The Iowa Department of Public Health is undergoing a change in the service contracting process. In November 2009, a group consisting of IDPH, DHS, and local health department staff met for a week to review, revise, and re-construct the process. Communication will be critical as implementation of the new process proceeds. Contract Transformer team members reached out to their Division Directors to discuss how to best keep staff informed, and want to encourage anyone with questions to contact any team member for more information. This newsletter is a progress report from the 90 day February 5, 2010 follow-up meeting.

Not only was the Kaizen team concerned with improving the service contracting process for IDPH staff, we also desired to make the application process a better experience for our local partners as well. One partner stated a “lack of cohesiveness of an IDPH division causes frustration for locals who would LIKE to follow along, but the rules aren’t the same.” As the Kaizen team proceeds with revising the service contracting process, we are attempting to incorporate input from our local partners. Some of the input revolved around creating forms attached to the RFP/RFA that are “accurate, consistent, timely, and in the simplest form possible”. Some of the suggestions included:

1. Creating a standardized spreadsheet with known information, such as goals, objectives, activities, and reporting data.
2. Developing a standardized budget form that includes pre-populated formulas so the sheet totals itself.
3. Developing a standardized billing format. – (To be addressed by electronic expenditure reimbursement)

The team is continuing to create templates for standardizing some of the attachments included in RFA/RFP’s. Once these templates are ready, we will be contacting each bureau to get additional input. We want these templates to be as useful as possible to everyone within IDPH. We look forward to your assistance with this process.

It is anticipated that the new process will become effective July 1, 2010! Did you know the whole process will be electronic?! And, there are specific roles and responsibilities for every person involved with service contracts. Wondering how it is going to work? Trainings will be planned during May and June, so watch the IDPH Internal training calendar schedule for a time that fits your schedule.

Since the initial Kaizen event in November 2009, IDPH staff and local partners have been working on several aspects of the new service contracting process. As these changes are implemented, a key component of the transition will be training for both department staff and local partners on the streamlined process.

There is a big changes coming soon! So, be sure to attend training. The team encourages IDPH staff to become familiar with the new process prior to the training. To learn more about the new process, consult with a Kaizen team member to see the new contracting process map.
Another result of the Kaizen experience will be a standardized evaluation process for reviews of competitive selections. We are currently working towards this goal. Guidelines will be provided to IDPH employees—starting with when the evaluation team should be formed, training the evaluators, standardized templates, when and how which forms need to be completed—and using SharePoint as an electronic part of the evaluation eliminating the need for most outside mail service. This is being done while remaining within the confines of Iowa Code and IDPH policy and procedures. This is a very exciting and intricate process. The end result will be well worth the effort and should provide the Iowa Department of Public Health an evaluation process that will help us select the best providers for the services we promote.

Over the years, department staff have received requests from the general public and our contractors to issue a notice when we have posted an funding opportunity for a specific project. In response, the team is currently developing a structure for the Lyris List Serve as managed by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Individuals will be able to subscribe to any or all of the IDPH topic area lists i.e. Nutrition and Health Promotion, Child Health, Local Public Health, etc. An email notification of the release of a competitive grant opportunity in the topic area will be sent to the list membership when the competitive selection document is posted on the IDPH web site. Members may also unsubscribe to a list at any time.

Enrollment for this notification system is scheduled to begin in mid-March 2010. You may access the IDPH Lyris List Serve lists through a link on the IDPH web site. We will begin issuing notices to the subscribed members when the new Service Contracting process is implemented as of July 1st.