



Continuous Improvement Advocates Program

Overview

The Continuous Improvement Advocates (CIA) program offers a unique leadership development experience for City of Tacoma employees to foster their professional growth, fuel their curiosity, and build citywide capacity for problem solving and data driven decision making.

Each program cycle, up to 20 employees are selected to participate via a competitive application process. The program provides an introduction to the City of Tacoma's Ci4i process improvement framework through a series of interactive exercises. Additionally, all participants complete an independent Continuous Improvement project.

Application Guidelines

To be considered, potential advocates must submit an application. Successful completion of the program requires 48 hours of training and project work over a period of 12 weeks broken down as follows:

- 24 hours (3 - 8 hour sessions) of classroom learning (Requires travel beyond normal work site)
- 2 hours total of one-on-one meetings with Continuous Improvement staff (4 - 30 minute "office hours")
- 15 hours (approx.) individual project work and team meetings
- 4 hours (half day) participation in open house event
- 1 hour follow-up/debrief with CI staff and submission of project "Success Story" assets
- 2 hours total follow-up with manager or supervisor to present progress and/or business case

***Before applying, applicants should obtain approval from their manager or supervisor to participate in all program related activities.**

Classroom Learning

Days 1-3 of Continuous Improvement Advocates training provides staff a chance to step back from day-to-day responsibilities to learn, collaborate and engage across departments. Training is facilitated by internal Continuous Improvement staff dedicated to providing the resources and information needed to help teams initiate and execute projects that drive results.

Course material focuses on the use of visual resources and design principles to clarify project objectives. Participants will practice essential tools to guide understanding the customer's perspective as they collect meaningful feedback. Concepts and exercises introduced as part of the Ci4i framework enable advocates to emerge with practical knowledge they can apply to their daily challenges as soon as they return to their work groups. Advocates also develop a network of peers from across the organization to support each other on future projects.

Manager and Supervisor Commitment

Management support is critical for participant success in this program. Continuous Improvement is sensitive to the fact that there are many demands on employee schedules and is dedicated to fully maximizing the time spent by advocates engaging in the program. Likewise, the Advocates program is strengthened by leadership committed to providing the resources and support required to facilitate staff development. Managers and supervisor expectations are as follows:

- Nominating and approving staff participation for 48 hours total training and program activities as outlined above
- Committing to 2 hours follow-up/debrief with Advocates project team to guide project direction
- Attending the 4 hour (half day) open house upon staff completion of the advocates program
- Sharing progress, challenges, and insights with the Continuous Improvement team throughout the year to facilitate increased advocate participation

IdeaLab

In addition to Advocates training, Continuous Improvement commits to advancing innovation, collaboration, and data driven decision making via monthly IdeaLab programming. IdeaLab is an informal 1 hour lunch and learn open to a citywide audience including Continuous Improvement advocates and project stakeholders. Upon acceptance to the Advocates program, all participants are added to the IdeaLab distribution.