

# Peak Highlights

Major Peak Partnerships, Projects, & FAQs

D E N V E R

PEAK

A C A D E M Y

*Innovate. Elevate. Repeat.*



## About

DENVER  
**PEAK**  
ACADEMY

*Innovate. Elevate. Repeat.*

Denver Peak Academy trains city employees at all levels to improve the way government works. Through innovation, employees do more with less and enhance the Denver city experience. Initially piloted via funding from the “Innovation Fund” (I-Fund), Peak Academy is housed within the Budget and Management Office in the Department of Finance. Denver Peak Academy staff teach the principles of data and process improvement to inspire employees to create a higher standard of government.



## How We Do It

Frontline city employees learn how to utilize process improvement in their every-day work and how to effectively create change within their agencies, thus also giving them ownership and a personal investment in the outcome. Peak Academy teaches a four-hour Green Belt class, a four-hour Green Belt for Leaders class, and a week-long Black Belt class. Since the program started in 2011, Peak Academy has trained 8,824 City and County of Denver employees and over 150 outside cities. Many of those cities have replicated the program to improve processes in their organization.

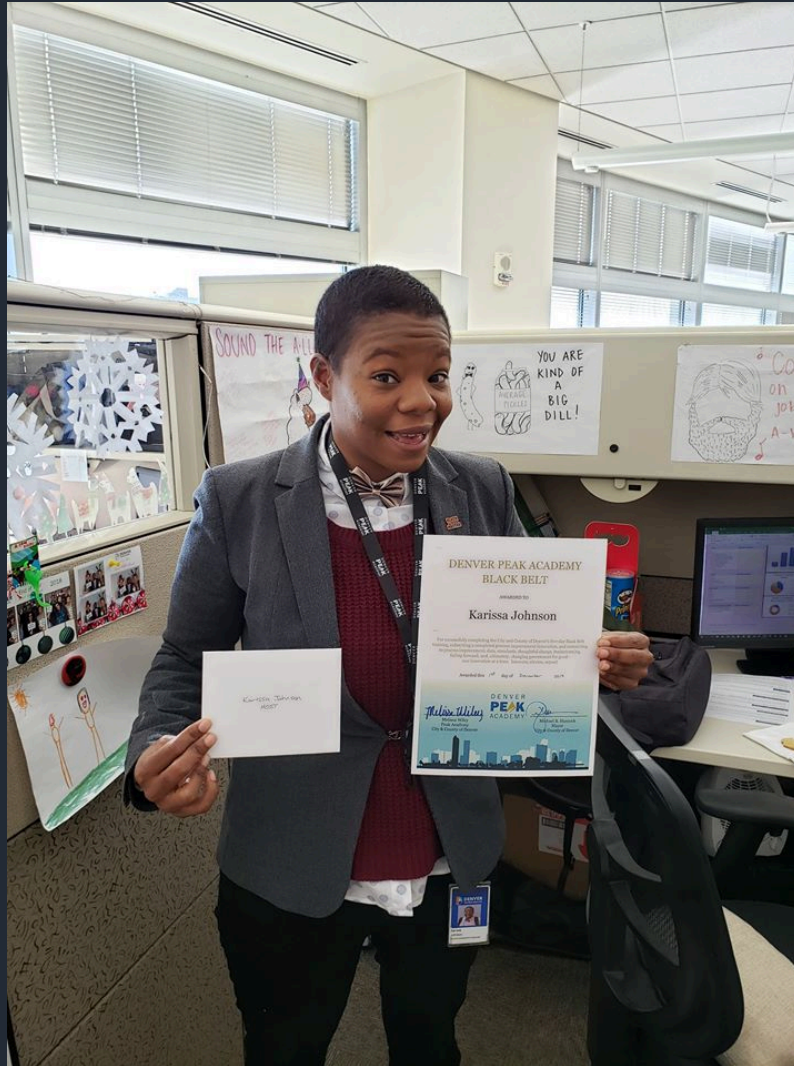


As of 5/6/20, we've trained:

**9,250** City and County of Denver Employees  
Over **200** outside cities and non-profits

For most up to date numbers, check out our [dashboard online](#)

# Measuring Success



Peak Academy measures success through hard-dollar budget savings as well as soft-dollar efficiency savings realized by city employees after participating in classes. Soft-dollar savings are calculated by monetizing the amount of staff hours freed up because of process improvement changes that can then be reallocated to other programs or service delivery within the agency.

As of 5/5/2020

**2,959** Innovations

**\$38,449,112** Net Savings

For most up to date numbers, check out our [dashboard online](#)



# Peak Partnership:

Office of Human Resources

# Talent Acquisition Team

## Objective: Reduce Time from Recruit to Fill

Peak Partnership with the Office of Human Resources Talent Acquisition Team focused on reducing the time it takes for an open position in the city to fill. This engagement was initiated because feedback from both applicants and employees indicated that the process was taking too long. The lengthy recruitment and hiring process was making it difficult to attract top talent. In many cases, applicants would receive offers elsewhere before making it through the city process. Before the partnership and subsequent changes, it took an average of 85 days to fill a position after its posting. Today, that number has by 50% and now takes approximately 42 days.

RESULTS:

85 Days ↓ 42 Days

50% REDUCTION



# Peak Partnership:

Denver Department of Public Health and Environment

## Public Health Inspections

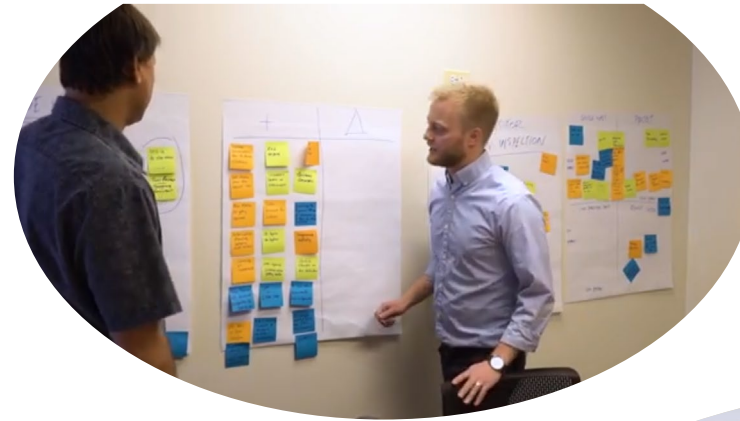
Objective: Reduce Time to Close Complaints

This 2017 partnership focused on improving customer service regarding open complaint investigations by the Residential Health team. Some of the most common complaints were related to bed bugs, pests/rodents, no hot water or heat, hoarding, etc. Due to inconsistent training and a lack of standardized operations, the team was struggling to finalize complaint investigations promptly. While the average days to resolve a complaint before the partnership was 172 days, several complaint investigations had been open for more than a year. After comprehensive data analysis, numerous process improvement workshops, and the implementation of staff-driven innovations, the team dramatically decreased the backlog—both the number of cases and time to resolve complaints—and improved their customer service.

RESULTS:

172 Days ↓ 71 Days

59% REDUCTION





# Peak Partnership: Community Planning & Development Development Services

## Objective: Reducing Permit Backlog

Development Services focused on ways to improve customer service and more efficiently respond to an ever-increasing permit demand. Due to several innovations led by Black Belt-trained staff, CPD's customer satisfaction rating has increased from 32% to 96%. This work resulted in reducing the amount of time to find paper plans, leading the efforts to accept proposals electronically, and decreasing the amount of time spent on zoning research by eliminating re-work and nonvalue-added steps in the process. After working with the team on innovating the process, including a level loading exercise, cross-training, and a series of process improvement workshops, the backlog of overdue permits dropped to just four—a decrease of 96%.

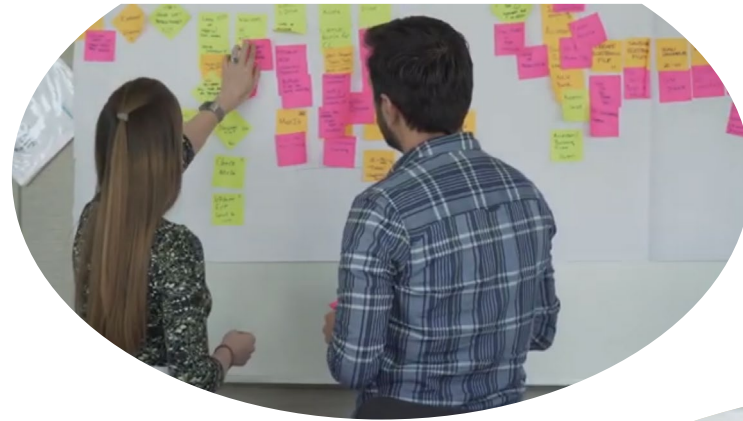
RESULTS:

Backlog

Over 100 ↓ 4

Customer Satisfaction

32% ↑ 96%



# Peak Partnership:

## Denver Animal Protection

# Denver Animal Shelter

### Objective: Reducing Animal Stays

It came as no surprise when the Denver Animal Shelter team won a 5281 award for their culture of innovation and teamwork. During this partnership, each employee submitted at least one innovation that worked toward the ultimate goal of getting 7,000 animals they see over the course of a year adopted into forever homes or reunited with their owners more quickly. The length an animal stays in an unnatural environment, like a shelter, affects its temperament and therefore adoptability. Innovations were as small as using a squeaker toy to get better photos of the animals to as large as data dashboards that helped compile results of animals medical exams and behavioral assessments in real time.

#### RESULTS:

Average Animal Stay

14 days ↓ 9 days

\$1 Million Savings





# Peak Partnership:

## Excise & Licenses

# Permit Counter

Objective: Reducing Lobby Wait Time

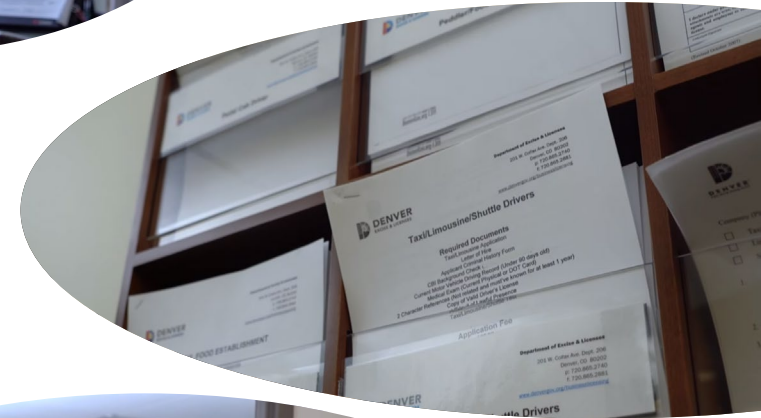
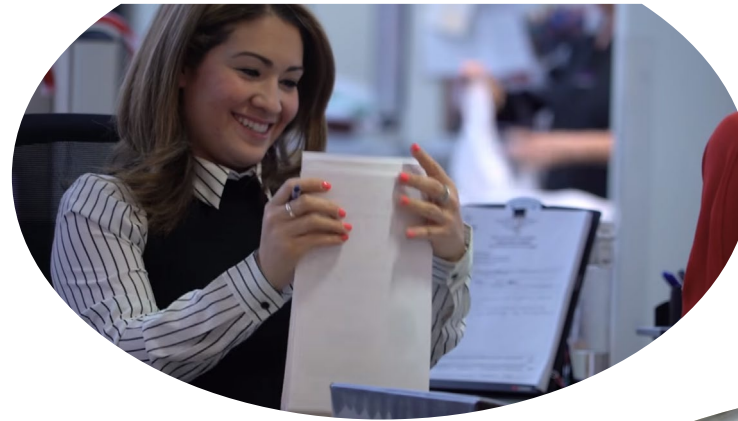
Over 24,000 people come through the Excise & Licenses permit counter every year to get over 100 different kinds of licenses for their business. In 2014, wait times could surge to a painful 8 hours, which not only wasted customers' time, it affected their livelihoods. For example, if security personnel couldn't get their Merchant Guard License, they couldn't be scheduled for shifts. By making a series of small changes using process improvement tools such as standard work, visual management, mistake proofing and 6-S, the team was able to reduce the average wait time 85%.

RESULTS:  
Wait Time

35 minutes ↓ 5 minutes

85% REDUCTION

\$250,000 Customer Savings



# Bright Spot:

Denver Parks & Recreation

## Parks Greenhouse Team

**Objective: Saving Time to Keep Parks Beautiful**

Parks crews have been a shining example of empowering frontline employees as experts in improving the daily experience for both the employees themselves and the communities they serve. The greenhouse team grows 240,000 plants a year in 16 greenhouses to be planted in the city's parks, the Denver Zoo and the Denver Botanic Gardens. They used Voice of the Customer to listen to the horticulturists in charge of all this planting to discover the biggest pain points to focus on. By creating better standard work for tracking orders and scheduling pick-up times paired with a 6-S of delivery and loading methods from the greenhouse, staff was able to save \$9,682.40 per year in staff time while also reducing their error rate by 35%.

RESULTS:

560 Hours of Wait Time  
ELIMINATED





# Bright Spot:

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

## Wastewater Maintenance

Objective: Reduce Time for Manhole Lowering Process

Lowering manholes is a key maintenance function to keep manhole covers from being hit, which costs the city \$100,000 per year. Through a Rapid Improvement Event, the team found several small incremental changes to implement that saved time in their day so they could lower more manholes each day and practice better safety while doing it. They created Standard Work, performed a 6-S to organize the trucks, cataloged manhole locations throughout the city and even changed a noise ordinance to start an hour earlier which allowed them to be more productive during their 8-hour shift. They also saved \$76,620 for their customers by implementing a process to pick up discarded manhole coverings right after being removed.

RESULTS:

Touch Time

42% Reduction

Savings

\$178,677



# Bright Spot:

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

## Black Belt Fellowship Program

**Objective: Utilize Black Belts After Training**

When DOTI Director asked what Black Belts do after training, it sparked an idea that has created an incredible career development program. Black Belts that have successfully innovated can apply to be a Black Belt Fellow, where they are assigned a process improvement project within another DOTI division. The Black Belt Fellow spends 2-3 months with the team in the assigned division practicing facilitation, problem solving, leadership and collaboration. Peak Academy staff provide weekly one-on-one coaching and support to these future DOTI leaders. The program has already produced some incredible results with identified savings of \$929,541 and one promoted team member to date.

### RESULTS:

Total Identified Savings

**\$929,541**

Total Black Belt Fellows

**6**





# Peak Partnership:

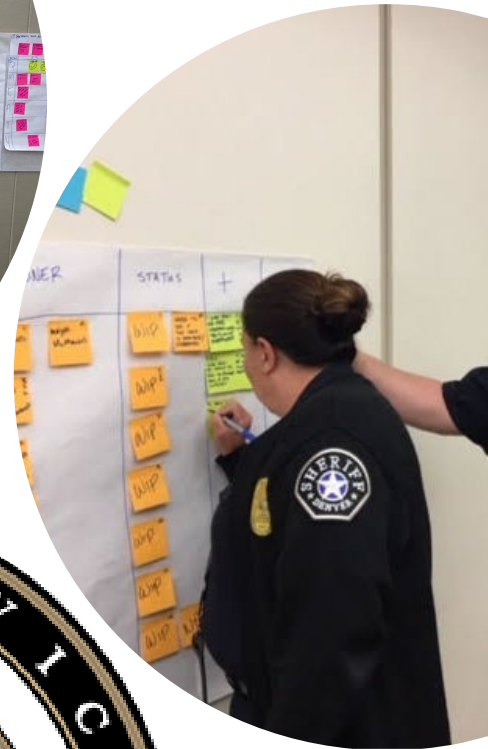
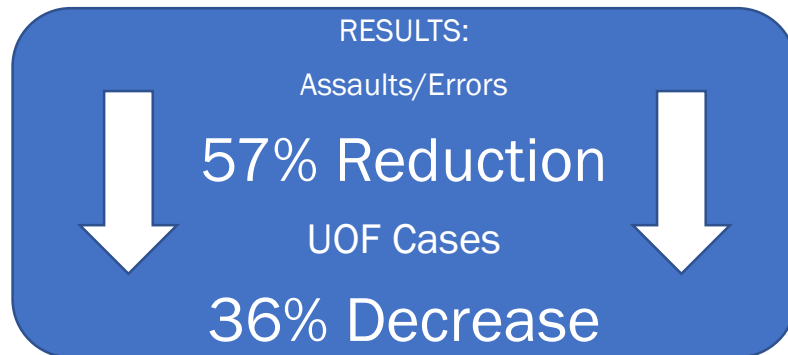
Denver Sheriff Department

## DSD Senior Leadership Team

**Objective: Decrease Intake Staff Assaults, Use-Of-Force (UOF) cases, and Pod Grievances.**

The DSD ran a number of Rapid Improvement Events and implemented a monthly dashboard meeting that resulted in a **57% decrease in staff assaults** and a **22% decrease in UOF incidents**. Lastly, the DSD implemented a pilot which included consistent staffing, the addition of programs, and an increase in therapy. The pilot resulted in an **86% decrease in grievances** in that area. Furthermore, the pilot resulted in a **36% decrease in UOF cases within the pilot area specifically**. Below you will find a few data sets illustrating these improvements:

- [Reduction of OTGIRT – Intake handcuffingGIRT – 3C pilot](#)
- [GIRT – Intake handcuffing](#)
- [GIRT – 3C pilot](#)



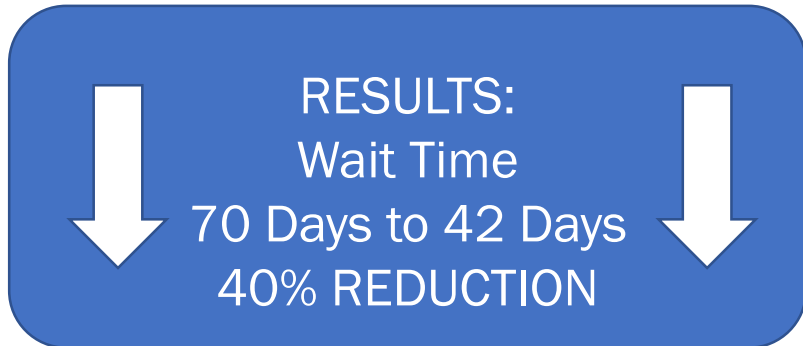
# Peak Partnership:

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO)

## Division of Small Business Opportunity (DSBO)

**Objective:** Decrease the time it takes a small business owner to become a certified small/minority/women owned business.

The time to certify a small business was taking too long and preventing deserving small companies from bidding for contracts within a reasonable timeframe. The team went through enhancements to their database and data collection, created checklists for site visits, and restructured site visits. The result was a decrease in certification time **70 days to 42 days, a 40% decrease.**





# Bright Spot:

Denver Clerk & Recorder

## Denver Elections Division

**Objective:** Eliminate hurdles for Denver residents with disabilities when they attempt to vote/participate in the democratic process.

Denver Residents with disabilities frequently face tremendous hurdles when attempting to participate in the democratic process. Locating and arriving at a **“Voter Service and Polling Center” (VSPC)** or reading, marking, and signing a mail ballot are just a few of the barriers that have led to disproportionately low turnout among voters with disabilities. Thus, the election team designed and implemented a system that allows eligible voters to register for and access the **electronic ballot** in such a way that it provides an autonomous voting experience for residents. In doing so, the Election Division was able to cultivate relationships with various organizations that serve this broad demographic of voters.

### RESULTS:

Potential errors during in-person voting processing time

30% REDUCTION

72 Hours to Less than 24 hours Ballot Turn-around Time

70% REDUCTION



### Invite Colorado Voters

Select one of the options below to continue. If you are an overseas or military absentee ballot voter and would like to vote today, select "Vote My Ballot" below. If you would like to view your sample ballot, select "View My Sample Ballot" below.



# Peak Partnership:

Denver Department of Public Health & Environment

## Office of The Medical Examiner (OME)

**Objective:** Decrease the time it takes to create, update, receive, send, and find medical records at the OME.

Once upon a time, the OME didn't obtain the correct medical records (internally & externally). Faxes were unreliable on both ends. Next of Kin (emergency contact) information wasn't always on the medical records. The investigators, doctors, and administrators were not on the same page.

Thus, the OME team built an innovation plan as part of its partnership with the Denver Peak Academy. This plan improved the process and helped the OME team to find funding to implement a more robust case management system, as well as obtain a new building to accommodate the process flow they designed as part of their improvement analysis. By the end of the partnership, **the OME decreased their wait time for medical records to approximately 10.5 min/case.**

### RESULTS:



Total Actualized Savings  
\$2,313.43 (Hard Savings)  
\$311,314 (Soft Savings)  
\$1,000,000 (customer wait time)





# FAQs



## What does Peak do?

Peak Academy is a process improvement team that trains and collaborates with government employees to improve the customer and employee experience, done through our Green Belt and Black Belt Trainings, Process Innovation Workshops, and our Peak Partnerships.

## How, why, & when did Peak get started?

The Denver Peak Academy started in 2011 by Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock. The Mayor placed the team in the Department of Finance under the budget director. The program's design aims to provide frontline employees with the tools to innovate and make data-driven decisions.

## Why is Peak in the Budget & Management Office?

Academy works with the frontline staff in each department to best utilize the tools and talent they already possess to improve their processes without the need for additional funding continuously.