



Streamlining Disability Benefits Adjudication

Following the e-Government (eGov) Act of 2002, US Federal Government Agencies have been striving to improve the usage and management of technologies to enhance citizen access to government information and services. Since 2003, one agency has been diligently working to transform its disability review process from a paper-based system to a fully electronic claims management system capable of handling the 2.5 million initial claims it receives each year. Despite significant progress in speeding up the process, the agency continues to have a lengthy backlog of cases awaiting final adjudication.

Booz Allen has partnered with this agency to assist with strategic adoption and development of technology into their business processes. Through our work on strategic development of the agency's disability initiatives, including the integration of health information technology (HIT) into the disability review process, Booz Allen Hamilton is helping the agency speed the adjudication of complex disability claims and enabling citizens to receive critical benefits sooner.

Transforming Outdated Systems, Eliminating Backlogs

Backlogs in determining eligibility for disability benefits have left citizens waiting for up to a year and a half in order to be notified of their eligibility to receive disability payments. In addition, an outdated and

inconsistent system architecture patched across all 50 states and 4 territories has made it difficult to retain workers, potentially leading to additional delays for citizens seeking disability benefits. Because the review process varies by individual case worker and jurisdiction, applicants have been awarded—or denied—disability payments based in part on who was assigned to handle their claim or where they happened to live.

Decision makers in the agency have sought to address these challenges with a faster, more efficient, and more reliable case processing system, understanding that if employees were able to process claims faster, they could better fulfill the mission of helping those with financial or medical problems. Additionally, a more effective case processing system would save taxpayers money and provide a better framework to reduce fraud and abuse.

One obstacle to achieving an optimized system was reliance on manual, paper-based workflows. With Booz Allen's help, employees that process disability claims now leverage automated, electronic processes that save time, effort, and cost. However, while streamlined front-end processes effectively increased employee productivity, significant delays and bottlenecks continued to surface later in the claims review lifecycle.

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For example, a major source of delays occur while processing and scheduling claims for hearings. As part of the automated, electronic disability process and with Booz Allen's help, the agency is working to better manage the growing demands of hearings scheduling.

Challenges involving the gathering and use of disparate data also prevented the US government from realizing its vision of an improved case processing system. In response, Booz Allen is enabling the agency to speed decision making and increase standardization with enhanced data collection, sharing, and analysis capabilities. Through this effort, Booz Allen staff members developed a tool which prompts disability examiners to ask each applicant 12 essential questions regarding eligibility and documentation before making a disability determination. That tool is just one of several tools that improve the consistency, accuracy, and value of the information used in determining disability cases.

An additional challenge faced by the agency has been related to the way medical information is received. Gathering patient health records has added another complicated step to the process that slows final adjudication. Building upon our experience in HIT, Booz Allen is working on a hospital-based pilot to develop metrics, as well as technology and business methodologies that will allow the secure transfer of medical information directly from healthcare providers to disability case managers.

Our Clients Are Ready for What's Next

As the disability system continues to evolve, Booz Allen will be ready to support future initiatives with its deep experience in HIT, government policy analysis, and business process design, as well as expertise in public-sector privacy and security

solutions. For example, with the agency seeking to enable direct transfer of medical records into its claims review process, we can provide capabilities that will help develop data repositories to handle information that will flow in from healthcare providers and insurance carriers.

Similarly, we stand ready to advise the US federal government should the integration of personal health records into disability case processing require alterations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). We are also prepared to consult with the agency on best practices for the use of Web 2.0 and other communication tools in today's environment where privacy and security are just as much of a concern as providing transparency to citizens.

With Booz Allen's support, these and other improvements to the disability system positions the agency to achieve other important goals in the future.

Ready To Help You

Booz Allen collaborates with government agencies on solutions for serving the public more efficiently and effectively. We base our approach to social service support on three pillars—domain expertise, cross-functional teams, and industry best practices. With this framework, we are able to provide seamless, collaborative, and transformational lifecycle support to social service organizations on issues ranging from requirements analysis to strategic alternatives to market analysis and beyond. To learn more about how Booz Allen is helping government agencies streamline and improve their processes to fulfill their mission and be ready for what's next, visit us at www.boozallen.com.

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