



The Washington State Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) conducted a series of six outreach sessions to collect best practices for local government permitting. Attendees shared success stories and techniques used by local government to improve quality, increase efficiency, and reduce processing time. Participants included local government and construction industry experts.

Six Best Practices emerged as common themes:

1. **Create Mutual Understanding**

Bring agencies, industry, elected officials, and the public together to build mutual understanding of the "how" and "why" of the permit process. Work together and educate all participants about how to be effective during permit review.

2. **Contact Stakeholders Early**

Connect with stakeholders early, before application submittal, so critical design requirements and constraints can be identified and resolved without surprise and rework late in the process. Stakeholders may include local community groups as well as state and federal agencies.

3. **Ensure Complete Applications**

Define what constitutes a complete application, provide a clear list to applicants, and require these items to be present at submittal. Educate applicants so they understand the requirements and consider their input about the requirements.

4. **Analyze Process, Performance, and Costs**

Analyze the process, its performance, and costs of service so applicants and reviewers know how to execute the steps. Mapping the full permit process can reveal opportunities for improvement and serve as a basis for determining permit fees.

5. **Use Information Technology**

Use technology such as electronic permit tracking systems, geographic information systems (GIS), and the inter-connection of these systems online to improve communication, reduce paperwork, and build easily accessible project records.

6. **Implement Systems for Staffing Flexibility**

Put provisions in place to maintain performance during high volume periods or quickly add specialty skills when needed. Approaches include temporary hiring, on-call consultants, contracting out, and interagency or interlocal agreements.

To view the complete report, contact the ORA Information Center at 1-800-917-0043 or visit our web site at www.ora.wa.gov.

The report was completed in accordance with RCW 43.42.010 and Engrossed Senate Bill 5508 to help local governments further their efforts for faster and more predictable permitting procedures and compliance with reporting requirements of RCW 36.70B.080.

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