

2018-2019 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Financial Services – Office of Performance Management

REQUEST NO.: 173

REQUESTED BY: Tovo

DATE REQUESTED: 9/4/18

DATE POSTED: 9/8/18

REQUEST: Please provide more information about the deliverables anticipated by adding four positions to the Lean Sigma Continuous Improvement Program.

RESPONSE:

Lean Six Sigma is a best practice framework for problem-solving, coaching, and management that many organizations – both public and private – have adopted worldwide. It helps organizations develop people at all levels to improve their work and deliver value to customers; the benefits from which include significant improvements in operating costs, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. Quite simply, Lean Six Sigma can help us do more, and do it even better, with less.

The City of Austin's Lean Program in the Office of Performance Management found success in its beginning stages as it trained staff from a variety of departments to complete various projects involving hiring, purchasing, and grant compliance. The expansion of this program will allow for far greater reach throughout the organization plus the inevitable improvements in operating costs, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. Examples of prior projects include a redesign of the Aquatics Division lifeguard hiring process that resulted in the on-time opening of City pools, significant improvements in Austin Public Health case management policies and tools that have been recognized by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs as a best practice, and multiple efforts with the 3-1-1 call center to improve the experience for callers as well as our call-takers. Specific projects that the expanded team will tackle moving forward include the full redesign of the capital project delivery system, redesign of the development services/permitting program, increased training availability throughout the entire organization, and additional process improvement projects in partnership with departments.

Goals for the expansion include significant savings for the City that create opportunities for reallocation of resources and cost/time savings for our customers. By reducing the delivery time for capital projects by 50%, it will result in substantial internal cost savings for the City which also means a reduction in bond dollars and other funding sources required to bring a project to completion. It also means the community will have access to facilities and improved infrastructure far sooner. The redesign of the development services/permitting program will result in reduced time to complete plan reviews and inspections, thus reducing the amount of time and costs residents and businesses incur to carry those projects out and reducing the work load of staff responsible for the reviews and inspections.

At this time, one person is responsible for the City's entire Lean program (including training, facilitating smaller projects, and leading larger scale consulting projects. The requirements to

address the capital project delivery system and development services/permitting program are far more than a single person can possibly handle. Further, the waiting list for Lean consulting services continues to grow as numerous departments have and continue to request assistance in improving processes and programs that directly serve the community.