

Strategic Lean Project Report



For Reporting Period: January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016

I. General Information:

Lead agency name: Washington Student Achievement Council

Partner agencies: 67 Washington colleges

Improvement project title: *Integrating Passport to College Promise Scholarship program with automated state aid payment process*

Date improvement project was initiated: 1/21/2016

Project type: New Project

Project is directly connected to:

Results Washington performance measure

Agency Strategic Plan – STEP UP Internal Strategic Plan

Other – Roadmap for Higher Education in Washington State

If applicable, specify the alignment:

Goal #1 – World Class Education

Goal #5 – Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government

Strive for exceptional work and continuous improvement

Supports former foster youth access to higher education and degree attainment, positively impacting businesses and communities in Washington.

Report reviewed and approved by: Dr. Rachelle Sharpe, WSAC Acting Executive Director

II. Project Summary:

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) improved the method for 67 colleges to request and WSAC to process Passport to College Promise Scholarship (PTC) student payments, improving accuracy and reducing processing time by up to two weeks.

III. Project Details:

Identify the problem:

Passport to College Promise Scholarship (PTC) is a comprehensive program aimed at helping students from foster care attend and succeed in college. PTC serves approximately 400 students per year and provides incentive funding to colleges for campus support, recruitment, and retention efforts.

Identification of and notification to colleges of eligible students, and the processing of Passport payments, was a manual process using Excel spreadsheets. The process involved exchanging information multiple times between WSAC and colleges.

Problem statement:

The lack of an automated method to identify every eligible student and to process payments for those students in a timely manner caused delays for students and was time intensive for WSAC staff and for colleges.

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Improvement description: Excel spreadsheets tracking eligible students and payment requests were eliminated, reducing the effort by WSAC and colleges to review student lists multiple times. PTC awards were instead incorporated into WSAC’s electronic payment system, resulting in more consistent, timely payments to students—in some cases two weeks sooner. Colleges can request PTC funds at the same time and using the same electronic method as for State Need Grant and College Bound Scholarship. An added benefit of automation is the early notification to colleges of foster youth status to inform priority awarding of State Need Grant funding. Institutions also do not have to ask vulnerable students for documentation of their foster youth status.

Customer involvement: WSAC’s IT and financial aid staff collaborated with colleges to develop and improve the electronic payment system. The result was an integrated, automated award and payment system. WSAC, colleges, and students benefit from timely and accurate processing of payments. Colleges are better able to manage and plan fund disbursements, and students can more easily coordinate personal finances and educational plans.

IV. Project Details:

Improved process as measured by: <i>(Click those that apply)</i>	Specific results achieved: <i>(Complete the narrative boxes below)</i>	Total Impact: <i>(Actuals; Current Reporting Period)</i>	Results status:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality	Reduces manual data entry at WSAC; increases controls and reduces potential for errors; data analysis and fund management tools available on demand electronically instead of in Excel; improved communication between WSAC staff and colleges; aligns process with other aid programs.		Preliminary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time	Reduction in staff time (WSAC and colleges) spent creating and then processing Excel spreadsheets. Reduces the time from eligible student identification to processing of payments.	50%	Preliminary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction	College staff are satisfied with the ability to request funds in a more timely and accurate manner. Students receive funds sooner.		Preliminary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee Engagement	Collaboration between colleges and WSAC staff creates trust, enhances mutual problem solving, and builds relationships.		Preliminary

V. Contact information:

Name: Betsy Hagen
Phone number: 360.753.7860
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VI. Optional Visuals:

Attached: Sample Passport Payment Request Spreadsheet
 Additional program information online at:
<http://wsac.wa.gov/passport-foster-youth>