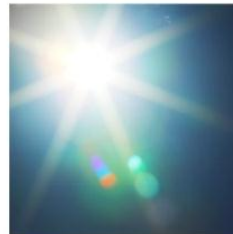


Improving Virginia's §§319 Program Efficiency: A journey through LEAN

2018 National Nonpoint Source Training Workshop
Colorado Springs, CO

Ms. Nicole Sandberg and Mr. Kelly Meadows
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of
Water Planning, Office of Watershed Programs



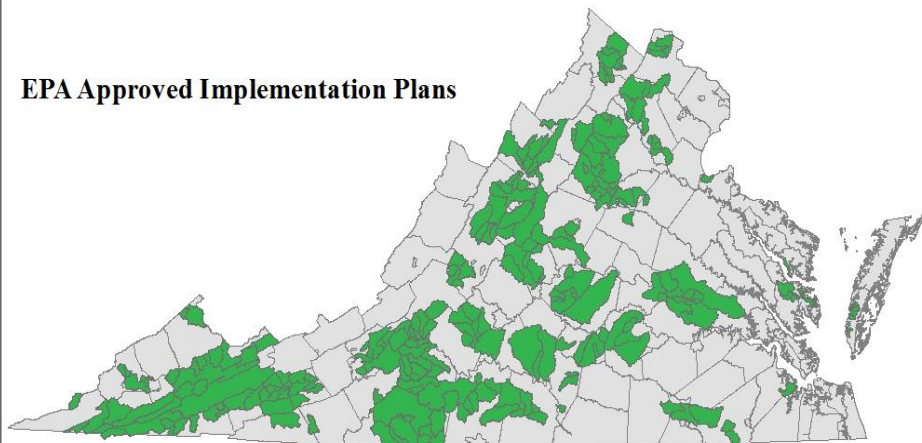
Why Do We Care?

- Become a more efficient and productive program
 - Reduce redundancies
- Utilize limited resources more effectively
 - Staff and Partner expertise and financial resources
- Engage more stakeholders and partners in NPS pollution improvement activities
 - Under-represented geographic areas, program areas (e.g. urban), etc.



319 Program Goals

EPA Approved Implementation Plans



8/17/2018
S:\Reps: IP_Statewide_Summary_2018.mxd





VA 319 Process Improvement Activities

- 2014: Assessment of Program Performance
- 2015: Capacity Building Training Program
- 2016: Evaluation of Program Improvement
- 2016: VA 319 Process Flow Assessment
- 2017-2018: Emerging Leaders Project and 319 LEAN Process
- 2018-2020: VA 319 Program Reset



VA 319 Process Flow Assessment

Program Areas

- Grant Award Process
- Sub-award (contract) Process
- Reporting
- Progress Review
- Modifications and Amendments
- Project Closeout
- EPA Award Closeout

Partner Areas

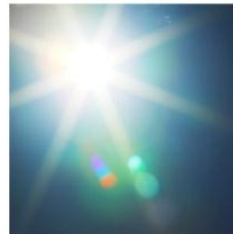
- VA DEQ Office of Watershed Programs
- VA DEQ Project Managers
- VA DEQ Office of Finance
- VA DEQ Office of Procurement
- Grantees & other Agencies
- U.S. EPA – Region 3



Areas Identified for Improvement

- Simplify process flow from EPA application to sub-recipient award, payment and closeout
- Simplify process for soliciting and selecting projects
- Grantee performance in administering projects
- Staff time availability to train and mentor grantees
- Reduce level of staff time and resources to administer program and projects.

Emerging Leadership Program: 319 Grant Program Process Improvement Project





Purpose of ELP Project

The ELP team was brought in to help identify opportunities for process improvement such as:

- Make 319 application easier to complete and review
- Increase quantity and quality of applications
- Improve program efficiency
- Reduce delay in awarding contracts
- Define the business requirements for a future agency grant management portal



Multi-Step Program Evaluation

- Surveys of staff associated with 319 program
 - Initial survey
 - Survey of potential action items
 - Survey of implementation success
- In-depth interviews with staff
- All-day meetings
 - Charter development
 - Mapping exercise
 - Action items



Preliminary Survey

- Survey sent to staff associated with 319 program
- Survey asked the following:
 - Staff hours spent on specific phases of the grant
 - What phase could most benefit from improvement
 - Offer suggestions on what can be improved
 - Feedback staff received from applicants



Interviews

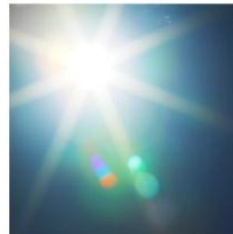
Purpose:

- Obtain buy-in from 319 Grant Program staff
- Further define scope and goals

Interview questions:

- Based on results of initial survey
- Focused on identifying greatest opportunities for improvement

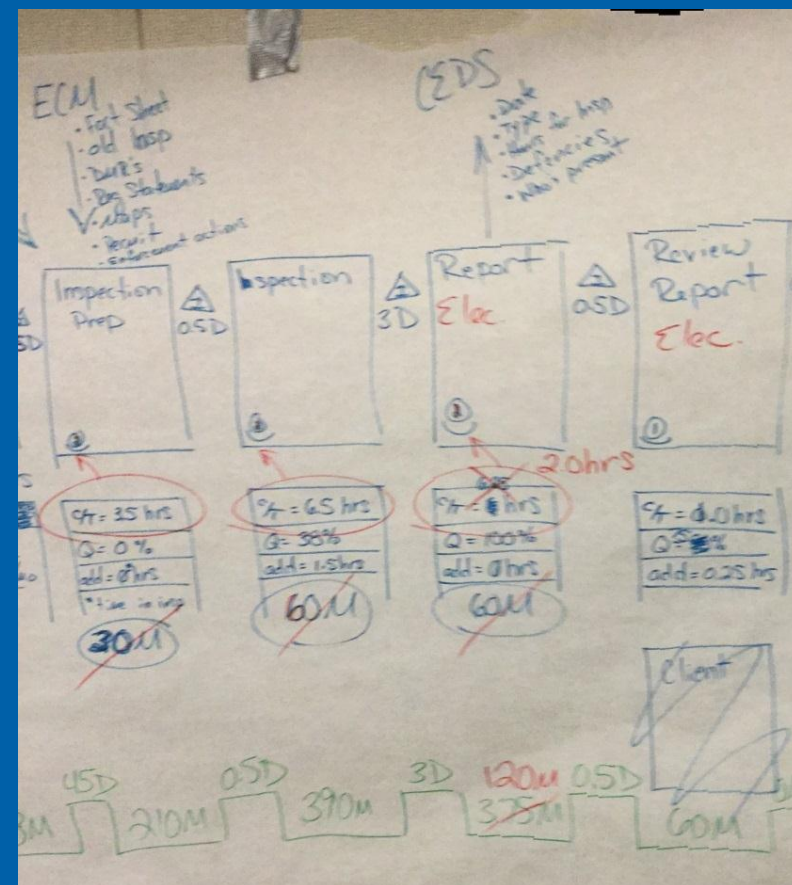
LEAN 319 Mapping Project





Current State Mapping Exercise

October 16-17, 2017





Process Steps Performed By:

Central Office
Staff

Regional Office
Staff

Central and
Regional Office
Staff

Touch Time
Wait Time

Development
RFA

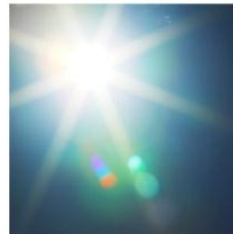
Publish RFA

Review
Applications

EPA Approval

Executing
Contracts

2018-2020: VA 319 Program Reset





Action Items

- Ranking by stakeholders
- Field testing: 2018 Request for Applications
- Implemented action items survey
 - Determine if action items pertaining to grant application review were implemented
 - What effect did they have on the process
 - Request additional suggestions to improve application review process

Implemented Improvements

Changes made as result of LEAN process:

- **Development of 2018-2019 Request for Applications**
 - 100% participation by all DEQ regions
 - Increased automation of application package/process
 - Revised and updated evaluative criteria and scoring
 - Promotion by Regional Staff
- **Updated RFA Review Process**
 - Participation by all DEQ regions regardless of applicant pool
 - Subject Matter Experts utilized to reduce staff time

Observed RFA Improvements

- **Improved Results from 2018-2019 RFA**
 - Quality of applications – 100% funded
 - Diversity of applicants – 50% new applicants
 - Geographic coverage – 75% applicants covered new areas
 - Decrease in the number of application issues to address
 - Decrease in staff and applicant time
- **Improvement of Sub-award Contracting Process**
 - Increased involvement by Regional staff
 - Decrease in process time: 2 months down from 6 months
 - Decrease in revisions and modifications: 2 iterations down from 4
 - Reduced need for content revisions due to proposal quality



Next Steps

- Review ELP Project Recommendations
- Revisit Process Flow Assessment to target additional Process Improvement Plan (PIP) candidates
- Update Grant Project Management Resources and Implement 2019-2020 Training Plan