



Detailed Lean Improvement Project Report

For the June 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014, reporting period

Agency name:

Department of Financial Institutions

Improvement project title:

Public Records Response Streamlining and Centralization

Date improvement project initiated:

July 15, 2014

Summary:

The Department of Financial Institutions (“DFI”) substantially improved its public records request response process, resulting in substantially reduced risks.

Details:

Description of the problem: DFI has historically dealt with Public Records Requests on a Division-by-Division basis, which meant that requesters were not treated consistently. For example, some Divisions had substantially different workloads and resources allocated, so two requestors seeking the same type and volume of records from different divisions may have received their responses on very different timelines. Similarly, there was little consistency across Divisions regarding forms (request forms, exemption logs, cover letters, etc.) and the way some exemptions were applied.

Description of the improvement: DFI engaged in a four-day Lean workshop with participation from each of DFI’s five divisions. During the workshop, we mapped out each division’s response process, determined the differences and similarities between them, and developed and implemented a uniform, agency-wide process for responding to public records requests. The workshop participants also determined that the process would benefit from centralization, and centralization of all public records functions was approved by executive management as of December 1st, 2014.

Specific results achieved: This process has been implemented recently enough that we do not have metrics available. Anecdotally, morale among staff assigned to public records requests appears to be higher, and by eliminating wasteful steps in the old processes, we appear to be responding to requests at roughly the same pace with fewer dedicated staff.

We are currently developing the metrics we will use to judge effectiveness going forward. They will likely include response rate, the amount of time requests spend in each stage of responses, and similar measures. Additionally, in the first quarter of 2015 we will implement visual management techniques that will allow each Division to see at a glance where the requests related to their division are in the overall process.



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How we involved customers or stakeholders in this effort:

Employees in each of the five divisions at DFI participated in the workshop. We deliberately included both employees with public records duties and some without such duties. Buy-in was particularly necessary given the instructions to the workshop group to consider whether centralization would be beneficial – rearranging FTE and budget allocations can be sensitive subjects and management buy-in early in the process was key, particularly once the group determined centralization of public records functions was in the best interest of DFI.

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