

2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-S-25GA

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Georgia

Assign Program Category (applicant): Health & Human Services (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: Department of Human Resources
2. Administering Agency: **Office of Child Support Services**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) Keith Horton, Director
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program: The purpose of Georgia's Office of Child Support Services' Rapid Process Improvement project is to improve efficiencies within OCSS while developing a culture of continuous improvement by focusing on the following areas: (1) Early intervention strategies; (2) Proactive case management; (3) Customized approaches to customer service; and (4) Improving enforcement tools. It streamlines entry point services to customers and improves early intervention to reduce arrearages on child support cases. How long has this program been operational? (December 2006) Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.

10. Why was the program created? Georgia's Office of Child Support Services is ranked 47th in the nation, processing an application for services was taking 71 days, there was a large locate backlog and a large amount of arrears not being collected. This level of services is not good enough for families so Georgia's Office of Child Support Services is currently implementing a series of faster, friendlier and easier processes known as Rapid Process Improvement in order to better serve our customers and to increase current support paid. **What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?** RPI identifies the value added and non-value added activities (known as waste) in delivering a service or product.

Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order:
RESULTS:

Event #1-Same Day Service (SDS): From the time an application for services is received to the time to file a Petition/Complaint for Child Support with the Superior Court or the Office of State Administrative Hearings reduced from 71 Days to the same day. On the day a customer applies for services:

- The case is registered onto the child support computer system while the applicant is in the office
- The Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) address and/or employer is validated
- The NCP is called, asked to come in that day, and if not available, given an appointment within the next week

- The legal paperwork is generated and case is referred to legal

Not only has the service time reduced by 70 days but no backlogs are created by waiting to take actions. Since all the above work is done by 1 employee, there is no rework as the case file is passed from one person to another. In the past, the above work was batched and done by 3 to 4 different employees.

Event #2-Early Intervention Process (EIP):

The total processing time for the enforcement process took 181,440 minutes (126 days). The goal was to increase the current support paid by taking proactive actions and then to reduce the overall enforcement processing time when a child support payment was missed. The EIP refers to the process for calling the NCP prior to the due date of the first payment. NCP's who received a reminder call were twice as likely to pay current support as ordered than those who didn't receive a call.

Event #3-Locate: Validate information instead of verifying information

Prior to RPI, Georgia verified all information using notices to the post office and employers. What the RPI showed us was that we could validate the information we had using multiple resources and thereby dispense with the postal and employer locate letters. We could also call resources, such as the employer instead of mailing out a form that delayed the process. The results are impressive, where we had 17% of our caseload in the locate function; we now have only 10% because we are not sending all cases to locate for verification.

Event #4-Legal Secretary Activities:

Through standardized work flow and practices, five (5) hand-offs within the process were eliminated, resulting in saving 10 hours per week per Legal Secretary. The new process establishes a proactive process in calling the Sheriff's office prior to hearing dates to see if the Non-Custodial parent has been served.

Event #5-Fatherhood Program:

Through the use of Value Stream Mapping, the team reduced the time for direct contact of the Non-Custodian Parent from 69 to 14 days (79.7% reduction). A 30-60 minute training program for the CSS agents was developed, and has been included in conjunction with the statewide rollout of the other RPI process changes. Standard Operating Procedures have been written for the Fatherhood Program referrals that include contacting candidates before orientation and provide for higher quality referrals.

11. **LOCATION:** Statewide implementation is complete for all the events listed. Each of the above events was piloted in different offices statewide. Once proven in a local office, it was then tested in small and large offices, rural and urban locations before statewide implementation occurred.

12. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? This Lean Management methodology was introduced to the subject matter experts (employees doing the work) who used this "lean thinking" to create our new processes.

13. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) The Office of Child Support Services partnered with the Governor's Office of Customer Service and Georgia Institute of Technology to cover five RPI events during a six month engagement project. Existing materials and staff were used to travel and provide the training statewide on this program. The total cost for this program was approximately \$63,500.

14. What are the program's annual operational costs? There was no assignment of cost for implementing this program.

How is the program funded? This program is funded through current appropriations of state and federal funds.

15. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? **NO.** If YES, please indicate the citation number. .

16. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? Existing equipment, technology and software were used in the RPI processes.

17. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? **NO**. If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. **Georgia was introduced to this methodology by: Georgia Institute of Technology Enterprise Innovation Institute 760 Spring Street, NW Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0640, ph# 770-606-8527**

18. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? **NO**. If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

19. Has the program been fully implemented? **NO** If NO, what actions remain to be taken? UIFSA and Financial.

20. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples: Statistically reporting of the program clearly indicates increased productivity, employee morale, customer satisfaction

- Same Day Service provided to 10,611 Custodian Parents requesting services
- 13,562 Establishment backlog cases were worked
- RPI assisted with the decrease of our statewide locate caseload by 37%
- Early Intervention calls and education increased NCP payments
- Legal Secretary's position- 10 hours per week were eliminated
- Standard Operating Procedure for Financial RPI will reduce UNID undistributed funds. 92.6% for portal application fees will be reduced to zero by registering portal applications within one business day
- Having the correct data measurements and metrics are key. This data must be monitored very closely. Even though the team may have identified the correct measurements, they may not have anticipated the correct capture method or reporting format. By intense monitoring of the data, required changes can be caught early, and more accurate and meaningful information deployed.

21. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The culture change driven through this Lean Management methodology has grown throughout the entire organization. RPI was a major shift for Management to lead and support employee led ideas as well as the astounding opportunity for employees to recommend and implement changes based on their knowledge and experience.

22. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

REPLICATION ADVICE: Among the lessons:

- Expect push back. People don't want to give up practices that they are comfortable with.
- Job descriptions need to be changed as well. We need to look for the right skill sets that will reinforce the changes and provide the employee with a better chance for success.
- Pilot office locations should be good performing offices. Using high performing offices as the pilot gives the RPI credibility.
- Expectations must be communicated clearly to the teams, field staff, and their managers. The managers themselves need to be strong, supportive and involved in the process. These factors shared throughout the organization will provide the needed leadership for successful change implementation.