Center for American Progress

The CitiStat Model

How Data-Driven Government Can Increase Efficiency & Effectiveness

Teresita Perez and Reece Rushing

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The authors wish to thank the staffs of Gov. Martin O'Malley of Maryland and Gov. Christine Gregoire of Washington for their assistance in preparing this report. The photos in this report are courtesy of CitiStat. The photo on the cover shows O'Malley at the podium in the CitiStat meeting room.

Introduction

When Martin O'Malley took over as Baltimore mayor in December 1999, the city government suffered from rampant absenteeism. In the Department of Public Works, for example, one in seven employees failed to report to work every day on average.[1] This absenteeism required other employees to pick up the slack, which produced high overtime costs and a huge burden on the city's finances.

O'Malley decided to tackle this problem by implementing a data-tracking and management tool called CitiStat. This program enabled the mayor's office to monitor overtime and sick leave in real-time, providing ammunition to crack down on chronic absenteeism. In CitiStat's first year of implementation the city saved $13.2 million—$6 million in overtime pay alone.[2] Outside of the police department, overtime fell by 40 percent within the program's first three years,[3] and absenteeism plummeted by as much as 50 percent in some agencies.[4]

Baltimore now uses the data-driven CitiStat system to manage all city programs and services. Information is gathered on an array of performance indicators, including response times for things like pothole abatement, trash collection, and snow removal, as well as the prevalence of problems such as illegal dumping, vacant buildings, and sewage overflows. This information is analyzed with the assistance of computerized databases and geographic mapping to zero in on areas of underperformance. Managers from each city department then meet with the mayor's office every two weeks to answer questions about their results.

This approach has produced dramatic improvements in city services and efficiency, with savings of $350 million since its inception.[5] As a result of this success, at least 11 other U.S. cities have adopted the CitiStat approach, with Washington, D.C., under new Mayor Adrian Fenty, the latest addition to this list. Although O'Malley was recently elected governor of Maryland, his successor, Mayor Sheila Dixon, continues to employ CitiStat.[6]

As Maryland's new governor, O'Malley is now beginning to apply the CitiStat approach to state government. This brings hope that Maryland will set an example for other states, as Baltimore has for other cities.

Washington state has already adopted a CitiStat-inspired system. Gov. Christine Gregoire implemented the Government Management Accountability and Performance initiative, or GMAP, after her staff visited Baltimore and attended a CitiStat meeting. Like CitiStat, GMAP demands systematic analysis of data and regular review sessions with agency heads to assess performance. GMAP, however, employs thematic review—as opposed to departmental review—around specific issues, such as "vulnerable children and adults," to promote collective problem-solving and cross-departmental collaboration.

CitiStat has curbed absenteeism, reduced overtime pay, and dramatically improved city services and efficiency, with savings of $350 million since its inception.

This focus on the numbers, not surprisingly, has produced dramatic improvements in government performance. Gregoire has relied on GMAP to, among other things, improve responsiveness to reports of child abuse, facilitate faster decisions on environmental permits, and reduce highway fatalities.

These gains (as well as those achieved by CitiStat) have required little extra expense. Both GMAP and CitiStat use affordable, off-the-shelf software and rely on a small staff to analyze data and oversee departmental implementation. The GMAP staff numbers nine analysts, while CitiStat has never had more than eight full-time staff.[7]

Nor have these programs been especially complex to implement. Gregoire and O'Malley launched their programs almost immediately after taking office. In both cases, departments and agencies were already collecting data sufficient to get started (though additional data have been collected as the programs have matured). GMAP and CitiStat simply unlocked this information and put it to use for decision-making.

This never would have happened, however, without commitment at the top. Gregoire and O'Malley placed top deputies in charge of presiding over review sessions, while sometimes attending sessions themselves. This hands-on attention has signaled to managers of agencies and departments that data must drive their decision-making—and that they will be held accountable for results. The insight here is that data alone will not change behavior and improve performance. Rather, good data must be coupled with committed leadership.

A CitiStat session is shown above. Then Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, sworn in as governor of Maryland in January, is at the center of the table facing the podium.

A CitiStat session is shown above. Then Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, sworn in as governor of Maryland in January, is at the center of the table facing the podium.

What is CitiStat?

CitiStat is a data-driven management system designed to monitor and improve the performance of city departments in real-time. Implemented in Baltimore in 2000 by then Mayor Martin O'Malley, CitiStat uses basic, inexpensive computer software to track a myriad of government performance indicators. Managers of each city department report to City Hall every two weeks to present their performance data and answer questions from the mayor's office. The mayor's office uses this data to identify underperformance and press for improvements.

O'Malley initially set out to replicate New York City's CompStat system for policing. He quickly decided this approach would be useful in managing other city departments.

Origins

CitiStat is based on a policing system, called CompStat, adopted by the New York City Police Department during the 1990s. This system, still in place today, tracks and maps data on virtually all categories of crime—from murder to theft to drug trafficking. By attending to the numbers and carefully monitoring performance, the department is able to zero in on problem areas, spot trends, and allocate its limited resources more efficiently.

Leaders of each city department report to City Hall on a biweekly basis to discuss performance data gathered under CitiStat and answer questions from high-level officials in the mayor's office, sometimes including the mayor.

Police are deployed based on the latest patterns of criminal activity with the goal of anticipating and preventing crime. From 1993–1998, the city's murder rate plummeted 67 percent and reported robberies declined 54 percent,[8] well ahead of national averages.[9] The system has since been replicated in dozens of cities throughout the country.

Soon after his election, O'Malley worked with Jack Maple, former NYPD deputy police commissioner for crime-control strategies, to replicate CompStat for the Baltimore Police Department. O'Malley quickly decided the CompStat approach would be useful in managing other city departments. After hiring a small staff and housing them in City Hall, CitiStat was launched. CitiStat grew from covering one department when it launched in June 2000 (the Bureau of Solid Waste within Public Works) to 16 departments in 2002. Initially, officials focused on data they already collected, in particular payroll and personnel data to address excessive absenteeism and overtime.

As CitiStat progressed, however, the mayor's office asked city departments to collect additional data to assess performance of key responsibilities. Currently, CitiStat requires all city departments to gather information continuously on a variety of indicators, such as response time to public complaints.

The CitiStat System

Leaders of each city department report to City Hall on a biweekly basis to discuss performance data gathered under CitiStat and answer questions from high-level officials in the mayor's office, including the first deputy mayor, who usually presided over the meetings under O'Malley, and sometimes even the mayor. Prior to meetings, departments submit data collected over the previous two weeks to the CitiStat office, which then assesses departmental performance on a wide range of issues and tries to identify trends. CitiStat staff graphically illuminate data through charts and maps that are displayed on large screens in the CitiStat meeting room (see photo on page 6).

If the information presented reveals underperformance, the department head faces tough questioning and is asked to come up with solutions. At the next CitiStat meeting, two weeks later, there is sure to be follow-up to see if action has been taken and the numbers are headed in the right direction.

Much of the performance data used for CitiStat comes from a centralized 311

non-emergency complaint and response number—modeled after the 911 number for emergency calls. Chicago first implemented this sort of call center in 1999 and many other cities have since adopted the approach. Baltimore is unique, however, in the way it has linked data generated by call-ins to everyday management.

Each caller's complaint or request is entered into a database and referred to the responsible city department for action. These data empower the mayor and the CitiStat staff to monitor the responsiveness of city departments, press for improvements in service delivery, and understand and prioritize issues of concern to Baltimore residents.

During CitiStat's first year of operation, Baltimore accelerated trash collection, snow removal, and response times to public requests and complaints, dramatically speeding pothole abatement.

Costs

For all its success, the CitiStat program cost the city very little to implement. CitiStat uses basic Microsoft Office programs—such as PowerPoint for presentations and Excel to gather data—as well as geographic information system, or GIS, mapping software from ESRI's ArcView unit, which costs less than $1,000. Because Baltimore city departments already had most of the necessary software on their desktop computers, there was only a very small investment to purchase additional software.

In addition to software, the city hired a small CitiStat staff and renovated City Hall to create the new CitiStat meeting room. In total, the program cost Baltimore $285,000 to set up[10] and carries annual costs of about $400,000, most spent on staff salaries.[11] Needless to say, this investment pales next to the several hundred million dollars it has saved the city.

The Benefits of CitiStat

When O'Malley became mayor of Baltimore, the city faced an array of seemingly intractable problems, from huge budget deficits to an unresponsive government bureaucracy to a crime rate well above national averages.[12] Under the CitiStat system, however, Baltimore has taken tremendous strides.

The city has been able to eliminate perpetual budget deficits while improving service delivery and lowering property taxes to their lowest point in 30 years. O'Malley credits CitiStat with saving the city $350 million since its inception.

The city achieved large savings, for example, through its efforts to limit absenteeism. Absenteeism causes government responsiveness and productivity to suffer while requiring other employees to work longer hours to pick up the slack, driving up overtime pay. Prior to CitiStat, absenteeism was a chronic problem for the city. But CitiStat enabled managers to more carefully monitor attendance and zero in on abuse. With this scrutiny, employee attendance increased and overtime pay decreased, saving the city $6 million in CitiStat's first year.[13]

At the same time, bringing government employees back to work has helped improve and expedite the delivery of government services. During CitiStat's first year of operation, Baltimore accelerated trash collection, snow removal, and response times to public requests and complaints.

Pothole abatement represents one of CitiStat's most well-recognized success stories. The city previously did not track pothole repairs, and residents constantly complained about the time it took to fill potholes. Now, when residents find a pothole they can report it through the city's 311 non-emergency number and track its repair time. With this ability to track service response time, the city is able

to guarantee that potholes will be repaired within 48 hours of notification.

As a result, pothole complaints have decreased considerably; 97 percent of all potholes are filled within 48 hours of notification. Such visible results have boosted public confidence in city government.

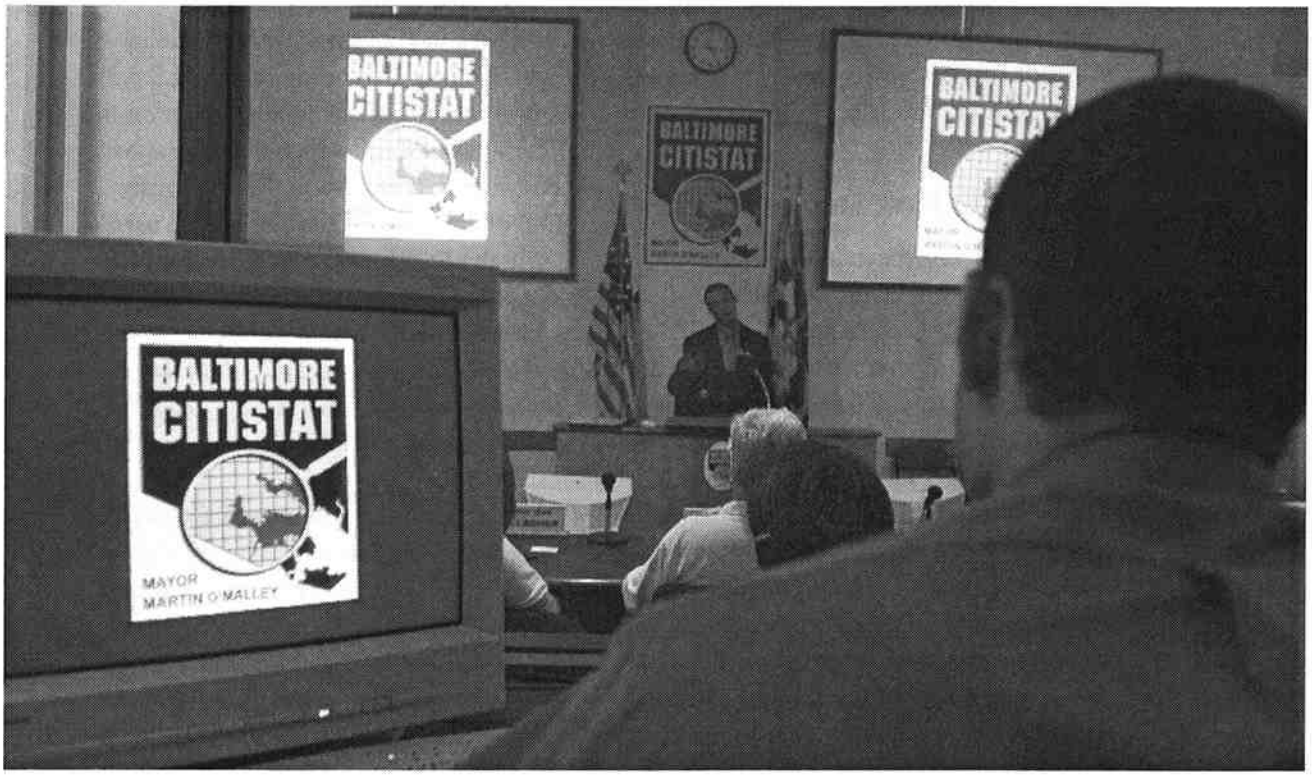
CitiStat also helped Baltimore reduce its spiraling crime rate. Even as crime rates in other U.S. cities declined in the 1990s, Baltimore's remained high. When Baltimore launched CitiStat in 2000, it had the second-highest violent crime rate among the nation's 30 largest cities. The city lowered its crime rate by 14 percent during CitiStat's first year, and from 1999 to 2003, violent crime fell nearly 40 percent—the largest decline among the nation's major cities—according to data reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and cited by O'Malley.[14]

Replicating CitiStat

Representatives of all levels of government from across the country and even from overseas regularly visit Baltimore to learn about the program from CitiStat staff and observe CitiStat review sessions. At least 11 cities in the United States and two abroad have already implemented programs based on CitiStat: Atlanta, GA; Buffalo, NY; Chattanooga, TN; Cleveland, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Providence, RI; San Francisco, CA; Somerville, MA; St. Louis, MO; Syracuse, NY; Washington, D.C.; Paraæin, Serbia; and Indjija, Serbia.

Applying CitiStat at the State Level

As Maryland's new governor, O'Malley has begun to implement his data-driven approach at the state level. Like CitiStat, all state agencies will be expected to compile



This photo is taken from the CitiStat control room where charts, maps and images are projected onto two large screens in the meeting room. O'Malley is at the podium.

data for regular review by the governor's office to drive management and policy decisions. These data will then be disseminated to the public through the Internet, providing greater transparency and accountability.

Maryland, however, is not the only state to adopt the CitiStat model. The state of Washington launched its own CitiStat-inspired program in June 2005 and has started to reap the benefits—including improved response to complaints of child abuse, reduced traffic congestion, and faster environmental reviews of construction permits, among other benefits. This experience shows that the CitiStat model is feasible at the state level.

As Maryland's new governor, O'Malley is moving to build a more robust information infrastructure that will allow for a clearer picture of problems and more focused solutions.

Washington's success has sparked interest from the state governments of Utah, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Iowa. If Maryland's program likewise proves effective—and the track record suggests that it will—other states are likely to follow suit, just as other cities have replicated CitiStat. This suggests a data-driven future for state government, with Maryland and Washington as primary models.

Maryland's First Steps

O'Malley recently signed legislation into law to implement StateStat, the state-level version of CitiStat, to monitor the performance of state agencies. StateStat meetings are already being held with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Department of Juvenile Services. During his campaign, O'Malley pledged to integrate all other agencies within six months, including the Maryland State Police, the Department of Education, and the Department of Transportation.[15] Like CitiStat, the governor's StateStat office will review performance data from state agencies every two weeks.

This effort will begin by organizing and analyzing existing data. But O'Malley is also moving to build a more robust information infrastructure that will allow for an even clearer picture of problems and more focused solutions.

In education, for example, O'Malley plans to carry out a survey every two years called the "Teacher Working Conditions Survey" to quickly identify and address areas of need pertaining to the "quality of school leadership, administrative support, professional development, and facility conditions."[16]

Survey data will be used to zero in on problem areas, evaluate the effectiveness of education initiatives, track progress over time, identify and expand successful strategies, and efficiently and expeditiously direct resources based on need. The ultimate goal is to build supportive work environments that will enable Maryland to attract and retain quality teachers.

Similarly, in February 2007, O'Malley issued an executive order creating BayStat, a new tool to enhance information on the Chesapeake Bay,[17] which the Chesapeake Bay Foundation rates as "Dangerously Out of Balance."[18] BayStat will be used to track the health of the bay, develop strategies that produce measurable results, and coordinate the state's response. Already, the governor has started holding BayStat meetings with the multiple agencies involved in bay-related efforts.

More ambitious data-collection efforts like these will take resources and investment to set up, requiring buy-in from the state legislature and state agencies. Such buy-in can be achieved by demonstrating tangible results using existing data. This is what happened in Baltimore, and this is what is happening in Washington state, where

early successes are paving the way for expansion of the state's program.

The Washington Approach

After her staff visited Baltimore and attended a CitiStat meeting, Washington state Governor Christine Gregoire launched the Government Management Accountability and Performance system. Like CitiStat, GMAP is based on systematic collection and review of data, employing readily available software and technology as well as regular meetings with agency managers. But instead of the department-by-department approach used by CitiStat (and planned for StateStat), GMAP employs thematic review around priority issues—such as economic vitality, health, and transportation—that involve the efforts of multiple agencies.

Like CitiStat, Washington state's GMAP system is based on systematic data collection and review. But instead of a department-by-department approach, GMAP employs cross-agency thematic review around priority issues.

Gregoire first applied GMAP to address the needs of vulnerable children and adults. The first GMAP meeting, held in June 2005, included several departments responsible for serving these at-risk populations, including the Children's Administration and the Aging and Disability Services Administration (both within the Department of Social and Health Services), as well as the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Since the first GMAP meeting, there have been sessions on five other priority issues:

- **Economic vitality,** with the participation of the Employment Security Department, the Department of Labor and Industries, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

- **Government efficiency,** with the Department of Information Systems, the General Administration Department, the Office of Financial Management Risk Management, the Department of Personnel and the Department of Printing

- **Health,** with the participation of the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services Medical Assistance Administration, and the Health Care Authority

- **Safety,** with the involvement of the Department of Corrections, the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Licensing, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, and the Department of Labor and Industries

- **Transportation,** with the collaboration of the Department of Transportation and the Washington State Patrol.

GMAP started with only four people on staff, but over the past year has grown to 13, allowing GMAP to expand its scope. Nine full-time equivalents, or FTEs in management parlance, work on GMAP, while four others are responsible for related initiatives such as performance auditing. Currently, the GMAP staff plans to launch another initiative on education (from early learning to higher education) and eventually include all state departments in the GMAP review process.

The state has created a training program to facilitate the transition to this more data-intensive approach. The GMAP office hired a management consultant to work with the Washington Department of Personnel to coordinate training and development aimed at building capacity within state agencies to adapt the program. The DOP currently offers such courses as "Data Collection," "Using Charts and Graphs to Communicate Performance Data," and "How to Measure What We Do."

Just like CitiStat, the GMAP office does not collect data itself, but rather compiles the information collected by different agencies. Departments submit their data to the GMAP staff prior to reporting meetings; staff then analyze the data and create graphical and visual aids. Meetings are held every other week and last about an hour.

Gregoire is present at the meetings, as is the governor's staff and key government officials, including the director of financial management, the director of information systems, and the director of personnel. The panel asks tough questions about the information presented, but also serves as a resource for the different departments. If a department has a technological need, for example, the director of information systems is there to help find a solution. At the same time, the meetings are structured so as to foster cooperation among the different departments present.

Washington's GMAP system has improved response to complaints of child abuse, reduced traffic congestion, and produced faster environmental reviews of construction permits, among other benefits.

The issues being addressed cannot be solved by any one department, so there is a need for departments to share information and come up with solutions jointly. Later this year, the state plans to implement a "dashboard" program that allows government officials to quickly access real-time data across agencies and publicly disseminate GMAP data online.

Washington Success Stories

GMAP has helped Washington improve government services and increase efficiency. Gregoire, for example, relied on GMAP to push the Department of Social and Health Services, or DSHS, to cut the amount of time it took to respond to complaints of child abuse and neglect in the foster care system. In March 2005, Governor Gregoire required social workers to personally visit residences where there had been reports of child abuse or neglect within 24 hours in emergency cases and 72 hours in non-emergencies. At a recent governor's GMAP forum, DSHS reported timely response rates throughout the entire state had increased from less than 40 percent in non-emergency cases to over 90 percent for both emergency and non-emergency cases.[19]

Responsiveness has improved in other areas as well. GMAP analysis, for instance, found that issuance of permits for environmentally sensitive construction projects can take a year or more, largely because many permit applications are not complete when they are submitted. Such applications demand considerable time and effort before they can be officially reviewed.

Gregoire instructed the state departments of Ecology and Fish & Wildlife to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the state Office of Regulatory Assistance to reduce the number of incomplete applications and thus reduce the total time required to evaluate whether permits should be issued. Among other strategies, the state is improving communication about the permit process and developing an online application to help applicants provide the right information at the beginning of the process.[20]

Gregoire is also using GMAP to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration to alleviate traffic jams. Approximately 50 percent of traffic congestion is non-recurring, caused by incidents such as disabled vehicles, debris, and collisions. Such incidents cause significant slowdowns, especially during peak commuting times, presenting a major challenge to the state's Department of Transportation and the Washington State Patrol.

GMAP is being used to improve coordination and cooperation between these two departments as well as local governments, track performance, and target problem areas. As a result, roads are being cleared more quickly and congestion is being reduced.

Lessons for Implementing the CitiStat Approach

State and local governments thinking about implementing the CitiStat approach first need to understand the key elements that have made it successful. Above all, success depends on commitment and engagement from top political leadership. Political leaders must continually review and apply data to identify areas in need of improvement, drive institutional change, and achieve goals for government performance. Crucially, the CitiStat approach creates a regular process that forces such constant review, ensuring that data are linked to everyday decision-making.

Above all, success depends on commitment and engagement from top political leadership. Political leaders must continually review and apply data to identify areas in need of improvement, drive institutional change, and achieve goals for government performance.

Success also depends on building the capacity for data-driven government, beginning with human capacity. There should be dedicated staff that oversee implementation and provide independent analysis of performance data gathered by agencies and departments. At the same time, government personnel must be provided technology and statistical training to meet the new demands of data collection and analysis.

In addition, the CitiStat approach requires a robust information infrastructure. Data gaps must be filled to provide a clear picture of performance, while data collection and management must be standardized and integrated to facilitate analysis. Robust data and analysis of course allow for more effective policymaking. But public dissemination of this information through the Internet can also increase government transparency and accountability, providing additional incentive for improved performance.

These key lessons of the CitiStat approach are discussed further below.

Commitment from Political Leadership

The CitiStat approach has been successful first and foremost because of commitment at the top. O'Malley set the tone, for example, by personally attending many CitiStat sessions, assigning his first deputy mayor to preside over the sessions, and demanding that department heads personally present information about their operations every two weeks.

Such commitment sends a message to agency and department heads, as well as lower-level personnel, about the importance of gathering and using data to drive performance. They know the mayor is paying attention and will hold them accountable for results.

With commitment at the top, data will begin to permeate decision-making and guide actions from department managers on down.

Dedicated Staff for Planning and Oversight

Washington's GMAP program started with four staffers and grew to nine over the course of a year. Such dedicated staff is essential for a number of reasons. First, there must be oversight and coordination to ensure that data collection is complete and consistent from department to department. Second, there must be independent analysis to make sure problems are brought to the attention of top leadership. And third, there must be expectations set to challenge departments to do better.

Training

Government personnel may lack necessary skills to apply data to policy and management decisions, especially at the time of initial implementation. Training is therefore critical to build this capacity. This includes statistical training, so employees are able to effectively analyze data, as well as technical training—from very basic data entry to GIS to more sophisticated data mining, depending on the employee. Washington's emphasis on training, described above, contributed to the smooth roll-out of its program.

The CitiStat approach places emphasis on continuous, real-time data collection and review, allowing for corrective action before problems mushroom.

Continuous Review of Data

Federal agencies, and many state and local governments, perform only periodic reviews of performance data. These reviews, however, may not catch a problem until significant damage is already done. The CitiStat approach, by contrast, places emphasis on continuous, real-time data collection and review.

This approach allows government to immediately spot problems and take corrective action before they mushroom and become unmanageable. Under O'Malley, Baltimore stayed out of the red—after years of budget deficits—only because of the meticulous tracking of expenditures, enabling city officials to immediately identify and address wasteful practices.

Linking Data to Government Decision-making

Data are not worth collecting if not linked to decision-making. The CitiStat approach links data to government decision-making in two primary ways. First, it creates a process that ensures top officials and managers regularly consult and apply data for policy and management decisions. Every two weeks, department heads meet with top officials in the mayor's or governor's office to review data.

Second, data are packaged in ways that make problems and performance easy to evaluate. Charts and graphs showing trends are presented at each CitiStat meeting, as well as maps showing geographic distributions. Such presentations, regularly reviewed, empower decision-makers to understand the issues at hand and take quick, decisive action.

Filling Data Gaps

The CitiStat approach seeks to quantify as many aspects of government performance as possible. Government officials, however, are likely to encounter data gaps that impede evaluation, especially during initial implementation. These data gaps must be identified and systematically addressed; otherwise, problems and underperformance may be missed and allowed to persist. Filling data gaps may require additional expenditures, but this should be viewed as an investment that will pay off over the long run. Baltimore's 311 number, for example, provided an important new data-gathering tool for monitoring city problems and government responsiveness. The data generated have enabled city officials to institute reforms that have produced far more effective and efficient government.

Integrated Data Collection and Management

Agencies in state and local government may gather and manage data in a variety of different, frequently incompatible formats. To allow for more sophisticated analysis, data collection and management needs to be standardized and integrated. Washington state, in particular, faced this challenge because of its initiative's inter-

The CitiStat approach makes the budget more manageable, ensures that resources are well directed, enables quick adjustments, and improves responsiveness. Simply put, the CitiStat approach delivers government that works.

departmental nature. The answer might involve providing a simple entry format that government workers can use on a daily basis to input and update information, as happened under CitiStat. Or it may require employing technological solutions to integrate existing databases and information. Washington, for one, is implementing a new technology to allow government officials to access real-time data across agencies.

Setting and Meeting Goals

In implementing the CitiStat approach, it is important to set clear achievable goals that will build trust and confidence in data-driven management. For Baltimore, this meant targeting absenteeism, overtime pay, and the time it takes for departments to respond to public requests or complaints. Accomplishing such goals can bring positive recognition, like Baltimore's 48-hour pothole guarantee, galvanize support both within and outside government, and pave the way for other initiatives.

Public Disclosure of Data

Public support will grow if government activities and performance are transparent and accessible. The first way to do this is to provide the public online access to information collected. Baltimore, for example, currently makes all CitiStat data available through its Web site, including charts, graphs, and maps. Placing such data in a narrative context can further enhance public understanding of government performance and draw attention to improvements. With enhanced public understanding comes greater accountability for government agencies and departments. Such information empowers the public to press for improvements where poor performance is demonstrated, which in turn can assist government leaders in driving entrenched agencies and departments to change.

Conclusion

The CitiStat approach is a proven data-driven model of government that is starting to spread. At least 11 American cities and now two states have put it into practice. This trend is likely to continue as the successes of these cities and states become better known.

Indeed, the CitiStat approach has produced dramatic results virtually everywhere it's been tried. This paper details these achievements in Baltimore and the state of Washington. But the story is the same in other places with CitiStat-like programs.

New information technologies provide the building blocks for this success. Before these advances, data collection and analysis were frequently too time consuming and expensive to undertake. But today, data are far more easily assembled, manipulated, transferred, and disseminated, making the CitiStat approach both feasible and affordable. Baltimore, for example, began its program on a shoestring of less than $300,000.

The ability to collect and analyze large amounts of data has brought greater precision to government. Decision-makers are better able to monitor trends over time, plot geographic distributions, and examine cause and effect. Problems or underperformance that previously might have been missed are now brought to the surface and exposed for scrutiny.

The CitiStat process, in which data reviews are conducted every two weeks, ensures that such information will reach key decisionmakers and that corrective action will be promptly taken. Disclosure of data through the Internet, moreover, empowers the public to participate in this process and hold leaders accountable for improvements.

The end result is more effective and efficient decision-making. The budget becomes more manageable as waste is identified and trimmed. Resources are focused and directed where they are needed most. Adjustments are quickly made according to changing circumstances. And responsiveness improves as agencies and departments strive to improve their numbers.

Simply put, the CitiStat approach delivers government that works.

Endnotes

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19 Author interview with Bruce Botka, Research Analyst for Gov. Gregoire and the Government Management Accountability and Performance program, September 7, 2006 and March 7, 2007.

20 Ibid.

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