CHECKLIST: Performance Information for the Public

Reporting performance information to the public can be scary. Here are tips for reducing the fear factor and putting that information into perspective.

- ☐ Share your goals: The purpose of performance measurement is to see how you're doing, find out what's working well, and pinpoint areas where you can improve. Making the data public helps reinforce adopted goals and increase your engagement with the community.

- ☐ Share your timeline: Clarify that the performance information establishes a baseline for improving both the measurement process itself and the quality of local services.

- ☐ Limit what you report: Don't inundate the public with numbers. Your goal is to increase their understanding. So focus on your key messages and the strategic measures that you want people to remember—such as the length of time it takes to resolve a code violation complaint, or how residents rate solid waste services.

- ☐ Explain what you're measuring and why: The selection of measures to track and report is based on something—the community vision, council goal-setting, feedback from a resident survey, specific complaints about a particular service.

- ☐ Consider going live: Once you're comfortable sharing the data, automating some monthly or quarterly postings can both increase the timeliness of the information and limit the amount of staff time required to sift through and manually post the primary source material.

- ☐ Include graphics: A chart or map can be worth a thousand words. Don't skip the narrative, but use visuals to supplement it. Here are some great examples from jurisdictions that have earned ICMA Certificates in Performance Management.

- ☐ Provide context: Just because you can create an infographic doesn't mean the public will understand its significance. Consider carefully how the reader/viewer will know whether performance is good or poor, improving or declining, or on a par with similar jurisdictions.