



## **Lean Government – What it Is and Is Not**

### **What Lean Government is Not**

**Citizens and citizen groups have been talking about the waste in government forever. There are hundreds of citizen groups that exist to expose the pork in government spending including Citizens Against Government Waste, National Taxpayers Union, and the Better Government Association. In many cases these are groups that just want to avoid giving the government their taxes. They often expose waste that emerges during the political process to obtain votes. In these cases, someone is benefitting from the spending even if the benefits exceed the public good associated with the expenditure. My definition of lean government does not include finding and exposing this type of waste.**

### **What Lean Government Is**

**Lean government is applying the tools and techniques of the Toyota Production System to government to improve service and reduce non-value-added waste. Lean government is about finding and eliminating bureaucracy and other non-value-added activities associated with customers obtaining government services. If you renewed your license or registration at the Division of Motor Vehicles, you experienced the effects of waste:**

- **Did you get a number and sit patiently until someone behind the counter was available to assist you?**
- **Did you wait again to take a road test?**
- **Did you wait again after you received your renewal to get your picture taken?**
- **Did you get the feeling you were the customer or that you were the victim serving the workers behind the counter?**

**Lean Government is capable of improving a process like this, and countless other government services. In a few weeks, a lean government expert can work with a team of government employees to help them map or flow chart the process they use to deliver service. With some training in the lean principles, the team can develop improvements to their processes that can be implemented in a matter of weeks. These improvements result in higher customer service and satisfaction, and often result in lower cost or increased capability that can be used to deliver other services. Once those employees have completed a lean government review and are trained to look for waste in their activities, they continuously make additional improvements to their work in other ways.**

**Lean Government is a win-win approach to service improvement. Workers win with increased job satisfaction and better working conditions. Customers (taxpayers) win with improved service and better value from their taxes.**