

Quality and Productivity Commission
32nd Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Innovating for Impact"

2018 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: eAPPEALS SOLUTION

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JUNE 2016

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2017)

PROJECT STATUS: _____ Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? _____ Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.



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The Department of Human Resources (DHR) Appeals Unit serves as the central unit that maintains, tracks and processes the appeals from more than 250,000 applicants and 100,000 employees across all County departments. As a result, DHR Appeals Unit receives approximately 3,800 to 4,200 appeals a year. In the past, these appeals were submitted in person or via mail or fax. The process was time consuming and contributed to a waste in human capital. To solve this issue, DHR successfully developed and implemented an automated online appeal management system, eAppeals, in June 2016. This first ever online system means that not only can employees file directly online and upload documentation, but also the departments can access the system and submit documents directly into the eAppeals system that they deem necessary to the case. This system fully maximizes analyst time to successfully complete the appeal and reduces the amount of waste in organizing and processing the appeal. By replacing manual, resource-intensive methods and outdated technology, eAppeals provides integrated capabilities that result in easier, timelier, and more accurate resolution of appeals.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT <input type="checkbox"/>
\$76,580			\$76,580	

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS The Department of Human Resources 500 West Temple St., Room 585 Los Angeles, CA 90012		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2302
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Roozan Zarifian		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2302 EMAIL rzarifian@hr.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> 	DATE 07/03/2018	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2515 EMAIL djensen@hr.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Lisa M. Garrett 	DATE 07/03/2018	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2406

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and **specify assessment time frame.** Use Arial 12 point font.

Challenge

The Los Angeles County (County) Department of Human Resources (DHR) Appeals Unit serves as the central unit that maintains, tracks and processes the appeals from more than 250,000 applicants and 100,000 employees across all County departments. As a result, DHR Appeals Unit receives approximately 3,800 to 4,200 appeals a year. In the past, these appeals were submitted in person or via mail or fax. There was no online system in which the employee could file an appeal and receive confirmation of a successful filing. Once an appeal was filed, DHR Appeals staff commenced a tedious process of reading the appeal, searching for necessary documentation, requesting said documentation from various sources, and subsequently entering the information onto the previous appeals system. The process was time consuming and contributed to a waste in human capital.

Solution

The goal of the creation of the eAppeals system was to implement an on-line submission form that would assist appellants in structuring their appeals in an easy, concise, thoughtful and convenient manner. The action taken was to replace the prior Cold Fusion web application that was technologically obsolete and lacked functionality. The result was the implementation of a configurable Documentum xCP application which became eAppeals: the Electronic Appeals Management System.

Altogether, the eAppeals system creates a platform for collaboration and equips departments, appellants, and other stakeholders with the tools needed to process and complete an appeal in a timely, thorough and efficient manner. This helps ensure that the standard for fairness is maintained during selection and personnel action processes while reducing the time and hurdles for completing the process.

System Description

The following processes were digitized and automated by eAppeals: Intake; Automated Case Assignment and Management; Analysis and Review; Acknowledgment and Case Closure; Final Report; and Management Reports.

The key objectives of the transition to the eAppeals system were to: provide an easy-to-use online submission interface; improve user productivity through automation and work que management; improve communication with appellant on status of appeal; increase management visibility in the appeals management work process; meet the

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60-day threshold in which to complete an appeal; improve the ability of both Departments and employees to submit requisite documentation; provide real-time reporting and dashboards; enhance interdepartmental collaboration; and provide an Appellant Dashboard for tracking appeals and self-service document exchange.

The eAppeals system meets these objectives by providing an easy to use online platform, which provides improvements in the following areas:

Consistent and Automatic Updates to Appellant

Through eAppeals, template-based email notifications are automatically sent to the appellant upon each case status change. The system also sends alerts to the analyst and supervisor in cases where the appeal has remained idle or will reach the 60-day deadline in which to complete the appeal. Again, this reduces the need to call DHR staff for a status update.

Once closed, a final disposition code is entered into the system from a drop-down list. Notifications are automatically sent to the appellant and, if appropriate, to the Civil Service Commission and advocate.

Audit trails allow the user to see a history of changes to the case. Users are able to see the initiation date, status changes, dates that documents were uploaded, etc.

Ease of Filing an Appeal

Through eAppeals, an electronic intake form allows an appellant to file an appeal, enter information, and be assigned a unique case number. The intake form allows a user to import documents that is relevant to the case, all in one space. Once the intake form is submitted by the Appellant, the eAppeals system then routes the case through the appropriate business flow process, and an intake notification is sent to the Appellant as soon as the case is open. Once open, the case receives a designation according to appeal type, source Department, high profile nature, and confidential nature. eAppeals will then auto-assign new cases to an HR Analyst, or to the Appeals Supervisor for assignment.

Innovative and User-friendly Dashboard

The dashboard provides an online easy-to-use appeals status check. It improves the appellant's interaction by providing up-to-date appeal status and information. The dashboard simplifies communication with the appellant on the status of the appeal and reduces the need to call DHR Appeals staff.

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For Appellants: eAppeals allows appellants to enter appeal information and look up the latest status or instructions. The dashboard displays past activities and informs appellants of the current status. The dashboard also informs them of the upcoming steps in the process. It displays any action that the appellant needs to take. It also enables the DHR analyst to provide instructions to increase workflow. The appellant can even request information directly from the dashboard. Appellants can enter multiple appeals at once and view the status on all of those appeals.

For Departments: The system also migrated content of prior appeals from legacy systems onto eAppeals to allow departments to search for prior appeals within the same system. The eAppeals system has a search function with partial meta data fields and is able to export search data to Excel for further analysis.

Benefits

As a result of developing eAppeals, the County has created a more efficient, transparent, and reliable way of filing, processing, and completing appeals of actions taken by the County. With the implementation of this system, the County has gone from a paper-based, manual entry system, to a fully automated system with much less need to expend human capital. With the push of a button, case summaries and aggregate reports for the entire county or an individual department can be generated. The eAppeals system also allows the department to electronically track HR staff performance, workload and case cycle times to ensure action is taken timely and in compliance with the 60-day threshold. Another result from developing the eAppeals system is the new and user-friendly dashboard. The up-to-date dashboard keeps the appellant informed and immediately reduces the number of calls to DHR staff.

Within a week of its implementation, appellants complimented the ease of use of the new system. Furthermore, the eAppeals system received the 2016 Excellence in Technology – Outstanding IT Project Award at the LA Digital Government Summit. This award was voted on, and is proof of, recognition of excellence by IT peers.

The creation and integrated use of the eAppeals system transformed the manner in which the County manages its appeal system. eAppeals' ease of use and the level of automation means the County expends less human capital on the mundane process of the appeal and more human capital on the actual analysis and customer service of the appeal, while ensuring that we maintain and continue to meet the standards for fairness as provided for by the civil service rules. The result is an easy-to-use system that facilitates a timelier, more accurate, and more thorough result of a vital County function.

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

The eAppeals system fully embodies the County of Los Angeles' goal to *Realize Tomorrow's Government Today*. Specifically, eAppeals supports *Strategy III.2.3 - Prioritize and Implement Technology Initiatives That Enhance Service Delivery and increase Efficiency*. With eAppeals, COLA has redesigned its appeals process to take advantage of electronic data. As a result, the County has created a more efficient, transparent and reliable way of filing, processing and completing HR appeals.

The system has also proven rewarding from a personnel perspective. eAppeals maximizes analyst time and resources involved in organizing and processing an appeal (*Strategy III.3.2 Manage and Maximize County Assets*). Since employees no longer need to follow up manually for additional information, the system has increased efficiencies and allowed the department to repurpose personnel for more meaningful work.

eAppeals also provides visibility into DHR's performance for the first time (*Strategy III.4 - Engage and Share Information with Our Customers, Communities and Partners*). eAppeals allows departments and DHR to increase productivity, streamline business processes and improve HR services through automation of workflows and integration of our enterprise HR systems. DHR can now electronically track HR staff performance, workload and case cycles to ensure action is taken in a timely manner, improving the department's ability to meet the 60-day threshold. County leaders can use this data to identify problems and roadblocks so they can further streamline and improve processes.

The eAppeals system also eliminated hard copy document storage requirements. DHR is required by law to save all appeals documents for three years, which generated dozens of boxes of documents each month that the county had to store offsite. Today, less than 5 percent of those individuals who submit an appeal do so through the mail. If the department does receive a hard copy document, employees can scan it into the system. DHR also migrated prior appeals from legacy systems into the eAppeals system, allowing departments to search for and access them (*Strategy III.2.1 Enhance Information Technology Platforms to Securely Share and Exchange Data*).

Overall, the eAppeals system creates a platform for collaboration and equips departments, appellants and other stakeholders with the tools they need to process and complete an appeal in a timely, thorough and efficient manner. This helps ensure the standard for fairness is maintained during selection and personnel action processes while reducing the time and hurdles for completing the process.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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Due to the new integrated system, the County is saving approximately \$76,580 per year through the reduction of stationary, postage, clerical staff costs.