

Public-Sector Project Management: Meeting the Unique Challenges and achieving Success

Course Length: 2 Days

Course Description:

What do the Great Pyramid of Giza and the Marshall Plan have in common?

Both are examples of public-sector projects that had, as many public projects do, an impact on their societies.

Not every public project impacts society in the same way that these two projects did. But every public project has the capability to improve the lives of citizens or the effectiveness and efficiency of government. Those who manage public projects follow a proud tradition of creating results for society and a host of challenges that make these projects unique.

As governments cope with the scarcity of resources, demands for increased productivity and service levels, and a rapidly changing workplace, project management will be one of the key skills of public managers.

Managing projects is always a challenge, especially when those projects involve multiple stakeholders, new or unproven technology, shifting or unclear project requirements, and constrained resources. Those project challenges multiply in the public sector, which is dependent on successful projects to make the changes necessary for the public sector to cope with a fast-changing world.

Public-sector projects can be more difficult than many private-sector projects because they:

- Operate in an environment of often-conflicting goals and outcomes
- Involve many layers of stakeholders with varied interests
- Must placate political interests and operate under media scrutiny
- Are allowed little tolerance for failure
- Operate in organizations that often have a difficult time identifying outcome measures and missions
- Are required to be performed under constraints imposed by administrative rules and often-cumbersome policies and processes
- Require the cooperation and performance of agencies outside the project team for purchasing, hiring, and other functions
- Must make do with existing staff resources more often than private-sector projects

- Are performed in organizations that may not be comfortable or used to directed action and project success
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This two-day workshop is designed to introduce public sector managers to the unique challenges of public-sector project management and the tools that can be used to increase the potential for success.

This workshop is compliant with the project management methods established by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), the world's largest and most respected association of project managers. It complies with the Project Management Body of Knowledge (the *PMBOK® Guide, Fourth Edition*) and the *Government Extension to the PMBOK® Guide, Third Edition*, which is also a PMI® publication.

Target Student:

This workshop is targeted to public-sector managers who see the need for improved productivity and greater success in achieving designated public outcomes. No experience in project management is required, though this workshop can also be useful for experienced project managers who are now facing the challenges of public-sector projects.

Prerequisites:

None.

The Goals of this Workshop

The goals of this workshop are to:

- Describe the new organizational environment for public agencies, an environment that makes the application of solid project management an organizational imperative
- Identify the challenges of managing public-sector projects
- Provide training that is compliant with PMI® standards
- Describe essential tools and methods for applying project management in the public sector
- Increase awareness of the need for project management skills
- Engage participants in exercises designed to improve their ability to apply these concepts and enhance their understanding of the application of project management in the public sector
- Improve the capacity of public-sector managers to create good outcomes and results

Course Outline:

Day 1:

- Module 1: Introduction to the workshop
 - In this module, we will detail the course objectives and schedule and identify participant interests and concerns
- Module 2: The changing public-sector workplace and the role of project management
 - In this module, we'll examine how the public sector has changed and why project management is an organizational imperative. We'll examine the competing values model of the organization to gain insights into the demands on public agencies and the tools that they might apply to meet those increasing demands.
- Module 3: The unique challenges of public-sector project management
 - In this module, we'll identify some of the major challenges of public-sector project management, including the array of stakeholders, the unique constraints of public-sector project management, the role of the media and political adversaries, and public-sector project risks.
- Module 4: The public-sector project management framework
 - In this module, we'll examine the project management framework defined by the *PMBOK® Guide, Fourth Edition* and the Government Extension to the *PMBOK® Guide, Third Edition*. We'll define key terms and identify critical organizational success factors for projects and the necessary skills for public-sector project managers, which are different than those required for managing private-sector projects. We'll also describe how the project charter, WBS, schedule and budget may be different for public-sector projects.

Day 2:

- Module 5: Identifying and managing the stakeholders for public-sector projects
 - In this module, we'll examine the overlapping sets of stakeholders for public-sector projects and the particular challenges of identifying the needs of the public, an important but hard to define stakeholder for any public-sector project. We'll identify the methods for creating a proactive plan for stakeholder management and the creative ways that we may need to deploy to reach them and build support for our project.
- Module 6: Managing the constraints of public-sector projects

- In this module, we'll further examine the constraints of public-sector projects and develop a plan for the proactive management of those constraints. We'll assess the risks that those constraints impose and methods for alleviating some of those constraints.
- Module 7: Managing vendors in public-sector projects
 - In this module, we'll examine the specific challenges of managing vendors for public-sector projects. We'll identify the major constraints that attend the use of vendors in public-sector projects and tools for better managing vendors in those projects.
- Module 8: Managing the risks of public-sector projects
 - In this module, we'll examine the unique risks of public-sector projects and methods for identifying and managing those risks. We'll identify the requirement to manage perceptions about the project as well as the project itself and discuss the unique risk tolerances of public-sector project stakeholders.
- Module 9: Workshop wrap-up
 - In this module, we'll wrap-up the workshop, make concluding comments, address remaining questions, and evaluate the workshop

The Workshop Presenter and Developer:

Dave Wirick, PMP, CMA is a Visiting Scholar at the John Glenn School of Public Affairs and also consults and trains for RG Freeman Group. He has nearly 30 years of experience working with and in public-sector agencies. He is the author of *Managing Public-Sector Projects* (forthcoming, John Wiley and Sons, 2009). He is a frequent speaker on project management and related topics and has worked with Fortune 500 companies, universities, government agencies, and a variety of other organizations.