

Creation of Primex Team  
**Connecticut Housing Finance Authority**  
Management Innovation: Internal Operations

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## **Connecticut Housing Finance Authority**

**Title:** *Creation of PRIMEX Team*

**Category:** Management Innovation

**Subcategory:** Internal Operations

Like many organizations in both the public and private sector over the last decade, CHFA has embraced process improvement methodologies as a way to bring about positive change to its programs. In 2013, CHFA launched its own Lean Process Improvement Initiative with the goal of identifying waste, bringing about program efficiencies and improving service to our customers. We provided training in Lean approaches to all staff, and, over the course of 5 years, held 22 Kaizen events and pursued Lean projects touching on many program areas throughout CHFA. The initiative yielded many successful results. Nearing the end of the 5-year mark, management identified the need to deploy a different means to pursue process improvements in the future.

Enter the creation of Primex (**P**rocess **I**mprovement **E**xperts) at CHFA, a trained team of in-house staff designated to lead CHFA's process improvement efforts. The team was created in 2018 and became fully operational in 2019. The team consists of senior managers representing each of CHFA's Departments, Single Family, Multifamily, Finance, Legal, Administration, Internal Audit and Planning/Research. Each member of the team underwent training in advanced process improvement methodologies. The role of each member is to serve on a team that leads smaller scale projects with completion dates of 3 to 6 months. As part of their duties, team members are charged with three tasks: 1) serve as the key point person for each department head on process improvements, 2) interact with their respective department staff to gather ideas for process improvement projects, and 3) collaborate with other departments on process improvement projects.

Since its inception, Primex has taken on several projects at the request of the Executive Leadership Team, bringing about efficiencies in multiple program areas. In 2019, the Primex team collaborated on three projects. In one project, the team performed an in-depth examination of the educational curriculum being offered to prospective homebuyers. The goal of this project was to identify potential improvements to the curriculum and ensure that we were deploying CHFA's resources in this area as efficiently as possible. Additionally, Primex undertook a review of our data management system in a series of separate projects. One of these projects reviewed two internal systems that track properties financed by CHFA, namely, MfaSys, a front-end system for loan origination used by the Multifamily Department, and BGI, a back office system for loan servicing program used by the

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Finance Department. The goal of the project was to ensure that loan data is maintained consistently between the two programs. Through the efforts of the Primex team and our IT staff, we have been able to develop an automated crosscheck between the two systems that enables better tracking and management of the portfolios. In addition, Primex undertook a review of CHFA's Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program, a state housing tax credit program and identified opportunities to improve the application process and compliance efforts. In 2020, Primex launched an effort to examine CHFA's process for deploying the 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credit, an effort that is progressing in spite of the impact on operations due to the COVID pandemic.

For CHFA, Primex has produced many benefits and would easily replicable by any HFA. It does not replace a traditional Lean program, but it serves as another important tool for management to improve programs. Its work has focused on smaller scale projects overall, and, at the same time, it has evolved to be an in-house SWAT team that can be deployed to respond to program areas needing more urgent attention. Primex has supported leadership in making sure our resources are being used as effectively as possible. It has served to break down silos between departments. Ultimately, it has made it possible for CHFA to strengthen our ability to meet our mission and commitment to affordable housing.