



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**OFFICE OF THE FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S OMBUDS**

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**Strategic Lean Project Report**

For Reporting Period: January 1, 2015, through June 30, 2015

**I. General Information:**

Lead Agency Name: Office of Family and Children’s Ombuds

**Improvement project title:** *Online Complaint System*

**Date improvement project was initiated:** 10/25/2013

**Project type:** Strategic Project – Update

**Project is directly connected to:** Agency Strategic Plan

- *Goal: promote the health, welfare and safety of children in state care, as well as the preservation of families, by investigating complaints in an impartial and timely manner*
- *Goal: increase public awareness of OFCO’s mission and enhance the ombuds’ effective response to inquiries*

**Report reviewed and approved by:** Patrick Dowd, Director

**II. Project Summary:**

The Office of Family and Children’s Ombuds improved the complaint process by giving customers more filing options, resulting in an increase of complaints received, from a monthly average of 43 complaints received to 58 complaints. This project also reduced consumption of office resources used in the complaint submission process. The number of complaint forms mailed to complainants was reduced from an average of 43.8 forms mailed per month before the electronic complaint submission system went live to an average of 17.33 forms mailed today.

**III. Project Details:**

**Identify the problem:**

Before we initiate a non-emergent investigation, we ask people to submit an official complaint form. Although the website originally had a downloadable version of the complaint form and allowed complainants to print and mail it to OFCO, many people lack the ability to print the form themselves. Many people called the office to request a form be mailed to them and would then mail the completed form back to OFCO. Either

method creates unnecessary steps and costs, burdening complainants, increasing postage costs and delaying investigations. There were also concerns that people with legitimate child safety concerns might be turned off by this more exhaustive filing process. Drawing from the Lean principles of creating flow and flexibility, OFCO sought to improve the complaint submission process and reduce the use of office resources by providing the option to file complaints more easily and immediately.

**Problem statement:** Currently, an average of 37.33 complaint forms are mailed to individuals per month, compared to our target of 33 forms (a 10 percent reduction), which we want to reach by June 30, 2015.

**Improvement description:** In collaboration with Department of Enterprise Services, a team of OFCO employees revised the complaint submission process, developing a method for electronic same-day submission. Staff members now tell complainants who call about the new electronic complaint form, as well as continue to offer to mail a form if needed. The new online form was launched March 26, 2014.

**Customer involvement:** All OFCO staff (internal customers) were heavily involved in meetings and discussions to improve the complaint submission process. Together they mapped out internal work processes relating to complaint submissions and identified areas for improvement. They suggested changes to the electronic form and helped gather feedback from complainants (external customers).

**IV. Project Results:**

<b>Improved process as measured by:</b>	<b>Specific results achieved:</b>	<b>Total impact</b> (Between Jan 1 – June 30 2015)	<b>Results status</b>
<b>Cost</b>	Reduced average monthly mailing expenses by 9.7%, from \$156.11 to \$140.96	\$90.90 saved	Final
<b>Cost</b>	Reduced staff time spent processing forms to mail. Average number of complaint forms mailed per month dropped 58%, from 41 forms before the online system went live to 17.3 forms mailed today	284 staff minutes freed for other tasks	Final
<b>Cost</b>	Staff handled 60.5% fewer inquiry phone calls, reducing calls from an average of 57.87 calls per month to an average of 22.8 calls	1,683 staff minutes (28 hours) saved	Final
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	Increased the utilization of OFCO services 34.8%, from an average of 43 complaints filed per month to 58 complaints	90 additional complaints filed	Final
<b>Quality</b>	Reduced inquiry phone calls to OFCO by 60.5% from 57.87 calls per month before the complaint form went live to an average of 22.8 calls this reporting period	60.5% fewer phone calls to OFCO	Final

**V. Contact Information**

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**VI. Optional Visuals**

