

Professional Practices for Lean and Quality Improvement in Government

American Society for Quality – Government Division

Center for Quality Standards in Government

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Introduction:

These professional practices provide a framework and guideline for sustained, system-wide use of the practices of Lean Quality Improvement in Government. The adoption and use of Lean Process Improvement in Government (sometimes called Lean Six Sigma) has been proven to be an excellent means of achieving economy, efficiency and improvement in government, but for a variety of reasons it is often not sustained from administration to administration. These professional practices provide guidance to sustain these efforts.

Mission: To ensure that Lean Quality Improvement is a continuing, sustained practice of good government. To create significant new efficiency and effectiveness within government through the broad use of Lean Quality Improvement practices.

Principles:

Process Management and Systems Management is the fundamental duty of every manager and supervisor in government, and should be part of the classification standard and goals all managers and supervisors. It is also important for as many employees as possible, at all levels of an organization, to be involved in process improvement.

The use of Lean Quality Improvement and Quality Science should be required principles and practices for every manager and supervisor, and demonstrated by the structured use of tools and results.

The government-wide use of the process management standard will encourage and sustain excellent operational performance. This should be pro-actively led by the Executive Officer rather than punitively enforced as an audit function. Process management standards give agencies a leading measure of process capability and a valid means of completing an organizational scorecard.

Legislatures, councils and other elected members must work cooperatively with government managers to ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are achieved and sustained. Specific practices include:

- Working cooperatively with agencies to prioritize annual performance metrics that represent an achievable scorecard of success for that agency.
- Requesting and considering annual recommendations from each agency for the streamlining and simplification of mandates, regulations and laws that will reduce resource requirements, simplify work process, or improve outcomes.
- Allowing agencies the freedom to repurpose savings from achieved efficiencies and economies, rather than attempting to annually reduce budgets. Recognizing that

John Baranzelli, Chair of ASQ Government Division - john.baranzelli@outlook.com

Rich Mallory, Chair of Center for Auditable Quality Standards for Government – rmallory@cpshr.us

immediate and reactive budget reductions create mistrust and a powerful disincentive for continued improvement opportunities.

- Creating a safe and beneficial career transition for employees that undertake recommendations or process improvements that lead to the elimination of existing jobs in government. This practice recognizes that employees take a personal career risk in recommending or working toward savings in their own program area, and that there is a strong public interest in ensuring that such employees are rewarded with equal or greater positions rather than job loss.
- The adoption and use of the Auditable Quality Standards of the Government Division of the American Society for Quality will encourage and sustain best practice and excellent operational performance.

Practices:

The ASQ Government Division Center for Quality Standards is working towards broad recognition and use of professional standards in government. The Professional Practices and Auditable Quality Standards are subject to regular professional review, to ensure uniform, objective and consistent guidance to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and value in government. The Center is also working to standardize methods, expertise, and materials in support of its mission.