



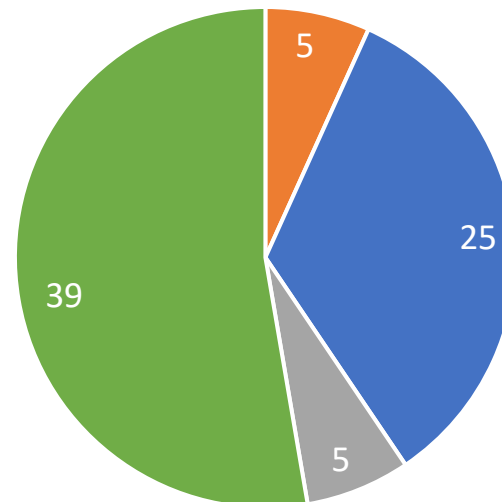
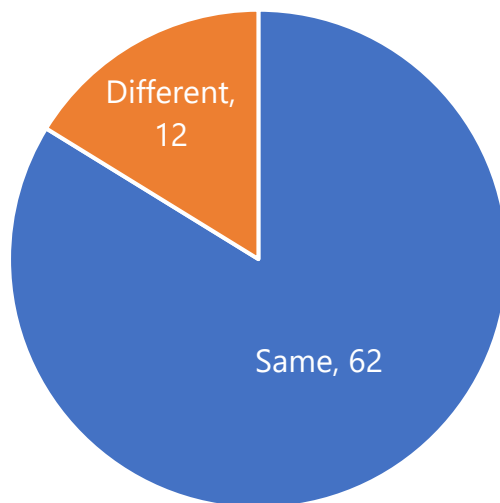
OAH Fee Structure, Billing Methodology, Productivity, and Organizational Structure Review

Follow-up Study

Feb – June 2022

Summary of Recommendation Status

- There were 74 recommendations total in the 2019 report.
- OAH has been tracking progress on these recommendations.
 - Stellar agrees with OAH's status for 62 of the recommendations.
 - Stellar assessed status differently for 12 of the recommendations.
 - For seven of the recommendations Stellar gave more credit.
 - For five of the recommendations Stellar did not find the same level of progress.



- Not Started
- In Progress
- Closed - No Action
- Completed

Focusing on the differences

3.1 Standardize training materials and create a training program to ensure staff understand what is expected of them for consistent use of technologies and processes, such as WebEx for hearings or Outlook for scheduling. Requiring use of tools that are already in place will quickly improve efficiencies within the organization. (See Conclusion #16.)



OAH has implemented a 2-day New Employee Onboarding Program that includes training for consistent use of commonly used technology. Stellar recognizes this will always be on-going, however, great strides have been made in laying the foundation of this work.

3.3 Standardize organizational policies and processes and use a collaboration tool ([similar to SharePoint](#)) when teams are collaborating on initiatives and developing operational documents.



OAH is currently leveraging shared folders to collaborate on documents. There are limitations to shared folders such as version control and permissions.

5.1 Ensure adequate subject matter expertise is leveraged prior to decision making and that the rationale behind decisions is documented and communicated. (See Recommendation #9.1.)



OAH has made many improvements by involving SMEs in workgroups and communicating to all staff via Town Halls and email; however, some staff still do not feel included or like they understand the rationale behind decisions.

Focusing on the differences

7.2 Expand existing dashboards to report on performance measures that are meaningful and accessible for staff at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels of the organization. (See Recommendation #6.2.)



Originally the agency envisioned a new software tool for tracking performance. Since that project stalled, the agency considers that project not started. Because of the enhancements made to PRISM which allow ALJs and staff to now track their caseload metrics, this could be considered started and in progress.

8.1 Review options with OFM to benchmark ALJ salary to the salaries of judges at BIIA. This may require shifting the ALJs from exempt status to classified so salaries can be linked during salary surveys.












OAH reviewed options and completed the actions to benchmark ALJ salary to the salaries of judges at BIIA. ALJs are now union represented and there has been progress closing the gap.

9.1 Create a governance structure with subject matter experts to prioritize initiatives, review and raise issues, and make decisions.



OAH has created a committee that meets once a month to review, update, and prioritize projects on the SPOT.

Focusing on the differences

<p>9.3 Establish a Business Transformation PMO with project, organizational change management, and Lean expertise to implement the recommendations of prior reviews, this review, and the agency's priorities. (See Recommendations #10.3, 12.1.1, and #15.1.)</p>			
<p>The approach for the Project Office is a great start. There is evidence the new project manager has been adding value. Not all interviewees understood how to engage the project manager for help with projects because she is already fully allocated on projects. A communication to staff describing the plans for the Project Office and how and when to engage with the project manager would be helpful.</p>			
<p>10.1 Leverage a governance committee to prioritize the tools, technology, and/or resource changes in support of OAH staff. (See Recommendation #9.1.)</p>			
<p>OAH has created a committee that meets once a month to review, update, and prioritize projects on the SPOT.</p>			
<p>11.2 Continue to transition information and processes to electronic records management and achieving the goal of becoming paperless will help further OAH's flexibility.</p>			
<p>The Electronic Case Records Project was completed in March 2020. All case information, including documents generated by OAH or received from other parties became a part of their electronic case file in their case management system.</p>			

Focusing on the differences

12.1.7 Retain the direct reporting relationship of the legal professional support staff to the local Division Chief ALJ.



No further action required.

14.2 Develop a RACI for the updated hiring process to define the authority for each level of management within the agency.



The hiring process needs to be documented. A RACI chart would help supervisors and managers better understand hiring decisions.

16.3 Utilize modern training platforms.



OAH purchased Articulate, a robust training tool. Stellar recognizes this work is on-going, however, with the hiring of a training coordinator and with the development of the Training Program Framework, Stellar feels this recommendation has been met.

New Recommendations

1.3	<i>Implement responsive web design to allow appellants to access the portal from a mobile device. This will increase the accessibility of the appellant portal to appellants who only have internet access through a mobile device.</i>
9.6	<i>Adding organizational change management expertise to the team would help close the awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement gaps that are difficult to close without help.</i>
14.3	<i>Evaluate staffing across caseloads so staff supporting each caseload have similar opportunities to participate in initiatives and improve their processes.</i>
19.8	<i>Consider using the first supplemental budget process each biennium to propose updated rates to OFM based on forecasted caseload estimates and projected costs.</i>
20.2	<i>Work with OFM to amend RCW 34.12.140 and RCW 34.12.150 to reflect OAH's current billing methodology.</i>
22.2	<i>Work with OFM to maintain a sustainable working capital balance in the 2023-25 biennial budget cycle.</i>
23.9	<i>In place of 23.5, OAH should review and evaluate strategies to increase efficiency in scheduling and using interpreters.</i>
23.10	<i>In place of 23.5, OAH should review and understand the reasons behind defaults that may lead to more efficient use of ALJ and staff time.</i>

Follow-up Study: Strengths

- Some of the agency's strengths identified during follow-up:
 - Relationships with referring agencies has improved.
 - Simplifying timekeeping entries and billing methodology led to improved transparency and a clearer understanding of billings and how they tie to timesheets and PRISM.
 - OAH's new billing structure has allowed for fund and cash balance to remain positive and grow.
 - Moving from a location-based model to a caseload-based model, simultaneous with the shift to a remote workforce, was a foundational pivot that accelerated standardization.
 - Respect for the Chief and the agency were apparent in interviewees desire to report positively about the agency's progress.
 - Professional administration/legal support staff in offices with two LA4s acknowledge large improvements in workload, productivity, and culture.
 - Increased staff capacity resulted in substantive improvements.

Follow-up Study: Opportunities

- Some of the agency's opportunities identified during follow-up:
 - Once OAH has a clearer idea of the functionality that will be included in Workday, they can evaluate if a new billing system will be required.
 - OAH should explore using the referring agency portal for transmittal of timesheet data and offer agencies more options for running their own reports based on their needs.
 - Some staff still do not understand the decision-making process, the authority for decision making, and who is involved in decisions.
 - Standardization of rules (model rules) across caseloads may be easier for appellants and OAH staff to navigate; however, traction may be difficult without a dedicated resource to facilitate conversations.
 - Further process simplification/automation opportunities with agencies exist (Some ESD caseloads still using email, OSPI appellants using email,...)
 - Staff who do not work on the UI caseload acknowledge that their caseloads have not had the same attention and improvement.
 - There may be opportunity to increase Senior ALJ morale after the changes to the organizational structure and the salary adjustments.