



## APPLICATION: USC Improvement Practitioner Program

This application includes prompts for the applicant (pages 1-2) and their department head (page 3). Both are to complete the application form as one document.

**Submission deadline:** Submit completed applications by 5 p.m. Tuesday, August 1, 2023.

**Send by email to:** Olivia Cable • cableo@mailbox.sc.edu • Office of Organizational Excellence

Applicant Contact Information	
Name	
Job Title	
Department*	
USC Email	
Phone	

Department* Head Contact Information	
Name	
Job Title	
Department*	
USC Email	
Phone	

\* Department, Division, or College/School as appropriate

### Applicant Responses

1. Why are you seeking to participate in the USC Improvement Practitioner Program?

2. Briefly describe a project or initiative where you used facilitation, change management, and/or project management skills – and describe the results.

See the program [information packet](#) for detailed information.

The USC Improvement Practitioner Program emphasizes learning by doing. As the program unfolds, each participant puts the ideas and tools to work by facilitating an actual improvement project. The next page of the application sets the stage for this.



The following prompts ask for three ideas for potential improvement projects. The applicant and department head are to discuss and reach agreement on these, to ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding possibilities. Provide three potential projects below – one in each of the text boxes.

Early in the program, after gaining important foundational knowledge about different approaches to improvement, each participant will review their three ideas, discuss them with their department head, and decide on one project to work on. This work will occur in between the learning sessions, with practitioners from the Office of Organizational Excellence providing guidance as needed.

## Process Improvement



**3a. Identify a process or subprocess in your work area that needs to be streamlined or simplified.** Include a brief descriptive name/label for the process, identify the first step and the last step of the process to indicate the scope of what the improvement effort would look at, describe why improvement is needed, and provide any additional information.

## Resource Optimization



**3b. Identify a situation in your work area where there's duplication of effort, disconnected activity, silos, and/or a lack of clarity for customers.** Optimization projects aim to ensure coordination, efficiency, and the effective use of resources. Describe the current situation, specify the function or service or capability that needs to be improved, explain why improvement is needed, and list several intended outcomes for a possible improvement project.

## Problem Solving



**3c. Identify an issue that has negative impact on services to your department's customers – an issue where meaningful improvement would truly make a difference.** Summarize the problem in one or two sentences, describe what you and others are seeing that indicates a problem, and describe why solving this problem is so important.

## For the Department Head

### 4. In what ways will the applicant and the department benefit from this program?

## Signed Agreement for Participation

By signing below, the applicant and department head agree to the time commitment necessary to complete the USC Improvement Practitioner Program. Applicant agrees to attend all learning sessions (approx. 14 hours over six months) and to facilitate an improvement project (approx. 30 hours).

Upon completion of the learning sessions, participants will receive an Improvement Practitioner Program Certificate to certify their improvement knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Upon completion and presentation of an improvement project, participants will receive acknowledgment and credentialing in the form of a University of South Carolina Garnet Belt. This special recognition confirms success in putting the ideas and tools to work to achieve meaningful results.

Enter first and last name for signature:

<b>Applicant Signature</b>

<b>Department* Head Signature</b>

\* Department, Division, or College/School as appropriate

<b>Date</b>	 
-------------	------

<b>Date</b>	 
-------------	------

---

### Email completed application to:

Olivia Cable, Administrative Coordinator  
Office of Organizational Excellence  
cableo@mailbox.sc.edu  
803-777-9053

### Direct questions to:

Stacey Bradley, University Organizational Excellence Officer  
Office of Organizational Excellence  
sbradley@sc.edu  
803-777-3836

### Key Dates:

- August 1 by 5 p.m. – Deadline for applications
- Week of August 7 – Notification sent to applicants
- Week of September 11 – Session 1
- Sessions continue through February 2024. For a complete schedule, see the [information packet](#). It includes an overview, timeline, and details about all the learning sessions and project work.

# PROJECT GUIDANCE

---

Need some help identifying potential improvement projects?

Use the following prompts to think through possibilities and narrow in on promising projects.



## When considering a potential **process improvement** project:

- Ensure your unit has oversight for most or all of the process.
- Look for any indicators that the process needs improvement, such as:
  - We receive complaints from customers about the process. We respond the best we can, but it's on a case-by-case basis, which isn't sustainable.
  - When we discuss the process, we often end up talking about negative things like delays, rework, overwork, red tape, etc.
  - When we get inputs from customers or others (such as from online forms or paper forms), the incoming information is often incomplete or inaccurate, resulting in delays or loopbacks.



## When considering a potential **resource optimization** project:

- Ensure your unit has oversight for most or all of the service delivery or responsibility for one of the main functions.
- Look for indications that better coordination, streamlining, and reduced duplication of effort are needed:
  - Multiple areas seem to perform similar functions or provide similar services.
  - Customers aren't clear about where to go for services or functions.
  - One primary area involved in the service delivery or function doesn't know what *another* area involved in a *similar* service or function does.



## When considering a potential **problem solving** project:

- Ensure your unit has oversight or responsibility for the issue.
- Look for signs that problem solving is needed:
  - We receive complaints about this issue from customers and/or employees.
  - We seem to address symptoms of the problem without getting to root causes – and the problem persists.
  - Considerable staff time is repetitively spent on this issue.
  - If we solved this problem once and for all, the positive impact would be significant.