

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Out-of-State Travel Start-to-End Process



Team Lead: Daniel Yeh

Division: EXEC

Problem/Opportunity Statement: WisDOT routes and processes about 700 Out-of-State Travel (OST) requests each year in what is currently a paper and hard signature process. A series of Lean projects conducted by teams from the Leadership Development Program and by staff in OPFI and the partner divisions reviewed a number of aspects of the process. Collectively, the teams identified four key objectives to improve the process: 1. Reduce rework for errors or missing information in approval stage at Division and OPFI levels; 2. Decrease processing time and duplicate steps for OPFI to populate database and track requests; 3. Increase timeliness and decrease rework for errors for reimbursement to employee; 4. Reduce delay and increase accuracy of 3rd party reimbursement.

Scope: The combined projects examine the OST process from start to end in four primary steps with an additional optional step: 1. Prepare request; 2. Request approval; 3. Conduct trip; 4. Seek employee reimbursement; Optional – seek third-party reimbursement.

Stakeholders: These processes impact employees from all Divisions who travel on behalf of WisDOT to conduct business, examine national standards, conduct national and regional research, or who may be trained on federal or national systems and initiatives. In any given year there are more than 200 individuals who take OST trips on behalf of the agency. The approval process requires approval from Division Administrators and the Secretary's Office. Reimbursement involves staff in DBM's Fiscal Services Section.

Magnitude: This process involves about \$600,000 per year but it is a highly sensitive topic that is often the subject of legislative or media inquiries.

Goals: 1. Reduce rework for errors or missing information in approval stage at Division and OPFI levels; 2. Decrease processing time and duplicate steps for OPFI to populate database and track requests; 3. Increase timeliness and decrease rework for errors for reimbursement to employee; 4. Reduce delay and increase accuracy of 3rd party reimbursement

Improvement Methodology: The teams utilized several tools: data gathered from review of OST approval and reimbursement processes; surveys of impacted staff; interviews with stakeholders; root cause analysis; process map review; investigation of published resources.

Results: The project resulted in three main improvement elements: 1. Clean up existing content on the agency intranet site that is leading to confusion about OST and reimbursement processes; 2. Develop an electronic approval process in On-Base that will eliminate the paper process and process steps and also provide more accurate information for downstream processes; 3. Create training materials and tools to communicate the new processes and best practices.

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Performance Metrics:

Metric Name	Initial Unit	Final Unit	Difference
Number of steps in process	15 in approval subprocess	12 in approval subprocess	3 steps removed from approval subprocess
Percentage of satisfied stakeholders	NA	NA	NA
Annual hours required	78 hours in approval subprocess related to database and scanning	0	78 hours repurposed
Annual ongoing cost	NA	NA	NA

MAPSS Core Goal Area: Accountability

MAPSS Core Coal Area: Service

Statewide Goal Area: Process Steps Eliminated

Statewide Goal Area: Staff Hours Repurposed

Date completed: December 13, 2017