

# GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY, OPENNESS & SECURITY

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Washingtonians ask for and deserve accountability from government and its officials. State government must show that investments made by the taxpayers yield solid results. Governor Gregoire has led the way to good stewardship of resources, transparency and openness in state government.



## **Governor Gregoire's Government Accountability Budget:**

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**Preserves, protects and provides access to local government records.** We will help our local governments preserve and protect important documents, prepare disaster preparedness plans, implement records management programs and provide convenient public access to family history records. *(\$1.6 million Local Government Archives Account-State)*

**Improves security and transparency in state elections.** Additional support for voter registration, voting systems certification, training for local election administrators, and the review of county election procedures will ensure compliance with election laws and rules. This investment will result in greater accuracy of ballot-counting devices, faster processing of voter registration forms and shorter wait times for callers to the voter-information hot line. *(\$533,000 GF-State)*

**Provides transparent and responsive governance.** In order to foster open government and make state agency actions as transparent as possible, it is necessary to develop best practices and procedures for responding to electronic public disclosure requests. This initiative will help Washington more effectively and efficiently respond to inquiries from the public. *(\$250,000 GF-State)*

**Maximizes e-recruiting.** The statewide e-recruiting tool assists job-seekers in finding employment opportunities in Washington state government. This investment will also increase the candidate pool for possible hires, and allow agencies to better manage their recruitment and hiring activities. Washingtonians will benefit by having an online tool that supports a competent and productive work force. *(\$3.6 million Data Processing Revolving Account)*

## ACCOUNTABILITY IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE BUDGET-BUILDING PROCESS

When she took office in 2005, Governor Gregoire was determined to improve the results that state government was delivering for the citizens of Washington. Within days she signed an executive order making it clear that every agency, every program and every employee would be accountable to citizens every day.

The cornerstone of the Governor Gregoire's accountability initiative is the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program.

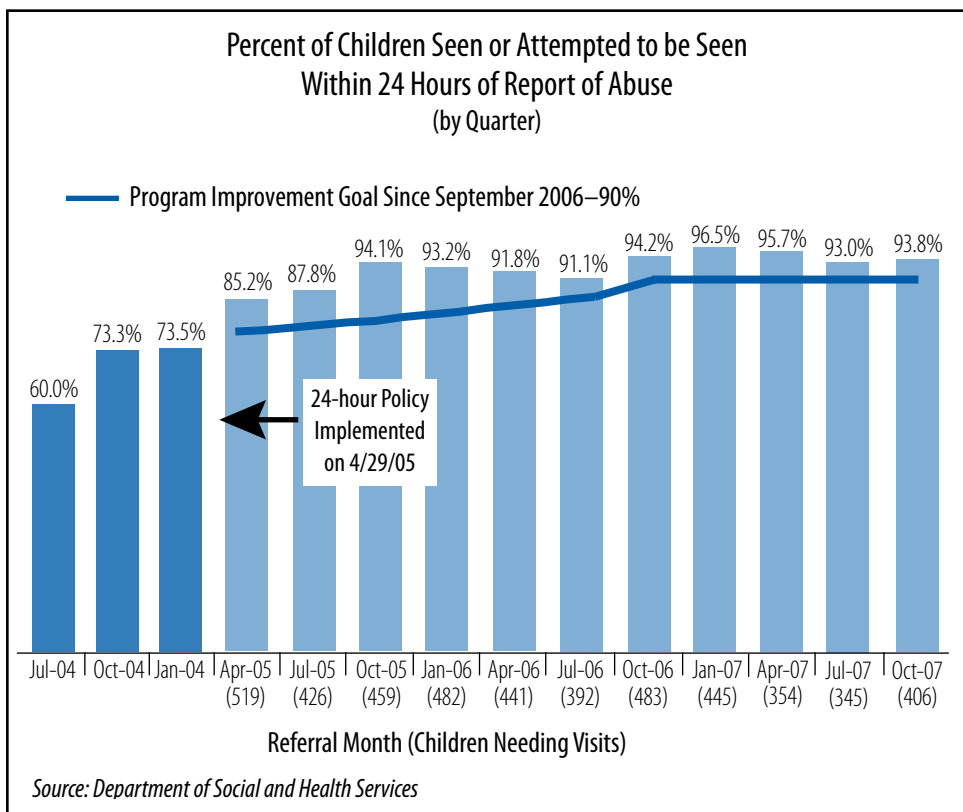
The GMAP program features regular, public meetings between the Governor and agency directors, who talk candidly about what is working, what is not and how to improve results. This approach allows the Governor and her agencies to understand why certain results are occurring, to make changes if necessary and to set expectations for performance. By revisiting key issues regularly, the Governor is able to follow up to make sure results meet expectations.

In addition to the Governor's accountability meetings, state agencies use the GMAP process to examine their own effectiveness and make needed changes. In this way, the Governor's approach to accountability is being used across state government to get better results for citizens.

### Responding Faster to Protect Vulnerable Children

Nothing state government does is more important than protecting the safety of vulnerable citizens, especially children. The GMAP program has proven extremely valuable in improving the lives of children in cases of abuse and neglect. Today, the state has clear evidence that when state social workers respond faster to allegations that children are being victimized, those children not only receive immediate help, they are less likely to be re-abused.

In early 2005, Governor Gregoire announced she was not satisfied with the previous mandate to respond to reports of child abuse within 10 days. She ordered the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to respond within 24 hours in high-risk cases and within 72 hours in lower-risk cases — and to begin tracking results in every region of the state.



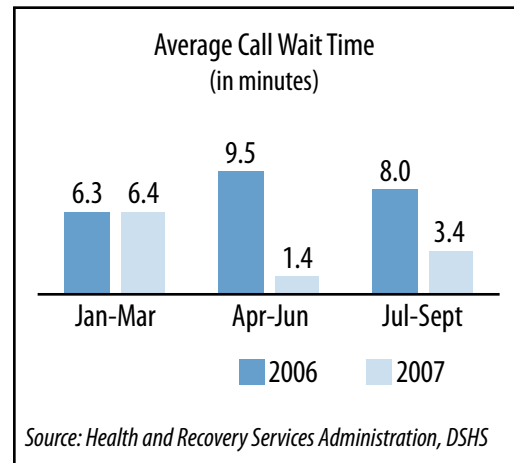
The GMAP process has not only sparked improvement in response rates, but has been used to track whether responding faster actually prevents child abuse. In October 2007, research by DSHS showed that quicker initial response reduced the likelihood of repeat abuse six months after the initial report and DSHS intervention. The 4 percent reduction in repeat abuse means more than 200 children were not made victims again.

### **Improving Customer Service at State Phone Call Centers**

Thirty-four state agency telephone call centers each handle more than 1,000 calls per month, and overall the state receives nearly 7 million calls per year. By applying GMAP performance improvement practices, the state is answering phone calls sooner, reducing dropped calls and serving customers better.

Since the Governor told her agencies to adopt best practices from the private and public sectors, results at all call centers are improving. In one center:

- The percentage of calls answered in 60 seconds more than tripled on the provider line and more than doubled on the customer line, even as call volumes spiked sharply;
- The percentage of disconnected calls fell to 2 percent as of August 2007;
- Staff turnover is down and customer satisfaction is up; and
- The department is saving more than \$9,000 a month, which is being reinvested to further improve customer service.



### **Simplifying a Complex Process to Safeguard Water Quality**

The GMAP program isn't just about collecting data and measuring results. Sometimes it's necessary to examine every step of a process to figure out how to become more effective.

That's what happened last year with a Department of Ecology program that distributes \$100 million each year to public agencies for water quality improvement projects. In recent years, local government officials complained that too much time and red tape were required to get the funding and, more importantly, to complete the projects in communities around the state.

By looking at every step of the process and identifying improvements that would not compromise environmental quality, changes were made that had immediate results:

- The number of steps needed to approve grant applications was cut by more than half;
- The number of decision points was slashed from 14 to three and the number of bureaucratic "hand-offs" was reduced from 58 to 14; and
- The time required to negotiate funding agreements has been reduced from an average of 12 months to six.