



Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION (OAWP)

CLIENT CHALLENGE

The Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) was created in 2017 within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) which is dedicated to improving the needs of Veterans across the United States. OAWP is committed to improving accountability within the VA by investigating VA whistleblower claims. Their goal is to create efficiency, standardization, and transparency in the referral process for swift resolution. As part of its focus, OAWP needed to provide VA employees and other stakeholders with up-to-date and accurate information regarding the whole of the Accountability processes. In order to do so, OAWP required change management and subject matter expert (SME) support in the form of Master Black Belts and Business Analysts to further enhance the success and transparency of the referral process. This work would provide the foundation for transformational case management to be leveraged across the Department of Veterans Affairs.

DTS SOLUTION

DTS implemented the Lean Six Sigma methodology of DMAIC—Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control—to guide VA's OAWP through an organizational transformation. Our staff engaged with internal and external stakeholders to assess the VA's training needs and workforce readiness. We also supported OAWP in their communications planning, organizational design and development, and change management efforts.

To ensure the successful implementation of the improved whistleblowing process, DTS supported OAWP in its organizational design and development. We worked to align organizational resources with OAWP's goals, preparing VA staff to perform effectively within the new structure. We used qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the DMAIC process, leading/best practices, and benchmarking to determine the efficiency of people, processes, and technology in support of the organization's mission, goals, and day-to-day activities. We implemented a process for continuously monitoring and tailoring the approach to address stakeholder interests, needs and concerns, increasing their commitment over time.

DTS developed a detailed Organizational Change Management Plan (OCMP) to provide a framework of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART) goals and strategies instituting successful change management to all relevant stakeholders.

During the Define phase, DTS worked closely with OAWP stakeholders and SMEs to define the problem(s), goal(s), and processes. We conducted information gathering sessions to collect insight and artifacts on the structure, policies, and operations of OAWP. It was also during those

information sessions that our staff interviewed the stakeholders and SMEs to identify the problem(s) to be documented in the high-level problem statements. We also documented and defined the processes involved and developed process maps, Supplier-Input-Process-Output-Customer Diagrams (SIPOCs), and the Current State Process Map (CSPM), which detailed all the As-Is business processes and were used as an input in the Value Stream Mapping (VSM) sessions that the team facilitated with the OAWP SMEs.

After completing the Define phase, DTS moved into the Measure phase, working with the VA to determine how the process was currently performing and creating a baseline. To do so, the DTS team leveraged the process and value stream maps and current state information gathered during the Define phase to conduct an in-depth assessment of process performance. DTS utilized its proven methodology for developing metrics to create a technological solution to intake thousands of lines of detailed human resource and finance data and create easy to use and accurate performance metric reports. Our methodology provided insight into where human capital resources were, what skills/ competencies they had, and areas of vulnerability, such as attrition, skills gaps, etc.

We then transitioned into the Analysis phase, where we created process maps and collected process performance data, then analyzed the processes and listed concerns and pain points. Shifting seamlessly into the final stage of Improve, we completed a thorough evaluation of OAWP's current quality assurance procedures and how they affect various steps of the process. We brainstormed solutions to eliminate areas of waste, duplication, and process variability; increase quality and consistency; streamline process execution and eliminate inefficiencies; and to reduce variability in process steps across core teams. DTS then worked with key stakeholders and SMEs to narrow down the number of solutions to a manageable number, developing To-Be Maps based on a narrowed-down list of solutions to better illustrate the recommended changes.

CLIENT IMPACT

DTS's skillful transformation of business processes, data analytics, and strategic communications led to significant improvements for VA OAWP, including:

- » Higher efficiency and more effective case management
- » Improved communications and increased readiness of VA employees
- » Increased process consistency, building trust and commitment among stakeholders

DTS is a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business founded in 2011 by consulting experts with a proven track record of helping government and commercial clients respond to daunting challenges. Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, DTS maintains a concentrated focus on the business areas in which our principals and staff have significant practical and academic expertise including Program Management, Strategic Planning and Organizational Advancement, Software and Business Process Development, and Learning Enhancement Solutions.

Relevant Services

- Program Management
- Business Process Reengineering
- Process Improvement
- Change Management
- Productivity Improvement
- Lean Six Sigma Methodology
- Quality Assurance and Quality Control Process
- Strategic Communications

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