

Detailed Lean Improvement Project Report

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

Agency name:

Department of Ecology

Improvement project title:

Lean Culture and Remedial Action Grant spending in the Toxic Site Cleanup Process

Date improvement project initiated:

06/07/2012: Initial Toxics Cleanup Program Lean Event.

Follow-up events:

- 08/2012: Program-wide survey
- 09/2012: Vision, Mission, Values development
- 09/2013: Program Leadership Team Lean Training
- 04/21-22/2014: Roadmap Work Session: Timeline of Actions to create a Lean Culture
- 05/2014: Mini-workshops with all program staff statewide to engage them in timeline development.
- 10/2014: Program Leadership Team strategic planning workshop
- 12/2014: Workshop to revise the Lean Culture timeline and assign project teams

Summary:

The Toxics Cleanup Program is taking a three-pronged approach to improving the efficiency and impact of our cleanup and pollution prevention work.

1. **Strategic Plan** – Sets five top outcome goals and identifies actions and resources for getting there, and measures that tell us if we've accomplished the goals.
2. **Lean Culture** – Improving employee engagement and retention through communication, knowledge-sharing, professional development, and leadership.
3. **Process improvement** – Starting with researching and addressing the length of time it takes to clean up sites with Remedial Action Grants.

Details:

Description of the problem: The original problem was that local governments were not spending Remedial Action Grants fast enough because the cleanup process was too slow. Later, we identified underlying problems with the program culture and support for staff.

Description of the improvement: We are simultaneously researching the causes of long cleanup times, building more tools for staff, and actively changing the culture.

Specific results achieved:

- **Cleanup time data:** In November, we launched a new tool to measure document review times in the cleanup process. No data available yet.



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- Tools for staff: A “toolkit” for cleanup is around 90 percent complete but we have no data on its use.
- Culture change: Metrics include the state employee survey, internal survey data, and the Leadership Practices Inventory. We do not have time series data yet, just initial measurements.

How we involved customers or stakeholders in this effort:

Ecology involved local governments in initial lean efforts around length of cleanup time, and provided updates on new procedures to address this issue. Currently, the main stakeholder focus is on program staff. We are providing several opportunities for input on the strategic plan and ongoing input on lean culture projects and process improvement.

Contact persons:

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