

Iowa Utilities Board Suggestions for Government Efficiency Gains

- 1) Pay a flat per diem for meals while in travel status. The time and energy spent gathering and reviewing meal receipts is taking valuable time that could be spent on substantive tasks. The time savings would be not only for the accounting or administrative team members, but especially for the traveler.

On average, an IUB inspector spends 1 to 1.5 hours per week sorting receipts and compiling an expense claim. We have seven inspectors. If the time could be reduced to 30 minutes per week, we could gain 14 hours of productive time monthly. Over a year's time, that equates to 21 days, or 3 days per inspector, of time that could be spent on substantive work. The accounting team member processing the claim spends, on average, 25 to 35 minutes. Not having to tape receipts to paper would save precious minutes that could be spent on other tasks.

Researching dining establishments because they have given the state employee a non-conforming receipt is non-productive time. Our inspectors travel around Iowa. Many times, small town restaurants still use the old-fashioned, small, green and white restaurant order pad that contains very cryptic information. It would be better for safety inspections to be the focus of our inspectors.

- 2) There are several agencies that receive much of their funding from billing other agencies for services they provide. These bills can vary from year to year. For example, for FY14 we budgeted \$15,000 for the auditing functions performed by the State Auditor's Office; the estimated bill we received in December was \$20,000. Another example would be the amount charged to us by DAS for various services. This amount fluctuates monthly and has been increasing over the years. We have not received a corresponding increase in our appropriation to cover increases over which we have no control.

In addition, agencies are spending significant time sending money back and forth among them.

It would seem to be more time and cost efficient for essential state functions to be supplied by appropriation.

- 3) Performance Reporting per the Accountable Government Act – Iowa Code 8E, and the recent addition of Iowa Code 8G.4, requiring a searchable budget database internet site - DATAshare - are, in part, duplicative and time consuming for the agencies. Can the Performance Plan and Reporting be pared down? The IUB has never received a comment or question regarding our measures or results. Determining what to post on DATAshare is time consuming. Our travel and budget information is already posted. Much of the information we might post is already on our website. The data that the IUB has does not lend itself to searches and data sorting as readily as some agencies, e.g. – Dept. of Revenue tax information by county or township.