



March 2013

Answering Some Common Questions About Lean Training

The Lean mailbox receives numerous requests each month. Perhaps you've wondered who is eligible to take our trainings or about special trainings for your staff. Here are some commonly asked questions, along with our answers:

I don't work for the state of Minnesota. Can I participate in Lean trainings?

In general, we say our Lean trainings are available to any public sector workers, whether employed at the state, local or federal level. While our curriculum is geared primarily toward State of Minnesota staff, we identify local and federal government officials as our "process partners," and it is important to have those process partners involved when integrating continuous improvement methods into our operations. In the past, we have welcomed workers from other states (and have even recently been talking to a neighbor from the north in Canada about training opportunities). Due to space constraints for our trainings, we do limit the participation of those who don't work in the public sector.

I can't find a confirmation of my registration? Can you confirm that I'm registered for this session? What can I expect from the training? Where do I park? Lunch?

You should receive an automated confirmation message upon completing your training registration. If a number of weeks later your memory is hazy, don't worry. We also send a manual confirmation and reminder one week in advance of training sessions, with all the details you need to know. These confirmations include all the important bits, such as a reminder of the location, details for parking and what lunch options you'll have.

I want to hold a Lean training for my staff in our office. Do you offer that?

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Give us your two cents

[A shiny new Lean website is currently in development. Have ideas or feedback for what you'd like to see on the new site? Drop us a line and let us know!](#)

If you're interested in hosting a Lean training specifically for your staff (in a county office away from the metro for example), you'll want to contact us. Email us at lean@state.mn.us and our program director would be happy to talk to you about coordinating a special training session.

The training sessions I want to attend are full, what should I do?!

Our new event registration system has a waitlist function. If a session is full, look for the "Add Me to the Waitlist" option and give it a click. Enrolling on the waitlist is not a fool's errand. In the days leading up to sessions, spots almost always open up, and if you're on the top of the waitlist, we'll email you right away, before anyone else.

Have other burning questions? Don't fret, just send us a message at lean@state.mn.us and we'll do our best to answer it for you.

Department of Education Kaizen Team Addresses Growing Demand for *Help Me Grow* Program

If a Minnesota parent, grandparent or physician has concerns about the development of a young child, they can send a referral to the state's *Help Me Grow* program. *Help Me Grow* connects these individuals with staff at their local school district or another local public health organization to explore preschool special education and development programs for that child. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) coordinates this process, receiving *Help Me Grow* referrals and passing them along to the right people at the local level.

A number of years ago, the volume of referrals was small. MDE staff could handle them as they came in. Today, the demand for *Help Me Grow* has risen rapidly. Perhaps you've heard their radio ads on Minnesota Public Radio in recent days. Larger public awareness campaigns like this, along with an increasing need for these services in Minnesota communities has seen the volume of *Help Me Grow* Referrals, well, grow. Quite a lot.

And the current processes at MDE have struggled to keep up with these increases. Processing referrals began to become an all-encompassing job, pulling the limited *Help Me Grow* staff away from other vital duties. With referrals only expected to increase further, the staff at MDE held a Kaizen event in February to reassess their process and develop a new one fit for the future.

Upcoming Events

March 19, Lean 101, **Open**
March 20-21, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**
March 26, Cass County Lean 101
March 27-29, MCTC Kaizen Event
April 1-5, U of M Kaizen Event
April 9, Lean 101, **Full**
April 10-11, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**
April 17-19, Assoc. of MN Counties Lean Training
April 29, Sibley County Lean 101
May 13, Lean 101, **Full**
May 14-15, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**
June 6, Lean 101, **Open** NEW
June 25, Lean 101, **Open** NEW

View all Lean events at www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar

Register for trainings on our [Eventbrite page](#).

The goals of the Kaizen event were to reduce the number of steps needed to process a referral, to standardize the expectations at the local level for school districts and public health organizations, and to integrate modern technology into the process (while getting rid of old technologies like faxed referrals).



The Help Me Grow Kaizen Team with their future process map.

As a result of the Kaizen event, the Help Me Grow team is developing more consistent, universal standards for their local process partners and communicating these standards more proactively. With each school district and local organization historically having its own method for receiving referrals, there was a large strain on the Help Me Grow team. Large amounts of time and effort went into maintaining vast, ever-changing contact directories, determining the proper contact methods for sending the referral, and too often dealing with email bouncebacks and technical issues.

The team is also removing some unnecessary process steps and pursuing technological enhancements that will automate other steps, including an automated phone message and more capable online forms. This will minimize defects and the resulting rework for Help Me Grow staff. It will also result in referrals arriving in the right place faster, with needed services subsequently getting to children sooner, in the vital stages of their development.

This was the core ideal that continued to drive the team over the course of the three-day kaizen event. When engaging in the mapping exercise for this “referral processing,” team members continually reminded each other that these aren’t just forms of data being processed. These are Minnesota’s children. This passion and commitment from the Help Me Grow team will be invaluable in helping them realize the promise of their future process map, Kaizen recommendations and bold implementation plan.
