



# The CI Circular

June 2015

## Farewell from CI Director Mary Jo Caldwell

Some of you may have already heard, but I wanted to let you know that I'm leaving my position as Director of the Minnesota Office of Continuous Improvement. This is a truly bittersweet move for me, as I have enjoyed my tenure here and I appreciate the opportunities I've had to work with such dedicated and talented people. I will be staying in the CI industry, but as a national consultant working with states, counties, and cities launching CI initiatives.

Over the past several years, Minnesota's CI program has tripled in staff as well as service offerings, and I'm very proud to have been a part of this. I want to thank the incredible Office of CI team — Cristine, Cathy, Jane, and Adam — because without them these enhancements to the program would not have been possible.



*The Office of CI Team – (from left to right) Jane, Adam, Jo, Cristine, and Cathy.*

I also want to thank the [CI Steering Team](#) for their continued support of the program. Our bi-monthly meetings are always well attended, and the team's participation has truly made a difference and shaped Minnesota's CI efforts!

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the Commissioner's Office here at the Department of Administration. Each and every one of them champion this program and are always "talking the talk" to all state agencies. Specifically, I want to call out prior Commissioner Spencer Cronk and our current Commissioner Matt Massman, as well as Assistant Commissioners Lenora Madigan and Curt Yoakum. Their dedication to this program is appreciated and I'm confident it will remain strong going forward!

I'd love to stay in touch with you and hear about the great work that you're doing. Starting July 1, you can reach me by email at [mjocald@comcast.net](mailto:mjocald@comcast.net).

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### Lean Fun Fact

The Minnesota Office of  
Continuous Improvement  
has trained over 8,600  
government employees.

—Jo



*Jo with the Department of Administration Leadership team in December 2013.*

### **Project Spotlight: MMB Financial Reporting Kaizen Event**

The Minnesota Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) works with state agencies to help them improve performance using CI tools. One key CI partner is Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB), who worked with the office to do a survey of their Accounting Services division. As a result of this survey, the Financial Reporting team asked Office of CI trainer and facilitator Cristine Leavitt to lead them through a Kaizen event.

Every year, the Financial Reporting team publishes the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report — a complex and detailed report covering all state funds and state agencies. Commonly called the CAFR, it is one of the most important and closely scrutinized documents published by the state. While producing the report, the Financial Reporting team works with state agencies while juggling tight deadlines and a commitment to quality that has consistently won the team national recognition. Obviously, this commitment to excellence and the tight constraints can cause stress on the team and significant overtime as they near the deadline.



*Members of the event team. From left to right: Cristine Leavitt (facilitator), Josie Shrum, Paul Thompson, Anh Yankovec, Sandy Kamnikar, Susan Rumpca (Team Leader), and Peter Hamma (facilitator).*

Through the Kaizen event, the Financial Reporting team identified process strengths and wastes, improving their understanding of the process and its critical components. For example, though Financial Reporting has strong staff, they often act as a go-between for the General Accounting division and state agencies, forcing them to switch between tasks, slowing the overall process. As a result of the event, they are now working with General Accounting to communicate more directly with agencies and reduce the burden on the process.

In addition, they were able to identify key pain points, such as the need to clarify the statements and data prepared by agencies three to eight times. There are also adjustments made after statements are completed, adding further complexity. To address these and other issues, the team came up with 18 recommended improvements, including a “quick hit” to reword memos in plain language to reduce confusion. By identifying these items, they’ve found ways to improve their efficiency, reduce overtime, and deliver a better final product.

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## Training curriculum and registration updates

You can register for our August and September courses starting now, but will need to follow a new registration process to do so.

### Registering for Training

Going forward, registrants will sign up for Office of CI training courses using the State of Minnesota’s Enterprise Learning Management (ELM) tool. State employees can access ELM within the [Employee Self Service](#) portal, where timesheets, pay stubs, and other employee resources are accessed. Non-state employees should email [lean@state.mn.us](mailto:lean@state.mn.us) to request an ELM account.

In either case, training courses can be accessed by clicking “Learning” on the main menu of Self Service. From there, you can search or browse the training catalog. When browsing, Office of CI courses are listed under the “Business Skills” category. When searching, use the search term “improvement” to see all Office of CI courses. You can find additional support on the [Registration page](#) of our website.

### Training Changes Starting in August

With the introduction of our new registration process also come some changes to training curriculum. To summarize:

- We’ve launched a new introductory online training titled “CI 101.” This short, interactive course is a recommended prerequisite for all other Office of CI training. It can be completed in about six minutes from the comfort of any computer by going to the [CI Online Training page](#).
- Kaizen Facilitation training will not be offered on a regular basis, but will be provided by request, with minimum enrollment sizes.
- Our Problem Solving course is undergoing a minor transformation, reflected in its new name, Problem Solving Tools. While the content of the course will be much the same, the course will be restructured into a more hands-on format.

For more information about these training updates, check out the [Training section](#) of our website. You can see the newly announced training dates in the Upcoming Events sidebar below, or on our website’s [Calendar page](#).

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### Upcoming Events

[Aug. 4, Intro to CI](#)

[Aug. 4, Problem Solving Tools](#)

[Aug. 11, Process Improvement Measurement](#)

[Aug. 18, Leading and Supporting CI Projects](#)

[Sept. 1, Intro to CI](#)

[Sept. 1, Process Improvement Measurement](#)

[View all Lean events at mn.gov/CI](#)

## CI in the spotlight at National Governor's Association Summit

The Minnesota Office of CI was one of two states invited to present at the National Governor's Association (NGA) Summit in April. The summit's topic was "Delivering Results." CI Director Mary Jo Caldwell shared the stage with the State of Washington and talked about how Minnesota's CI program is the longest-running enterprise-wide state program in the nation. She highlighted how we began, our successes along the way, lessons learned, and what we are doing today.

The event was a great opportunity to highlight Minnesota's ongoing CI efforts on a nationwide stage; a number of Governors and representatives from their administrations were in attendance. The Office of CI's dashboard reporting of training results and self-reporting project tracking tool generated strong interest from attendees.



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