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Virginia Department of
Environmental Quality

Virginia Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program (CWFAP) Streamlining Efforts

2020 CIFA Workshop

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Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

December 3, 2020

Objectives

- Background information
- Lean event description
  - Before, during, and after event tasks
- Results
  - Tangible and intangible
- Key takeaways for success and lessons learned

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Background – Virginia CWFAP

- Our team administers three funds
  - Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (Federal/State)
    - Virginia Resources Authority (VRA)
  - Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (State)
  - Water Quality Improvement Fund (State)

- Team distribution
  - Central office (Richmond) – Program management staff, project officers, fiscal staff and VRA
  - Regional offices (Around the state) – Project managers

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Background – Virginia DEQ Regional Office Locations
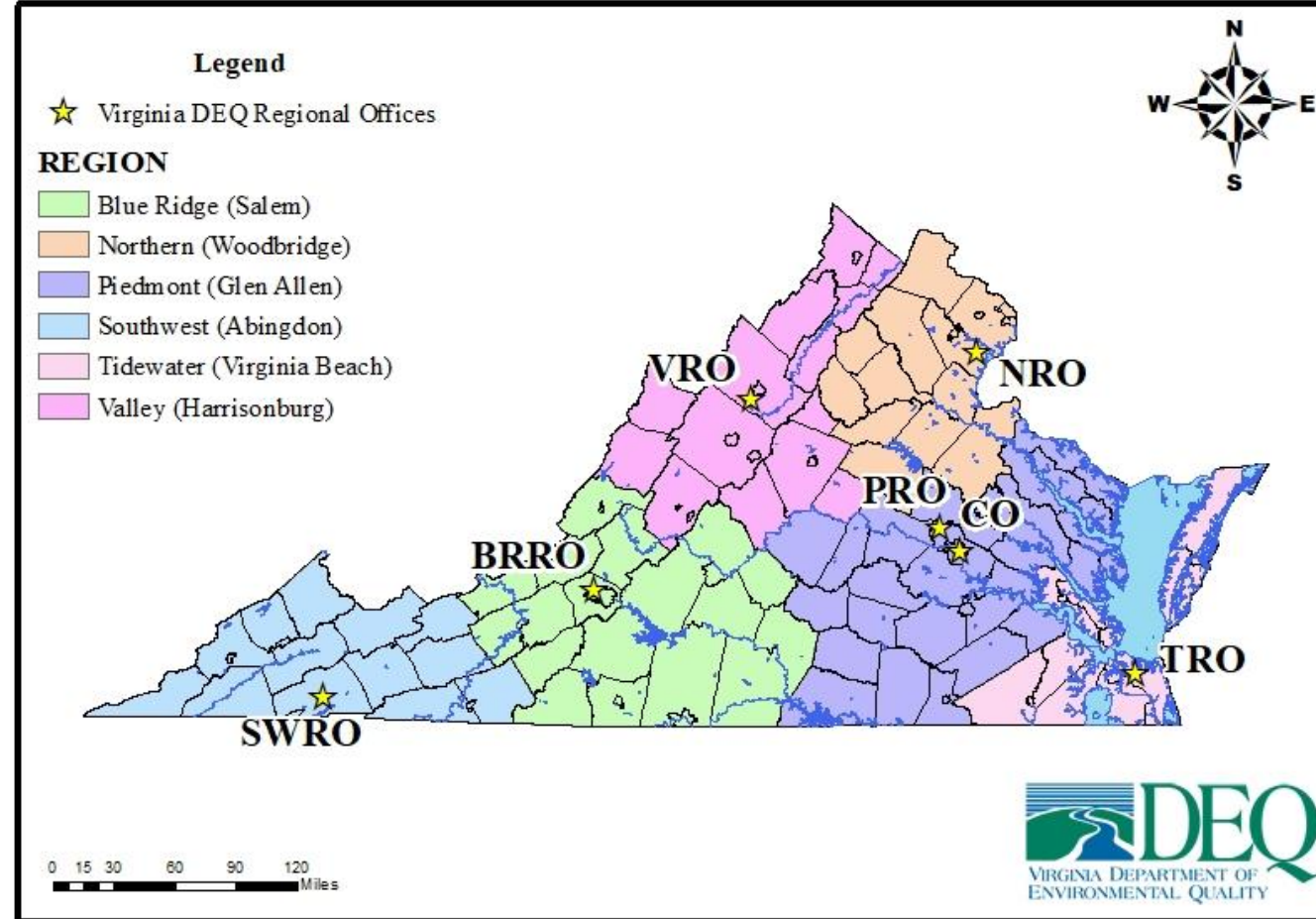
Background – Virginia CWFAP

- Team Composition
  - Seasoned and new staff (including new Program Manager)
  - Big picture thinkers and detail-oriented analysts
  - Engineers, wastewater and stormwater specialists, geologists, and more
  - Strengths – Problem solvers, deliverers, time keepers, optimists, analysts, strategists, self-believers, empathizers, and more

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Background – CWFAP Team Decision

- Gathered in November 2018

- Team decided to tackle streamlining the program

- Determined best option – Process Improvement Mapping
  - To be led by internal training group – green belt in Lean Six Sigma
  - To develop a "Current State Map" – captures what is actually happening versus what the SOP says

- Held face-to-face one-day event in Richmond – March 2019

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Before Event

- Gathered and provided materials already in house
  - Process flow maps
  - SOP and guidelines documents
  - Program operations plan
  - Applications, checklists and forms

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Before Event

- Created a project charter
  - Identified <u>process owner</u> and leadership team sponsor
  - Provided an opportunity statement that put <u>boundaries</u> on items to tackle
  - <u>Prioritized objectives</u> into top 3
  - Identified process <u>starting and stopping points</u>
  - Determined what was <u>in scope versus out of scope</u>
  - Named the <u>team</u>

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Before Event – Project Charter

Project Charter

Project Name:	Clean Water Financing and Assistance	Current State Mapping Date:	3/12/19 8:30 - 5:00
Division/Unit:	Administration	Process owner:	Karen Doran
LT Sponsor:	Valerie Thomson		

Opportunity statement (Highest priority opportunities for the event)

eliminate unnecessary steps (ex. redundant paperwork, examine checklists), make processes between programs similar where possible (why accept self-certification for one program but not another?), reduce number of program records, optimize staff time (for example, SLAF has applicant fill out plans and specs checklist, but staff fills it out in RLF), optimize CEDS for efficiency and make it more usable, clarify staff roles (who needs to perform review or sign approval), consistency amongst staff, use technology to make our processes more efficient (ex. post documents on our website for external customers to use, rather than having to provide to them individually)

Event objectives (Include 1-3 highest priorities from opportunity statement, metrics targets, and timeframes)

Reduce review time for each step, eliminate unnecessary steps, make use of technology

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Before Event – Project Charter

High Level Overview of Business Process	
Solicitation, application review and project funding list, initial meetings, review of submittals (several), loan closing/grant agreement, disbursements, site visits, close out 4 funds: Revolving Loan Fund, Agriculture, Water Quality Improvement Fund, Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Start by mapping Revolving Loan Fund	
Start of process to be mapped	**End of process to be mapped**
Solicitation	Project close out
Project Scope	
In Scope:	Out of Scope:
Preparing for ECM, changes to review steps, minor changes to CEDS, changes to staff roles	Future phases of CEDS Federal process VA legislation Virginia Resource Authority processes

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Before Event – Project Charter

Team Selection	
Name	Division
Karen Doran	CWFA
Kelly Ward	CWFA
Mike Crocker	CWFA
Boyd Wiley	CWFA
Allen Cornett	CWFA
Jeanne Puricelli	CWFA
Ken Savko	CWFA
Kim Butler	CWFA
Lars Bolton	CWFA
Bill Spencer	CWFA
Charlie Via	CWFA
Pantea Westermann	CWFA
James Cornett	CWFA
Shawn Crumlish	VRA
Michelle Prior	OFM

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During Event

- Event led by third party with no prior knowledge of process
  - DEQ training staff – green belt Lean Six Sigma
- Mapped VCWRLF process from beginning to end
  - What is beginning to end?
    - For us – annual solicitation to final loan disbursement
- Identified
  - Key communication points
  - Who, what, when, where, how, and why of each step
  - List of action items to achieve 3 event objectives

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During Event

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During Event

After Event – Output and Continuous Follow Up

- Output
  - Received two items from the Event Lead
    - Current State Map Graphic
    - List of Action Items
- Continuous follow up
  - Held monthly team meetings
    - Reviewed progress on action items
    - Continuously evaluated action items for clarification and ownership
  - Event Lead performed periodic follow up assessments

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After Event – Output – Graphic Current State Map

START HERE

END HERE

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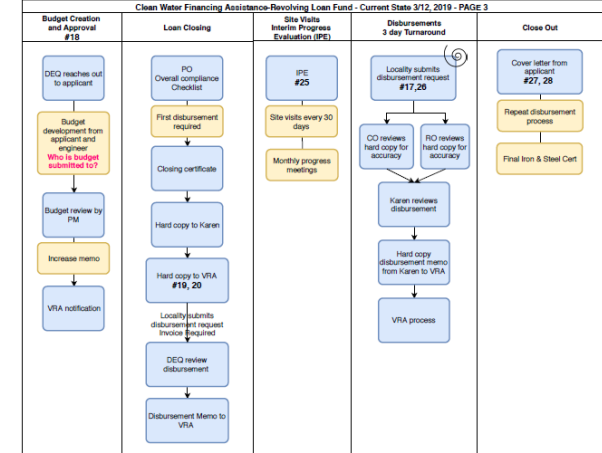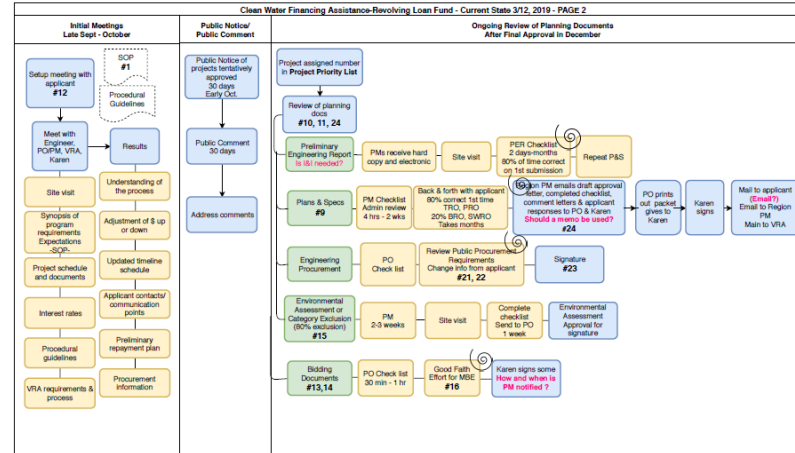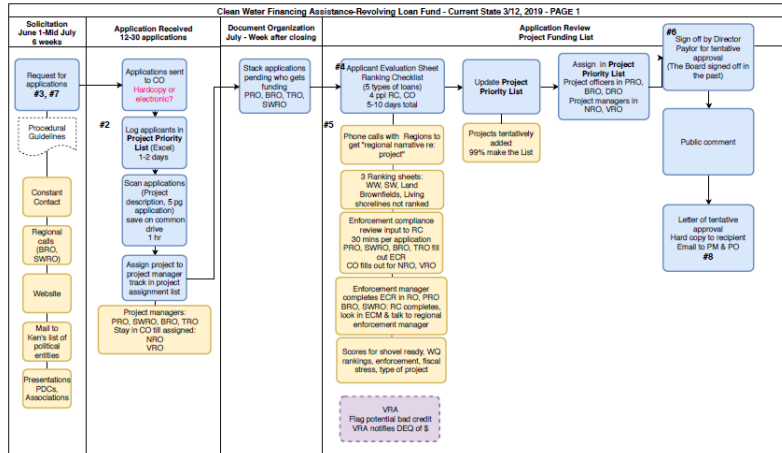
After Event – Output – List of Action Items

Project Name:	Clean Water Financing and Assistance	Current State Mapping Date:	3/12/19 8:30 - 5:00
Division/Unit:	Administration	Process owner:	Karen Doran
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#	Task	Lead	Members	Comments
1	Review and update DEQ SOP			Consider updating Program Design Manual as a first step
2	Standardize project tracking, VRA/DEQ communication points	Pantea		work with Karen on #11; shared drive structure drafted - team review and organize; VRA/DEQ comm points - ongoing - met with Shawn - creating spreadsheet to track progress of projects through loan closing - will discuss at monthly meeting
3	Review Procedural Guidelines for opportunities to clarify to applicant what's needed with the goal of improving the quality of data in for all project types - related to application, see #7	Pantea/PMs		work with Bill; Pantea and Bill to complete when reviewing FY20 applications - ongoing
4	Applicant evaluation sheet - Still effective? Will the current criteria hold up in the future?	Pantea/Karen/Mike		Pantea to complete when scoring FY20 applications - ongoing
5	Formalize regional input for application review process	Bill		work with Kelly on #3; see #3 - complete - PMs review with Kelly
6	Who signs tentative approval list - Paylor, Board? Pros and cons	Karen		Paylor signs - complete

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Results – Tangible

- Reduced amount of paper program was using
- Updated templates to fillable PDFs
- Updated applications and evaluation sheets
- Posted key documents to the website
  - Reduced questions from borrowers
- Organized common electronic filing system
  - Provided access to documents by all team members
  - Serendipitous – provided for seamless transition to full time telework due to COVID

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Results – Intangible

- Saved time and resources by
  - Standardizing communication within team and support agencies
  - Streamlining communication with borrowers
- Explained step by step the process to new staff (including the Program Manager)
- Helped get central and regional office staff on the same page – resolved differences in how projects were managed and increased consistency

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Key Takeaways for Success and Lessons Learned

- Key Takeaways for Success
  - Bring coffee and candy
  - Put boundaries around which processes to map
  - Define your team (anyone who has a role in the process)
  - Get <u>everyone on the team</u> in the room together (when it is safe)
  - Having a variety of experience is invaluable (need all and equal voice)

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Key Takeaways for Success and Lessons Learned

- Key Takeaways for Success
  - Staff proven/staff led improvements are most effective
  - Action item ownership is key – volunteer (best) or assign
  - Prioritize action items
  - Hold each other accountable
  - Did I mention? Bring coffee and candy!

- Lessons learned
  - Allow for enough time, including breaks
  - Set up a system to check on progress

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Virginia CWFAP Contact Information

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