2013 Quality Improvement Grantees Learning Congress

September 23, 2013

Public Records Requests

Snohomish Health District

Josi Green, Ivy Giessen & Debbie Pennell

1

Public Records Request Project Team

Team Leader:
Debbie Pennell, Administrative Support Manager

Team Facilitator:
Kevin Plemel, Program Manager

Team Members:
Nancy Blevins, Health Information Manager
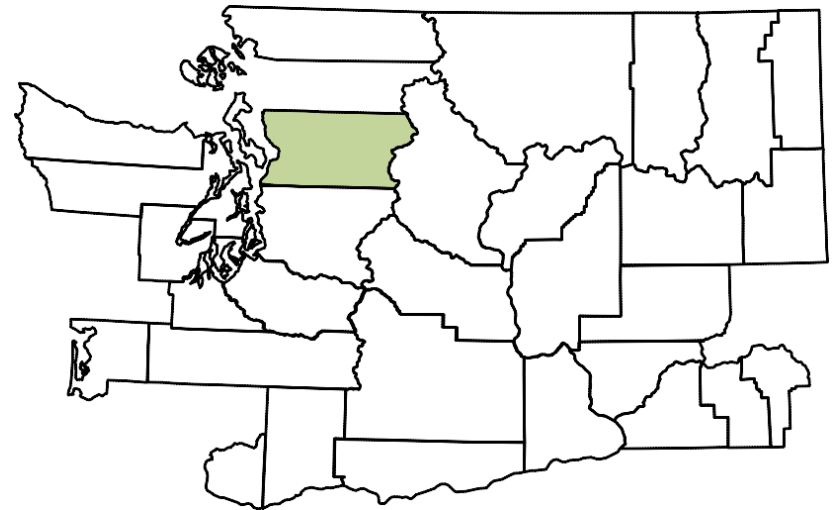Josi Guzman-Green, Program Assistant 2
Susan Schmick, Program Assistant 2
Crystal Dudley, Administrative Assistant
Ivy Giessen, Applications Systems Analyst

Snohomish County

- Total population: 717,000
- 42% residing in unincorporated areas
- 162 employees, 2013 budget $17,170,636

September 23, 2013

Project Identification

- ✓ Snohomish Health District's Environmental Health Division estimates processing 500+ requests for public records on individual property tax account numbers in Snohomish County in 2012/2013.

- ✓ The increase of requests limits staff effectiveness in other services the public requires.

- ✓ From October 2012 – June 2013 Snohomish Health District received and processed 687 public records requests on individual tax account numbers.

Recognizing the Need for Change

Problem/Opportunity

Request for Public Records Detailed Flowsheet

Request Received:
1. Attach purple routing slip to request.
2. Date stamp request and routing slip.
3. Fill in PTA number and contact info.
4. Route to support staff manager.

Support Staff Manager:
1. Add number sticker.
2. Fill in section routing area.
3. Place in appropriate section inbox.

Support Staff:
1. Make copy and put in manila folder.
2. Log request on tracking worksheet.
3. Search databases by each address and PTA separately, enter findings on routing slip.

No Records Found / Single or last section:
1. Support Staff will notify contact person re findings via phone or email.
2. Will note results on routing slip.
3. Complete tracking worksheet.
4. Pull copy from manila folder.
5. Log in and file request in binder.

Records Found / Multiple Sections:
1. Pull files and attach to routing slip.
2. Give to next Section.

No Records Found / Multiple Sections:
1. Write N/A on manager's line and give to next section.

Records Found / Single or Last Section:
1. Update tracking worksheet with manager's initials, date sent to manager and support staff initials.
2. Give to applicable section manager.

Section Manager:
1. Review and flag files with information to be managed as confidential.
2. Initial and date request.
3. Give to next section manager or support staff, whichever is appropriate.

Files Ready To Be Released:
1. Support Staff will call contact person and report findings.
2. Status is recorded on routing slip.
3. Update tracking worksheet as appropriate.
4. Await receipt of payment or prepare files for review.

Payment Received:
1. Support staff will copy all requested pages **after** receiving payment.
2. Pages will be mailed, left at counter for pick-up, scanned or emailed depending on request.
3. Replace copies with original pages
4. Pull and discard copy from manila folder.
5. Update tracking worksheet.
6. Place copy of request in each file.
7. Re-file records.

Review of Files:
1. Remove confidential information by copying page, white out info, make clean copy and place back in same place in file. (Original kept in designated manila folder).
2. Place request with files in pending box at front counter.
3. Contact will mark pages they want with post-it notes
4. If time allows, pages will be counted and payment made by contact person at this time.
5. If more time is necessary, pages will be counted and contact called with applicable fees.
6. If mailing copies, postage fee will be added.
7. Contact may consult with sanitarian for further questions.
8. Re-file records.

AIM Statement

To process 98% of public record requests from receipt of request to records made available to customer within 10 business days, while reducing the number of clarification to requestors of public records from 1.2% to 0.5%, and reducing the average number of times staff hand off requests to another staff member from 5 to 3, or 10%, per request by June 30, 2013.

Ultimately, the outcome will reduce staff time and effort while not diminishing customer service (98% within 10 days or better).
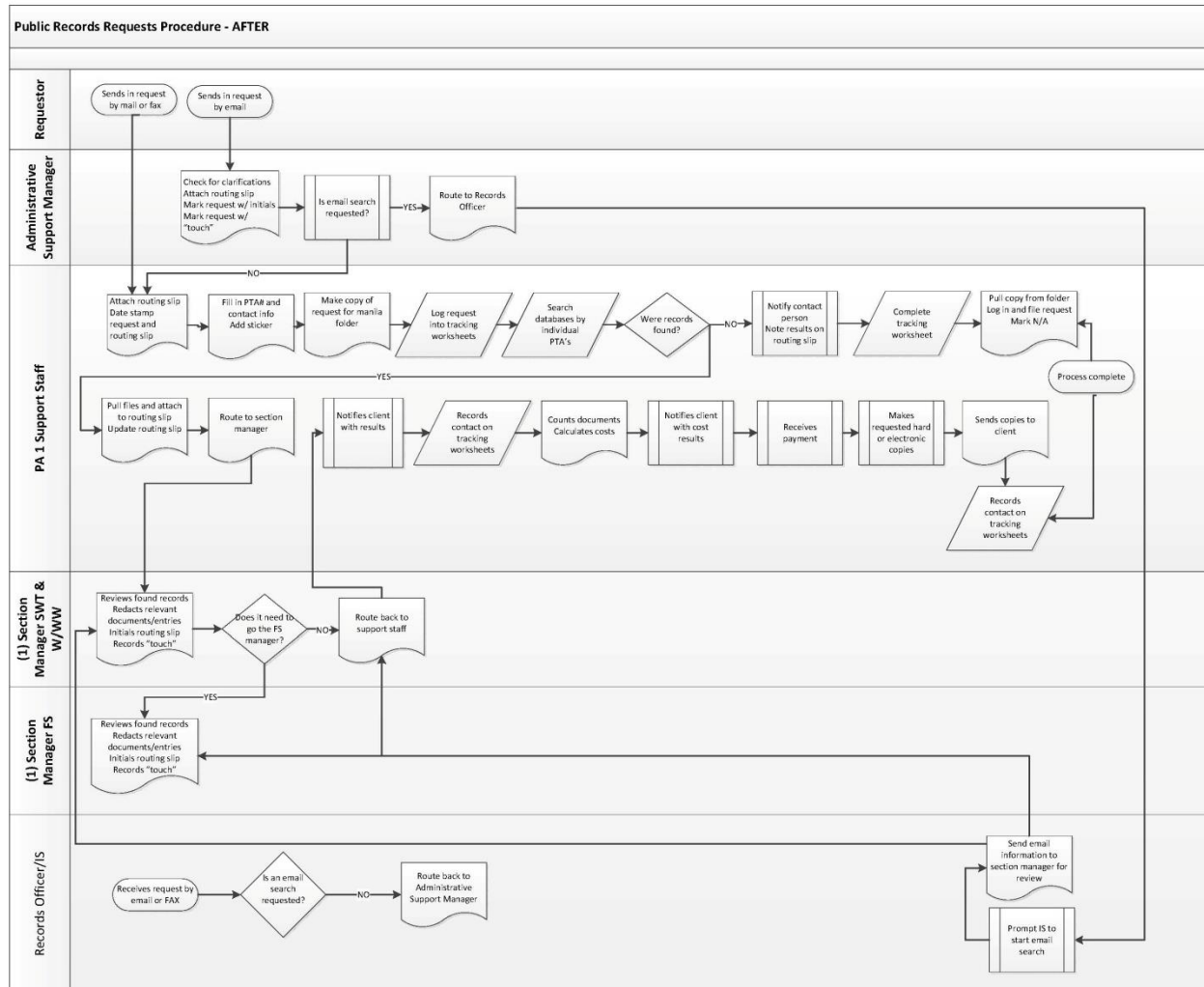
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Project Activities

✓ Mapped process

✓ Measured targets

✓ Studied possible redundancies

✓ Implemented workload shift

✓ Enhanced the *Request for Public Records* form

Quality Tools – Swim Lane Diagram -Before
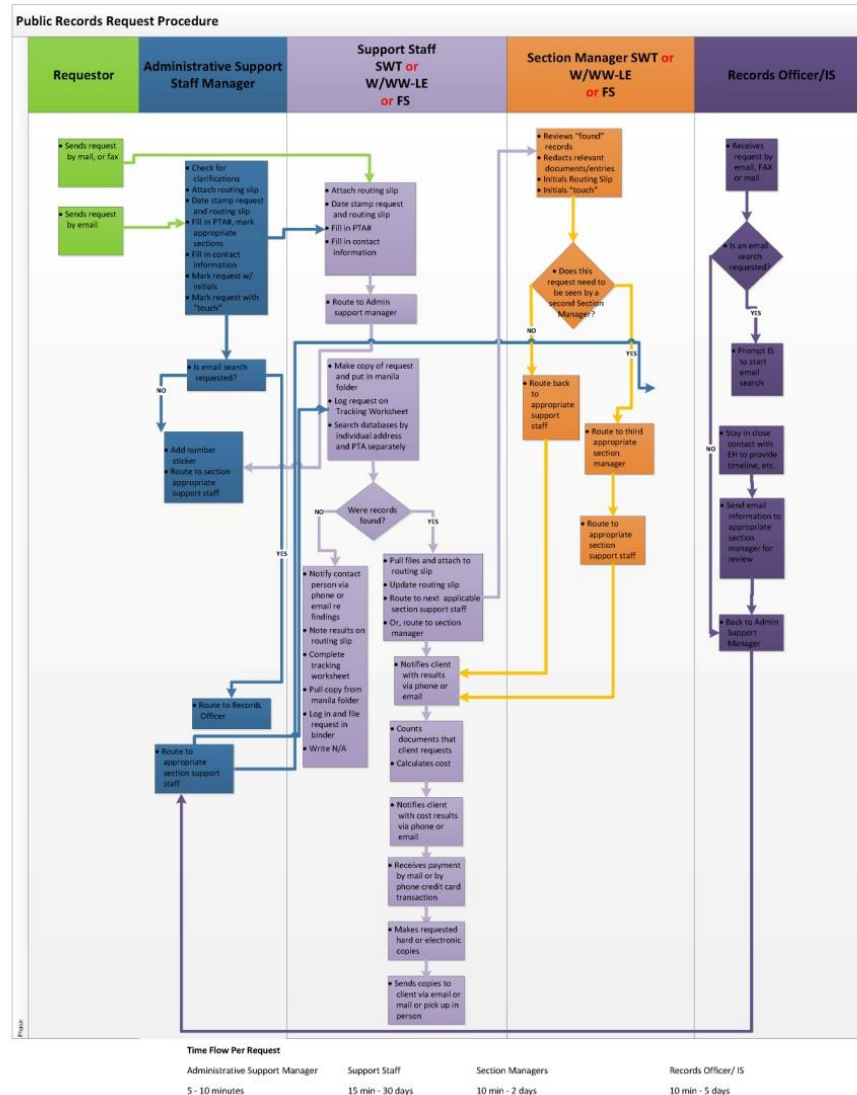
Swim Lane Diagram - After

Quality Tools – Root Cause

✓Too many staff handling work

✓Lack of centralized location for work

✓Variations in process by support staff and managers signing off on requests

✓Lack of clarity for customer regarding forms

Quality Tools – Improvement

✓ Centralized location

✓ Designated space

✓ Reduced the number of staff handling requests

✓ Created a standardized email reply

✓ Implemented a numbering system

✓ Improved paperwork

Previous Tracking Process

New Tracking Process

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Results – Targets Met

Percentage of Records Requests Completed within 10 Day or Less Target

Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13
92%	90%	100%	60%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Results – "Touches"

Average Touches by Staff Per Total Monthly Request

Month	Value
Jun-13	3
May-13	3
Apr-13	4
Mar-13	4
Feb-13	4
Jan-13	4
Dec-12	4
Nov-12	5
Oct-12	4

Next Steps

- ✓ Implement and evaluate newly enhanced form

- ✓ Create and/or discuss possibility of a new specific email address

- ✓ Establish a standardized web-based process

- ✓ Create a standardized district-wide form

17

Lessons Learned - Clarifications

- ✓ No baseline for clarifications
- ✓ Actual findings
- ✓ Repeat customer requests

Enter Final Date

Lessons Learned - Touches

✓ Touches

✓ Centralized location

✓ Less staff handling work

Enter Final Date

Lessons Learned – Centralization

✓ Clarity of process

Enter Final Date

Public Health Performance Management Centers for Excellence

For more information, contact:

Josi Green, Program Assistant
jguzmangreen@snohd.org

Ivy Giessen, Applications Systems Analyst
igiessen@snohd.org

Debbie Pennell, Administrative Support Manager
dpennell@snohd.org

www.snohd.org

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