

Lean Government Case Study: Connecticut Governors Redouble Commitment to Lean Government

In January of 2010, Connecticut's Governor, M. Jodi Rell, announced that her state would be continuing and expanding their effort to improve state government processes through lean methods. Agencies across the state have changed the way they do business by adopting lean.

Governor Rell said lean methods piloted by state Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Labor (DOL) have resulted in substantial efficiencies, service improvements, and cost savings. Those same principles were expanded to five more agencies: Motor Vehicles (DMV), Consumer Protection (DCP), Administrative Services (DAS), Revenue Services (DRS), and Economic and Community Development (DECD).

Lean is a continuous improvement philosophy in which teams of department employees examine an agency's processes, identifies root causes of problems, develop their own solutions, and eliminate non-value adding steps to ultimately expedite services for taxpayers while doing more with existing resources.

"Piles of paperwork, reams of red tape and bureaucratic hurdle after bureaucratic hurdle are a snapshot of a bogged down system. It is too cumbersome and too costly," Governor Rell said. "We are changing the way state government does business."

"Our taxpayers deserve a government that delivers services in the most efficient, cost-saving way while being responsive to the people they serve," the Governor said. "Many agencies are already seeing substantial results. Less red tape gives staff more time to carry out the responsibilities to our citizens."

The DEP began its efforts around July of 2008 and they are still ongoing. Using a team approach to identify and remedy inefficiencies and duplicative steps, the agency has streamlined a review for seven types of inland water permits that previously used seven separate processes, getting them down to one consistent process. Dock permits, which had been issued an average of 550 days after application, are now down to about 100 days. The DEP has also been able to reduce by 62 percent (294 days to 113 days) the time needed to process applications for loans for municipal wastewater treatment projects under state's Clean Water Fund.

"We would never have imagined the magnitude of success that we now see," DEP Commissioner Amey Marrella said. "Staff teams have led 18 lean projects and we are implementing their recommendations on improving our processes for permitting, enforcement and other programs."

"The improvements are resulting in better services for the public and those whom we regulate," Commissioner Marrella said. "As a result of lean, DEP is freeing up staff resources to address backlogs and provide more timely and high quality service."

The DOL is working with agencies and groups both inside and outside state government to embrace lean practices. The agency's Lean Government approach has been recognized by the Connecticut Quality Improvement Award Partnership (CQIAP), which represents the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for Performance Excellence in Connecticut.

"We are doing more with less. We have to," Governor Rell said. "Agencies in my Administration clearly understand that serving the public in a more-efficient, less-expensive way is paramount."

Since taking office as Connecticut's new Governor in November of 2010, Dannel P. Malloy, has continued support for lean government efforts that are improving efficiency, service, and satisfaction by both citizens and government employees.

Quotes from Connecticut state government department employees involved in lean:

"Thank you for introducing me to one of the most positive experiences for me here at the Labor Department. Now I can't seem to stop wanting to lean everything."

Stephanie Jones, Business Management

"Eliminating waste in government has truly been an enlightening experience. The process gave me a real understanding of the needs of our customers and the way they do business."

Diane Sardilli, Hartford Business Services

"The Lean process helped us to take an objective look at our internal business processes and finds ways to streamline them. Implementation of these changes will make for a better product, reducing wasted time and duplication of effort."

Harlan Armour, Claims Examination

For more information:

Connecticut's Lean Government practices go to: www.ctdol.state.ct.us/LEAN

To Learn More About Lean Government:

Learn how the Maryland World Class Consortia can help your government organization use simple and effective methods of continuous improvement to increase service levels, shorten response times, reduce cost, and improve employee satisfaction.

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