

The most common Kaizen-powered improvements

Kaizen teams in state government have developed a wide range of changes to their processes, but there is definite common ground among the types of changes. Listed below on the left (in no particular order) are the most common improvements from 50+ Kaizen events in Ohio state government – with an example of each on the right.



KEY IMPROVEMENTS	EXAMPLES <i>The following text is from detailed write-ups at lean.ohio.gov</i>
Simplifying a form (poka-yoke)	Public Safety: (Car dealerships) Too often, sections of the various forms had been unclear and confusing, or they were asking for information that is no longer needed. As a result, many incoming submissions didn't contain all the necessary info – so staff were having to go back and contact dealers for clarification. The new forms, when fully in place, will be much easier to follow and fill in. This will ensure that submissions arrive with all fields correctly filled in, which eliminates the need for backtracking and rework.
Developing one form to replace multiple forms	AG's Office: The team consolidated three purchasing-related forms into one. The new form will be more comprehensive, with people who make purchase requests providing all the needed information at the start of the process. This will reduce questions, loopbacks, and delays as the request moves on to purchase, delivery, and payment.
Turning a paper form into an electronic form that is completed and submitted online	Development: The online application will end most of the data-entry work among staff – and the entry errors that inevitably occurred with manual data entry. Data from hard-copy charts submitted with applications had to be entered into spreadsheets. When a finger slipped and typed an incorrect number, problems could surface later on. All of this will be prevented with electronic applications.
Creating a fast-track process for certain types of customers or applicants	Board of Nursing: Each incoming application will be assigned to a designated liaison who handles all the attachments and interfaces with compliance. This will free up the other licensure staff to work with applicants who don't have any compliance issues – preventing those time-consuming loopbacks and handoffs that affected the previous process.
Replacing multiple similar subprocesses with one standard subprocess	Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities: Staff will be using one straightforward model to process an application for services – compared to before when teams serving all 88 counties were mixing, matching, and modifying 5 different models to create their own approaches.

The most common Kaizen-powered improvements continued

Replacing multiple entry points with one entry point	Taxation: With improvements developed by the team, decision-making is being pushed forward to the start of the process. Petitions are received at a single entry point at Taxation’s Compliance Division, where staff use guidelines and tools to process most of the petitions on a new fast-track basis. So there are fewer steps, fewer people involved, fewer handoffs, fewer delays – and faster outcomes for citizens.
Using single-person processing to eliminate batching and handoffs	PUCO: Previously, work typically followed four workflows, with multiple people working on one registration at different stages of the process. The team created and clearly documented one standard workflow, with one person handling everything from beginning to end.
Reducing checks, inspections, and signoffs done by supervisors and others	Insurance: Supervisors will spend 1,000 fewer hours per year to review closing letters because the new process ensures that the letters are done right early on. The supervisors’ time can now be spent on other activities that add value.
Moving a key subprocess higher in the process	Aging: Assessments of each resident will be done very early in the process, to allow more time and better coordination. These assessments gather important information to match the individual with available programs, services, residences, and facilities.
Replacing hard-copy paper (records, documents, etc.) with electronic files	AG’s Office, BCI: Another key improvement is at the end of the new process. Final reports from BCI will increasingly be provided in electronic format, replacing the hard-copy versions with all their paper, postage, and extra handling.
Consolidating multiple reports into one	Mental Health & Addiction Services, Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare: With the new process, the team moved toward a paperless system, creating a single “snapshot” database to track patient data and internal movement – and provide accurate, instant reports. This would replace the multiple tracking databases used previously.
Eliminating requirements that no longer apply	State Highway Patrol: One change is the elimination of one test (the results were rarely used for screening out candidates), plus the replacement of a second test with an in-house testing tool that has rock-solid validity and can be graded the same day. The switch maintains the highest screening standards while reducing delays and cutting costs up to \$560 per candidate.
Changing a numeric threshold so that additional steps are triggered less frequently	Turnpike Commission: Staff will have higher spending limit capabilities on purchasing cards, allowing them to make critical purchases in a faster timeframe.... One standard process will be utilized for purchases made under \$50,000 level at all Turnpike Commission locations. This will ensure a maximum of 5 days for a purchase to be delivered and paid.
Giving customers more info and guidance at the start of the process so they know exactly what to do	Mental Health & Addiction Services: Training resources and materials will be posted online for stakeholders. These will include checklists, frequently asked questions, webinars, recordings, and more.