

Performance Measurement *In Practice*

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The ICMA Center for Performance Measurement is dedicated to helping local governments measure, compare, and improve service delivery.

As ICMA's executive director, Bob O'Neill wrote in the April 2007 issue of Public Management Magazine, "Performance measurement is the only way to know that a local government is high performing. It helps local governments make decisions, set targets, identify best practices, and communicate verified improvements to citizens."

Presented in this brochure are four short case studies that demonstrate how several CPM participants have used CPM data to improve service-delivery performance, connect with citizens, and develop employees.

Currently, more than 200 cities, towns, counties, and other public entities across the United States and Canada participate in CPM. To learn more about CPM and how to join, please visit icma.org/performance or call 202-962-3562.

ICMA advances professional local government worldwide. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advancing professional management of local government. ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, provides member support; publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 9,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect 185 million individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.

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De Kalb, Illinois Employs the National Citizen Survey™

Jurisdiction: De Kalb, Ill.

Population: 42,579

Square Miles: 14

Form of government: Mayor-council

Performance Indicator: Citizen satisfaction

In 2004, the city of De Kalb, Illinois, began conducting a biennial survey of its residents using the National Citizen Survey (The NCS™), a citizen survey service offered jointly by ICMA and the National Research Center. In the city's 2004 survey, De Kalb officials sought to learn how residents rated the quality of city services and how residents viewed the city's image.

Surprising Ratings for Quality of Life

With regard to their quest for service-quality information, De Kalb officials found the ability to compare their own NCS™ results with those of other communities that had conducted the NCS to be extremely valuable.

In 2004, De Kalb residents rated the quality of city services at a level equal to or higher than the average reported by residents of other communities using the NCS™, De Kalb officials were surprised to learn, however, that residents rated the quality of life in De Kalb at a level below the average reported by other NCS™ communities. To determine the reasons for De Kalb's lower-than-expected quality of life ratings, the city conducted a series of focus groups with residents.

The focus group discussions revealed that residents had major concerns about poor property maintenance in the downtown area, on several gateways into the city, and in several neighborhoods—and that these blighted areas were greatly influencing residents' opinion of quality of life in De Kalb.

In response to residents' quality-of-life concerns, the city council reviewed and reorganized its budget priorities. The council directed funds toward boosting code enforcement efforts and sprucing up the downtown and gateway areas. The city increased the code enforcement staff from 1.5 to 3 full-time officers, hired a part-time hearing officer, and contracted with a

Perhaps the most important result of the NCS™ was the realization by community leaders that the city needed to establish a new, more relevant community identity.



Pictured here are the dramatic before-and-after results of the city of De Kalb's increased code enforcement efforts—efforts that resulted directly from citizen feedback received in the city's recent survey.

planning firm to prepare a downtown plan. Two plans for gateway improvements were also prepared. By 2006, the downtown plan was completed, and the city had embarked on a \$1 million downtown streetscape program and \$7.8 million gateway improvement effort.

Shaping the City's Image

Another interesting finding of the city's 2004 NCS™ effort was that a significant proportion of De Kalb residents continued to view the city as a "farm town" despite efforts to shift the city's image to that of a "college town." De Kalb has a strong agricultural history but is also home to Northern Illinois University, a campus of more than 25,000 students about 65 miles west of Chicago. (To assess

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residents' opinions of the city's image, De Kalb added a custom question to its NCS™ instrument.)

In response to the results, De Kalb's city council developed a plan to boost the city's profile as home to NIU. Among other efforts, the city formed an Image Enhancement Committee that has been charged with development of a plan to re-brand the city as a college town.

To track the progress of its image-shaping efforts and other service-delivery improvement work the city plans to continue biennial administration of the NCS.

To learn more about the NCS, please visit icma.org/ncs.

Bellevue, Washington Uses PM Data to Improve Fire Department Response Time

Jurisdiction: Bellevue, Washington

Population: 117,000

Square Miles: 32

Form of government: Council-manager

Performance Indicator: Response time from call entry to arrival on-scene

The city of Bellevue, Washington, recently used emergency medical response time data gathered through its participation in the ICMA Center for Performance and other sources to garner city council approval for an increase in staffing at one of the city's fire stations.

The city manager's office and fire department presented the council with detailed performance data



This young "firefighter-in-training," who provided his own gear, enthusiastically assists Bellevue firefighter Ben McCall.



Pictured above are two vehicles from the fleet of Engine Company 3, which services the Crossroads area in Bellevue, Washington.

The city manager's office and fire department were able to win the council's approval by using detailed performance data regarding response time and staffing.

regarding response time and staffing for fire stations across the city. The data showed slower response time from call entry to arrival on-scene for one geographic area of the city. At the time, all three fire stations in this particular area were cross-staffed with only three firefighters.

If a Basic Life Support (BLS) emergency was reported to one of these stations, all personnel assigned to the station would leave on the aid unit. Should a subsequent emergency call (fire or EMS) occur in the now empty fire station's response area, the next nearest available unit from another station would respond to the incident—resulting in a slower response time than if the unit from their closer station were available to be dispatched.

Using performance measurement data, city staff determined—and explained to the city council—that the addition of eight FTE firefighters would allow the fire department to staff an additional dedicated two-person aid unit on a 24/7 basis—greatly decreasing the risk of a fire station being without a crew as before.

Bellevue expects both EMS and fire suppression response time to improve with the additional staffing and looks forward to sharing the additional results when they become available.



The City of Westminster Performance Measures Team coordinates performance measurement efforts organization-wide. First Row (left to right): Scott Magerfleisch, IT; Eileen Ling, City Attorney's Office; Jeri Elliot, Police; Sue Andre, Parks, Recreation, and Libraries; Abel Moreno, Public Works and Utilities. Back Row (left to right): Rachel Harlow-Schalk, General Services; Barbara Opie, City Manager's Office; Aaron Gagne, Community Development; Aric Otzelberger, City Manager's Office. Team members not pictured are Bob Smith, Finance; Rich Welz, Fire; Jennifer Galli, Fire.

Westminster, Colorado Cultivates a Learning Model and Team Approach to PM

Jurisdiction: Westminster, Colorado.

Population: 109,671

Square Miles: 33.5

Form of government: Council-manager

Topic: Reporting and applying performance measurement information

To ensure that Westminster, Colorado's performance measurement efforts constitute a management tool and not just a data collection exercise, Westminster's city manager requires department heads to submit annual performance reports—and has staffed and

trained a team of professionals to support the effort (in concert with their other duties).

The reports are required to go beyond simple enumeration of inputs and outputs to analysis of progress toward outcomes and explanations of different aspects of service delivery performance—and the reports are used not to expose and punish shortcomings but to highlight areas for improvement and seek solutions.

For a recent reporting cycle, city manager Brent McFall asked department heads to address the following questions in their performance reports:

- How do this year's performance measures reflect progress toward the strategic plan goals and objectives?
- What are notable trends, exemplary accomplishments and achievements, and areas for improvement?

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- How have performance measures been used to evaluate and direct operations during the year?
- How have performance measures been used to make improvements or validate current practices?
- How has performance measurement been integrated into your department?

As alluded to earlier, the department heads receive assistance from Westminster's citywide performance measurement team in drafting their reports. The team is composed of staff members from each department who act as champions promoting performance measurement within each department. Team members receive special training in performance measurement philosophy and practice and are available to provide subject matter expertise and analytical support within their departments—to both department heads and fellow staff.

The city manager and performance measurement team review each department's report in detail. The reports are then used in three ways:



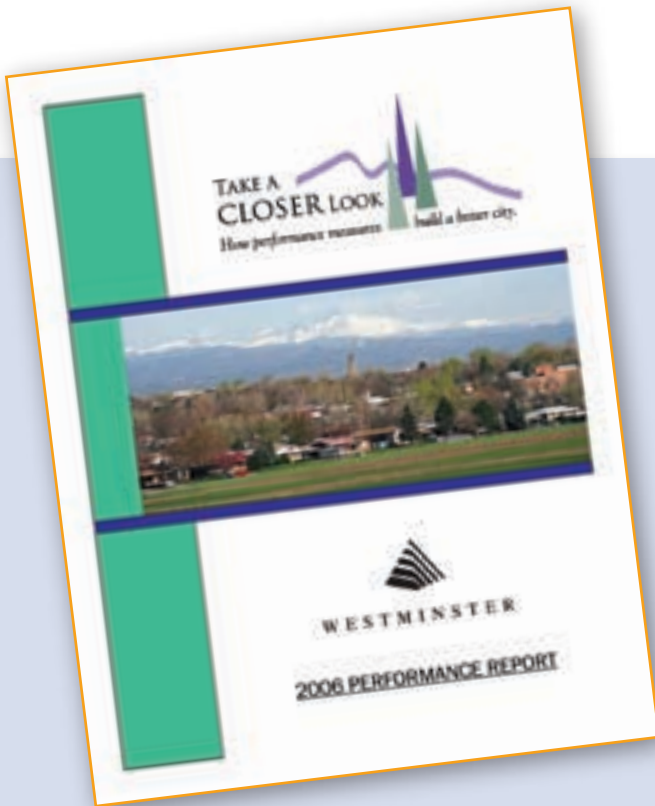
Brent McFall, city manager of Westminster, Colorado (far right), reviews performance reports with Aric Otzelberger (far left), CPM primary coordinator and management analyst, and Phil Jones (center), management intern.

A major goal of this process is to foster understanding performance measurement—not to go simply through the motions of the practice

- To make operational changes, where appropriate
- To assemble the annual performance report to the city council, *Take a Closer Look: How Performance Measures Build a Better City*, which highlights progress toward internal targets and comparisons to peer communities (drawn from CPM data) in a digest format (and feedback from the city's biennial citizen survey in even-numbered years)
- To assess each departments' utilization—and understanding—of performance measurement in day-to-day operations.

A major goal of this process is to foster understanding of performance measurement—not to go simply through the motions of the practice. In fact, to ensure that department heads “walk the talk,” the city manager also discusses the use and application of performance measures within department operations during their individual appraisals.

McFall asserts that, “When examining our performance measures, we must ask ourselves, ‘So what?’ Performance measurement is not merely a data collection exercise, but rather a management practice to understand, justify and improve operations. We must focus our efforts and measure what really matters.”



Each year, the City of Westminster produces “Take A Closer Look.” This publication highlights the city's performance measures and informs its citizens of the city's progress in reaching its strategic goals.

Miami-Dade Emphasizes the Power of Effective Internal and External PM Reporting Tools

Jurisdiction: Miami-Dade County, Florida

Population: 2,426,848

Square Miles: 1,964

Form of government: Council-administrator/manager

Performance Indicator: Using performance management software and reporting performance data

As part of the internal performance reporting process in Miami-Dade County, Florida, departments present their scorecards at monthly “business reviews.” In these reviews, departments highlight underperforming areas, discuss root causes, and establish initiatives to ameliorate performance deficiencies. The frequency and regularity of these performance reviews help employees maintain strategic and operational focus.

Another part of Miami-Dade County’s internal reporting process includes quarterly meetings between assistant county managers and departments to discuss program performance and how it relates to the organization’s strategic plan.

Monthly Internal Performance Reports Feed Quarterly Public Reports

Also each quarter, the county’s automated performance management system allows for the posting of department-specific performance reports to the county’s general website for viewing by citizens and county officials—promoting accountability to the public and providing county officials with near real-time ability to gauge progress toward goals.

As an alternative to the high level of detail available in the web-based quarterly reports, Miami-Dade also produces a citizen-oriented annual digest of the county’s performance information in its “Progress Report to the Community” document (which is also available through Miami-Dade’s website). The report presents a summary of county service delivery performance in seven areas:

- Economic development
- General government
- Health and human services
- Neighborhoods
- Public safety



The County of Miami-Dade, Florida operates an intranet site that provides employees with quarterly department performance data, department business plans, the county’s strategic plan, and performance appraisal information.

- Recreation and culture
- Transportation.

Each section presents data from specific measures and provides explanatory information regarding improved and underperforming areas. For several years, the report has been available to citizens in both bound and electronic formats and in multiple languages. (Print versions of the report are readily available in English and Spanish and audio translation of the report in Haitian-Creole is available through the county’s 311 service.)

In its early incarnations, Miami-Dade’s electronic version of the “Progress Report to the Community” was simply a static file, which could be downloaded from the county’s website. Focus group reviews with citizens, however, indicated that a more interactive format would be appreciated. Now the electronic version of the report is presented through a dynamic web page that permits searching, filtering, and downloading of desired information. More than 2,000 users accessed the electronic version of county’s 2005 report in the first month of its release. Preliminary data for the 2006 Progress Report show similar user access rates.

With an emphasis on frequent and user-friendly reporting to both internal and external audiences, Miami-Dade demonstrates how to keep performance measurement “on the agenda,” encouraging its use and relevance in local government decision making.



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The mission of ICMA is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.

**For more information about the Center for
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