

2015 Exemplary Lean Project Award

NHDES/EPA Region 1 - New England (EPA Region 1) Lean Project Team

The 2015 Exemplary Lean Project Award is presented to the NHDES/EPA Region 1 - New England Lean Project Team for its work to streamline the Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA) and Priorities and Commitments (P&C) List processes.

Since 1997, NHDES and EPA Region 1 have been operating under multi-year PPAs, which created the basic framework for joint environmental, public health, and programmatic priority setting, as well as the development of negotiated work plans documented via the P&C List and NHDES's Measures Tracking and Reporting System (MTRS). Over \$5 million in EPA dollars form the annual Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), which helps to fund the work specifically detailed in the P&C Lists and MTRS work plans. Given significant staffing and organizational changes at EPA Region 1, and new policies for managing PPAs & PPGs, it was necessary for staff to: 1) gain a more in-depth understanding of the constraints facing each agency; 2) re-define the approach for developing these planning documents; and 3) take advantage of opportunities to streamline processes, improve communications, use new tools more effectively, and work more collaboratively.

As a result, NHDES and EPA Region 1 agreed to charter one of the first, formal joint Lean events between a state environmental agency and EPA Region 1. Carolyn Russell, formerly with NHDES, and Stephen Perkins of EPA Region 1, co-facilitated the ensuing four Lean meetings. As a result of this project, detailed processes were documented in writing for the first time, and both parties gained a much better understanding of, and a greater appreciation for, the organizational, staffing, and funding constraints unique to both agencies. The design of a streamlined PPA document and related development processes will accelerate the annual completion timeframe for these agreements by 4 to 6 months. NHDES staff helped EPA Region 1 realize its goal to shift the annual P&C List planning process for the New England States to a two-year planning cycle to align with the new, two-year cycle for National Program Manager Guidance documents. NHDES took a leadership role in not only bringing the other New England states to consensus, but also led a pilot project to design a new, two-year P&C List and to document the results of all EPA Region 1/State negotiations on the new on-line version housed on a Microsoft SharePoint site. This approach is now serving as a model for other EPA regional offices and their respective states.

The efficiencies gained by sharing a single, electronic version of the two-year, negotiated work plan are significant. Congratulations to the NHDES/EPA Region 1 Lean Project Team on a job well done!

NHDES Lean Project Team Members: Susan Carlson, Ted Diers, John Duclos, Vincent Perelli, Wendy Waskin, Michael Bradley, Carolyn Russell (Co-facilitator). **EPA region 1 Lean Project Team Members:** Kristi Rae Simoneau, Steve Boudrot, Jennifer Brady, Lucy Casella, Dave Conroy, Deborah Harstedt, Johanna Hunter, Edward Kim, Michael Ochs, and Stephen Perkins (Co-facilitator)