

STEM Wizard: Working Session Summary
PI Planning Notes - VA.gov Session Breakout

EDU reports STEM FORM has 90% Rejection Rate.

Ideal goal is 0% Rejection Rate. Need to understand reasons for & numbers behind rejections to clearly identify rejection rate goals going forward.

Scholarships of a similar nature:

- Not sure what exists.
 - o DOE may have a similar program
 - o Ricardo may have ideas of similar programs
 - o **LUKE will look for options.**
- Reasons for rejection
 - o Not enrolled in a STEM program
 - o Not near the benefits exhaustion (6 months or less).
 - SIDE NOTE: We should know that they don't have the benefit based on available data.
 - o **LUKE: get the details on rejections by type.**
 - Get counts /% of all EDU STEM applications, responses to each of the "2 of 6 education benefit" questions.
 - Applying for STEM Scholarship
 - Enrolled in a STEM undergrad program
 - Have a STEM undergrad degree & pursuing a teaching certification

LUKE: Darrell discussed some ideas about updating the Spool file to make it easier to use. Larger font, perhaps? Routing to a specific person (SME)... Explore with Ricardo.

How many people are coming through the Wizard vs. direct traffic to the form?

SINCE OCT 1, 2019

- 25,000 people coming through the Wizard (since Oct 1, 2019)
- 1995 40,000 regular applicants
- 1995 / STEM – 4,000
- **122,750 direct traffic to the apply 1995 page**

Fixing issues in the form itself, we address all issues in the form submissions. For this PI add the form update and push Caution Flags (on Search Results page) to the right.

When we update the form...

WARN people that they're not eligible for the scholarship.

CONSIDER:

- Use flipper functionality (segmented roll-out) to track decreased rejection rate
- Roll out to select time period instead of % of applicants to better track.

OMB – do we have to replicate a paper form?

- Once we're online, can make updates?
- Not sure who to ask... Policy & regulation staff.
- Find a resource who can weigh in on this info.

Post Planning UPDATES from EDU:

1. So it appears that the only way to view the answers to the questions would be to go into each individual applicant's record in TIMS and transcribe that data into a spreadsheet or database. Currently the application responses are captured into TIMS, but you cannot export or view all the applications...
 - a. Recommendation: we have received 10358 applications. I do not recommend that we go the manual look up and transcribe route. I recommend we try to have a way to capture this data going forward with the changes we are going to make.
2. Ricardo seemed to think that response data would be available through Google Analytics. I said I don't think that is captured.

Data not captured in Google Analytics.

3. High level data as of 12/19/19:

STEM APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	10358	
Eligible STEM	1086	
DENIALS	9272	
- NO ELIGIBLE STEM PROGRAM	3145	
- DID NOT EXHAUST ENTITLEMENT	3284	
	6429	69.34%

- a.
 - b. So about 30% are denied b/c they are not in an eligible program and another 30% because they have not exhausted their benefit.
4. I am attached the file that Mike Johnson sent along with the data. HE said this is what they capture there in Buffalo. A lot of it did not make sense to me. If we want to dig into that data we can set up a call with Mike after the holidays.
 5. Last, he provided the following that I share for your review.

Some options to improve the STEM application process would be:

1. Leverage the use of existing data within VA.GOV such as remaining entitlement to trigger a warning message for claimants who have more than 6 months of benefits remaining. Message could be as simply as "To be eligible for the STEM Scholarship, you must have exhausted or will exhaust benefits within 6 months of application. Based upon your remaining entitlement, it appears you may not be eligible. You may continue to apply, or apply at a later time in the future when your entitlement has/will exhaust"
2. Add more questions to the 1995 such as:
 - Have you or will you exhaust benefits within 6 months from current date?

3. I know we have had some discussion pertaining to the use of the CIP Code list. Our office currently utilizes it determine program eligibility in the lieu WEAMS until WEAMS can be updated to reflect STEM eligible programs. So the issue here is we are using a list We are placing the burden on each claimant to enter the name of their program and then cross reference the program against a list they do not know exists.

Can VA.GOV specifically the STEM1995 supporting referencing a dropdown list, so that the same claimants can only choose from programs that we will use to determine their eligibility?