WCB Technology Plan – 2023 - 2025

Introduction

The mission of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) is to provide timely and impartial resolution of disputes arising under Oregon's Workers' Compensation law and the Oregon Safe Employment Act. This is in keeping with Governor Kotek's directive to prioritize customer service by being more efficient, more effective, and creating systems that will empower the Board as public servants to deliver for Oregonians.

Using the state court as a model where it makes sense to do so in an administrative forum, WCB is committed to achieving its mission utilizing technological advances in the development of its procedures and processes. Such technology may include, but not be limited to, databases, computer programs, internet, email, edocket, website, Wi-Fi, video technologies, and other advancements in telecommunications.

This plan will be reviewed and revised biennially and as needed in response to new and unexpected circumstances and events.

Selection

Procedures and processes which may be suitable for change or modification include:

- Increasing the usability of the WCB Portal by
    - Enabling submission of additional documentation.
    - Allowing delivery of Final Orders.
    - Adding the ability other state entities and unrepresented claimants to use the Portal.
    - Adding delivery of briefing schedules and exhibits to parties.

- Shift from processes using physical paper files to processes using electronic files where possible.

Considerations

When exploring and implementing existing or new technologies, the following criteria will be considered:

Legally Sound

Projects should advance the cause of substantial justice. Accordingly, projects must be in full compliance with existing statutes, administrative rules, case law, and executive branch policies (WCB, DCBS, DAS, etc.).

Expenditures

WCB will prioritize information technology projects that result in increased savings over the existing processes and technology. Ideally, projects should not detrimentally impact legislatively approved budgets. WCB is committed to being fiscally responsible and in accordance with Governor Kotek's directive, WCB will be determining its economic needs to become more technologically advanced in developing processes and procedures to better serve the State of Oregon.

Resources

Where needs can be met with existing staff skills, talents, and levels, WCB will utilize those existing resources. Where this cannot be accomplished, assessments of needed resources will be conducted by WCB management in a timely manner, with engagement with DCBS and DAS, in an effort to keep projects moving forward effectively.

Recognizing that technology is ever changing, existing hardware and software should be used, where possible. WCB will seek additional hardware and software as technology needs are changing to move forward consistent with the agency's needs, and governor's directives.

WCB will continue to investigate whether other entities (e.g. the State Library) can provide needed services more efficiently and/or economically. Services should be consolidated and integrated wherever possible to maximize resource utilization.

Accessibility

Projects should strive towards creating greater accessibility for users, utilizing jargon free language, translations, and economic and geographic friendly technology. Technology enhancements need to be user friendly and implemented as seamlessly as possible.

Timeliness

Services to stakeholders should be delivered in real-time, as much as possible. Communications channels between stakeholders will be considered and established so as to identify needs and issues, and to facilitate understanding and resolutions as quickly and easily as possible.

Security

In alignment with the State of Oregon's Enterprise Information Services Office vision of "ensuring user-friendly, reliable and secure state technology systems that serve Oregonians," projects shall consider data security, privacy, and confidentiality. WCB will partner with DCBS, vendors, etc. to select technology that will ensure protection from unauthorized access, modification, and tampering of systems and data.

Training

Training requirements related to new initiatives should be streamlined, accessible, and affordable. Preference will be given to technologies that are supportive and responsive to incidents, problems, and needs in "real-time" and that enable end-users to better support themselves. Training plans and materials shall be regularly reviewed to ensure that the needs of internal and external users are being met.

Collaboration

To create greater efficiencies and utilization of resources, opportunities to collaborate with other entities, such as other DCBS divisions, state agencies, or external parties, should be sought out and implemented wherever possible. Recognizing that there are shared systems, data, and processes that other entities have stake in, WCB will continue to work with stakeholders when exploring, developing, and implementing new processes and technologies.

Implementation and Review:

This plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially.