The Problem

Developing IT projects at DES was not a smooth process and generated frustration for both DES and associated DoIT staff. With the wealth of ideas and scarcity of resources, a more efficient process was needed. At the request of the DES Senior Leadership team, a Lean project was initiated to create a better process for developing IT projects at DES.

The Process

The current process for developing IT projects at DES was created. Then a future desired state was created based on the charge to develop a process where “All potential IT projects move forward from an idea to the IT project queue, assignment to staff, and eventual completion.” This resulted in the development of 2 implementation plans and 5 teams to work on the items needed to get to the future state.

Allocating resources fairly, regardless of funding, was a difficult topic as some units had dedicated developer resources and others did not. Much time was spent on creating a more efficient, consistent, and fair process that did not unduly penalize or impact those programs that had deliberately made significant IT investments over time.

For a fresh eyes perspective, a Department of Transportation staff member participated on the team focused on allocating resources. His knowledge of how things were done in his agency, in particular what worked well and what didn’t, helped the team develop sound ideas to move forward.

Periodically, project updates were given to the DES IT Steering Committee and the DES Senior Leadership Team. Proposed SOPs and guidance materials were shared with these groups for feedback and course correction. A stakeholder email list, comprised of key staff throughout the agency, helped staff stay in the loop on proposed changes and offered an avenue to provide feedback.

The Results

The following were created to help improve the IT project process at DES:
- IT project tracking application
- Business plan template and checklist
- Project management guidance which included roles and responsibilities for DES vs. DoIT staff
- Project time estimate guidance
- IT plan template to be filled out by each part of the agency to improve IT planning
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for ranking and prioritizing projects
- Documentation of the tools and people governing this process

The Team

Event Co-Managers: Deb Soule (DES) and Chris Simmers (DoIT DES Liaison)

Team Leads:
- IT queue development: Deb Soule (DES)
- Business plan development: Chris Simmers (DoIT)
- Allocating resources – Sarah Yuhas Kirn (DES)
- Project communication – Tim Nowack (DES)
- Project After-care – Heather Pike (DoIT) and Chris Simmers (DoIT)

Overall, 67 staff participated in this process.