



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

LAND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT:

APPLICATION RECEIPT PROCESS



Summary

Combined, standardized, and simplified application intake procedures for four separate permit programs.

Using Lean principles, DES's Land Resources Management permit programs ensured same-day review for completeness and acceptance of permit applications, eliminated delays by standardizing procedures and cross-training staff, and improved accuracy of data entry.

Accomplishments

- Automated many repetitive activities.
- Cross-trained all support staff on initial review.
- Reduced data entry errors by eliminating double-keying.
- 45 "tweaks" to streamline the process.

Team

- 9 Support Staff
- 6 Supervisory Staff
- 2 Lean Facilitators
- Customer groups on a consulting basis

Contact

Carolyn Russell
carolyn.russell@des.nh.gov
271-3010

The Service

Wetlands, Shoreland, Alteration of Terrain and Subsurface Permit Programs (collectively, "Land Resources Management Programs" – LRMP), which regulate land development throughout the state.

The Problem

The four programs used separate staff and followed their own procedures to accept permit applications. The programs had many differences in data entry, requirements for a "complete" application package, and letters sent to applicants and municipalities. The initial "administrative completeness review" could take up to 14 days for some types of applications.

The Goal

The goals of this project were to:

- Reduce the time required to do the completeness review of applications;
- Improve the consistency of submissions by applicants and the response by programs; and
- Provide cross-program staff coverage to prevent processing delays.

The Lean Process

LRMP staff described the current process steps to intake new permit applications. In mapping the process steps for each of the programs, the staff understood that they were doing many of the same tasks, but in different ways. The team then designed a single process using the best practices from the existing approaches and using all available staff on a rotating basis. One of the biggest challenges to creating a single, consistent process was the inconsistency in statutory and regulatory requirements between the four programs. It took some time, and some legal input, to reach final agreement on the minimum elements that could be required as part of each application. Applications missing any

of the critical elements would be returned to the applicant to resubmit a complete package.

Although the list of items required for each type of application remained slightly different, the initial review process was standardized. Detailed standard operating procedures and new "checklists" listing the required elements were developed to support staff. Letters were standardized across the programs and new automated templates were created. Application forms and instructions were revised to streamline the initial review.

DES did several things to communicate the changes in the requirements and procedures with consultants and potential permit applicants. A LRMP webpage was created to describe the new process. Flyers outlining the changes were included with each program's letters and permits for several months leading up to the change. E-mail notices went out to 2,500 contacts including professional organizations.

The Results

- Applications and payments are now processed the same day received.
- Up to 40% reduction in processing time for initial completeness review.
- Eliminated duplicative data entry and redundant letters to applicants.
- 23% increase in initially complete standard wetland applications.

