

Reinventing Government: Implementation At The Local Level, 2003

There has been extensive discussion about “reinventing government” in the media and at conferences around the country. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conducted this survey to identify how the principles of reinventing government are being applied at the local level.

The *Reinventing Local Government* survey was conducted in spring and summer 2003. The survey was mailed to the Chief Administrative Officers in municipalities with populations 10,000 and over. Out of 3,215 municipalities surveyed, 1,072 responded (33.3%).

For more information on the *Reinventing Local Government* survey, please contact [Sebia M. Clark](#).



[Click here to buy the complete dataset from bookstore.icma.org.](http://bookstore.icma.org)

Following is the survey text with the aggregate results shown in bold next to each answer. Each answer represents the percentage reporting for that question, except where noted.

Budget

In the **last five years** has the budget recommended to the city council:

1. Included funds for customer service training for municipal employees? **71.0** Yes **29.0** No
 - A. If “yes,” were funds approved by the council? **80.1** Always **18.1** Sometimes **1.7** Never
 - B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **72.0** Always **27.2** Sometimes **0.8** Never
2. Included funds to help train neighborhood organizations in decision making? **19.8** Yes **80.2** No
 - A. If “yes,” were funds approved by the council? **67.8** Always **24.0** Sometimes **8.2** Never
 - B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **69.1** Always **26.1** Sometimes **4.8** Never
3. Included funds to train employees in developing better decision-making skills so they can respond more effectively to citizen complaints? **63.9** Yes **36.1** No
 - A. If “yes,” were funds approved by the council? **76.9** Always **21.7** Sometimes **1.3** Never
 - B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **71.0** Always **28.5** Sometimes **0.5** Never
4. Included funds for e-government initiatives? **67.5** Yes **32.5** No
 - A. If “yes,” were funds approved by the council? **75.8** Always **23.4** Sometimes **0.7** Never
 - B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **69.0** Always **29.9** Sometimes **1.1** Never
5. Recommended contracting out a municipal service to a third-party vendor? **65.7** Yes **34.3** No
 - A. If “yes,” was the contracting out of the service approved by the council? **64.0** Always **33.1** Sometimes **2.9** Never
 - B. If “yes,” was the contracting out implemented? **67.7** Always **30.5** Sometimes **1.8** Never
 - C. If “yes,” was any anticipated cost saving reflected in related budget categories? **49.1** Always **46.2** Sometimes **4.7** Never

6. Recommended a fee increase instead of a tax increase to fund certain services? **85.7** Yes **14.3** No
- A. If “yes,” was this approved by the council? **59.3** Always **39.8** Sometimes **0.9** Never
- B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **68.6** Always **30.7** Sometimes **0.7** Never
7. Included a change in your budget format to funding outcomes, not inputs? **28.8** Yes **71.2** No
8. Recommended the use of enterprise funds? **67.7** Yes **32.3** No
- A. If “yes,” did the council approve using enterprise funds? **85.4** Always **13.9** Sometimes **0.7** Never
- B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **87.5** Always **11.6** Sometimes **0.9** Never
9. Recommended partnering with a private business or non-profit agency to provide a program or service? **70.7** Yes **29.3** No
- A. If “yes,” did the council approve? **66.0** Always **32.7** Sometimes **1.2** Never
- B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **67.5** Always **31.6** Sometimes **0.8** Never
10. Recommended programs that would make the municipal government more entrepreneurial and then included funds to carry out those programs? **44.7** Yes **55.3** No
- A. If “yes,” did the council approve? **61.6** Always **37.1** Sometimes **1.3** Never
- B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **58.9** Always **40.2** Sometimes **0.9** Never
11. Anticipated non-tax revenues derived from entrepreneurial efforts of the municipality? **42.8** Yes **57.2** No
12. Recommended funding citizen surveys to determine expectations and levels of satisfaction? **55.6** Yes **44.4** No
- A. If “yes,” did the council approve funds? **71.4** Always **23.0** Sometimes **5.7** Never
- B. If “yes,” was the program implemented? **71.0** Always **25.0** Sometimes **4.0** Never

Response to Recent Shortfalls

13. Which of the following measures has your local government implemented or considered **in the past year** to address budget shortfalls? (If you have considered *and* implemented the measure, please check both columns.)

Measure	Number reporting	Considered	Implemented	Service(s) affected
a. Shared services-e.g., two local governments combining their public works departments, so that one department would deliver services to both communities.	479	100.0	49.9	
b. Reduced service delivery-e.g., reduced library hours	475	100.0	56.4	
c. Eliminated delivery of at least one non-required service- e.g., cancelled a summer in the parks program.	408	100.0	64.5	
d. Increased taxes	538	100.0	72.9	
e. Added/increased user fees/charges for service	904	100.0	87.6	
f. Rescinded previously approved capital expenditures	523	100.0	71.5	
g. Froze vacant positions	684	100.0	83.2	
h. Used reserve funds (one-time solution)	616	100.0	82.1	N/A
i. Identified a nontraditional source of revenue	282	100.0	59.2	Please describe:

Descriptive Characteristics

14. Which of the following services are provided by your municipality (*Check all applicable.*)

96.7 Police	98.1 Public works/engineering	92.0 Leisure (parks and recreation)
87.3 Fire (paid/volunteer)	83.6 Water/sewer	54.1 Library
65.0 Refuse collection	98.5 Inspection (building/zoning)	47.8 Cultural and arts

15. How many full-time employees are employed by your municipality? (*Check only one.*)

8.4 1,000+	8.1 500 - 749	37.8 100 - 249	4.5 Fewer than 50
4.7 750 - 999	22.5 250 - 499	14.0 50 - 99	

16. Generally speaking, how would you classify the economic health of your municipality? (*Circle only one.*)

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
5.0	22.5	37.9	26.0	8.7

17. Which best describes your municipality? (*Check only one.*)

14.2 Urban, central city	33.0 Low density suburb	12.7 Rural
25.3 High density, first ring suburb	14.9 Central city, but not in an urbanized corridor	

18. In the past ten years, has your municipality's population (*Check only one.*):

40.5 Increased more than 10%	10.8 Stayed the same	0.9 Decreased more than 10%
35.2 Increased between 1 - 10%	12.5 Decreased between 1 -10%	

19. Please indicate the most recent unemployment rate (*Check only one.*):

9.9 Greater than 7%	34.3 Between 5 -7%	40.3 Between 3 -4.9%	15.5 Under 3%
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20. Please indicate the average per capita income of your community (*Check only one.*):

29.5 \$40,000 and above	11.8 \$15,000 - \$19,999	0.3 Under \$10,000
48.1 \$20,000 -\$39,999	3.3 \$10,000 - \$14,999	6.8 Don't know

21. Please indicate if the total taxable value of real estate (sometimes called the grand list) during the past five years has:

93.5 increased in value	4.4 stayed the same	2.2 decreased in value
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22. In the most recent operating budget, please indicate the fund balance measured as a percent of revenues (*Check only one.*):

64.3 6% or more	4.5 4% to 4.9%	4.7 2% to 2.9%	4.7 0% to 0.9%
6.4 5% to 5.9%	3.3 3% to 3.9%	4.6 1% to 1.9%	7.4 Don't know