State of Missouri – 2019 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity

NOMINATION FORM

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Department: Department of Social Services

1. **Project or team name:** Family Support Division - Program Integrity Unit

2. **List the name of all team members, job titles, state agency department, and/or other organizations including public, private sector or business:** *(Please list alphabetically by last name – 2 to 20 team members maximum.)*
   1. Capriglione, Trisha - Unit Supervisor
   2. Dopuch, David - Social Services Manager
   3. Hinzpeter, Gary - Social Services Manager
   4. Tomlinson, Stephan - Deputy Division Director, Family Support Division
   5. Renkemeyer, Michele - DSS Director of Strategic Improvement
   6. Blythe Cermak, Case Analyst
   7. Jessica Council, Case Analyst
   8. Jim Dieckmeyer, Case Analyst
   9. Shannon Dunham, Case Analyst
   10. Debra Geiser, Case Analyst
   11. Tressa Goliday, Case Analyst
   12. Denise Jones, Case Analyst
   13. Molly Kempker, Case Analyst
   14. Cheryl Krystoff, Case Analyst
   15. Mark LaVenture, Case Analyst
   16. Cyndie Miller, Case Analyst
   17. Julie Noonnan, Case Analyst
   18. Glenda Sanchez, Case Analyst
   19. Brenda McCleskey, Case Analyst

3. **Nomination Category:** *(Check only one.)*
   - [ ] INNOVATION
   - [ ] CUSTOMER SERVICE
   - [x] EFFICIENCY / PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

4. **Explain why you selected this category:**
The Program Integrity Unit is responsible for determining and establishing overpayment claims for public assistance benefits. Every overpayment claim represents real collection efforts by the State to recoup funds for taxpayers and support the public safety net for Missourians in need. In March of 2018, the backlog of unprocessed claim referrals made evident the need for a process improvement effort.

II. BACKGROUND

1. **When did the team begin its work?**
This work began in March 2018 with the kick-off of a continuous improvement effort to review process efficiencies and a goal to reduce the existing backlog.

2. **What date did the team initiate the implementation phase of the project?**
Implementation of the improvement efforts began on July 25, 2018.

3. Is the project:

☒ Time Limited   ☐ Completed   ☐ Ongoing

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Why was the project necessary?

This project was necessary because the Program Integrity Unit (PIU) inherited a backlog upon consolidation of claims processing functions during divisional reorganization in about 2015. Despite experienced staff and will, the team struggled to make a dent in this backlog and keep up with new work; subsequently, leading to an increased backlog over the following years. With each backlogged referral for claim either 1) it represented potential real dollars the state could recoup for the benefit of MO taxpayers or 2) it represented "waste" in that it lacked supporting evidence to validate the referral. Therefore, DSS intentionally employed a process improvement project.

2. What were the primary goals of the project? *(150 words or less.)*

1) Eliminate a backlog of 8,337 cases and 2) reduce processing times. 1) We initially defined our project by stating that every claim received prior to 07/25/2018 would be processed within twelve months. At that time, we had 8,337 cases pending and the PIU drew a line in the sand and started their journey. As of 06/28/2019, PIU is down to only 2,065 of the initial cases! A dynamic chart, if we could insert one here, would show how the team processed and/or established 6,272 claims since 07/26/2018 or 75.2% of our initial project goal. After the remaining bucket of Food Stamp cases are processed, we will reach an overall project goal of 80%! About the Food Stamp cases; in April 2019, we redefined scope and focused on the reamining bucket of Food Stamp claims (452). PIU is on track to complete the goal of eliminated the remaining 452 cases by July 31, 2019. After these few Food Stamp claims are complete, the team will have processed all pending Food Stamp claims from 2011 - 2017 in less than 12 months! 2) In July 2018, the average time to process a claim ranged from 90 - 360 days. By April 2019, the average time to process a "ready to work" claim was reduced to less than 10 days.

3. Describe the project: *(200 words or less.)*

The DSS/Program Integrity Unit utlized the "Theory of Constraints" and "Lean" continuous improvement methodologies to eliminate waste in the process and identify, isolate, and overcome program constraints contributing to the unit's inefficient work flows. This consisted of various project phases including but not limited to a process walk, data analysis, process/value-stream mapping, root cause analysis, internal stakeholder communications, relationship building, policy revisions, and more.

4. What technology, if any, was used in the development, implementation, maintenance or measurement of the project? *(150 words or less.)*

The project largely rested on the philosophy that existing staff and resources had the capacity to address the backlog through process improvement. The project team did not consider significant investments in new technology as there was no desire to simply automate bad processes. That being said, the project team did utilize reporting with Tableau software and file sharing management through SharePoint.

5. Explain how the accomplishment of the team exceeds its regular duties and responsibilities.
(150 words or less.)

This team has done an incredible job largely addressing and eliminating a significant backlog that persisted for years. This effort became a SHARED vision and responsibility of the whole team. This was not the case in past years. Because of the improvement effort, this team (spread all across the State of Missouri) has seen significant improvement in morale and a sense of common purpose. The team now understands that their effort has an impact, that they have a voice in how they do their jobs, and are responsible to Missouri for ensuring the intergrity of our public assistant programs.

6. Which of the following describes the intended benefits of the project? (Check all that apply and provide an explanation. - 150 words or less)

☐ Cost Reduction   ☒ Time Savings   ☒ Increased Effectiveness

☒ Improved Process   ☐ Other: Describe

Explain the intended benefits: The Program Integrity Unit processes claims for the purpose of recouping public assistance program dollars that were disbursed inappropriately/unintentionally due to ineligibility, fraud, or error. The most obvious intended benefit was fully realized just months into the project with establishment of claims; in that, recoupements could begin. (Due to federal regulations, recoupement, if necessary, from these claims would be seen in the next 12-24 months.) The team also; however, has reduced the amount of time it takes to process a claim, increased their focus on those claims with the highest potential rate of return for the state, and saved staff time by updating policy and practices to reduce time spent on low rate of return claims.

For the period of July 2018 through May 2019, 2,927 claims were established with a total dollar amount of claims established: $ 4,398,181.81. We expect to have comparable data for 2016 and 2017 by July 30, 2019.

IV. RESULTS / MEASUREMENT

1. **Explain how the success of the project was measured and what outcomes were achieved.** (Explanation should not exceed 300-500 words.)

Success was measured/reported weekly to all team members on 1) Number of backlogged claim referrals; 2) Number of claims processed by worker, by week, by month; 3) Amount of claims established by Program and 4) actual processing time. See Project Description for details.

2. **Are the benefits derived from this project:** (Check only one.)

     ☒ Recurring   ☐ One-time

3. **If recurring, how will the benefits be sustained?** (Explain in 150 words or less.)

A more efficient processing of public assistance claims will lead to increased recoupment for MO taxpayers and enhanced program integrity.

V. RECOGNITION / AWARDS

1. **Has this project previously been nominated for the Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity? If yes, when?**

No

2. **If yes, for which category was it nominated?**

N/A

3. **Has this project received any other awards or recognition? If yes, describe.**

N/A

VI. NOMINATOR'S INFORMATION

Nominating Department: Department of Social Services

Name: Stephan Tomlinson   **Signature:**

Telephone Number: 573-751-5222   **E-Mail Address:** Stephan.R.Tomlinson@dss.mo.gov

VII. DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR'S INFORMATION

Name: Same as Nominator   **Signature:**

Telephone Number: **E-Mail Address:**

VIII. DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR APPROVAL

Department Director's Name: **Signature:**
Jennifer Tidball, Acting DSS Director

Nomination must be signed ONLY by the Department Director to be eligible for consideration. Nominations not signed by the Department Director will be returned to the agency coordinator.

State of Missouri
2017 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity
Executive Summary

Project or Team Name: Family Support Division - Program Integrity Unit

Nominator: Michele Renkemeyer

Nominating Department: (Nominations must include names of all agencies/departments/organizations/ businesses, etc.)

Department of Social Services

Category: Efficiency/Process Improvement

Executive Summary: (Executive Summary page must be 500 words or less, 12 point, Times New Roman font, and left justified. **Attach the Executive Summary to the front of the nomination.**)
The Family Support Division - Program Integrity Unit has seen exceptional process improvements and efficiencies over the past year as it has launched a Theory of Constraints project aimed at reducing a backlog of public assistance benefits claims and improving ongoing work regarding the processing of claims.

This project has already resulted in a significant reduction in the claims backlog, and has resulted in increased potential collections for MO Taxpayers.

State of Missouri
2019 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity
Executive Summary
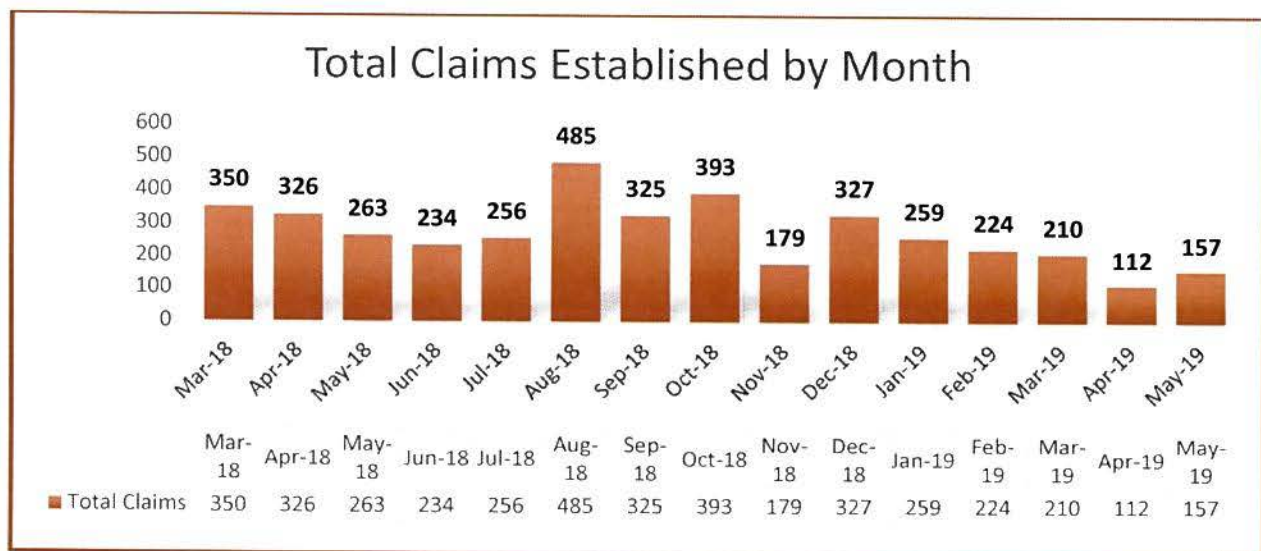Prepared by: Stephan Tomlinson, Family Support Division Deputy Director

Department of Social Services – Program Integrity Unit

The Family Support Division - Program Integrity Unit (PIU) has achieved exceptional progress through a continuous improvement project aimed at reducing a public assistance claims backlog and improving the related workflow.

The project team, about 20 people, has worked together to identify and remove process constraints. The team has analyzed the potential return-on-investment related to different claims, and worked to update policies to allow staff to focus on claims that represent a positive investment for Missouri's tax dollars. The team has worked with internal stakeholder to "fully-kit" or make ready, their claims material on submission, and has engaged in candid feedback with other DSS teams.

The project utlized the "Theory of Constraints" and "Lean" methodologies to eliminate waste and identify, isolate, and overcome constraints contributing to inefficiencies. This involved various project phases including a process walk, data/root-cause analysis, process mapping, stakeholder communications, relationship building, policy revisions, and more.

The primary goals of the project were to 1) Eliminate an 8,337 case backlog and 2) reduce processing times. The initial goal was to process all 8,337 claims received prior to 07/25/2018 within twelve months. The team drew a line in the sand and started their journey. As of 06/28/2019, PIU is down to 2,065 of these cases!

Total Claims Established by Month

	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19
Total Claims	350	326	263	234	256	485	325	393	179	327	259	224	210	112	157

PIU is currently focusing on eliminating the remaining 452 SNAP cases by July 31, 2019. After these claims are complete, the team will have processed all pending Food Stamp claims from

2011 - 2017 in less than 12 months and reached an overall project completion of 80%! This work has led to established claims worth a total of $4,398,181.81.

In July 2018, the average time to process a claim ranged from 90 - 360 days. By April 2019, the team reduced the average time to less than 10 days.

Missourians should be proud of this team. There has been a significant reduction in the claims backlog and increased potential collections. The team has engaged in regular huddles to drive progress, and they have shown real team spirit. They are making sure this spirit takes root by calling their units by new names (the Hurri-Claims, a play on the word "hurricane", for example).

This work has gone far beyond the regular responsibilities for the team. Team members have participated in numerous meetings incorporating new process improvement methodologies and the team has really bought-in with the ideas that The Missouri Way promotes. This team went from skeptical of process-improvement, to champions of mindset that we want to instill throughout state government. This team has not previously conducted training, policy drafting, notice reviews, or other similar tasks - but they have not shied away from any work necessary.

This project has seen exceptional process and warrants the Governor's Award on Quality and Productivity. These DSS team members have worked hard over the past year and deserve recognition. They have truly become champions of many of the things we are working to implement in Missouri state government.

State of Missouri

2019 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity

GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity (GAQP) recognizes teams that champion service excellence, efficiency, innovation, technology, process improvement, and employee development in Missouri state government. All projects must meet requirements of effectiveness, responsiveness, and efficiency of such magnitude that would make the project a model of excellence in state government nationally.

ELIGIBILITY

Any team of individuals employed by the State of Missouri who worked together to implement a project within their own agency, or who have worked with another section, division, department, agency, organization or business to implement a project which exemplifies the purpose of the GAQP, may submit a nomination. The combined number of individuals representing any team should consist of **2 to 20 team members** (maximum) – the majority of whom are state employees.

Teams must provide documentation which includes, but is not limited to, background information, measures, and other supporting material that demonstrates the impact of the project. Projects are encouraged to demonstrate the potential for replication in other jurisdictions or settings.

Once a nomination has been approved by the department/agency and submitted for consideration for the GAQP, additional team members may not be added.

All projects must have been in existence long enough to have a **measurable** impact.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Describe (in 500 words or less) the initial challenge, research, problem-solving measure, documentation, results, etc. Executive summary page must be typed in 12 point, Times New Roman font, and left justified. **Attach the executive summary to the front of the nomination**. [A blank Executive Summary document is available at the end of this document.]

NOMINATION PROCESS

A team of managers, directors, and/or state executives reviews nominations and selects the winners of this award which recognizes successful teams in Missouri state government.

1. Secure nomination packet from your agency/department GAQP coordinator or on the GAQP web page at http://www.training.oa.mo.gov/erp/index.htm.
2. Complete the nomination form (providing ALL information requested)
3. Forward completed nomination form to the agency/department GAQP agency coordinator.
4. Agency/department GAQP coordinator reviews nomination form and ensures that all information and documentation is complete and accurate.
5. Agency/department coordinator secures agency/department director endorsement signature and forwards completed nomination packet to GAQP state program coordinator.
6. **Do not submit hard copies of information, documentation, videos, etc.**

CATEGORIES

Customer Service
The winning team(s) will identify and develop measures to improve customer service in Missouri state government. The winning project(s) will establish how its development and implementation provided the agency a means to more effectively satisfy customer, stakeholder, and public expectations. This will include, but is not limited to, communication, information, responsiveness, resolution of problem(s), and on-time, reliable, consistent customer service delivery.

Efficiency / Process Improvement
The winning team(s) will develop an effective and creative approach in using state resources to implement a new process or deliver a product or service. Implementation of the winning project must have improved the overall quality of products and services, significantly enhanced operational efficiency, simplified work processes, generated increased revenues, or reduced spending.

Innovation
The winning team(s) will develop and implement a new process/product/service or a better application to an existing process/product/service to create an "added value" to state government. The winning project will deliver benefits to the citizens of Missouri through advances in vital services such as healthcare, education, communications, transportation, etc.

Pinnacle Award
The winning team will be chosen from a nominated team if, in the opinion of the Selection Committee, the nomination clearly encompasses multiple award categories in a manner that exemplifies the spirit of the Governor's Award, or exceeds all other nominations. This award is not open for nomination and may only be used by the GAQP Selection Committee.

Examples of previous winning nominations for the above categories are available by visiting the following link: previous winning nominations.

Agency/Department Coordinator Forwards Complete Packet to:

Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity
Office of Administration – Division of Personnel
Attn: John Beakley
Center for Management and Professional Development
Truman State Office Building, Room 430
301 East High Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101

John.Beakley@oa.mo.gov
573-526-4554

http://www.training.oa.mo.gov/recognition.htm

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Nomination Checklist

The Nomination Checklist is for your assistance to ensure that you have completed all parts of the nomination package. **Do not include this checklist with nomination packet.**

- Verify all team members have been included on the nomination form [maximum of 20 team members, the majority of whom are state employees]. **Once the nomination has been submitted additional team members may not be added.**

- Check to make sure all names are spelled correctly and listed alphabetically by **last name**. (Verify spelling of all team members names.)

- Include the job titles and agency/organization of all team members.

- Complete the **Executive Summary** and attach to the **front** of the nomination form. It should include why this project is exceptional, why the citizens of Missouri should be proud of this team, and why the accomplishments are beyond regular responsibilities.

- Forms can be downloaded on the GAQP web page at http://www.training.oa.mo.gov/erp/index.htm. Enter responses to all questions (reference each section and number clearly) on an original or copy of the nomination form.

- Confirm point of contact and telephone number.

- Review nomination to ensure:
    - acronyms and technical terms are clearly identified and understandable to the average reader;
    - supporting documentation is provided; and
    - measurement for the project has been included in the nomination.

- Forward completed nomination packet to agency coordinator for verification.

For more information visit the website listed below or contact:

GAQP State Program Coordinator
John Beakley
573-526-4554
John.Beakley@oa.mo.gov

http://www.training.oa.mo.gov/recognition.htm