

## Licensing Caseload Backlog

**Agency:** Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH)

**Partners and Customers:** Department of Social and Health Services Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS), Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), hearing participants.

### Project Impact

The Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) is a small agency. We hold appeal hearings. For example, if you lose your job and apply for unemployment benefits but you are denied, you have the right to a hearing. We hold hearings for unemployment insurance, child support, medical benefits, licensing, and many other types of cases statewide.

The work we do directly impacts the lives of Washingtonians. Our mission is a critical part of our justice system. We provide due process by holding administrative hearings for Washingtonians who disagree and dispute agency determinations.

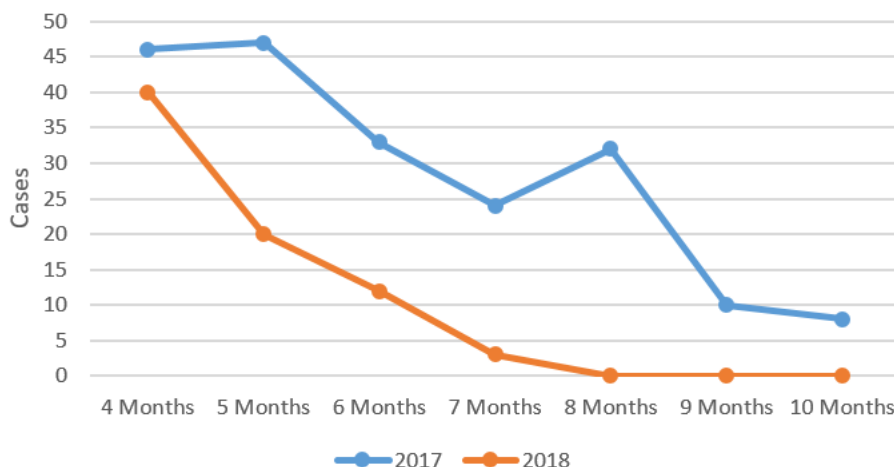
One type of case OAH handles is for people who have been accused of neglect or abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. In these Licensing cases (CPS, DCYF and APS cases), it is incredibly important that children and vulnerable adults are protected. It is equally important that innocent people are not prevented from working in their chosen field. The accused person has their name put on a list of people who can no longer work around children or vulnerable adults. These people have the right to file an appeal, so they can tell their story to a judge and have their day in court. While the matter is pending, they are not be able to work in their chosen field. Previously, it could take up to 10 months before a hearing was held. These complex hearings could take up to 40 hours each. This Lean project focused on reducing the time that people wait for their hearing and also reducing the backlog of pending cases.

The Office of Administrative Hearings improved scheduling hearings for our Licensing cases, resulting in a significant reduction in wait time. 85% of cases now have a hearing within 3 months (which is down from 10+ months). We also reduced the backlog of pending cases from 635 to 495.

### Impact

This effort resulted in faster access to justice for the people of Washington. In 2017, some people were waiting 10+ months for their hearing. Now 85% of cases are scheduled within 3 months, and no cases are scheduled more than 7 months out. The backlog was also reduced by 140 cases.

Wait Time Beyond 3 Month Goal



# Strategic Lean Project Report



## Project Summary

### **Background**

Early in 2017, OAH identified a backlog of Licensing cases. Also, it could take 10+ months to hold a hearing. This wait time caused frustration for hearing participants and delayed their access to justice.

### **Problem Statement**

Licensing hearing events were occurring up to 10+ months after the request was received compared to our target of holding hearing events within 3 months, which we wanted to reach by the end of 2018.

### **Improvements Made**

OAH implemented the following improvements:

- Additional judges were dedicated to conduct Licensing hearings
- Increased staff awareness and urgency of holding hearing events within 3 months
- Modified the scheduling process to reduce wait time
- Tracked metrics to monitor improvements

## Project Results



**Time**

Decreased the wait time for a hearing event **from** 10+ months **to** within 3 months.

Decreased the backlog of cases from 635 to 495.



*85% of Licensing hearing events are held within 3 months of the request.*

## Project Details

**Date improvement project was initiated: 2/17/2017**

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