

City of Houston / Houston Police Department

Improving CJIS Vetting Processing Time for Background Checks

Problem Statement

The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) vetting process time for Non-HPD personnel averaged 14-21 days for completed background checks over the previous 6 months, resulting in customer dissatisfaction due to the waiting time and additional resources required.

Mission Statement

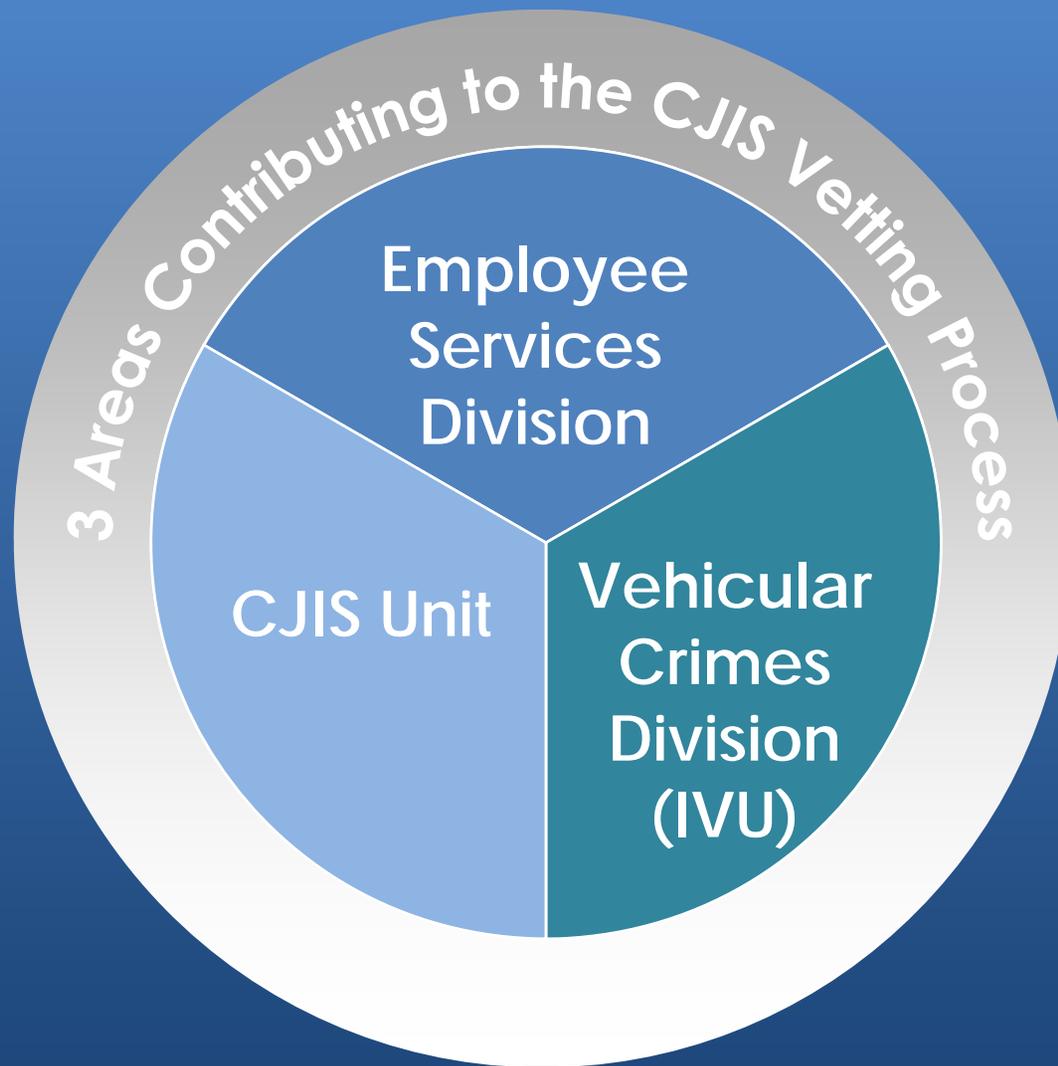
Establish a more efficient workflow while continuing employee/customer feedback to improve customer satisfaction over the next 6 months (by July 31, 2015), resulting in improved customer service due to timesaving and the reduced need for additional resources.

Project Charter

Date:	September 01, 2015	
Project Title:	Improving CJIS Vetting Processing Time for Background Checks	
Project Leader:		
Sponsor:		
Department Description:	HPD / Inspections Division / CJIS Compliance Section	
Team Member	Function	% Time
	Project Lead	55%
	Project Assistant	10%
	Distribution Director	5%
	Quality Control Advisor	5%
	Quality Control Advisor	5%
	Survey Assistance Specialist	10%
	Data Analysis Manager	10%
Problem Statement:	The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) vetting process time for Non-HPD personnel averaged 14-21 days for completed background checks over the previous 6 months, resulting in customer dissatisfaction due to the waiting time and additional resources required.	

Project Charter – (Continued)

Mission Statement:	Establish a more efficient workflow while continuing employee/customer feedback to improve customer satisfaction over the next 6 months (by July 31, 2015), resulting in improved customer service due to timesaving and the reduced need for additional resources.
Stakeholders:	Customers of the CJIS Section / City of Houston / Houston Permitting Center / Houston Police Department / Inspections Division / CJIS Section
Project Scope	
Process Start:	January 21, 2015
Process End:	July 31, 2015
In Scope:	See PROJECT SCOPE



Internal Customers

Interviewed key stakeholders
concerning services provided

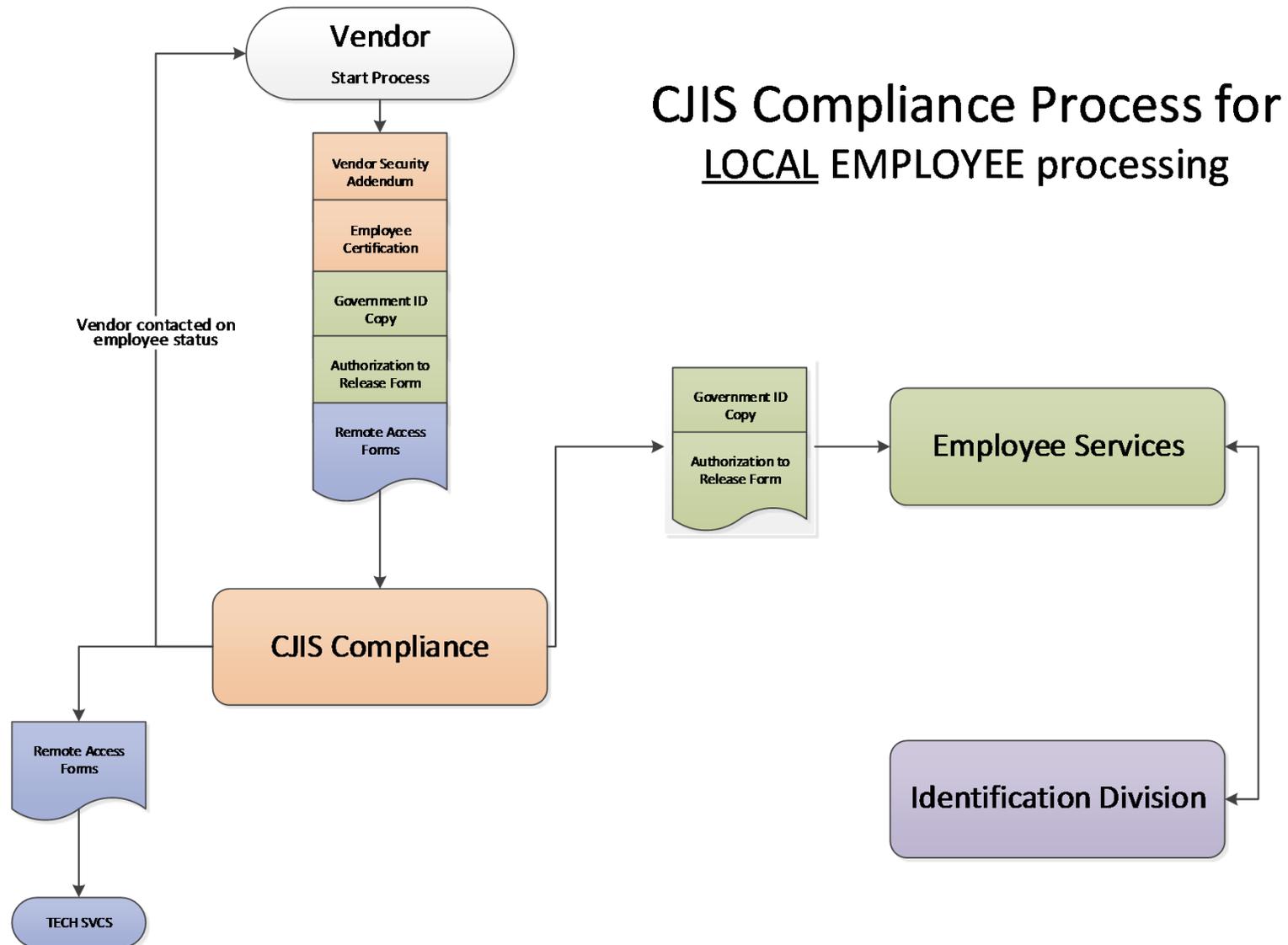
Interview Questions

- What are we doing right?
- What can we improve?
- Specifically, what functions do you perform that influence the “broken” system?
- How can we fix the “broken” system?
- Will additional resources be needed?

Affinity Diagram – (Issues with the CJIS Process)

LEADERSHIP	MEASURING TOOL	WORKFLOW	RESOURCES	COMMUNICATION	CULTURE
Lack of leadership	No measurements in place	Not organized	Lack of adequate resources to get the job done	Lack of consistent communication	Lack of buy in by employees
No check and balance		Too many bottlenecks	Lack of training and/or cross training of personnel	Points of contact were not known	Too many divisions (sections) involved
No accountability		No one is following the requirements	More time to complete the job properly		No party wanted to do the undesirable work
Responsible parties do not have the authority to get job done		Employees do not understand the overall system and/or processes	The CJIS Unit was being responsible for too much...not enough staff		Employees did not feel like anyone cared about customer service
Lack of leadership involvement		No one understands the impact of their roles	More overall support needed		Internal customers are not viewed the same as external customers
There was not a clear expectation for service or process completion		Overlapping of duties by multiple parties for no reason	Not enough personnel for various sections		Employees are not rewarded
Leadership does not respect support functions			More training for personnel will be needed if anything will change		Employees feel underappreciated
					Team approach needed

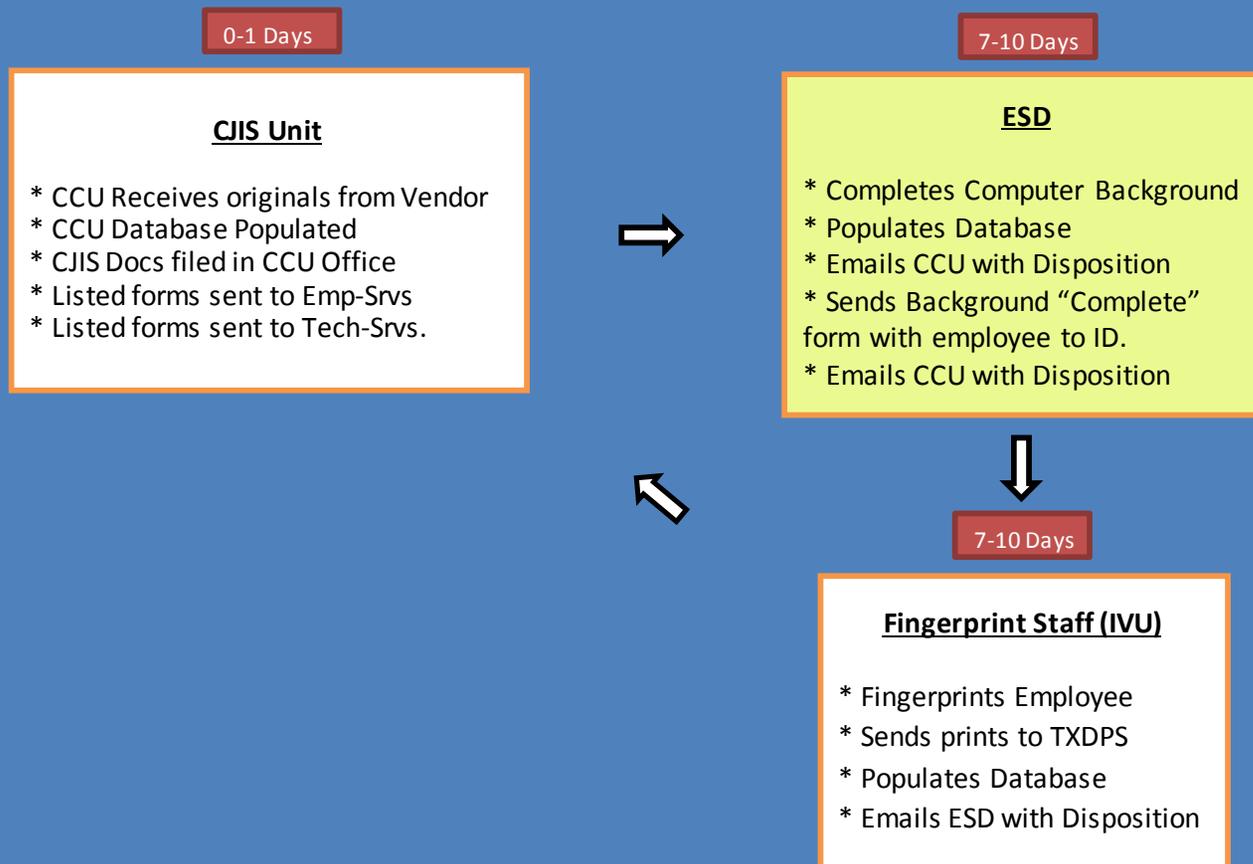
Process Chart – (Previous)



Discovering the Bottlenecks

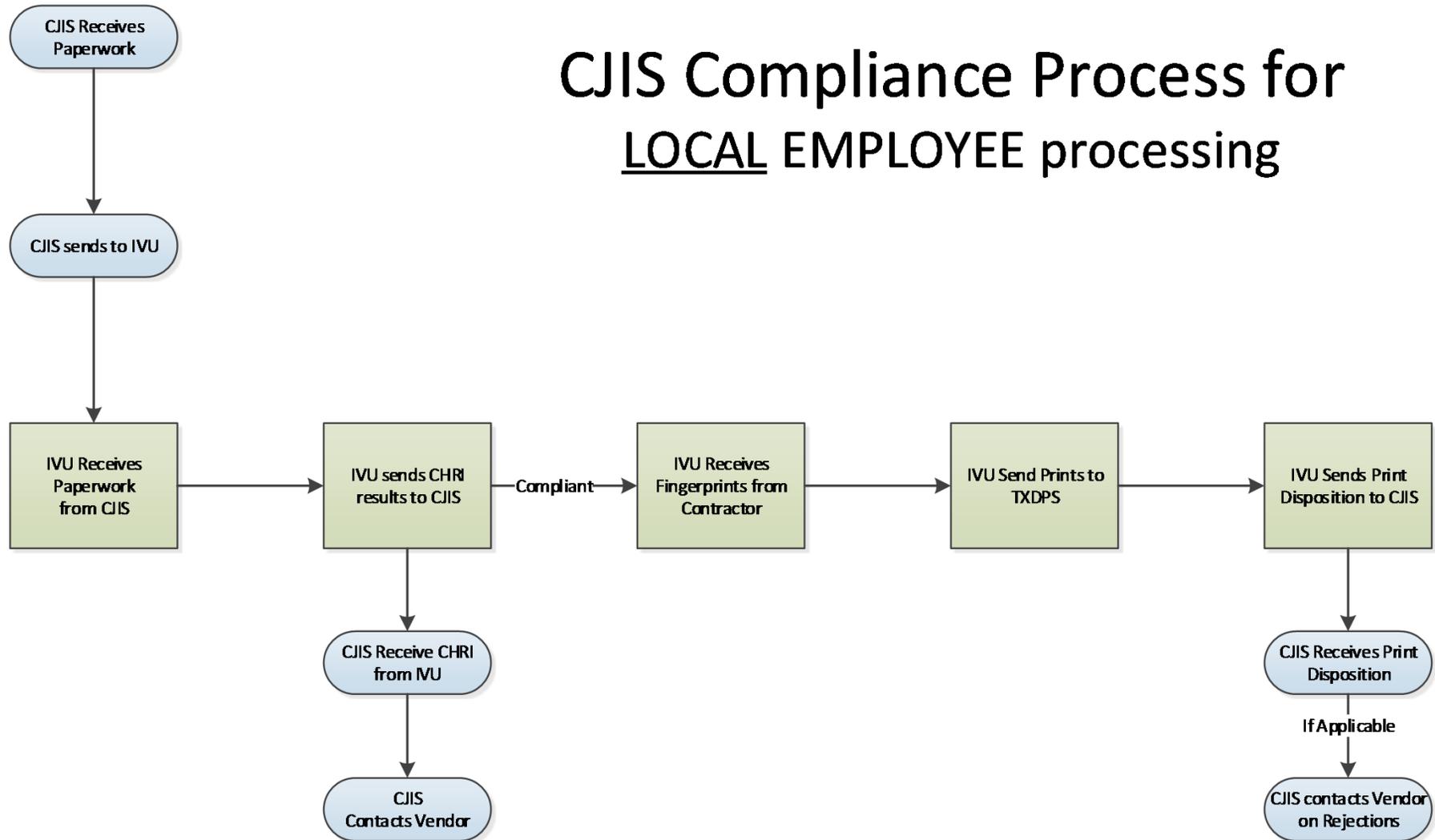
CJIS / ESD / IVU Combined Workflow

(Wait Time for total process = 14-21 days)



Process Chart – (Adjusted after merge)

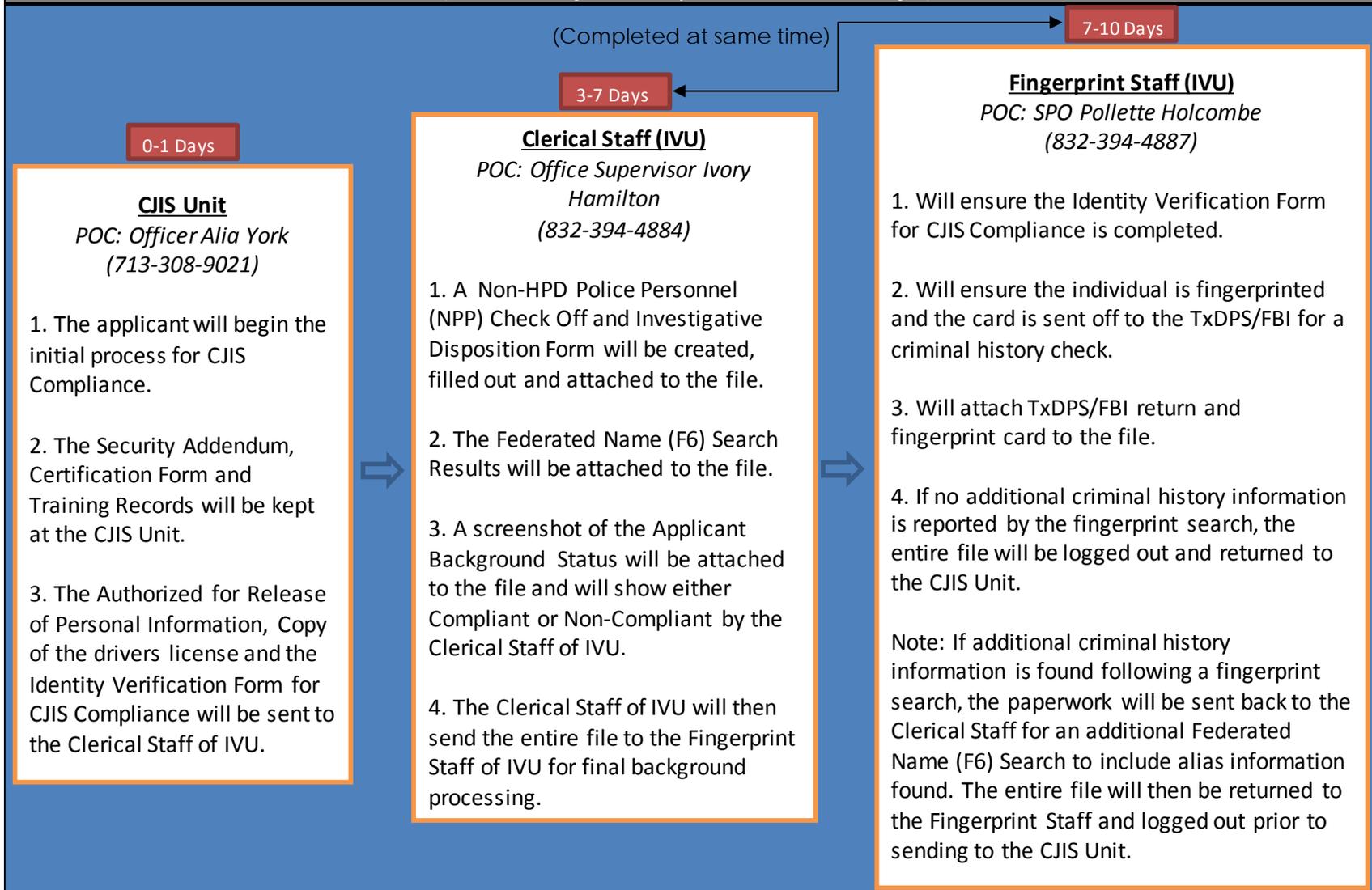
CJIS Compliance Process for LOCAL EMPLOYEE processing



Waste Eliminated

CJIS Compliance Section

(Wait Time for total process = 7-10 days)



Verifiable Results

- Customer wait time was decreased by **50% (from 14-21 days to 7-10 days)** over the observation period. Customer satisfaction increased and complaints decreased over the observation period.
- Allowed the City of Houston/HPD to reallocate between \$200-300k per year to other needed areas (salaries funding 4-6 police officers who were currently performing background checks). These duties are now completed by IVU.
- Increased employee involvement with decision making. Employees were more likely to participate with continual changes within the work environment and felt like their voices were heard.
- Healthy communication between all parties have increased and team members have the freedom to request meetings to discuss concerns with the process.

Improvement Recommendations

- Plans are in place to automate the fingerprint process; which would decrease the processing time from 7-10 days to within 24 hours. Currently, all fingerprint cards must be sent to TxDPS/FBI by mail.
- Use electronic documentation methods within all sections to ensure immediate updates are available to all sections involved. Currently, information often is saved on paper documents; which makes it difficult for all parties to have access to updated information.
- Develop a method to update the status of applicants granted CJIS access. Due to TxDPS regulations, HPD personnel are only allowed to monitor active CJIS applicants.

Improvement Recommendations – (Continued)

- Consider need for proficiency examinations for Fingerprint Technicians and/or Officers who determine identification for fingerprints.
- Consider need for identification verification by second Fingerprint Technician and/or Officer .
- Identify improved methods for obtaining approval/signature.
- Consider developing online application process.
- Modify Validation Instructions by requiring a signature related to completion of validation process and returning signed document to CJIS Unit.

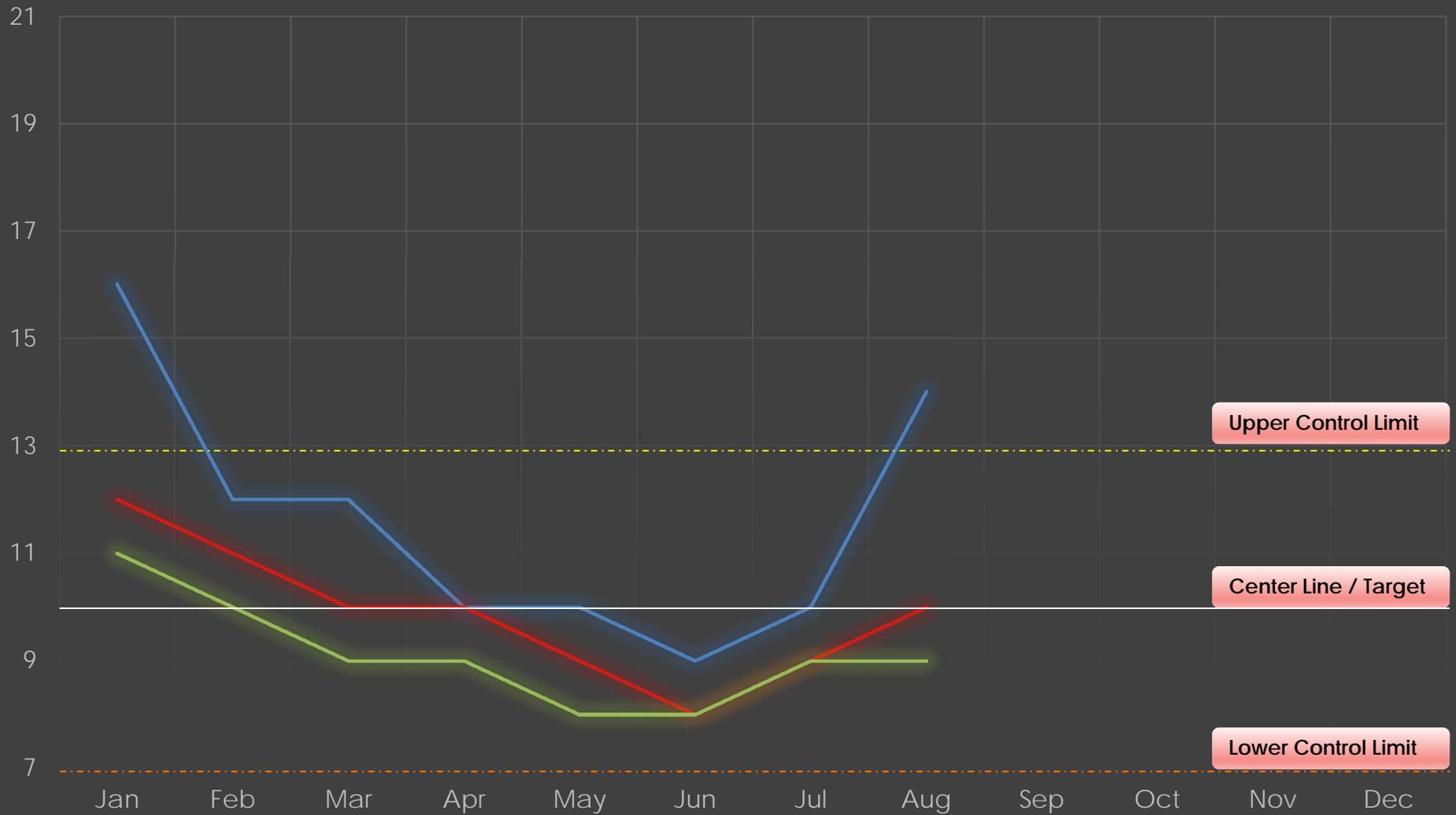
Control Plan

- All sections have updated the standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure personnel are aware of their individual processes and a mechanism is in place to encourage input.
- Process owners have been identified and all employees understand the protocol to follow when suggesting corrections, updates and opportunities for improvement.
- Metrics were created to identify the average time it takes to complete a background check for CJIS and various applicants. Therefore, management can now be aware of the average wait time that is outside the Upper Control Limit (UCL) during each month.

Control Chart

CJIS Processing – (2015)

— CJIS — Recruiting — Volunteers



Lessons Learned

- Not only was customer wait time decreased by more than 50% (from 14-21 days to 7-10 days) over the observation period; however, there are **more opportunities** within the process that could further decrease wait time for customers.
- **Employee input** plays a valuable role within the change process. It was a remarkable experience to share a problem with employees and to assist those employees as they developed valuable solutions.
- The opportunities for continued improvement encouraged in the **Control Plan** is an essential way for leaders to ensure processes are not only known by all employees, but mechanisms are in place to update these processes on a continuous basis.
- Without the use of metrics similar to the **Control Chart** shared earlier, it is nearly impossible for management to be aware of the true service provided to customers or the ability to monitor the status of processes in efforts to identify problems in a reasonable timeframe.

