

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY DRIVER LICENSE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

AN ISSUE BRIEF FROM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Driver License Improvement Plan is to improve services and shorten wait times for driver license customers.

KEY FACTS

- ◆ Outcome improvements were expected in the areas of customer service, safety and security, and employee environment.
- ◆ The Department of Public Safety (DPS) reports progress in the areas of customer service, training and equipment, and document security.

BUDGETARY IMPACT

The Texas Legislature appropriated \$63 million and 361 full-time equivalents for this purpose in the 2012–13 biennium.

STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Driver License Improvement Plan was established in the 2012–13 General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 18.07.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) developed a Driver License Improvement Plan. The objective of the plan is to improve services and shorten wait times for driver license customers. The Texas Legislature appropriated \$63 million and 361 full-time equivalents for this purpose in the 2012–13 biennium.

HISTORY

In 2009, the Sunset Advisory Commission recommended that DPS contract with an outside entity for a management and organizational study. The Sunset Advisory Commission further recommended that the driver license program use a civilian business management model rather than a law enforcement model. Two studies were completed either in concert with or as a result of Sunset recommendations. Recommendations included:

- Combine licensing and regulatory functions into one division.
- Establish a non-commissioned management and staffing structure for the driver license program.
- Reassign law enforcement officers from the driver license program into other divisions as appropriate.
- Establish mega centers to better serve customers in urban areas.
- Close offices in less populated regions, allowing for staff reassignments for greater customer impact.

FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

The 2012–13 biennial funding for the Driver License Improvement Plan was appropriated from the State Highway Fund 006. DPS reported expending approximately \$20 million of the total \$63 million appropriation by the end of fiscal year 2012. DPS also reported hiring approximately 266 of the 361 full-time equivalents by the end of fiscal year 2012.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

With the implementation of the Driver License Improvement Plan, DPS anticipated outcomes in three areas:

Customer Service: Reduce driver license office transaction times to 45 minutes for originals and 30 minutes for renewals. Reduce contact center calls by being clearer in correspondence and website information. Improve customer satisfaction with an online survey. Make process changes in accordance with customer feedback.

Safety and Security: Increase fraud prevention with security features on driver license and identification cards.

Employee Environment: Improve retention programs by increasing salaries of field employees and realigning position descriptions. Provide management leadership training for staff with the intent of improving employee retention and maximizing productivity.

AGENCY REPORTED PROGRESS

At the end of fiscal year 2012, DPS reported progress towards meeting the expected outcomes in three areas of the Driver License Improvement Plan.

Customer Service

DPS is scheduled to open six mega centers in urban communities in fiscal year 2013. Mega centers will be located in Austin, San Antonio, Dallas/Fort Worth (2) and Houston (2). DPS received additional capital budget authority in July 2012. This authority allowed DPS to expend funds for equipment at these facilities.

At the end of fiscal year 2012, DPS reported 223 operational driver license offices. DPS reported the installation of queuing systems in 59 driver license offices to categorize customers by transaction type to increase efficiency. The agency implemented online scheduling for road tests for Class C licenses in 59 driver license offices. Similar online scheduling was implemented for commercial driver licenses in 40 offices. DPS began accepting credit cards at all locations. The agency routed calls to low-volume offices to increase the number of customer calls answered.

DPS also reported shortened card delivery time from 45 days to approximately 10 days. The agency reported remodeling 38 existing facilities to improve customer service. DPS increased awareness of online services and mail and phone renewal options with press releases, website content, and informational flyers. DPS encouraged renewal of summer driver license expirations before the summer 2012 rush. The agency reopened 14 offices previously closed to better serve customers in rural communities. DPS routed calls from busy offices to the contact center allowing field offices to serve more customers.

Document Security

In relation to the Safety and Security expected outcome, DPS requires proof of lawful presence in the United States to obtain a Texas Driver License as required by the Transportation Code, Chapters 521 and 522. DPS also requires proof of Texas residency for all new issuances of Class C licenses and identification cards.

Training and Equipment

In relation to the Employee Environment expected outcome, DPS hired 209 temporary personnel during the busy summer months of 2012. The agency provided uniforms to employees to make them immediately identifiable to customers. DPS reports training 179 staff in the Driver License Division Leadership Academy. The agency reported revising job descriptions and career ladders to help retain a skilled and motivated workforce.

USEFUL REFERENCES

The studies and reports used to develop the Driver License Improvement Plan are listed below:

- Sunset Advisory Commission, *Final Report: the Department of Public Safety, Private Security Board, and the Polygraph Examiners Board* http://www.sunset.state.tx.us/81streports/dps/dps_fr.pdf.
- Deloitte, *Texas Department of Public Safety Management and Organizational Structure Study* <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/deloittestudy/index.htm>.
- The Government Partnerships Program at Texas State University, *2011 Executive Summary – Business Intelligence Analysis Report*.

More information regarding the Driver License Division and the services provided may be located at <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense>.

CONTACT

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