Breakthrough Project	Project Name: EPA Freedom of Information Act Response	Program: OEI	Report Date: 12 Oct 17

1. PROJECT DEFINITION (Plan)

Problem Statement: EPA uses a decentralized model for processing FOIA requests which relies on a variety of different processes across the agency. Simultaneously, the number of FOIA requests that involve more than one office or region has increased significantly in the last several years; which creates significant burden upon agency staff, results in confusion, increases the risk of litigation, affects timeliness of initial interaction with and final response to requestors, and raises uncertainty regarding the application of FOIA across the agency.

Scope: The Agency's FOIA response process from initial receipt to final closure of request. Excluding litigation and issues involving records management and E-discovery services.

Goal: Meet statutory deadlines for responding to FOIA requests and appeals on 100% of such requests received by FY22.

2. ANALYSIS (Plan)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows members of the public to request Agency records and information. Requests for information must be provided in writing (generally via electronic communication) to the Agency in order to be considered a FOIA request. Agency staff work with requestors to validate a clear understanding of what information the requestor is seeking to enable internal records searches. Once a request has been received, the Agency has 20 working days to provide the information; except in cases of complex requests when an additional 10 working days are allowed by the statute. The EPA receives over 10,000 FOIA requests annually; of those over 2,000 are considered complex.

There are currently dozens of different FOIA processes that a request for information might go through depending upon how it is received by the EPA. Additionally, the process of responding to requests is further fragmented at the sub-organizational level as many of the personnel handling requests are not dedicated FOIA staff, have highly variable levels of FOIA expertise, and are provided varying levels of guidance or direction. Coupled with the challenges of coordination among potentially responsive organizations, this fragmentation leads to varying outcomes in terms of timeliness and consistency of responses.

3. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS (Do)

#	Assigned Date	Action to be Taken	Action Owner	Due Date	Percent Complete				Completed Date
1	3 Oct 17	Research key data points using FOIA-online	Larry G.	17 Oct 17	25	50	75	100	
2	12 Oct 17	Conduct Regional stakeholder call	Larry G.	12 Oct 17	25	50	75	100	
3	12 Oct 17	Develop communications strategy	Mike A.	1 Nov 17	25	50	75	100	
4	12 Oct 17	Identify key stakeholders & participants	Steve F.	1 Nov 17	25	50	75	100	
5	12 Oct 17	Determine boundaries/goals of Jan event	Steve F.	15 Nov 17	25	50	75	100	
6	12 Oct 17	Coordinate multi-day Lean event, including relevant stakeholders, for Jan 18	Mike A.	1 Dec 17	25	50	75	100	
7	12 Oct 17	FOIA Appeals process – data collection & interdependencies	Denise (OGC)	20 Dec 17	25	50	75	100	
8	12 Oct 17	Develop standard work, process flow, definitions & performance targets across all offices/Regions	Steve F.	30 April 18	25	50	75	100	
9	12 Oct 17	Conduct process change pilots, validate countermeasures & begin implementation	Steve F.	30 May 18	25	50	75	100	
10	12 Oct 17	Initiate Agency-wide implementation addt'l changed for new process	Steve F.	30 Jul 18	25	50	75	100	
11	12 Oct 17	Validate changed process against performance targets	Steve F.	30 Sep 18	25	50	75	100	

4. RESULTS (Check)

5. STANDARD PROCESS & VISUAL MANAGEMENT (Act)

Team

Name:	Role:
Byron Brown	Executive Sponsor
Steven Fine	Process Owner
Larry Gottesman	Project Lead
Mike Appleby	Coach
James Tyree (R10)	
Brenda Young (OEI)	
Yerusha Donaldson (R6)	
Denise Walker (OGC)	

Issues/Obstacles

Project Management

Day and time for regular update meeting:

Alternate Thursdays at 12:00 EST

Regular updates due to project lead by:

External Cost for this project (if any):

Progress

Project Start Date: 21 Aug 17

P D C A

1 2 3 4 5

Estimated Project Completed Date:

Breakthrough Project	Project Name:	Program:	Report Date:

1. PROJECT DEFINITION (Plan)

Problem Statement:

1

Scope:

2

Goal:

3

2. ANALYSIS (Plan)

4

3. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS (Do)

#	Assigned Date	Action to be Taken	Action Owner	Due Date	Percent Complete				Completed Date
1					25	50	75	100	
2					25	50	75	100	
3					25	50	75	100	
4					25	50	75	100	
5					25	50	75	100	
6					25	50	75	100	
7					25	50	75	100	
8					25	50	75	100	
9					25	50	75	100	
					25	50	75	100	

5

4. RESULTS (Check)

6

5. STANDARD PROCESS & VISUAL MANAGEMENT (Act)

7

Team

Name:	Role:
	Executive Sponsor
	Process Owner
	Project Lead
	Coach

8

Issues/Obstacles

9

Project Management

Day and time for regular update meeting:

10

Regular updates due to project lead by:

External Cost for this project (if any):

Progress

11

Project Start Date:_____

P D C A

1 2 3 4 5

Estimated Project Completed Date:_____

Breakthrough Project Template – Guidance Sheet

1 **PROJECT DEFINITION**: **Problem Statement** – A clear statement of the difference between the current condition and the target condition - in observable or measureable terms. Include the impact on the customer and/or mission, as well as relevant performance metric(s). Do not speculate on causes nor include solutions.

2 **PROJECT DEFINITION: Scope** – The bounds of the project including the beginning and end steps through the eyes of the customer, any geographic or other limitations, clarifying what is "in" scope and what is "out" of scope of the project.

3 **PROJECT DEFINITION: Goal** – The metric-based improvement objective in the form of "*X* (current condition) to *Y* (target condition) by *Z* (date)"

4 **ANALYSIS** – The relevant data and associated analyses that identify the primary improvement opportunities that will result in improvement actions. Indicate which problem solving tools were used during the Analysis phase and contributed to the team's understanding of the root cause of the problem (e.g., value stream mapping, fishbone diagram, Pareto, 5-why, SIPOC, brainstorming, etc.). Alternatively, describe the process used to identify the improvement actions to be taken.

5 **IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS** – The actions derived from the Analysis phase that will be completed to achieve the goal of the project. Must include future steps until project complete, and any countermeasures if predicted progress on meeting the target has not been met.

6 **RESULTS** – Using line charts and/or bar charts, present project results in terms of the key metric(s) including baseline and target. Progress toward meeting the target should be clear, as should trends. Alternatively, describe how the team is tracking progress towards meeting the Project Goal.

7 **STANDARD PROCESS & VISUAL MANAGEMENT** – Describe the standard process documents and visual management tools that will be used to track BOTH process flow and performance, including how and when they will be used. Include photos of each (standard process, flow board, and performance board). Alternatively, describe how gains achieved through the improvement actions will be maintained in the future.

8 **Team** – List the primary team members and their roles. The executive sponsor is responsible for addressing issues and removing obstacles. The process owner is responsible for making any needed changes in the process. The project lead is responsible for making sure progress is being documented in the template, that the project remains on schedule, and documents any issues or obstacles. The coach is responsible for making sure the tools, including the template, are being used as designed and intended. If subject matter experts, customers and/or suppliers were a key component of the team, include them as well.

9 **Issues/Obstacles** – List issues and obstacles that are blocking progress on the project and what must be done to resolve them.

10 **Project Management** – Record the date and time for the regular update meeting, and when updates to the template are due to the project lead in time to prepare for the update meeting. Document external costs required/expended for the project (as applicable).

11 **Progress** – Shade in the phases of the project as they are completed. Record the project start date & estimated project completion date.