith, Niki Loftus

CONTACT: Scott Keith, (360) 570-5055

DCP Answers Participants Requests

During the previous four years, Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) participant requests for increased services consistently included the need for same-day investment changes and transfers, increased investment options, and telephone and internet access to accounts on a 24-hour, seven day basis with transaction capabilities. These customer requests were documented in customer surveys and from participant conversations and correspondence.

Customer needs were addressed by contracting with an experienced third-party record keeper and the implementation of new services most requested by participants in July 2000. All DCP participants now have the option to handle many transactions online and by using the telephone voice response system. Three new investment options were also made available to participants in September 2000. Participants are still able to contact their client service representatives when needed.

Results

★ Improves customer service by providing customers 24-hour, seven day a week access to account information.
★ Improves customer service by providing customers Internet and telephone capability to manage DCP accounts and by providing same day investment/transfer capability.
★ Increases investment offerings for participants by 25 percent with the addition of three new balanced funds options and replaced two offerings with investment funds with lower management fees.
★ Provides retirement planning software tools for participants to use.
★ Updates and improves all DCP publications and educates employees on the benefits of DCP.

Team Name: DCP Recordkeeping Migration Project Team
Team Members: Trina Arnott, Michelle Arroyo, Brian Berghoff, Greg Deam, Sheila Ehrig, Kris Fjalstad, Chris Hendricksen, Anne Holdren, Dina Morrow, Marc Tremblay, Tim Valencia, Stephen Wade, Cindy Wallace, Bev Wells, Kathy Wilson

CONTACT: Anne Holdren, (360) 664-7009

Retirement Planning Registration Improved

For years, the open enrollment start date for retirement planning seminars was established one month after the the seminar schedule was published in the DRS member newsletter. The purpose was to give all members an equal opportunity to be notified and register for a seminar. The seminars filled up quickly and this process often generated over 500 member telephone calls the first day of registration - with wait times of up to 30 minutes. Members calling to enroll before the start date were told to call back. Analysis of seminar registration data revealed that since DRS had increased the number of seminars offered in high population areas, space was available for all interested members.

The new registration process requires no start date and allows for open enrollment as soon as members receive their newsletter. This spreads the telephone calls over a longer period and seminars don't fill up too quickly.

Registration is now also offered on the Internet to allow members to register 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The online registration page requires essential information to be filled in before the request can be forwarded, which reduces follow-up calls for information that was missing in voice mail and e-mail messages. The Internet registration option has also reduced the total number of phone calls that go to staff.

Results

- ★ Improves customer service through 24-hour, seven day a week Internet registration option.
- ★ Reduces staff time spent on follow up calls for missing or incorrect registration information by approximately 168 hours anually.
- ★ Eliminates customer wait times on the telephone.
- ★ Continues to serve customers fairly and equally.
- ★ Allows staff more time to focus on seminar and presentation improvements.

Team Name: Retirement Planning Registration
Team Members: Larry Champine, Kris Fjalstad, Dennis Gustafson, Robert Julian, Bob Redfield, Larry Reinier

CONTACT: Robert Julian, (360) 664-7021

Fewer Forms Foster Flexibility

DRS seized the opportunity to update and combine agency forms when implementing the new School Employees' Retirement System (SERS). Some forms are designed for a single retirement system and others can be used by any of the 12 retirement systems DRS administers. Project staff led a review and revision of existing forms, and coordinated work on forms required in the new retirement plan to simplify and consolidate forms where possible. Staff also coordinated forms development to meet the agency's new electronic document imaging requirements.

Revising and consolidating forms for multiple system use saves storage space for the agency, and eases distribution and storage for employers who stock and distribute these forms to their employees. Through this effort, the agency avoided an increase in the number of forms. Master copies of new forms are provided to employers to copy and store only what they need, and the forms are also available on the DRS Web site.

Results

- ★ Avoids an increase in number of forms, saving storage space for the agency and employers.
- ★ Improves 20 DRS forms and seven third party record keeper forms.
- ★ Simplifies and streamlines the forms distribution for employers.
- ★ Improves service to employers and customers.

Team Name: Combining Agency Forms
Team Members: Brian Berghoff, Jack Bryant, Monica Chavey, Liz Cramer, Amanda Drake, Sheila Ehrig, Jackie Hanson, Stephanie Klapstein, Laura Leland, Tami Schwender

CONTACT: Sheila Ehrig, (360) 664-7263

Substitute Teachers Get Service Credit Purchase Help

The process for substitute teachers to exercise their option to purchase service credit for retirement earned during the school year was complex for both DRS and the teachers. Twenty-five percent of applications were returned to the customer because information was missing or incorrect, or applications were submitted prior to the date the agency is allowed to accept them. An average of 659 teachers annually ask to initiate a billing process for optional service credit. Twenty percent never complete payment to purchase the service credit. Based on the feedback received from a survey of 150 substitute teachers, the team improved the information brochures for three retirement plans, clarified the forms and process for applying for service credit and added a worksheet for the substitute teachers to estimate their service credit purchase.

Results

- ★ Developed a clear and consistent process for substitute teachers to purchase service credit.
- ★ Established an application form and worksheet that simplifies the process for DRS and the member.
- ★ Developed three separate application forms and information for the three Teachers' Retirement to clarify the differences in the plans.
- ★ Projected to reduce the number of applications returned because of premature receipt and incorrect or missing information by as much as 50 percent, saving a minimum of 32 staff hours in handling time annually.
- ★ Projected to reduce the number of optional bills created but never paid by the customer by as much as 70 percent, avoiding an investment of staff time of an estimated 69 hours annually.

Team Name: Substitute Teachers Service Credit Project
Team Members: Dick Cashatt, Val Dickinson, Dennis Gustafson, Brian Kennedy, Sis Koval, Kim Smith, Vickie Worgum

CONTACT: Margaret Wimmer, (360) 664-7044

Simplified Employer Reporting

The Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) Record Keeping Project streamlined reporting to employers. New deferral and deferral change information is now automatically updated electronically into the Central Payroll System which also produces most state agency pay checks. Electronic updating saves significant staff time taken to manually update the previous system. Deferral reports for employers who do not use the Central Payroll System are also automatically updated through an interface with the new system.

The electronic feed to DRS systems also allows reports to employers to be consolidated. Employers now receive one report of all deferral changes in a format consistent with other reports provided by DRS. Previously, individual change forms were sent to employers.

Results

- ★ Saves an estimated 2500 staff hours annually by avoiding manual entry of DCP deductions.
- ★ Establishes consistent format for all reports to employers from DRS.
- ★ Enhances data analysis capabilities through consistent storage of information within one system.

Team Name: DCP Record Keeping Migration Project Team
Team Members: Trina Arnott, Michelle Arroyo, Brian Berghoff, Greg Deam, Sheila Ehrig, Kris Fjalstad, Chris Hendricksen, Anne Holdren, Dina Morrow, Marc Tremblay, Tim Valencia, Stephen Wade, Cindy Wallace, Bev Wells, Kathy Wilson

CONTACT: Anne Holdren, (360) 664-7009

Annual Tax Filer Education Project

The Department of Revenue continually seeks improvements and tries to simplify the reporting requirements for business owners through changes to the tax reporting forms. Often businesses that only file annually are confused by the changing forms and require assistance. The Port Angeles Field Office held classes in January, providing training to approximately 20 taxpayers during three different presentations. This resulted in reducing the number of taxpayers needing specialized assistance from Revenue personnel on field office open days. The majority of these taxpayers are now also participating in future tax education presentations, such as the Department's New Business Outreach workshop. In addition the office staff are planning four tax education classes for January 2001.

Results

- ★ Saved approximately 20 hours and reduced front office congestion by educating business owners to prepare their own returns without assistance.
- ★ Reducing the stress and confusion for business owners who file annually.
- ★ Reduction in the number of business owners needing individual, specialized assistance.
- ★ A lobby display was established for annual filing information and forms.
- ★ Contributes towards the agency goal of building and strengthening relationships with our customers.

Team Name: Annual Tax Filer Education Project
Team Members: Tom Wheeler, Jackie Rydel, Ivy Cristion

CONTACT: Tom Wheeler, (360) 457-2564

Compliance Training Matrix

The Department of Revenue has 15 Field Offices across the State of Washington. The Compliance Division Manager in each office is responsible to train each new employee on his or her job duties and responsibilities. Because each manager has different skills and training techniques, training programs for newly hired Revenue Agents were inconsistent among the different offices. The team developed a training matrix for use in all offices to improve uniformity in training for each of the geographically separate Field Offices.

Results

★ Developed a standardized training matrix for new Agents to use during their first year on the job.

★ Developed a standardized training checklist.

★ More consistent training for newly hired Revenue Agents.

★ Quicker, more effective collection efforts by new employees.

Team Name: Compliance Training Matrix Quality Team
Team Members: Jeff Sherman, Leonor Castellanos, Ivy Cristion, Lisa Beauchamp, Minh Tran

CONTACT: Jeff Sherman, (360) 753-2549

Data Warehousing and Advanced Analysis Pilot Project

A team was organized to explore data warehousing and advanced data analysis technology and conducted a pilot to determine feasibility. The team elected to conduct a pilot project that involved predictive modeling for audit selection. At the same time, a small group of end users evaluated query and analysis tools to identify potential business applications.

Discussion of pilot: A portion of our current audit selection process involves a statistical priority list. This list is generated yearly and is ranked by total gross revenue, total deductions and total tax due. Specific criteria are applied to this list to arrive at our audit priorities. We are limited by the amount of data available to us and the fact that applying criteria to the list is largely a manual effort. Increasing access to data and providing better front-end tools will allow more individuals to be involved in the audit selection process. We would expect that this would enhance our audit coverage and increase productivity.

Results

★ Demonstrated the feasibility of data warehousing, for increased access to data, through the creation of a data mart.

★ Demonstrated the feasibility of using advanced data analysis software to perform predictive modeling to find hidden patterns and trends that might suggest more productive accounts for audit.

★ Provided method for division to explore new ways of viewing and analyzing data. This will allow managers to consider an increased number of factors when determining staff workload and will allow them to play a more active role in the audit selection process.

Team Name: Data Warehousing and Advanced Analysis Techniques Study Team
Team Members: Mary Welsh, Ken Capek, Kathy Oline, Stan Woodwell, Steve Wolford, Greg Charles, Sonja Long, Dean Johnson, Janetta Taylor, Marty Parsons, Ross Garrison, Brad Flaherty, Laurence Reeves

CONTACT: Mary Welsh, (360) 570-6076

Enhanced 911 Improvement

Effective January 1, 1999, telecommunication companies collecting Enhanced 911(E911) tax were required to remit it to the Department of Revenue. By statute, the E911 tax was remitted monthly and due on the last day of the month. This requirement forced 80% of the taxpayers to file monthly instead of quarterly. This increased the number of returns from 4 to 24 annually. Through legislation, the due date for the E911 tax now corresponds with the Combined Excise Tax Return (CETR) due date. A line code for the E911 tax was added to the CETR thus eliminating the need for a separate return.

Results

★ Tax simplification is gained by allowing taxpayers to file on one return, 4 returns compared to 24 annually if original frequency was quarterly.

★ Enables taxpayers to participate in the Electronic Filing (ELF) process (Currently 10 taxpayers that file E911 are in the ELF program).

★ Savings of time and money on the design of tax returns and postage and printing.

★ Eliminate the need for cashiers to separate and batch the E911 returns.

★ Saves examiner time by including E911 in the excise tax process rather than the very manual E911 process.

Team Name: Enhanced 911 Process Simplification Team
Team Members: Debbie Young, Sandi Stott, Bev Albritton, Netti VanHorn, Sherree Christiansen, Pat Moses, Jim Thomas, Tim Sekerak, John Garrison, Gregg Gallwas, Sue Nelson, Kurt Wieburg, James Petit

CONTACT: James Petit, (360) 902-0379

Expedited Publication of Determinations

By statute, the Director of the Department of Revenue may designate as "precedential" certain written opinions, or determinations, regarding taxpayer liability and disseminate them to the public. Under the Department's regular publication procedure, the typical minimum amount of time needed for a determination to be published, after receipt of a request for publication, is 2-3 months, and the average time is approximately 6-8 months. The Department has recognized, however, there is a need for an expedited publication process in certain circumstances, in order to provide better service to taxpayers and Department employees. A new process was developed in the summer of 2000 to expedite the publishing of determinations that meet the criteria for expedited publication.

Results

★ Under the new process, qualifying determinations will now be published within 14 business days after receipt of a request for publication rather than the 6-8 month average.

★ Our stakeholders, taxpayers and Department employees, will now be receiving much more timely information to assist them in their jobs and reporting responsibilities.

Team Name: Expedited Publication Team
Team Members: Jan Bianchi, Jackie Danyo, Grace Dellosa, Catherine Pree, Susan Price, Steve Zagelow

CONTACT: Catherine Pree, (360) 570-6140

Managed Audits

The traditional audit is time consuming to the auditor and invasive by nature to the taxpayer. The voluntary Managed Audit Program was started in the summer of 2000 that allows some businesses to perform some or all of the procedures of an audit.

First, an assessment is made by the auditor whether the business is able to perform specific review procedures. Next, the auditor explains the procedures of the managed audit and works with the business to design specific instructions for the taxpayer to follow. An agreement is signed by the Department and the taxpayer. The auditor provides supervision and assistance throughout the process. A limited waiver of interest is provided as incentive for the business to perform under the managed audit agreement.

Expected Results

★ Managed audits free auditors' time for other priority work assignments.

★ Early communication, understanding, and agreement in the process is expected to result in earlier closure of the audit, increasing the overall efficiency and cost savings over a traditional audit, in addition to improved relationships with the business.

★ Improved communication, increased understanding, and early agreement are expected to reduce appeals that are filed as a result of misunderstanding of audit procedures and tax applications.

★ Businesses are given more flexibility for managing their own resources, resulting in less disruption to their regular business operations.

★ Businesses learn more about their accounting systems and how tax laws apply to their business.

Team Name: Audit Alternatives Quality Team
Team Members: Mark Craig, Julie Japhet, Deeann Desanto, Dave Hansen, Toni Kastner, Linda Fortney, Don Morely, James Petit, Gary Davis, Patrick Gillespie, Dick Lambert, Chris Barnes, Chuck Ehret

CONTACT: Mark Craig, (253) 593-5140

Improved New Business Packet

For years, the Department has sent new businesses a packet of information explaining their tax reporting responsibilities. This was typically the first contact that taxpayers had with the Department. We questioned whether this was the most effective communication method, if the information was meeting their needs, and if there were ways we could improve the content. A survey of nearly 150 newly registered businesses was conducted. We found that taxpayers preferred “receiving” information from the Department through the mail but preferred "contacting" the Department by phone. We reviewed and altered the contents for the new business packet to better reflect the needs and desires of our customers.

Results

★ Consolidated the “New Business Handbook” and the “Guide to Completing the Combined Excise Tax Return” into a comprehensive resource called the “Business Tax Guide”.

★ Developed a magnet in the shape of Washington State that includes the Department of Revenue web site address and toll-free number (for quick and easy reference).

★ Developed a checklist called, “Get Set for Success—Learn How to Report Your State Excise Taxes Correctly.” This was included in the front of the “Business Tax Guide” to give taxpayers a quick, simple reference for getting off on the right foot.

★ Added the “Solutions to Common Reporting Errors” brochure in the new business packet. This colorful, quick reference aid is designed to help taxpayers learn how to avoid common reporting errors.

Team Name: New Business Communication Team
Team Members: Robin Krick, Janet Shimabukuro, Don Gutmann, Tom Hough, Cynda Johnson, Tammy Metzger, Celeste Morgan, Libby Parsons, Jenny Smith, Deanna Jackson, Becki Bretthauer, Sherree Christiansen, Heather Johnson

CONTACT: Janet Shimabukuro, (360) 753-7790

New Business Outreach Program Enhancements

New Business Outreach (NBO) workshops, which began more than 10 years ago, were somewhat unorganized and inconsistent from office to office. Presenters felt little support for their efforts and were left to conduct workshops with limited equipment, resources, and marketing assistance. NBO presenters were brought together to brainstorm improvements for the program. The workbook and slides were updated to reflect taxpayer needs; a leader's guide, presenter checklist, written evaluation, NBO brochure, promotional posters, and oversized tax returns were created; infocus machines were purchased; presenter training was conducted; a joint commitment from both Audit and Compliance was reached; online registration was developed; and a pre-registration process was initiated.

Results

★ Created a comprehensive workbook with corresponding slides that better reflect taxpayer needs.

★ Improved awareness—attendance increased more than 20 percent from the same time period last year.

★ Developed/acquired better tools/equipment for presenting.

★ Established process for evaluating performance and collecting participant feedback.

★ Greater commitment to NBO program agency wide—from managers to line staff.

Team Name: New Business Outreach Committee
Team Members: Janet Shimabukuro, Alyson Carlson, Scott Amrine, Sue Cook, Ivy Cristion, Denise Harding, Mike Youtsey

CONTACT: Janet Shimabukuro, (360) 753-7790

Office Relocation Procedures

When office relocations take place, generally personnel have not had the experience of a move. They do not know what the requirements are, whose responsibility it is to do what, or whether or not a move should even take place. By debriefing after office moves as they occurred, a document was put together that recommends preplanning and evaluating current office location and space, suggests timelines for involving appropriate staff and resources, lists the steps required for a move and appropriate contact positions for each task.

Results

★ A plan to review leases at least 18 months in advance of expiration so that an evaluation of the current property can be made and if necessary a well-planned move can occur.

★ Information on the process that Office Services must go through to submit a space request and what information others can provide to Office Services to assist in the process.

★ The plan instructs and empowers a field manager to form a group that will review the document and plan the details of the move.

★ The plan outlines all the details required for a move; lists the appropriate contacts and provides timelines.

★ The plan outlines details of how to prepare for moving day and lists last minute details that are usually not thought of until it's in crisis.

Team Name: Office Relocation Procedures
Team Members: Kathy Oline, Cherryl Scott, Evelyn Czapiewski, Le Perry, Tom Reslock, Julie Andersen, Diane Gibbs, Lynnea Hansen, Brad Strand, Terry Schurke

CONTACT: Evelyn Czapiewski, (360) 570-6048

Return Process Review

The Taxpayer Account Administration (TAA) Division converted from a Micrographics storage and retrieval system to an electronic imaging system. This electronic imaging system transformed how the Excise Tax Return process is handled by TAA staff. Staff from three divisions formed a team to review the processing of the Excise Tax Return from the point of entrance into the Department through the final step of capturing the data from the return. Within the current tax return process, a total of 15 areas were identified for possible areas for improvement or further analysis.

Results

★ Changes made in processing the logging of batches in the Document Management Section resulted in 500 hours saved. This results from about 1.5 FTE hours per day saved.

★ Change in the section responsible for batching the work resulted in more efficient processing.

★ Renaming of certain batches to better identify the documents contained in those batches is expected to reduce the number of processing errors.

★ Revising of system logic to allow batch data to process when a document in a batch is missing a Universal Business Identifier number.

★ Identification of areas where improvements and efficiencies may be made in the process with further analysis.

Team Name: Return Process Review Group
Team Members: F&ES: Judy Bandock, Anita Duemig-Fairbanks, Linda Lethlean, Susan Root; TAA: Rob Rice, Jennifer Scott, Mel Kirpes, Nonnie Phan; IS: Suzi Simpson, Bonnie Oberst, Bret Bretthauer

CONTACT: Linda Lethlean, (360) 586-4309

Settlement Procedures

The Appeals Division resolves taxpayer excise tax appeals by either issuing written determinations which decide taxability or dismissals, or through settlement. The settlement process has traditionally been that the administrative law judge (ALJ) in charge of reviewing the appeal would submit a written settlement proposal and recommendation to the division's managers and negotiate the terms of settlement. Direct involvement of the ALJ in settlement negotiations made both the ALJ and the taxpayer uneasy because: the ALJ did not have actual settlement authority, and if the case wasn't settled the ALJ had to issue a written determination on the same appeal that he/she attempted to settle.

The Appeals division modified its settlement process in the spring of 2000. While the ALJ still presents the settlement proposal to management, the ALJ is no longer directly involved in settlement negotiations with the taxpayer. Instead, the manager negotiates directly with the taxpayer and enters into the settlement agreement.

Results

★ Both the ALJ and taxpayers believe that this makes a "cleaner" settlement process.

★ The ALJ is no longer in the position of playing both the negotiator and decision-maker.

★ The responsibility of the negotiations is placed with the manager who has the authority to approve the settlements.

Team Name: Settlement Procedures
Team Members: Grace Dellosa, Lisa Faker, Eddie Brown, Darcy Bristow, Liz Cosio, Jackie Danyo, John Prusia, Susan Price, Catherine Pree, Mark Pree, Dave Dressel, John Gray, Chris Coffman, Pegg Bauer, Rex Munger, Steve Zagelow, Jan Bianchi, Randy Okimoto, David DeLuca, Jeff Mahan, Carl Lewis

CONTACT: Susan Price, (360) 570-6140

Simplifying Harvest Adjustments and Quality Codes

We have multiple classes of harvest adjustments and timber quality codes used by large harvesters when determining their taxes. Over the years, we have noticed that these adjustment classes and quality codes were no longer realistic in terms of current timber harvesting and marketing conditions. We met with the timber industry periodically over the last two years to work out harvest adjustment classes and timber quality codes that both better represent current timber harvesting and marketing conditions and in many cases simplified and reduced the number of adjustment classes and quality codes.

Results

★ Simplifies large harvester reporting.

★ Better reflects current timber harvesting and marketing conditions.

★ Aligns tax adjustments with current industrial practices.

★ Expected to minimize the reporting errors in regards to taking adjustments.

★ Estimated to save 30 minutes of taxpayer return preparation time/DOR examination time per return (approximately 300 hours per year).

Team Name: Simplifying Harvest Adjustments and Quality Codes Team
Team Members: Steve Vermillion, Laurence Reeves, Bob Tully, Mark Longrie, Ed Ratcliff, Joe Gienty (retired), Robert Smith, Dwayne Woolsey, Chris Westwood, Bill Justis, Dan Taylor.

CONTACT: Steve Vermillion, (360) 664-8432

Combining Stumpage Value Area Tables

We send out Instruction Packets with Stumpage Value Area (SVA) tables each quarter to Forest Excise Tax taxpayers (large harvesters). This packet contains roughly 8 pages of instructions and a 1 page SVA table. The instructions are identical for all westside SVAs; they would get additional packets with all the same instructions when all they really needed was the 1 page SVA table. Now we have a single westside and eastside instruction packet with all of the SVAs contained in that single packet. Now, in most cases, a harvester gets a single instruction packet with all the SVA tables they need.

Results

★ The estimated savings for printing and mailing are $1,648.

★ Provides increased convenience and simplicity for taxpayers.

★ Reduces the amount of electronic storage space necessary to maintain our stumpage value tables.

★ Reduces the number of documents that our examiners have to sort through in order to get to our stumpage tables for doing tax examination.

Team Name: Combining Stumpage Value Area (SVA) Tables
Team Members: Steve Vermillion, Laurence Reeves, Jennifer Billings, Randi Johnson, Jenny Smith

CONTACT: Steve Vermillion, (360) 664-8432

Assistive Technology and Treatment Center

Providing efficient and effective therapeutic supports to Division of Developmental Disability (DDD) clients at Fircrest became a problem due to 500% increase in requests for services over the last seven years.

A quality improvement team developed and implemented a streamlined, collaborative system called the Assistive Technology and Treatment Center at Fircrest. The team organized equipment and therapy staff into one area and developed new assessment and treatment procedures to accomplish this collaborative system. The new system provides clients at Fircrest an efficient and convenient integration of services that include: Assistive Technology; Communication Therapy; Occupational Therapy; Audiology; Self-feeding/ Nutritional assessment; Dental services; Physical Therapy; Vocational assessment; Leisure and other therapies.

Results

★ Increased service units completed per full time employee by 200+%.

★ Reduced the amount of time required to develop effective program and/or equipment.

★ Encouraged equipment vendors to provide equipment for trial use at the treatment center at no charge.

★ Established an affiliation and collaboration with faculty from the University of Washington, University of Kansas, Washington State University, and Eastern Washington University.

Team Name: Assistive Technology and Treatment Center at Fircrest
Team Members: Cynthia Willman, Kathy Smith, Tim Cullinan, Kathy Swenson, Mary Thomas, Scott Healy, Isabel Soley, Bill Riddle, Jerry Willette

CONTACT: Bill Riddle, (206) 361-3037

Database Consolidation and Automation

Counties, in partnership with the Department, are responsible for providing employment and day programs for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) clients. The County Human Resources Information System (CHRIS) is a provider payment system for these client services. This payment system was very labor intensive and fraught with errors, such as missing data, incorrect billing codes and the use of obsolete service codes. The system took three to six months to complete a provider payment cycle using outdated technology.

The project team developed a standardized, decentralized process. They consolidated databases, making client information available to the counties. The new system includes on-line data entry, error correction at the point-of-entry, and on-line access to client data by counties, thus ensuring accurate and reliable data at every stage of the process. The simplified system requires fewer people and has set the stage for expanded electronic communication between DDD, counties, and the private service providers.

Results

- ★ Replaced manual processes with electronic ones for distributing and collecting data.
- ★ Increased productivity across the program by 2%.
- ★ Reduced the billing cycle from 3-6 months to 1-4 weeks.
- ★ Provided counties with on-line access to DDD client information.
- ★ Eliminated labor intensive reviews through use of point-of-entry error detection and correction.

Team Name: CHRIS Automation Team
Team Members: Tim Brown, Linda Johnson, Rick Stablein, Jana Sesonske, Debby Davies, Josh McMeel, Gregg Anderson, Mike Ahern, County Representatives

CONTACT: Rick Stablein, (360) 902-8459

Clear Communications Help Clients and Providers

For several years, Aging and Adult Services Administration (AASA) clients in COPES (Medicaid Community Options Program Entry System) received two separate notices, listing different participation amounts for their community-based care. These notices confused clients, their representatives, and providers. In addition, the duplicative and erroneous letters caused excessive rework, phone calls, and wasted time by DSHS financial and social services staff.

A team developed one letter to include all needed information. A major computer system was revised to create one letter with the accurate participation amount. The project was implemented statewide.

Results

- ★ Provide one clear and accurate award letter to all clients.
- ★ Saved $21,000 in postage.
- ★ Reduced phone calls by 30%.
- ★ Increased accuracy of payments to facilities/providers by 30%.
- ★ Increased customer satisfaction to client, provider and AASA staff.
- ★ Reduced client confusion and anxiety.
- ★ Saved 9,189 rework staff hours.

Team Name: Award Letter Team
Team Members: Norma Cook, Shirley Alleyne, Marrianne Backous, Mary Lou Percival, Guyce LaFavour, Pam Lambeth, Mary Craves-Holland, Dan Lengyel, LaDonna Parsons, David Armes, Tom Williams

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

DSHS & Community Partner to Reach Hard to Serve Clients

It is particularly difficult to coordinate delivery of DSHS and other community services to clients with severe and multiple needs. Too often, clients with complex needs do not receive all the services they need in a systematic way. Beyond the human cost to the client, the state experiences higher recidivism rates and costs as clients revolve through mental health facilities and hospitals, emergency rooms, substance abuse rehabilitation facilities, jails, and nursing homes.

A team developed a collaborative partnership within DSHS and the community to serve these clients. Over a two-year period the team provided hard-to-serve adult clients and seniors with coordinated, appropriate, and enduring services. The project will be implemented throughout the state in 2001.

Results

★ Reduced inpatient hospitalization by 134 days for 67 clients.

★ Saved a total of $192,003 in emergency mental health treatment, inpatient and psychiatric hospitalization.

★ Reduced psychiatric hospitalization for 12 clients by 9 days.

★ Reduced recidivism and eliminated the need for emergency mental health treatment for 8 clients.

★ Provided opportunity for clients to stay in the community.

★ Saved $525,266 during the two-year period.

Team Name: Community Action Team – The “A” Team
Team Members: DSHS: Preston Hess, Nancy Jones, James Mead, Kathy Voshell, Perry Kinney, Debbie Buse, Kathy Dougherty, Randy Burge, Evelyn Agostinelli, Diane McCalmon; DOC: Karen Adams, Chuck Wright, Daniel Barbara, Heather Dean; Compass Mental Health: Tom Sebastian, Pam Hutchinson; Snohomish County Corrections: Greg White; Associated Provider Network: Bob LeBeau, David Kludt; Snohomish County Human Services: Preston Hess, Nancy Jones, Debbie Page, Terry McDonough; Alcohol and other Drugs: Jim Gorman; Aging and Long Term Care: Mary King, Diane Lavier

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

House Calls Deliver Services to Homebound Clients

Homebound seniors and adults with disabilities cannot easily get to and from DSHS offices to apply (or reapply) for Medicaid or Food Stamps. Many clients are non-ambulatory, with chronic and acute long-term care needs. It can also be difficult or impossible for some clients to communicate by phone and mail. All of these physical barriers can cause delays to establish eligibility for clients who need food, medical care, and immediate prescriptions.

A team developed and implemented a streamlined client home visit. As a result, 76% of client eligibility applications are processed and approved the same day.

In addition, workers were able to identify instances of previously undetected abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Adult Protective Services clients received much needed help rapidly.

Results

- ★ Improved customer services as clients were interviewed in their own homes.
- ★ Determined eligibility quickly and easily.
- ★ Improved income-reporting changes more frequently.
- ★ Maintained 0% error rate.
- ★ Improved referrals to other needed services.
- ★ Provided more safety and needed help to vulnerable adults.
- ★ Provided more accurate and timely eligibility determinations.
- ★ Reduced the average wait period for eligibility by at least 14 days.
- ★ Increased client referral rate by 25%.

Team Name: Financial Home Visits Team
Team Members: Robin Crowley, Norma Cook, Pam Lambeth, Diane Linnell

CONTACT: Deanna Rankos, (360) 725-2576

Behavioral Rehabilitation Services Improvement

The addition of federal dollars to the Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) program, traditionally called group care for children, imposed new federal requirements regarding contracting. Children's Administration (CA) decided to use this change in requirements as an opportunity to improve the quality of services. Both providers and CA saw room for improvement, as providers sometimes had difficulty understanding the required deliverables.

CA consulted with the Council on Accreditation (COA) and the Child Welfare Leagues of America (CWLA) for best practice standards in identifying provider qualifications. Providers were able to use their COA accreditation in completing the qualification process. The team prepared a Contractor's Handbook describing all the contract deliverables in a Question & Answer format.

Results

- ★ Secures eligibility for federal funding ($9.7 million).
- ★ Assures provider qualifications meet best practice standards.
- ★ Improves partnership with providers around contract obligations.
- ★ Ensures that children and families are receiving quality services.

Team Name: Behavioral Rehabilitation Services Team
Team Members: Debrah Kime, Dinah Martin, Nancy Sutton, Priscilla Wolfe, Amy Wong, Linda Gil, Carole Holland, Janice Greenfield, Jim Carter, Mike VanderMeer, Rick Holcomb, Carmita Velasquez; Assistant Attorney General: Kara Larsen; Escelsior: Bob Faltermeyer; Washington State Coalition of Children's Residential Services: Fran Hume; Washington Association of Family-Based Treatment Services: Wendy Warman; Service Alternatives: Dan Austin; Catholic Community Services: Mary Stone-Smith

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Contract Monitoring Improvement

During fiscal year 1999, the Children's Administration (CA) spent $81,000,000 for contracted services. The growth in the amount of money spent for contracted services was not matched by an increase in the resources to monitor contracts. Lack of monitoring resulted in non-compliance with contractual requirements, payment problems and inconsistent quality of services to children and families.

The team developed a monitoring process, policy and documentation tools. The effectiveness of the tools and procedures was demonstrated through field tests with providers. Analysis of satisfaction surveys confirmed the benefits of contract monitoring to consumers of services.

Results

★ Provides effective, proven monitoring tools adaptable to all client contracts.

★ Decreases overpayments and inappropriate payments by $689,700.

★ Improves quality of services through clarification of expectations for 73% of contracted providers.

★ Improves working relationship between contracted providers and the agency.

Team Name: Contract Monitoring Team
Team Members: Peggy Brown, Ginny Heim, Priscilla Wolfe, Connie Lambert-Rome, Laura Nelson, Chris Trujillo, Sharon Young, Joe Crawford, Jim Carter, John Petersons, Malynda Eastman, Martha Hickman, Sharon Braden, Brian Lindgren, Joanne Ashcraft, Christy Gullion, Paul Noski, Susan Hannibal, Debbie Lynn; Providers: Alena Yastchenko, Kris Romstad, Sam Grayson

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Region 5 Intranet Website

In Pierce and Kitsap counties, the Children's Administration uses paper to distribute copies of much of the information needed for staff on a day-to-day basis. A team designed a cost-saving, appealing useful Intranet website specifically tailored to the needs of local employees. The site includes a regional mission statement, listings for agency and community resources, maps and driving directions to other offices (including pictures), a webcam shot of the current state of traffic on the Narrows Bridge which connects the two counties, and regional news, events and awards. New links are added regularly to increase the richness of the content. Animation and pictures of local interest entice viewers to visit the site. Staff are better informed, have the tools to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently and are more able to participate in the celebrations, news, events and recognition of their peers.

Results

- ★ Providing web-based access to up-to-date information saves staff 5,330 hours per year.
- ★ Eliminating hardcopy distribution of many documents saves $944 per year.
- ★ Provides direct e-mail links to appropriate contact people.
- ★ Provides one-stop shopping for a wide variety of resources.
- ★ Improves staff morale and working environment due to keeping current with regional news, events and awards.

Team Name: Region 5 Website Team
Team Members: Ken Burnett, Richard Woodard, Kathy Ramsay, Dan Estes, Patrick Osby, Dianne Thompson, Mike Gray

CONTACT: Chris Trujillo, (425) 649-4181

Multi-Award Procurement Project Realized Big Savings

DSHS was conducting numerous competitive procurements to select contractors for personal and purchased services following a process required by law. Competitive procurements took approximately 300 staff hours and three months of process time. To reduce the process time and yet satisfy legal requirements, a team developed the Multi-Award Procurement process.

In this process Central Contract Services (CCS) identified five services that were likely to be needed more than once in a fiscal year and conducted a competitive procurement to establish a pool of prequalified vendors for these services. The prequalified pool is established every two to four years to allow new vendors to compete. When DSHS needs a contractor for a service, CCS conducts a Secondary Level of Competition where each prequalified vendor is sent a letter inviting a bid. The Secondary Level of Competition only takes 50 hours of staff time with as little as two weeks of processing time.

Results

- ★ Saved over 2,758 hours of staff time for CCS after using this process 14 times.
- ★ Reduced process time from three months to as little as two weeks.
- ★ Saved $17,430 in advertising, printing, and postage costs.
- ★ Saved over 4,000 hours of staff time for Purchased Services Contracts Unit in the procurement for programming services.

Team Name: Multi-Award Procurement Team
Team Members: April Boze, David Brauer, Sandy Daniel, Pamela Davis-Taggart, Don Dinsmore, Janet Halvorsen, Ron Jennings, Jessica Jensen, Richard Jones, Karen Lichtenstein, Charles Hunter, Brian Lindgren, Scott Maricle, Darrel Mellor, Catherine Ott, Drucilla Rowan, Rhett Russell, Thomas Sampson, Jeanette Sevedge-App, Luther Smith, Preston Wheaton

CONTACT: Jessica Jensen, (360) 664-6071

Putting Together a Puzzle

The two veterans homes each had their own seperate training programs for Respectful Workplace and Customer Service. The Staff Development Coordinators (SDC's) at each home got together and decided to combine their training sessions and have the same curriculum for the entire agency.

The SDC's came up with a theme for a workplace puzzle. An incomplete puzzle has a lot of holes in it, doesn't stay together well and doesn't provide the whole picture. A complete puzzle, however, will show how each employee sees their role in completing and participating in the respectful workplace puzzle. Their intent is to show how all of the puzzle pieces can come together to create a workplace full of mutual respect with employees focused on customer service.

Results

- ★ The entire agency will be receiving the same training.
- ★ Each employee will be able to see their role in completing and participating in a workplace puzzle.
- ★ The puzzle provides a fun, interactive way of learning.
- ★ The 2 homes are working together toward a common goal.
- ★ The training is being done "in house" and is therefore customized to the agency.

Team Name: Staff Development Coordinators
Team Members: Ed Dolle, Karen Bryan

CONTACT: Ed Dolle, (360) 895-4358

Same Day Job Search – Vancouver Style

Vancouver WorkFirst staff partner with their respective Community Service Office (CSO) staff to assist customers applying for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Applicants are required to begin job search the same day they apply for benefits *and* attend a 30-hour workshop designed to build job-seeking skills. Attendance was unpredictably low at the workshops. The team developed a new referral process employing a verification form for the applicant to complete and WorkFirst counselors and Case Managers to sign. They also initiated a first-day desk level orientation of WorkFirst job search procedures, registration in the JobNet job seeker—employer matching system and introduction to employment and labor market information.

Results

- ★ WorkFirst Workshop attendance up 17% from a baseline of 315 to 471.
- ★ Workshop completion increased 23%, from a baseline of 186 to 386.
- ★ Improved data collection and tracking for WorkFirst Job Search participants.
- ★ Customers are now able to conduct job search activities prior to attending the workshop.

Team Name: Vancouver WorkFirst/Food Stamp/JSCI Team
Team Members: Rod Carpenter, Marie Wodaege, Molly Jeannet, Ted Sperry, John Reavis, Jan Baur, Eka Frimpong, Yang Em, Lucy Amie, Bill Tatum, Joe Smith, Steve Hansen; CSO, DSHS: Mike Johnson, Carol Lee

CONTACT: Steve Hansen, (360) 735-4965

Garnishing Improvements

The Benefit Payment Collection (BPC) Unit is responsible for collecting overpaid Unemployment Insurance benefits. One process used for collection is the garnishment of wages. Previously, accounts were audited and referred for garnishment. But due to staff reductions, the wait time from referral to issuance of garnishment ballooned to six to nine months. This wait caused staff to re-audit the account to determine if garnishment was still appropriate and created a backlog of nearly 500 accounts. The BPC team used Continuous Quality Improvement tools and brainstorming to improve the process. The resulting improvements eliminated the backlog *and* the need for duplicate audits.

Results

- ★ Reduced the number of staff hours spent auditing accounts from 15.7 to 7.85 hours per month, a reduction of 50%.
- ★ Reduced time issuing garnishments from an average of 7.5 months to just one week.
- ★ Increased interest earned to the Trust Fund due to rapid recovery of overpaid benefits.
- ★ Improved efficiency by eliminating duplicate audits.

Team Name: Benefit Payment Control (BPC) Team
Team Members: Carole Bernhardt, Becky Richards, Bill McDonald, Pam Sulenes, Pat Kirk, Maria Laucirica, Leovy Cabrera, Terry Casillas, Linda Marshall, Glenda Walloch-Shaper, Kathlyn Sweet, Renee O'Hara, Matthew Thompson, Debbie Ellis, Keith Eubanks

CONTACT: Carole Bernhardt, (360) 902-9787

Employment Security Department

Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award

Corporate Jobs Challenge Project

Back in 1995, ESD partnered with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Seattle Chamber to address high unemployment within targeted areas of the Emerald City. In the beginning the process of matching low-income residents with employer openings was slow and labor intensive, producing marginal placement numbers. Utilizing team skills and Continuous Quality Improvement tools, project staff chose to maximize various technologies in their solution. The team replaced written/mailed communications with standardized forms and a fax matrix system for submitting job openings. They also designed an e-mail contact list for over 500 employers. Improvements in marketing via the Chamber and the Governor's new hotline increased exposure and job listings.

Results

★ Saved over $5,000 by reducing direct mailing costs to employers/partners.

★ Reducing mail correspondence produced savings of over 300 staff hours.

★ Increased the pool of new employers offering jobs by 600. Job placement numbers have more than tripled in the last three years. Exceeded $15,000 client annual salary goal with a current average of $17,666.

★ Awarded "Group Award of Merit" by the International Association of Personnel at Employment Security (IAPES).

★ Since inception, job placements contributed to reducing welfare related expenditures by over $46 million and wages for low-income workers approaching $120 million.

Team Name: Business Employment Solutions
Team Members: Richard Mason, JoAnn Hairston, TaMara Pitre, Truscenia Garrett; DSHS: Phyllis Lowe, Helen Campbell; Greater Chamber of Commerce/Urban Enterprise Center: Bob Watt, Herman McKinney, Susannah Ross, Lynn Coriano

CONTACT: Richard Mason, (206) 389-7310

Core Service Delivery Solved

Due to limited resources, the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum WorkSource East Center could support just .5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee for front desk duties. Duties included greeting and providing immediate attention to customers, conducting a cursory evaluation of customers' needs and referring them to appropriate services. Front desk staff persons were not trained to provide WorkSource core services, including job and support service referrals, assistance with resumes and labor market information. This team took action to remedy the situation.

Results

★ Utilized existing staff resources to provide front desk services.

★ Improved customer service by offering core services at the front desk.

★ Increased Cowlitz/Wahkiakum WorkSource Center capacity to provide services by teaming front desk staff with experienced Job Service Specialists.

★ Developed a directory of services available at the WorkSource Center and who to contact for assistance.

Team Name: The Core Service Delivery Team
Team Members: Linda Waterman, Jim Lomer, June Trusty, Jo Donaldson, Ngoc Diep Pham, Reed Martin, Chris Cotton

CONTACT: Jim Lomer, (360) 578-4226

The World on its TAXIS

The department's automated Tax Information System (TAXIS) computer system assigns over 220,000 tax rates annually to employers who pay taxes to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. The Experience Rating/Benefit Charging Team is responsible for auditing the system and responding to employer requests for information and adjustments on their tax rates. The processes were manual, time intensive and prone to error. The team automated the audit process by creating several spreadsheets for calculating tax rates and employer reports. The improvements allow for correction of inaccurate data and the capacity for timely responses to employer requests.

Results

★ Decreased response time to employer requests by 70%, from 55 minutes per response to 16 minutes.

★ Improved accuracy of tax rates, thus reducing requests for tax rate reviews by 63% (2,085 for the period December 1998 to August 1999 to 1,308 for the period December 1999 to August 2000).

★ Saved 650 FTE hours by automating the audits and providing accurate information.

★ Decreased risk to agency by improving accuracy of tax rates.

★ Eliminated keying errors.

Team Name: Experience Rating/Benefit Charging Team
Team Members: Keith Black, Zelda Caldwell, Joe Carey, Vicki Clark, Hermie Goodwin, Betty Hatter, Nancy Howe, Therese Hulbert, Wilma Jensen, Steve Parsley, Shoni Revay, Wayne Sullivan, Roberta Wells, Karen White, Beccie Zolman

CONTACT: Nancy Howe, (360) 902-9617

High Fashioned Modules

The Claimant Placement Program (CPP) was charged by the Legislature to assist Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants with a quick return to work—benefiting individuals and families. The state program offered a job search assistance workshop but content was inconsistent, with no link between intervention and outcome. Processes for contacting, scheduling, and following-up on participant attendance were time intensive. The team developed a six-module workshop to educate job seekers on effective job search methods. Quality standards and assessment tools were added to gauge workshop effectiveness. Performance measures were linked to CPP services with other assessment tools available for use at local sites. Additional improvements were made to scheduling and the participant follow-up process.

Results

- ★ Decreased the percentage of UI benefits used by claimants participating in CPP group workshops from 76% to 71% at the pilot sites.
- ★ Pilot generated average UI Trust Fund savings of approximately $234 per participant.
- ★ Produced high quality workshop curriculum and marketable workshop materials.
- ★ Ensured statewide consistency in service delivery.
- ★ Established customer base better prepared for conducting successful job search activities.

Team Name: CPP Redesign Team
Team Members: Brian Roper, Dennis Birge, Andrea Bone, Barbara Korst, Mike Riber, Joe Denogeon, Paul Christopherson, Roberta Newell, Barbara Reed, Iris VanBuren-Baugh, Holly Parkin, Daryl Campbell, Joe Perez, Jennie Weber, Carmen Nicely, Mali Gunn, Sam Mack, Carl Mackey, Sue Feist, Kaye Clark, Barbara Flaherty

CONTACT: Andrea Bone, (360) 438-3265

Personnel Pizzazz

Assessing individual employee personnel information was a slow and cumbersome process, frequently impacting the workload of Administrative Support staff. To improve the process, the team identified commonly needed information, reviewed options for storing and retrieving the information electronically and developed a format for creating a database that contains current information on all employees. They also added a table that includes the employee's position number, job classification, salary information, and effective dates of personnel actions.

Results

- ★ Employee personnel records are easily accessible.
- ★ Files are maintained with minimal effort.
- ★ The data can be queried for information on individual records, sorted to accommodate specific personnel actions or reviewed in a matter of minutes.
- ★ Access to the database is protected.
- ★ Saved 12 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) hours annually.

Team Name: WorkSource Walla Walla Administrative Support Team
Team Members: Tracy McFarland, Terry Rhodes

CONTACT: Jennie Weber, (509) 527-1808

BARTS Says, "Dough!"

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program's automated fraud management system (BARTS) detects improper benefit payments due to unreported work and earnings. The crossmatch process has a lag time of at least five months after benefits are paid before discrepancies can be detected. The Office of Special Investigations used the BARTS system to implement a pilot during the first quarter of 2000 designed to detect overpayments much earlier in the benefit claim process. The method utilizes "New Hire" data that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) currently uses for child support collection and matches it against weekly UI payments.

Results

★ Previously, 81% of the overpaid dollars were fraudulent. New Hire process resulted in only 36% of the overpaid dollars identified as fraud—an improvement of 45%.

★ The average fraud overpayment amount for the crossmatch cases is $1,250, the average for New Hire is $740, an average reduction per case of $510 or 29%.

★ The average non-fraud overpayment amount for crossmatch cases is $349 and the average for New Hire is $209, an average reduction of $144 per case or 40%.

★ New hire determinations were appealed at a rate of 1.6% compared to 7.5% for the regular crossmatch.

★ Improved services to employers by reducing the number of New Hire Earnings Verification forms that need to be completed by 54%.

Team Name: New Hire Team
Team Members: Jerry Iyall, Jean Lupien, Kathy Ramoska, Pat Williams, Pat Mayhew, Ana Parkinson, Cheryl Sebaska, Kristy Weber, Sheryl Mayes, Josh Thompson, Lindsay Blain, Byron Zarp, Ron Giachetti; BARTS contractor: Carol Richards

CONTACT: Kathy Ramoska, (360) 407-5240

In The Know

There was no effective system to capture information on customer usage of the Spokane Office Resource Center. The lack of information hampered planning of staffing and equipment. Customers logged in on a sign-in sheet to use the center. The information requested was unclear and customers often asked for clarification or provided inaccurate data. Ideas to improve data collection and the sign-in sheet were brainstormed. Data collection elements were identified and the sign-in sheet was redesigned. Using existing technology, a database was created, tested, and modified to capture customer usage.

Results

- ★ Improved plans for customer usage, allocation and utilization of staff and resources.
- ★ Reduced customer sign-in time 50%, from approximately 1.5 minutes to 45 seconds.
- ★ Reduced customer wait time by 75%, from approximately 2 minutes to 45 seconds.
- ★ Improved customer service and data accuracy with easier to understand sign-in sheets.
- ★ Saved an average of 200 FTE hours annually by providing an improved sign-in sheet.

Team Name: Spokane Resource Center Database Team
Team Members: Frankie Arteaga, Dennis Smith

CONTACT: Dennis Smith, (509) 532-3120

Walla Walla Whallops Scheduling Woes

WorkSource employees were spending 60-90 minutes per week downloading, sorting, and editing Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant information in order to schedule clients for orientations to center services. There was no way to schedule multiple orientations and the process was prone to errors. The team resolved the problem by identifying elements critical to the sorting process and defining criteria needed to make the process less staff and time intensive. They consulted the Local Area Network (LAN) Administrator and developed a new process that uses a database to replace spreadsheets. The database automatically selects claimants meeting the criteria for orientations, improves sorting speed and performs mail merge functions. It also prepares and mails customer letters—scheduling up to four sessions.

Results

- ★ Saved 65 FTE hours annually by reducing processing time from an average of 80 minutes per week to approximately 5 minutes per week.
- ★ Increased scheduling capacity from 1 to 4 sessions.
- ★ Significantly reduced scheduling errors, resulting in increased customer satisfaction.
- ★ Process is easy for staff to learn and requires minimal training time.
- ★ Information is readily accessible with a clear trail of scheduling activity maintained for staff review.

Team Name: Core Services Team
Team Members: Carmen Nicely, Cathy Remell, Donna Larsen, Zenaida Guevara

CONTACT: Jennie Weber, (509) 572-1801

Veterans' Pilot Integrates the Goods

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), from Congress, requires veterans' services be integrated into the WorkSource environment. The federal Department of Labor (DOL) requires additional data be collected on services to veterans as well. The JobNet job seeker-employer computer match system did not have the capacity to capture the additional data. There were also concerns regarding veterans customer waiting times and staff intensive reports. This team designed and implemented a pilot to integrate veterans' services into the WorkSource Center. Veterans now receive work search resources via Job Hunter Workshops and are eligible to use the self-service Resource Center. Intensive services are still managed by the Veterans Unit but placement personnel can now do job referrals. Also, the team developed a database and template to capture the new data required by WIA. They identified specific codes on special Vet 9 report to do follow up on and sending postcards now does verification of veteran status.

Results

★ Saved 108 FTE hours by streamlining the verification process from 120 hours per year to 12 hours per year, a reduction of 90%.

★ Saved $3,315 in postage, paper, and envelopes annually by using postcards in lieu of mailing letters.

★ Improved customer service by eliminating wait time for intensive services.

★ Created database that meets federal reporting requirements and provides management reports.

★ Veterans receive integrated service delivery in the WorkSource environment.

Team Name: WorkSource Spokane Veteran's Unit
Team Members: Michael Briscoe, Luis Cerna, Cynthia Dean, Chuck Elmore, Daniel Lambert, Ken Mende, Donald Ott

CONTACT: Luis Cerna, (509) 532-3102

Data Collection—No Dream!

There was no data collection system for the WorkFirst Retention Services Program. Setting up and locating participant files was time consuming and labor intensive. Obtaining information for responding to management inquiries was difficult, sometimes producing unreliable data. Documenting client participation was also cumbersome and inefficient. Employers with multiple participants did not like getting numerous calls from various staff to verify their participant information. Finally, billing the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) on the performance-based contract was a confusing and inefficient process. The team built a database to collect participant data, track the number of hours worked by each participant, provide management reports, and facilitate the billing process. Additionally, they designed a postcard for participant follow-up and a template for those employers with multiple participants.

Results

★ Streamlined and improved data collection process by utilizing existing technology.

★ Saved 4,423 FTE hours per year.

★ Saved $858 in postage per year by using post cards in lieu of mailing letters.

★ Improved employer customer service by reducing complaints.

★ Reduced staff frustration.

Team Name: Spokane WorkFirst Post-Employment Retention Service Database
Team Members: Shannon Booth, Albert Garza, Melissa Keplin, Chris Mietus, Lyle Moholt, Sally Ring, Jennifer Rodney, Julie Springer, Vang Xiong

CONTACT: Jennifer Rodney, (509) 532-3081

Improving the Procurement Process Assists HCA's Customers

One of the major business processes at the Health Care Authority (HCA) is procurement of health benefits for our customers. Procurement is expensive and there is often a time crunch for health plans to establish their networks of coverage with providers. Working with health plans and providers HCA took on an improved procurement process. The goal was to save time, money and provide the best possible product for our customers with the best possible value. It was also important that we work together to solve the issues of access to health care in some rural areas of our state. The elimination and/or the duplication of customer surveys and oversight of quality standards for plans also was discussed. Over the last year, phase one of the improvements was put in place with the following results.

Results

★ Health plans collectively saved $200,000 by the state using the health plans' consumer survey data

★ Regular workshops with the health plans and providers provided a proactive approach to jointly working on cost and access problems. The result has been a means to continue to measure progress.

★ Awarding the contracts 3 weeks earlier allowed more time for plans to negotiate their provider networks.

★ Administrative efficiencies in the design of the Request for Proposal (RFP) reduced the volume of paper responses from health plan bidders by 65%.

★ Save 600 FTE hours per year.

Team Name: HCA Procurement Improvement Team
Team Members: Melodie Bankers, Dick Whitten, MaryAnne Lindeblad, Becky Loomis, Beau Bergeron, Gary Christensen, Dick Showmaker, Elin Meyer

CONTACT: Melodie Bankers, (360) 923-2728

PEBB Reduces Paperwork with Improved Process

The Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Self-Pay Unit receives over 1,891 documents each week. These documents were manually entered in the Health Care Authority (HCA) Access Database, for tracking purposes, prior to being delivered to staff for processing. The multiple entries required an average of four hours of staff time on a daily basis and, at times, caused delays in delivering correspondence promptly to staff.

To resolve this problem, PEBB developed a more automated process through the imaging system. This redesigned process was also intended to provide easy tracking access and better reporting data for management. The revised process includes tracking document types systematically and routing them to the appropriate staff for processing. It also provides accurate report information and assures timely delivery of all documents received. This was accomplished without any increase in resources or staff. The new redesigned process allows for maintaining quality services and the sanity of the clerical staff.

Results

- ★ Turned around response time to our customers.
- ★ Improved staff morale by eliminating unnecessary manual data entry.
- ★ Improved consistency and effectiveness in tracking documents.
- ★ Save 960 FTE hours per year.

Team Name: PEBB Imaging Team (Go Getters)
Team Members: Lonnie Rickard, Jack Dobson, Mary Whittle, Larry Cade, Renee Bourbeau

CONTACT: Renee Bourbeau, (360) 923-2813

Basic Health Imaging Saves Time

Although imaging is not new to state agencies, it takes a quality improvement process to assist staff in seeing that this might be the best approach. Basic Health (BH) plan provides health insurance to residents of Washington State. To provide this service they receive thousands of pieces of correspondence a month from members (customers). Receiving, tracking, filing and maintaining documents so that staff have access to them takes resources and space. BH action team reviewed options and recommended an imaging system to scan the documents and place them into the members' computer records. This afforded staff immediate access to records and accounts and improved the turn around time.

Results

★ Process of imaging reduced two contract FTEs.

★ Eliminated 5 temporary FTEs.

★ Three FTEs were reallocated to direct customer service phones.

★ Eliminated a large file room that has currently being used as a training room for the whole agency.

★ Improved customer service by faster access to files.

Team Name: BH Document Improvement Team
Team Members: Preston Cody, Lois Johanson, Renee Bourbeau, Del Cunning-Berry, Marie LaBonte, Kathy Eberle, John Barada, Romeo Solis, Tom Neitzel, Elizabeth Ammann

CONTACT: Preston Cody, (360) 412-4361

Winner of Governor's Quarterly Service and Quality Improvement Award

Getting Service To Eligible Customers

Because membership for health insurance in the Basic Health (BH) Program is contingent upon meeting income requirements, the BH division of HCA began a process several years ago to recertify income requirements. Staff understood that there must be a better way than just hit and miss and comparing data manually. After forming a team to examine the process the team recommended to compare member (customer) income information to the Employment Security Department (ESD) income database. The discrepancies are identified electronically and BH staff recertify those members with income in ESD database as higher than the records from BH databases. Recertification consists of requiring proof of income from members (customers) for continued enrollment. Those identified as no longer qualified for BH are disenrolled and, in cases where BH has subsidized premiums for unqualified members (customers), steps are taken to recoup the overpaid subsidies.

Results

- ★ Approximately 1400 recertification are begun each month on accounts identified in ESD and BH database comparisons.
- ★ For fiscal year 2000, 6800 accounts, a total of 12,784 members, were disenrolled for income overages following the recertification process.
- ★ Total savings in premium subsidies for ineligible members for FY 2000 was over $8.8 million.
- ★ We billed members for $218,959 subsidy overages during FY 2000 and have collected $103,457.
- ★ Total invoices outstanding with payments being made equals $115,502.

Team Name: Recertification and Recoupment Improvement Team
Team Members: Hieu Nguyen, Eileen Slusser, Lois Johanson, Janet Peterson, Chuck Hitchings, Kyle Vu, Preston Cody, Christy Vaughn, Elaine Laughlin, Kathy Eberle, Deanna Kehr, Bevin Hansell, Debbie Haeger, Mike Angel, Kathy Newman, Ed Stedman, Shaun Wilson, Tori Snyder, Lonnie Budd, Renee Bourbeau, Ida Zodrow, Tome Neitzel, Becky Loomis, Leslie Brundidge

CONTACT: Kathy Eberle, (360) 412-4307

Improved Translation Project = Enhanced Customer Service

The HCA's Basic Health program was faced with several issues surrounding document translation. Our cycle time was 4.98 days. One FTE was removed from direct customer service at the call center to focus on translating documents from our customers and there was a multi-step, multi-building process to route documents. A team was formed to examine this process and make improvements to customer satisfaction. The team came up with a 2 Phase process improvement. Results of Phase 1 are listed below.

Results

★ Streamlining the document flow and optimizing use of technology, the team saved 3.2 days and 1.5 FTEs.

★ Reduced the number of steps required to process a foreign language document from coding, tracking, manual spreadsheet input, routing and scanning to a one step process

★ Additional team recommendations, including a more centralized translation function, have been reviewed by management and will be phased in beginning December 2000.

★ Call Center staff can use the time saving to answer phones.

Team Name: Translation Team Improvements
Team Members: Preston Cody, Nicole Ross, Cindy McKinzie, Gail Burris, Elvia San Martin, Anton Cooper, Lois Johanson, Sun Watkins, Kyle Vu, Jose Gonzalez

CONTACT: Preston Cody, (360) 412-4361

Liquor Invoice Payment Process Becomes Timely and User Friendly

The agency utilized a 30-year old labor-intensive purchase order and payment system that required the final invoice to match the estimated price *to the penny*. Staff were handling the invoices as many as 18 times when prices didn't match. The system also restricted the size for inputting invoice numbers to five digits, which often caused confusion and made research difficult since most liquor invoice numbers are 10-12 digits long. Additionally, due to changes in programming, some of the original edits in the system are no longer in place. This resulted in loss of records, duplicate payments and completed records remaining in the system for years.

A multi-divisional process improvement team assessed the needs of accounting and purchasing division staff. Their research used quality tools and techniques to analyze and recommend a revised payment application that is more flexible for staff to use. The antiquated system was shut down. Accounting staff can now process and pay invoices immediately after receiving them from purchasing staff with approval signature. Invoice numbers up to 10 digits can now be entered into the current system. This improves record accessibility and makes research for payments and customer service more efficient. This new process has eliminated duplicate payments and records are no longer lost in the system.

Results

★ Annual savings of $3,593 in DIS printing and miscellaneous report costs.
★ Full compliance with State Auditor & OFM policy payment standards.
★ Reduced invoice process and payment time by an average of 3 weeks.
★ Redirected 5,200 FTE hours annually.
★ Expanded invoice tracking system for a 10 digit invoice.
★ Elimination of duplicate payments.
★ Increased flexibility within the payment system.

Team Name: Liquors Payable Process Improvement Team
Team Members: Nancy Lin, Sheila Esslinger, Juanita Kane, Gary Gladstone, Judy Layne, Gary Thompson, Shirley Warren, Arlene Freitag, Kelly Higbee, Cindy Doughty, Hal Bellerud, Dave Marty, Rita Lakin, Nancy Barnes

CONTACT: Sheila Esslinger, (360) 664-1677

Telephone Billing Process Saves Bucks

Formerly, the State Controlled Area Network (SCAN) telephone bill from the Department of Information Services (DIS) and subsequent payment process by the Liquor Control Board (LCB) was outdated, time consuming and not cost effective. Additionally, essential information needed to charge phone calls to the proper LCB program was not available on the bill.

The SCAN Billing Process Improvement Team comprised of staff from the LCB and DIS worked cooperatively using quality tools and techniques to streamline the billing process. They developed a Microsoft Access database application that prepares journal vouchers for the State Treasurer and DIS as well as a more detailed journal voucher for the LCB. The worksheets in the application are set-up to allow input directly from the DIS SCAN billing, eliminating accidental duplication and other keying errors. The application uses the balanced data to create financial coding for the journal voucher and the uses File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to transmit the coding to the Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS) without re-keying.

Results

★ Redirected 34 FTE hours per month within the LCB Financial and Information Technology Divisions. The prior process took 40 hours (350 code lines) per month. The new process takes 6 hours per month.
★ Developed new account codes in DIS financial system that correlate to AFRS coding structure to eliminate errors. Prior process incorporated a high manual re-keying error rate due to an automated program that could not be changed when program code or structure changed.
★ Identified and eliminated unused and unneeded phone numbers reducing the monthly bill from $44,000 per month to $39,000 per month, a decrease of $5,000/month for an annual savings of $60,000 in the 2001 fiscal year. This savings is reflected as an average and will likely increase during the last 6 months of the year by an additional $2,500/month.

Team Name: SCAN Billing Process Improvement Team (PIT)
Team Members: Leslie Halstrom, Fay Bronson; DIS: Jodi Jarrell, Jackie Smalley, Joyce North, Sue Berg, Elaine Lyle

CONTACT: Leslie Halstrom, (360) 664-1762

Constituent Services Gets Answers to Citizens

The Constituent Services Office has a daunting job: providing prompt answers to the thousands of questions and concerns citizens bring to the Governor—by letter, phone and e-mail. Delays are inevitable, but staff knew they could do better. So they set out to get 50% of their letters to the Governor for signature within two weeks—and reduce their backlog—all within eight weeks.

To meet the goal, staff first reorganized the flow of work within their office. Everyone pitched in, taking on different duties to eliminate bottlenecks. Then they scoured through the list of backlogged mail and contacted agencies that had been asked to respond to mail. They identified and fixed places where communication had broken down.

Not only did they meet their goal, they exceeded it. Their next task is to maintain the gains they made, and make even further improvements.

Results

★ The team far exceeded its initial goal of increasing the percentage of mail that got to the Governor's desk within two weeks to 50%. At the end of the eight weeks, 76% of the mail met that standard.

★ The team also achieved 115% of its goal for reducing the backlog of letters, again exceeding the team's own expectations.

Team Name: Constituent Response Breakthrough Team
Team Members: Julie Woods, Pam Phillips, Mary Farley, Gary Perkins, Carol Green-Sistrunk, Julie Skillings, Louise Tabor, Bryce Gardella; Policy staff: Dick Van Wagenen, Shelley Westall; L&I facilitators: Todd Baker, Kelly Rosie

CONTACT: Tim Kelley, (360) 902-0397

Office of Trade & Economic Development,
Office of Community Development and
Department of Printing

Automating Copy Center Billing

The Department of Printing (PRT) bills customers monthly for Copy Center print requests. A report used for accounting verification is attached to the invoice illustrating detailed information from each printing requisition. Sometimes necessary information for accurate accounting is inaccurate or nonexistent. A team comprised of employees from the Office of Community Development (OCD), the Office of Trade & Economic Development (OTED) and PRT created a process to automate open requisition billing saving both agencies time and money. Instead of manually inputting and checking data, the system creates a text file from existing information. The Excel program enables OCD and OTED to import data and automatically sort and process invoices. This team was able to reduce cycle time and utilize technology to save FTE hours and money.

Results

- ★ Reduced invoice processing time by an average of 30%.
- ★ Saved OCD and OTED an estimated 336 FTE hours per year.
- ★ Produced a cost avoidance for OCD and OTED of an estimated $24,036 per year.
- ★ Increased convenience for PRT customers resulting in improved customer satisfaction.
- ★ Established a common framework for three agencies to successfully collaborate and save tax dollars.

Team Name: Copy Center Billing Team
Team Members: PRT: Sharie McCafferty, Jolaine Swanda, Debbie Molenda, Patrice Lucas, Jan Silva; OCD & OTED: Jake Thomas, Tom Mason, Jim Lambert, Jeanette Hoage

CONTACT: Sharie McCafferty, (360) 570-5062

Business Development Unit's New Web Site

Business Development's (BD) former Web site was created in 1997. In 2000, it no longer fulfilled the marketing goals of BD. It had an antiquated look, the information was out of date, and it did not give Washington State the electronic representation it requires in the highly competitive ecomonic development marketplace. The solution was to develop a new Web site with current economic development information on Washington, a new graphical look, and a competitive and compelling marketing message. Business Development contracted with an outside consultant to design and program the site, and in July 2000 it went live on the Internet.

Results

★ Saves money on postage by referring inquiries to BD's Web site instead of mailing information packets; measurable savings especially on overseas postage.

★ Prospective clients have access to information on Washington State 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

★ BD's economic development partners have increased accessibility, more information, and an easily readable format through the Web site.

★ The Web site has the capability to give immediate feedback to clients. The Web site allows BD the ability to monitor the number of visits to the site.

★ The monthly average for web monitoring between July and September 2000, was 1,487 visits--48 per day and an average stay of six minutes.

★ The Economic Development Councils have access to status reports on the projects taking place in their counties.

Team Name: Business Development Unit Project Team
Team Members: Beth Toomey, Lynn Dahman

CONTACT: Peter McMillin, (360) 725-5072

Tourism Resource Center

In order to support rural communities and small businesses in their efforts to promote tourism in their respective regions, the Tourism unit recognized the need to create greater awareness of existing resources available to these communities. The Tourism unit created a Tourism Resource Center to provide one-stop shopping to rural communities and businesses on tourism development topics.

Results

★ Improved services to constituents enabling them to implement tourism development strategies.

Team Name: EDD Tourism Resource Center Team
Team Members: George Sharp, Liz Green

CONTACT: George Sharp, (360) 725-5064

Customer Service Manual

The agency has always been committed to extraordinary customer service. While this is not a new concept to the employees of Washington State Parks there has never been a formalized Customer Service Manual. The parks each had their own method of training their new employees in the art of customer service and HQ staff had to figure out standards on their own.

The new Customer Service Manual defines agency standards. Customers, services and goals are identified. Standards include: Telephone Service, Face-to-face Service, Written Communication, E-Mail Etiquette, Customer Reception at Premises, Publications, Where to Find Information, Attitude, Quality Improvement Principles and Guidelines, and Customer Service/Quality Training Opportunities.

Results

- ★ Customer Service Manual printed for each of the parks, each region, and each employee at HQ providing agency standards for all employees to reference.
- ★ The electronic version of the manual is available on the agency-shared file for all to access and is hyperlinked for ease of reference.
- ★ The hard copy manual is in a three-ring binder so that it will be easy to update and include additional information. This will be valuable in making it a document that will be used far into the future. It contains a section for the parks to add their own information for their particular customers.
- ★ The manual includes a section on where to find all agency information. This will allow employees to access current data quickly and efficiently.

Team Name: Customer Service Manual Charter Team
Team Members: Mike Thorniley, Neil Masser, Chon Clayton, Lisa Dunn, Cindy Jorgensen, Terri Heikkila; Executive Sponsor: Frank Boteler

CONTACT: Lisa Dunn, (360) 902-8636

Travel Vouchers Round Trip Reduced to One Day

The process for reviewing and approving travel vouchers was paper-intensive, involving several reviewers. Vouchers were reviewed and corrected by two support staff as well as the fiscal staff responsible for the final review. As a result, it took one to two weeks for staff to receive payment for travel expenses. Staff in the fiscal office worked with clerical support staff and the agency travel coordinator to eliminate steps that did not add value.

Results

★ Turnaround time for travel voucher payment reduced to one day, from a previous range of one to two weeks.

★ Staff time freed up to do other activities

Team Members: Gail Grocott, Linda McMaster, Jodi Collins

CONTACT: Gail Grocott, (360) 704-5238, extension 161

Supply Room Reduces Turnaround Time for Office Supply Delivery

The supply room (for common desk supplies) was historically "open for business" at established hours two days per week. Feedback from staff indicated that restricting order placement to those times was inconvenient—when a customer needs a pen, s/he can't wait until business hours the next day. The team converted the supply process to a "just-in-time" e-mail initiated system that ensures same day delivery of needed supplies. The team also developed and distributed a list of supplies available in-house, making it easier for staff to know what could be immediately available. Eliminating the need for supply staff to be physically in the supply room permitted them to be deployed to other customer-service tasks.

Results

★ Turnaround time reduced to within two hours, down from an average of two days.

Team Members: Jerri Bennett, Joyce Riley, Georgia McNeil

CONTACT: Joyce Riley, (360) 704-5237, extension 171

Purchasing Order Turnaround Time Reduced

When staff needed to purchase computers or other equipment, the turnaround time for issuing field orders to vendors ranged from three to six weeks. A review of the process suggested that delays were due primarily to a historical process of batching, and to lack of responsiveness on the part of certain suppliers. By eliminating batching that did not add value, and by considering responsiveness in evaluating suppliers, the agency could significantly shorten purchase order processing and the time required to receive the requested item.

Results

- ★ Average processing time was one month; after process improvements, 98% of staff orders are processed within 3 working days, 80% within 24 hours
- ★ Using local vendors for items not on state contract has effected cost savings in the form of discounts and reduced shipping charges

Team Members: Jerri Bennett

CONTACT: Jerri Bennett, (360) 704-0553, extension 171

Technology Improvement Assists Consolidated Services

The Consolidated Services of the Washington School for the Deaf was using antiquated technology to access the financial systems operated by Office of Financial Management (OFM). All the computers were hard wired to a 20 year old 8-port controller using 3270 emulation cards, which then connect to the financial systems via a shared T1 circuit. This limited the number of personnel who could access these systems. With the assistance of Mike Contris at OFM, the team was able to access the financial system using the Internet thus eliminating the need for the older system.

Results

★ Eliminated the need for a T1 circuit.

★ Allowed new computers to be installed in consolidated Services.

★ Eliminated the need to purchase a new controller and the associated wiring when the office relocates at the end of the year.

Team Name: Technology Improvement Team
Team Members: David Stetson, Kay Pedisich

CONTACT: Chuck McCarthy, (360) 418-0412

Washington State School for the Blind and Department of Corrections

Campus Maintenance/Backlog Reduction

Like many agencies, WSSB seems to always have a list of work that school staff is not able to complete in a timely manner. The school analyzed the problems and determined that the only way much of our grounds work would be completed in time for the start of another school year would be to enlist a volunteer work force. Thanks to the availability of work crews through the Department of Corrections (Larch Correctional Center), WSSB was able to open school with the grounds in great shape.

This type of partnership not only allowed the School for the Blind to have a great looking campus for the start of the school year, it also provided 10 inmates at Larch with pride of accomplishment in the work they had completed for the school and the children that the school serves.

Results

- ★ General appearance of campus improved.
- ★ Fire hazard area cleared and bark dust covered area for weed control.
- ★ Inmates at Larch Correctional Facility provided a quality service to the school.
- ★ A new partnership developed, which has been beneficial to WSSB and Larch.
- ★ Ground work backlog was almost eliminated.
- ★ Larch inmates provided labor equivalent to $9,959. Work would not have been accomplished without the donated labor.

Team Members: Officers Scott Donwerth, and Mayla Donwerth; inmates from Larch Correctional Facility; WSSB Staff: Tom Schaff, Rod Lee, Brian Kindblade

Contact: Dean O. Stenehjem, (360) 696-6321, extension 130#

Washington State School for the Blind;
Department of Services for the Blind;
Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation of Washington and Northern Idaho

Low Vision System Change for Washington

In Washington State, more than 102,000 individuals have severe visual impairment. Vision loss has become a national health issue. Out of a shared concern for the lack of public awareness and quality services for individuals with low vision, the Washington Lions Low Vision Task Force was formed. Experts in the fields of medicine, education and vision rehabilitation and individuals who are blind and partially sighted have formed a unique public/private partnerships to address this problem and implement a system change that will help restore independence and freedom to many individuals. This collaboration has provided a forum to bring an interdisciplinary team of experts and consumers together to redefine and enhance the service delivery system and to heighten awareness of low vision services and issues.

Results

- ★ Low Vision Education Series presented in eight Washington sites to more than 230 participants via the K-20 video conference system.
- ★ Creation of a new statewide toll-free Low Vision Information and Referral telephone service (funded through Lions Club International Foundation Grant).
- ★ Development of a traveling low vision clinic system that will reach individuals in rural and typically underserved populations.
- ★ Development of a children's Outreach Program that will provide free low vision evaluations to 300 school-age children and grant each child up to $75 toward the purchase of low vision devices.
- ★ Secured funding to award seven low vision clinics $3,000 each to purchase needed low vision devices.
- ★ Awarded a grant from Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) for $200,000 to assist in the implementation of a statewide system change that could be replicated in the rest of the country

Team Members: Representatives from the following groups: Washington State School for the Blind, Dept. of Services for the Blind, WA Talking Book and Braille Library, VA Hospital, Lighthouse for the Blind, National Federation of the Blind of WA, WA Council of the Blind, Easter Seals, the Lilac Blind Foundation-Spokane, Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation of Washington and Idaho, Lions Low Vision Clinics (Bellevue, Spokane, and Kennewick)

Contact: Patty Turnberg, (206) 526-1559