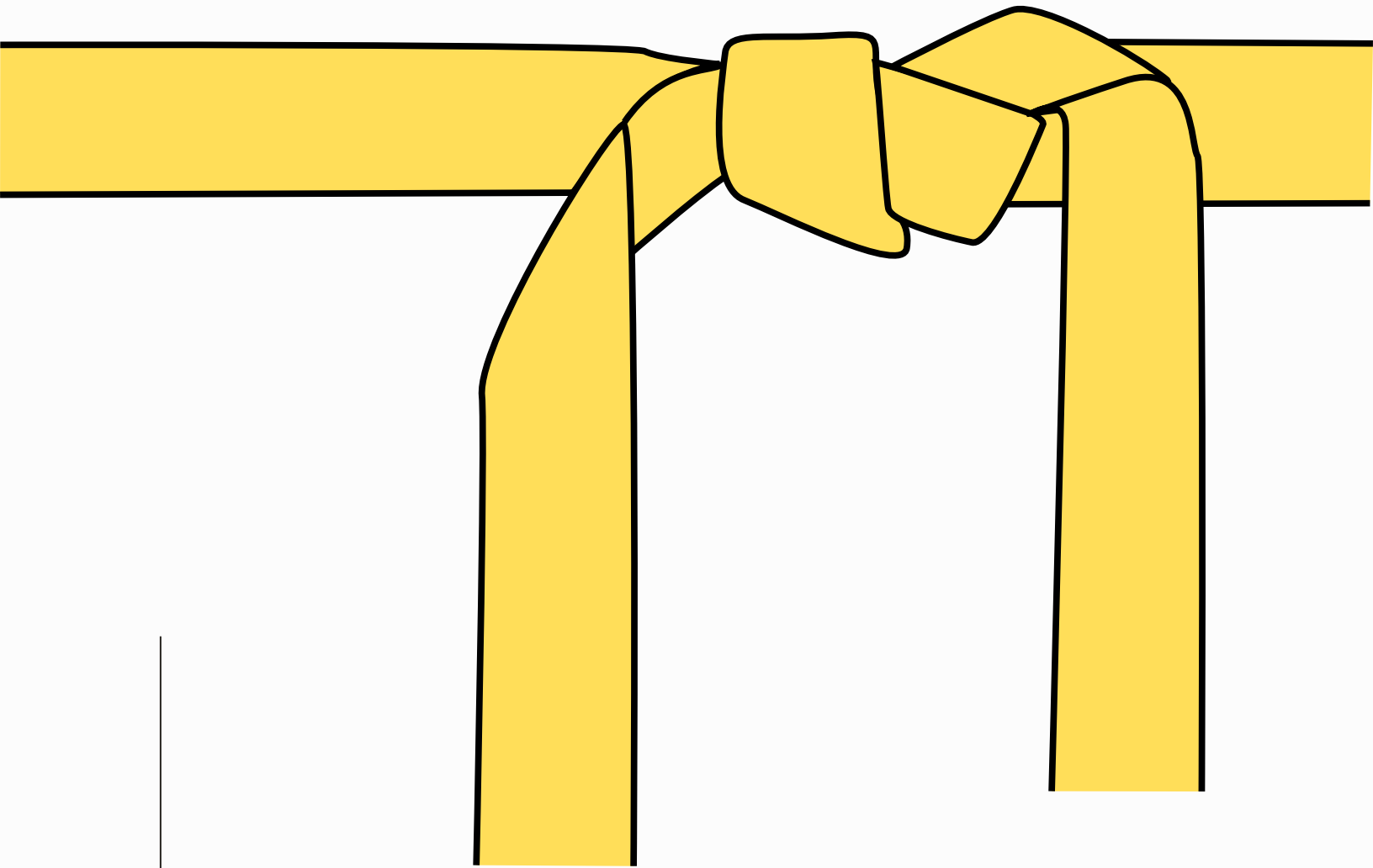

Yellow Belt Certificate

Guidebook



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1. Guidebook Guidance

Purpose

The Yellow Belt Certificate Toolkit is designed to support you through the Yellow Belt Certification process, from start to finish. It provides clear guidance on qualifications, certificate steps, and the key phases of a process improvement project. This toolkit includes helpful resources, templates, and a glossary to simplify the process and ensure you feel confident as you lead your project. Whether you're new to leading improvement projects or looking to refine your skills, this toolkit will help you stay on track and succeed.

How to Use

1. **Review the Qualifications:** Confirm you meet the qualifications before starting.
2. **Follow the Certificate Steps:** Follow the steps to track your progress through the training and project requirements.
3. **Use the Project Phase Guide:** Follow the five major project phases step-by-step, using the linked digital resources to help with each stage.
4. **Consult the Glossary:** Use the glossary to clarify CI terms and concepts.
5. **Set-up a Personal folder:** Take the time to create a Yellow Belt folder in your Drive, organizing your documents and notes in one central location.

Consult the [state's Improvement website](#) for additional resources and insight

Yellow Belt Timeline

1–6 months: Learning Phase

- Participant completes 14 online modules → Attends instructor-led training.

12 months: Standard Project-Completion Window

- Participant completes the project within 12 months after instructor-led training.

+6 months: Extension, As Needed

- Instructor approves additional time, creating an 18-month maximum for project completion.

The guidance included in this toolkit is meant to support an individual's Yellow Belt Certificate journey, and all requirements to complete the certificate should be followed. However, some agencies have additional requirements to receive the certificate. Consult with your agency to identify any additional requirements.

2. Participant and Mentor Qualifications

Participant Qualifications

- **Interest in CI:** Desire to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and enhance overall service delivery.
- **Process Knowledge:** Understanding of workflows, performance metrics, and operational challenges within your work area.
- **Willingness to Learn:** Openness to Lean Six Sigma concepts like data-driven problem-solving, process mapping, and root cause analysis.
- **Collaboration:** Strong communication skills and ability to work effectively with colleagues across different roles and levels.
- **Commitment:** Willingness to apply training to real-world projects and follow through to completion.
- **Employee & Manager Support:** Must be a full-time, permanent employee with manager approval to participate and apply CI tools.

Mentor Qualifications

- **CI Tools Knowledge:** Experience with CI tools and project implementation.
- **Yellow Belt Familiarity:** Knowledge of Yellow Belt requirements, project evaluation, and available DOA resources. Yellow Belt Certification preferred.
- **Project Report and Data Understanding:** Familiarity with the state Project form and Database, with the ability to assist trainees with collecting and analyzing data to measure project success.
- **Communication & Collaboration:** Provide support and address concerns.
- **Time Commitment:** Support trainees through project evaluation, proposal writing, training, and resolving project roadblocks.
- **Program Advocacy:** Promote the Yellow Belt program, inform staff of opportunities, and help assess project feasibility.
- **Management Support:** Ensure the trainee's efforts align with agency or bureau goals.

3. Certificate Steps

FOR PROJECT CERTIFICATION

1. Contact CI Rep

Reach out to your Agency CI Contact or supervisor and discuss your interest.

3. Attend Instructor-led Training

Learn the steps to lead your improvement project.

2. Complete Yellow Belt Modules

Go on Cornerstone and learn the fundamentals to process improvement.

4. Lead Improvement Project

Develop and lead a project team, improving a process in your work environment.

5. Submit Completed Project

Use the state's improvement form to record your completed project.



4. Requirements

Project Certification

- ☐ Select your process project using the screening questions
- ☐ Use a project charter or proposal to outline your project
- ☐ Map the current state process
- ☐ Collect Before and After data
- ☐ Perform root cause analysis
- ☐ Map the future state process
- ☐ Implement your solution
- ☐ Submit your project, including the charter and results, to the CI Project Database within 18 months of completing the modules.

5. Phase Breakdown and Resources

Purpose of this section:

This section breaks down the major phases of certificate completion and highlights key resources available to support your project. While the steps and resources outlined here are designed to guide you, not all are required for certificate completion. Phases three through five focus specifically on project development. Review section four, or visit our website for the [Project Certificate Requirements](#) and consult with your CI representative to confirm any additional expectations.

Phase One: Initial Identification

Goal and Major Steps

The goal of this phase is to begin discussing your participation in earning the Yellow Belt (YB) Certificate by brainstorming and identifying potential improvements you could make in your work environment.

1. Discuss with your supervisor and/or CI mentor about interest in Yellow Belt and project ideas.
2. Write initial idea/project proposal including problem statement and potential data sources.
 - a. Utilize screening questions.
3. Get approval from appropriate supervisor(s) to begin the Yellow Belt Curriculum, starting with the modules.

Digital Resources

- **Project Proposal**: Complete part one of the provided, or agency-specific, project proposal to guide early project development. Fill out the remaining questions throughout your training experience.
- **Screening Questions**:
 - Does this problem occur within an existing process?
 - Does this process occur the same way each time?
 - Is this problem affecting a lot of people?
 - Does this problem occur frequently?
 - Is this problem manageable?
 - Is this problem fully under your control?

Phase Two: Training

Goal and Major Steps

The goal of this phase is to complete both the YB modules and instructor-led training, gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to begin leading your process improvement. During this phase, you should continue to update and complete your project proposal as you gain insights and information.

1. Review the YB training schedule and availability of instructor-led training. Plan accordingly.
2. Complete the 14 YB modules on Cornerstone.
3. Attend instructor-led training.
4. Check in with your project proposal and make needed adjustments.
5. Meet with supervisors or CI mentor and provide updates on the next steps.

Digital Resources

- **Yellow Belt Modules:** The YB modules can be found on Cornerstone and consist of 14 educational classes that develop your understanding of process improvements. We estimate six hours of time is needed to complete the modules. This can be done in multiple sittings.
- **Yellow Belt Note-taking Worksheet:** The worksheet is an optional document that is designed to support your retention of the information taught in the YB modules. It is recommended that individuals take notes, that best fit their learning style, during the modules.

Phase Three: Project Data Gathering

Goal and Major Steps

This phase is dedicated to defining the process improvement you are planning to make for your project. During this phase you will map out the current steps in the process and identify the metrics you plan to capture to show the impact of your improvement. This is a collaborative phase with involved stakeholders, ensuring project buy-in and implementation.

1. Set a project Scope: ensure manageability
2. Define the Process: utilize a process map to outline the start and end of the process.
3. Map the Process: utilize a process map to outline the first draft of the process.
4. Current State Process Map: review the process map with stakeholders, team members, supervisors, or any party involved in the process.
5. Collect Before Data: Identify and collect project data, if data does not currently exist create project data through surveys, time studies, or other active processes (see Metrix Summary for more insight into project data)
 - a. If hosting a focus group or interviews: Prepare guided questions, document and categorize ideas.
 - i. If hosting virtually, prepare engagement (polls, activities or questions) at least every seven minutes during session. Encourage group to connect with cameras on.
6. Review findings with the supervisor or CI mentor

Digital Resources

- **Process Map:** This is one template; other software can be used depending on agency access, such as Mural, Visio, Canva, etc.
- **Process investigation:** Use of whiteboard (Zoom or Teams) for brainstorming and group idea collection. Use of polls or MS Forms for capturing consensus of opinion.
- **Data Collection Plan:** Optional
- **CI Metrics Summary:** Review for examples of project metrics

Phase Four: Project Proposal

Goal and Major Steps

At the end of this phase, you should have completed a detailed, evidence-based project proposal, utilizing the information gathered in phase three to generate and prioritize a solution.

1. Generate project solutions using root cause analysis, 5 whys, nominal group technique, or other methods
2. Based on previous steps, complete your project proposal
3. Review and get approval on final proposal, including final solution, with relevant stakeholders and supervisor and/or CI mentor

Digital Resources

- Finish Project Proposal from phase one. You should already have a downloaded copy of your proposal.
- [5 Why and Fish Bone Template](#): Optional way to support solution generation

Phase Five: Project Implementation

Goal and Major Steps

At the end of this phase, you should have completed a detailed, evidence-based project proposal, utilizing the information gathered in phase three to generate and prioritize a solution.

1. With your project team, assign roles and responsibilities to implement your solution
 - a. Include deadlines to ensure project is completed within the 18 months timeline
2. Collect “after” data to capture the impact of your improvement
3. Create a future state process map outlining the improved process
4. Submit project using the states CI project form
5. Optional: Present your project

Digital Resources

- [RACI-Matrix Project Management](#): Optional tool to organize team tasks and responsibilities
- [Process Map After](#): Similar to process map from phase 3
- [Submit final project](#): Submit final project to the state



6. Glossary



Term	Definition
Current State Process Map	A visual representation of how a process works right now, including all steps, decisions, and flows, used to identify problems or inefficiencies.
Data-Driven Problem Solving	Using data to understand, analyze, and address problems in a process rather than relying on assumptions or opinions.
Fishbone Diagram	A visual tool used in root cause analysis to identify and categorize possible causes of a problem, often grouped by categories like methods, people, etc.
Future State	A description or map of how a process should ideally function after improvements are made, with less waste, fewer errors, and better
Lean Six Sigma	A problem-solving approach that combines Lean (eliminating waste) and Six Sigma (reducing variation) to improve processes, quality, and
Metric	A way to measure how a process is performing, helping you track improvement and understand where problems exist by quantifying aspects like
Methodology	A structured approach used to guide process improvement work. Common examples include: DMAIC and PDSA.
Nominal Group Technique	A structured group decision-making method where individuals first generate ideas independently, then share and prioritize them as a
Problem Statement	A clear, concise description of an issue in a process, explaining what is wrong, where it occurs, and why it matters.
Process Improvement	The practice of identifying, analyzing, and enhancing existing processes to make them more efficient and effective.

Term	Definition
Process Mapping	A visual tool that outlines the steps in a process, helping teams understand workflows and where problems or opportunities for
Process Project	A structured effort to improve a specific process by identifying problems, analyzing root causes, and implementing effective
Project Sponsor	The person who authorizes and supports an improvement project, helping to remove barriers and ensure the team has the
RACI Matrix	A chart that clarifies roles in a project or process by identifying who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed for
Root Cause Analysis	A method of identifying the fundamental reason a problem is occurring in order to develop solutions that address it at the
Scope	Defines the boundaries of a project, including what is included, what is excluded, and what goals the team is trying to achieve.
Stakeholder	Anyone who is affected by or involved in a process, including those who rely on its outcomes and those who help carry it out.
WBS (Work Breakdown Structure)	A tool that breaks a project down into smaller, manageable parts or tasks, making it easier to plan, assign, and track work.
Waste	Any activity that consumes resources (time, money, effort) but does not add value to the customer or end-user.
5 Whys	A simple technique that involves asking “Why?” five times (or more) to uncover the root cause of a problem.