



Improving the Initial Authorization Process: *Best Practices from Georgia*

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Introducing GNPEC

Initial Applications Before FY21

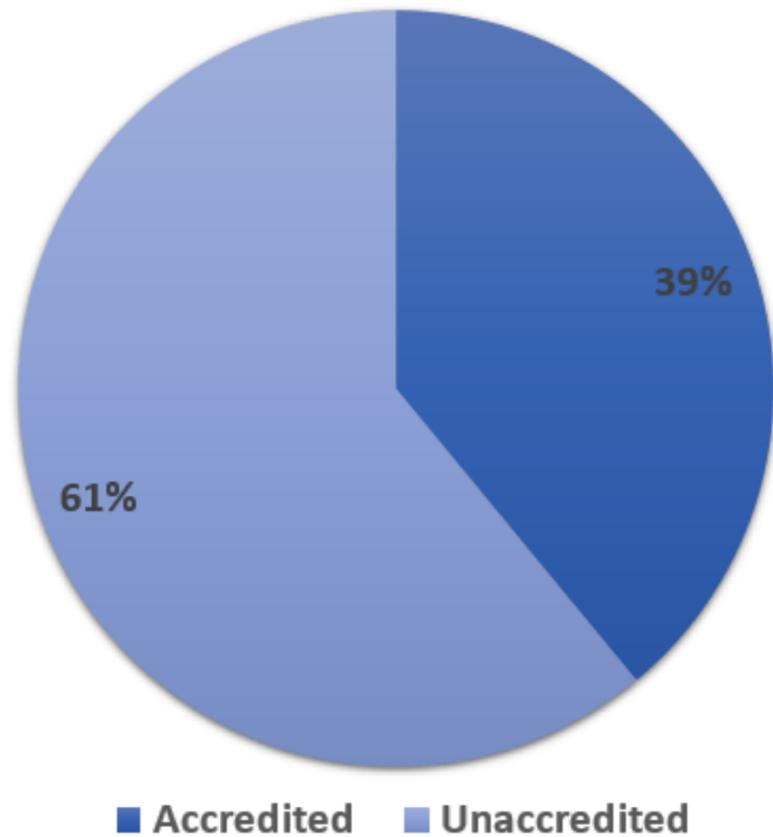
The Initial Applicant Regulatory Specialist Role

Initial Applicant Team

Recent Interventions in the IA Process

Looking Forward to Meeting Current Challenges

Takeaways and Questions



Six Regulatory Specialists (RS) review all applications for personnel, programs, renewals, and initials across 346 institutions.

Each RS is given 60-70 institutions to work on throughout the year. Each institution must annually file their renewal application.

Initial applications are processed on a rolling basis.



Pre-FY20

Prior to FY20, GNPEC was not prioritizing the completion of Initial Applicants. Without a standardized process, many initial applicants took a long period to authorize.

FY2018:

39 schools authorized with an average of 149 days from assignment to authorization.

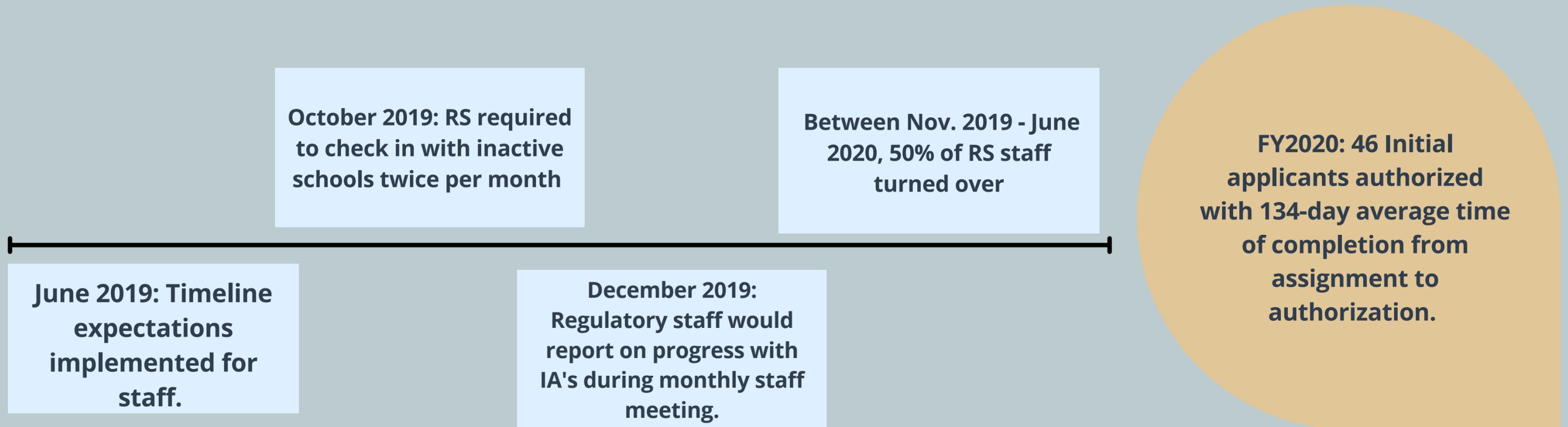
FY2019:

32 schools authorized with an average of 156 days from assignment to authorization.



Looking back

New Executive Director appointed in February 2019.





Challenges during this time

Isolation of the role



Lack of standardized process



High turnover





Creation of the Initial Applicant RS

Initial Applicant RS

The main point of contact for all initials

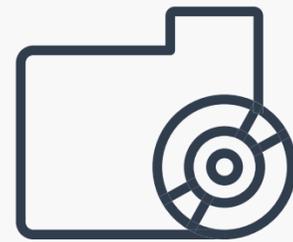
**15-20 initial applicants assigned to the
initial RS, in addition to a decreased
renewal workload**

Overall Emphasis on Timelines

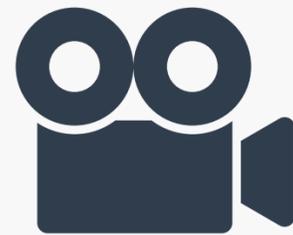


New Interventions

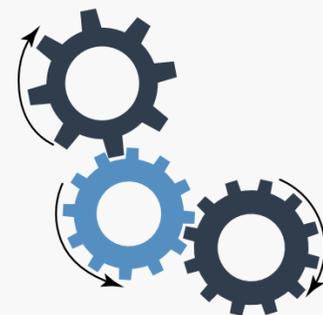
The creation of the Initial RS role identified other areas within the initial process that required additional interventions.



Expanded institutional
resources



Created tutorial videos



Established initial
application review
process



Institutional Resources

- Expanding the number and quality of institutional resources.
- Resources are organized based on authorization-related materials and program-related materials easily accessed on GNPEC's website.

An official website of the State of Georgia. [How you know](#) ▾

 GEORGIA NONPUBLIC POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION COMMISSION

[Directory of Institutions](#) ▾ [Authorization](#) ▾ [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#) **[Institutional Resources](#)** ▾ [Student Resources](#)

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All fees can now be paid online via the [Schedule of Fees](#) page.



Authorization- Related Resource Materials

As GNPEC continues to authorize more unaccredited schools we have received feedback reaffirming that sample resources being available is helpful to institutions.

General Authorization-Related Resources

- [Minimum Standards Criteria \(2021\)](#) (790.56 KB)
- [Institutional Resource List in Response to Covid-19](#) (488.13 KB)
- [Self Assessment of Distance Education](#) (185.51 KB)
- [GNPEC Enrollment Agreement Template](#) (24.3 KB)
- [Catalog Guidelines](#) (99.81 KB)
- [Student Transcript Template](#) (13.33 KB)
- [Student Survey Sample](#) (23.64 KB)
- [Financial Improvement Plan Guidelines](#) (160.69 KB)
- [Initial Site Visit Guidelines](#) (197.2 KB)
- [Renewal Site Visit Guidelines](#) (213.92 KB)
- [GNPEC Change of Ownership Form](#) (101.57 KB)
- [School Closure Information Form](#) (203.64 KB)
- [Scholarship Application Form](#) (202.45 KB)
- [GNPEC Sample Withdrawal Form](#) (17.87 KB)



Program-Related Resource Materials

Prior to July of 2020, GNPEC used external evaluators to review and make recommendations for programs.

As GNPEC has shifted to internally evaluating programs there has been an increased focus on comprehensive program materials.

Program-Related Resources

 [GNPEC Program Outline Template](#) (23.27 KB)

 [Syllabus Template - Content Outline](#) (13.85 KB)

 [Syllabus Sample- Medical Assisting](#) (57.5 KB)

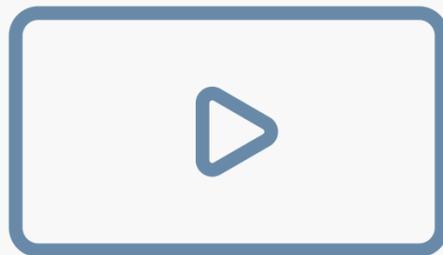
 [Sample Lesson Plan](#) (38.41 KB)



Tutorial Videos

How-To Videos were developed and added to GNPEC's website in January 2021.

GNPEC currently has eight how-to videos on the Institutional Resources Page, with each video addressing a specific part of the authorization process.



Video Topics:

"Creating and Accessing EDvera"

"Overview of Completion of IA Application"

"Tab 1 Overview (Institutional Information)"

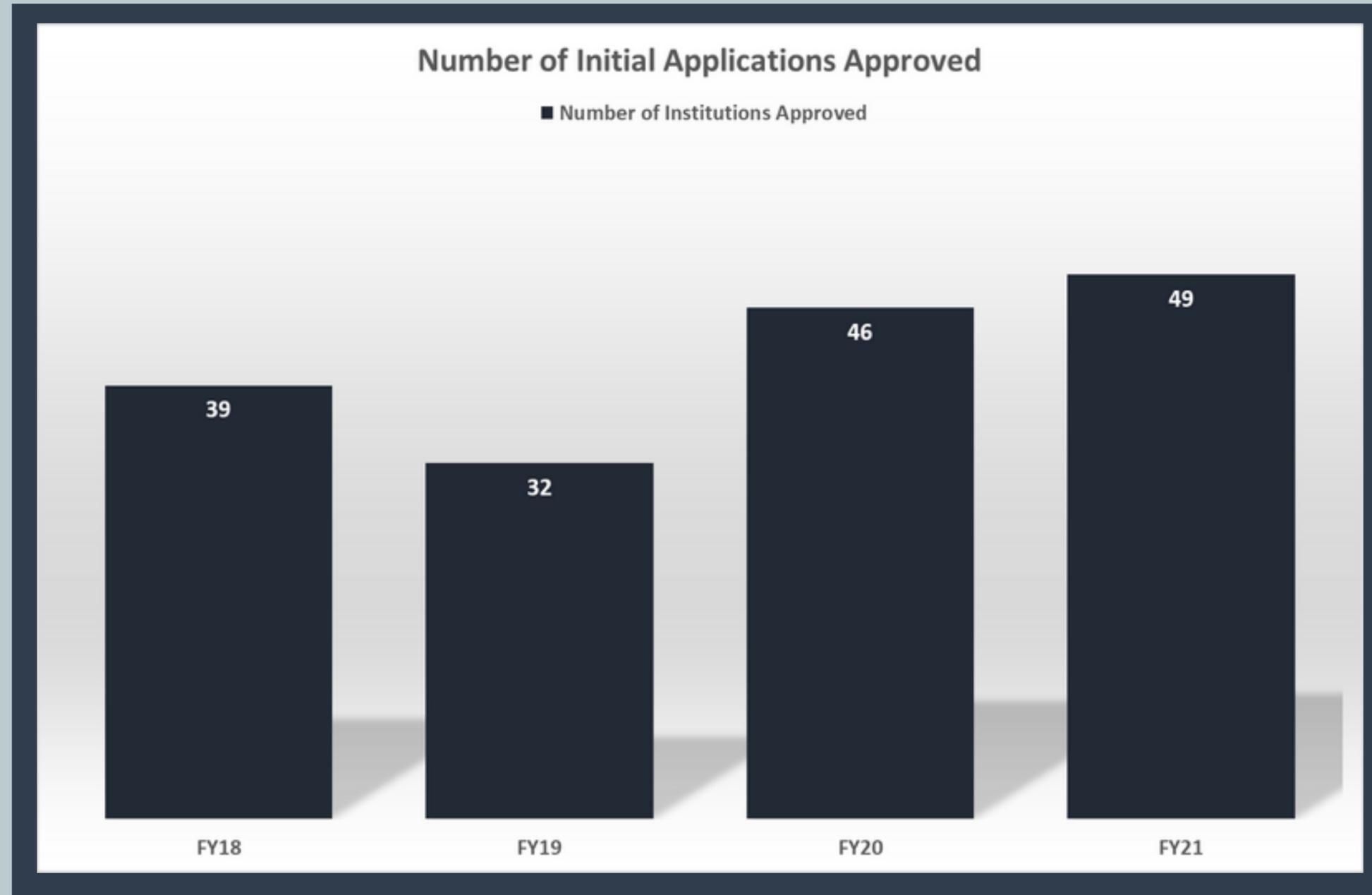
"Tab 2 Overview (Minimum Standards Document)"

"Tab 3: Programs and Exhibits"

"Tab 6: Financial Information"

"Tab 6 Tuition Information, Fees, Bonding"

"New Program Applications and Personnel Forms and Agent Permits"



In FY21, the Initial Applicant RS approved 49 applications with an average of 166 days from assignment to approval.



Strengths of the Role

Simplification of workflow

Consistency between applications.

Gained expertise in the initial application process.





Weaknesses of the Role

- Large workload
- Isolation of Initial Applicant RS
- Over-reliance on Initial Applicant RS to process applications, develop the role itself, and support institutions.



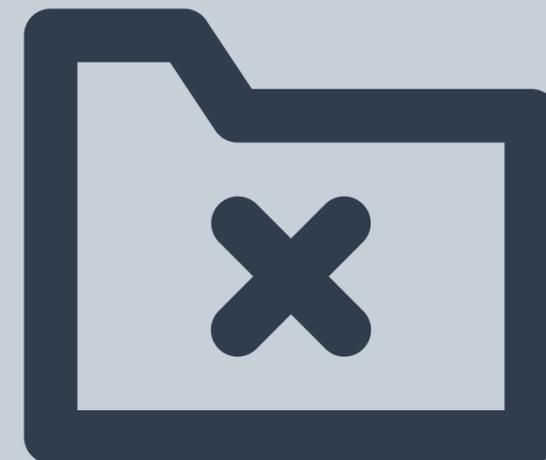


Challenges during this time

Increased Volume of Initial Applicants

Ineffective inactivity policy

Incomplete applications



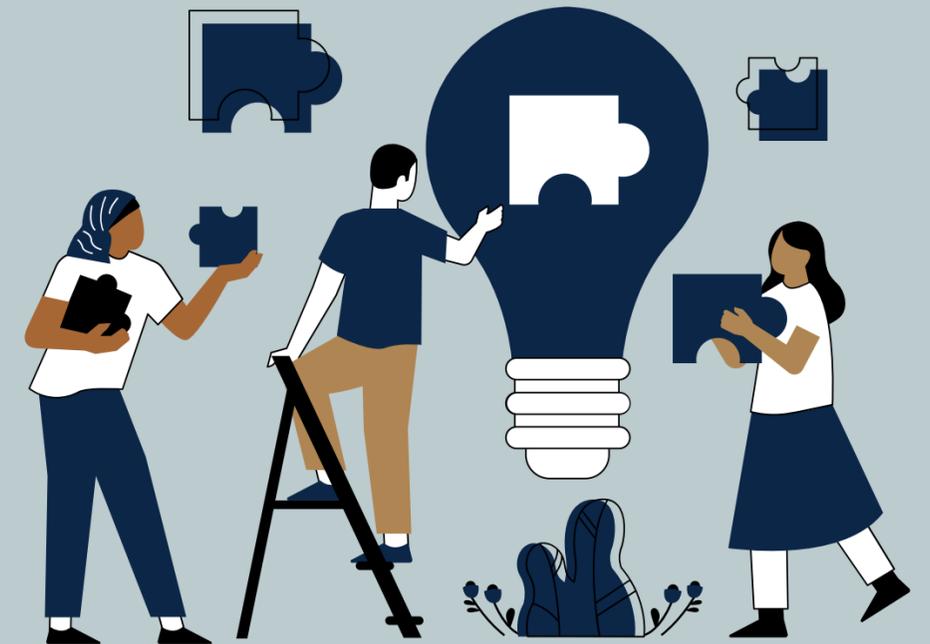


Who is the Initial Applicant Team?

All six Regulatory Specialists are a part of the Initial Applicant Team.

The Initial Applicant Team is led by Mike.

The team is overseen by Dr. Vieth, the Associate Executive Director.





The creation of the team led to the following improvements:

- The capacity to process more applications.
- Increased support for initial applicants.
- Monthly meetings to discuss current trends and challenges with Initial Applicants.





Inactivity Policy

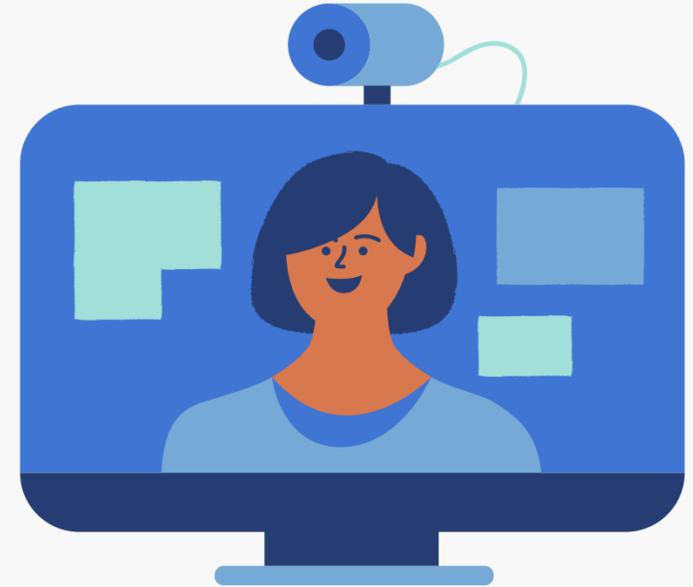
- Applicants are required to resubmit the application with revisions every three months.
- If the application is not resubmitted in 3 months the institution will be removed from the process.

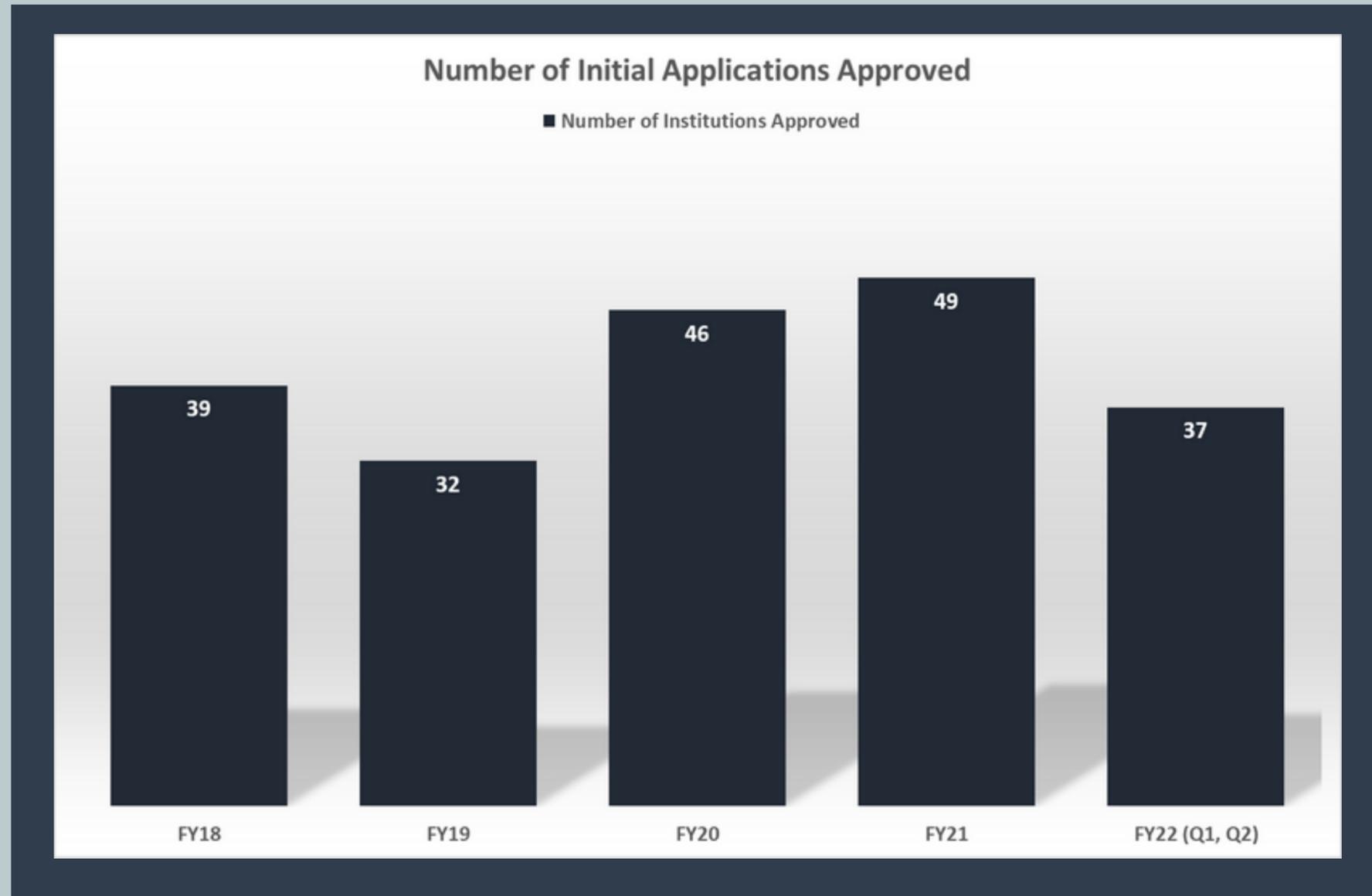




Training and Welcome Packet

- GNPEC started requiring that all Initial Applicants attend a virtual training session that is offered on a monthly basis before submitting an application.
- After attending training, the institution is given a Welcome Packet which includes FAQs, how to use EDvera, and information on exhibits required with definitions.





In the first six months of FY22, the Initial Applicant team approved 37 applications with an average of 110 days from assignment to approval.

Met our strategic goal of 114 days 



Trends in Types of Institutions

- **As of April 1st, 2022, 30/33 Initial Authorization Applications currently being processed are for unaccredited institutions.**
- **51% of all Initial Applicants in the pipeline are unaccredited allied health programs**





Strengths of Current Interventions

- **Increased efficiency** ✓
- **Enhanced collaboration** ✓
- **Less time spent on inactive applications** ✓
- **Institutions are submitting more complete applications** ✓

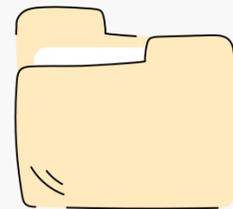


Current Challenges

Preparing institutions for potential growth



File review



First-year Renewal of Authorization Applications





Preparing Institutions for Growth

Six-month virtual visit post-Initial
Authorization



- **File expectations**
- **Discuss renewal expectations**
- **Adjust any inconsistencies**



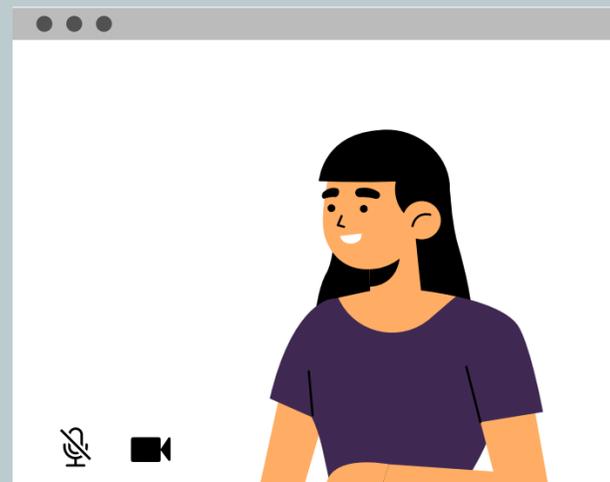
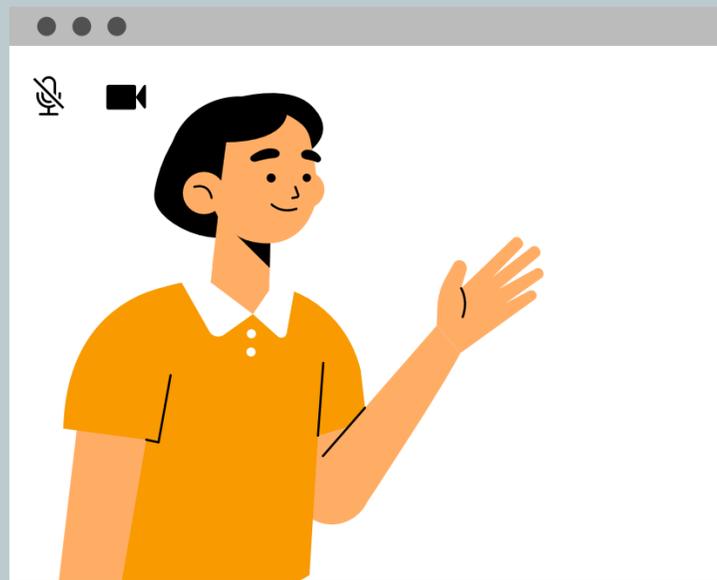
Enhanced Physical Sample Files



The sample file will encompass all requirements and best practices to guide institutions.



Renewal Application Training



Quarterly optional "town hall" to discuss additional requirements for renewal and recent updates.



Takeaways

- **Resource development and distribution**
- **Willingness to adapt quickly**
- **Channels for collaboration**



