



Smart Cities: PerformanceStat at 15

The case for performance management in city government,
fifteen years after the popularization of “Stat”

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School of Arts and Sciences
3814 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
www.fels.upenn.edu

David B. Thornburgh
Executive Director

Christopher Kingsley
Lead Author

Mateo Rando
Research

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Tara Acker

Director of SomerStat
Somerville, Massachusetts

Leigh Botwinik

Author, The Philadelphia SchoolStat Model
Fels Institute of Government
University of Pennsylvania

Jane Dunham

Deputy Director
Department of Finance & Management
Columbus, Ohio

Jim Gaffey

Assistant Director, Quality Control
Syracuse, New York

Matt Gallagher

Chief of Staff
Maryland Office of the Governor

Michael Jacobson

Director of KingStat
King County, Washington

Wendy Korthuis-Smith

Director of GMAP
Washington State

Catherine Lamb

Director of PhillyStat
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Devin Lyons-Quirk

Senior Project Manager for Performance
Office of Administration & Finance
Boston, Massachusetts

Victor Prince

Director of CapStat
Washington, D.C.

John Timoney

Chief of Police
Miami, Florida

James J. Willis

Assistant Professor of Criminology, Law, and Society
George Mason University

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Executive Summary

The PerformanceStat approach to municipal leadership is one of the most impressive government innovations of the past two decades, several times awarded as the model by which reform-minded mayors can wring better performance out of snarled municipal bureaucracies. Since its popularization in Baltimore, the strategy has spread to more than a dozen U.S. cities and the “-Stat” suffix has been appended to programs at local school districts and at many state and federal agencies.

This review by the Fels Institute of Government examines PerformanceStat’s expansion among local and state governments and confirms its essential value: to help public managers increase the quality of public services while driving down their cost. We note, however, that while “Stat fever” has carried the model into several new fields of public administration, the rate of adoption by its core constituency—local and state governments—has been anemic. Moreover, several established programs are struggling or have been suspended. This report explores the causes of those difficulties.

Despite these challenges, PerformanceStat programs continue to expand and evolve. Discussions with Stat directors at both the local and state levels suggest that several PerformanceStat programs will continue to move toward monitoring thematic rather than departmental goals, and many are beginning explore how to modify the Stat environment to emphasize interdepartmental problem solving. Finally, while the budget climate is likely to continue to weaken existing PerformanceStat programs and to delay the many information technology investments on Stat directors’ “to do” lists, this pressure on the public purse may spur incoming executives to adopt PerformanceStat as a proven tool for cutting costs without sacrificing results.

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The Creation and Popularization of “Stat”

The PerformanceStat model adapted by the public sector to help manage America’s cities was first developed by the New York Police Department (Behn 2006, Timoney 2010, Maple 1999). Police Commissioner William Bratton was appointed command of the NYPD in 1994 by the city’s new mayor, Rudy Giuliani, who had won office promising law and order in a year when nearly 2,500 people were murdered in New York City. The new *comparative statistics* management sessions that become known as “CompStat” were, from their inception, organized around a single imperative: to reduce serious crime.

How did it work? CompStat increased the NYPD’s ability to identify and monitor crime trends throughout the city, and its management philosophy held each commander accountable to explain, then anticipate, and finally to prevent crime in his precinct. The results were immediate. New York City’s crime rate was cut nearly in half over the next four years and Commissioner Bratton graced the cover of *Time Magazine* in 1996, beside the proclamation that “finally, we’re winning the war against crime.” CompStat, in particular, received tremendous attention for its role in transforming an organization “legendary” for its resistance to change into such an effective crime-stopping machine. Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government recognized the program with its *Innovations in American Government* Award in 1995, and within five years, more than a third of America’s major cities had implemented some version of it (Weisburd 2004).

One of these cities was Baltimore. At the turn of the century, Baltimore’s municipal government shared many of the same structural and cultural problems that Commissioner Bratton had inherited at the NYPD: a bureaucracy that did not prioritize its core mission (service delivery), did not set sufficiently high performance standards, and did not record the information that public managers would need to meaningfully improve it. So when the city’s newly elected mayor, Martin O’Malley, reached out to the creator

of NYPD’s program to bring CompStat to the Baltimore Police Department, Mayor O’Malley went a step further and established a second “Stat” shop in City Hall to manage the ambitious goals his administration had begun to set for Baltimore’s city agencies.

The mayor held his first session with a single department in June of 2000, just a few months after assuming office. Two years later, Mayor O’Malley’s process incorporated all seventeen of Baltimore agencies. By 2007, the program claimed savings of \$350 million (Perez 2007, Gallagher 2010). Almost a decade after Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government had recognized the contribution of CompStat to the NYPD’s remarkable transformation in the 1990s, it conferred to Baltimore’s “CitiStat” the same prestigious award. “The program’s effectiveness in service delivery is considerable,” wrote the award’s nominee. “CitiStat is quickly becoming the way governments manage their services and address the diverse challenges that they confront.”

What is Stat?

One of the virtues of successful PerformanceStat programs is their simplicity, both of function and form.

Function

“Stat” programs are intended to improve specific performance objectives: to decrease crime (CompStat), to increase test scores (SchoolStat), to deliver better services less expensively (CitiStat). The more explicit and brash this definition of purpose is, the better.

Form

To achieve this purpose, PerformanceStat programs employ regular meetings between the chief executive (chief, principal, mayor or governor) and agency directors where performance data is used to analyze each agency’s performance, establish performance objectives and accountability for those objectives, and schedule follow-up to ensure these objectives are met. Each of these elements is important to the integrity of the program. Stat programs without regular meetings, accurate and timely data, clear direction, and rigorous follow-up will rarely accomplish much.

Understanding PerformanceStat

PerformanceStat owes many of its methods to the art of performance management practiced by every municipal budget office. Its success as a tool of executive leadership, however, is due to Stat's emphasis on measuring performance at the point of service delivery. PerformanceStat challenges bureaucracies to be accountable for their results, above and beyond their activities and outputs. (To target a decrease in crime rather than increase in patrols, for example, and faster business permitting rather than an increased number of clerical staff.) PerformanceStat is also unusual in that it institutionalizes a willingness, on the part of senior

Providence, Rhode Island into satisfactory order—and this is not unusual. Managers of PerformanceStat programs, both old and new, reported to Fels that it remains an ongoing challenge to locate, cleanup, digitize and report out agency data to inform decisions being considered by the chief executive and his or her staff.

PerformanceStat offices also make a major investment in training their agency partners: to improve their data collection, to evaluate that data for stories about service performance, and to tell these stories compellingly through use of visualization tools such as graphing, geospatial

Whereas much of the practice of performance management in public organizations has been developed to advise periodic budget processes, PerformanceStat repurposes these tools to inform weekly resource allocation decisions.

managers, to investigate the factors that determine an agency's performance in great—some would say exhaustive—detail. To accomplish this, it moves the tools of performance management, such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), dashboards, and other data visualization applications out of the back room and closer to the point of service delivery.

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An immediate result, in almost every case, has been a demand for more detailed and better-quality data. As Mayor O'Malley quipped, "I guarantee that every Fortune 500 company knows how many vehicles it has in its fleet." In contrast, straightforward facts about agency inventories and activities are often unavailable to municipal managers. Indeed, it took the director of ProvStat two full years to wrestle the records for

mapping, and slide presentation software. An important and distinctive feature of PerformanceStat meetings in state and local governments is that they require agency heads to present and defend their management decisions to people who are not subject experts: executive staff and, in many cases, the public.

It is this—the iconic "Stat" meeting, with its projector and dual screens, pre-prepared slide-decks, and the agency director at the podium before the Mayor to review the numbers in plain language—that best captures the difference between PerformanceStat and the management techniques that advise governments' back offices.

The Benefits of PerformanceStat

A review of roughly a dozen local and state government programs conducted by Fels found that, as a rule, PerformanceStat is an effective strategy to improve public services and drive down their cost, to increase communication between city agencies and encourage problem solving, and to easily “report out” these results to citizens and other public partners.



Since 2002, hundreds of elected officials and municipal managers have visited Baltimore’s CitiStat program and hundreds more have visited programs that have been created in CitiStat’s image, in cities like Syracuse, Providence, Somerville and Washington, D.C. More recently, the “Stat” suffix—and elements of its method—have been appropriated by public managers in federal agencies, state and county governments, and at local school districts (Patusky 2007). No detailed study of these programs has been conducted, but initial results are promising and point to several areas where Stat programs deliver real value.

Better Service, Cheaper

This is the core promise of PerformanceStat, to provide a better public service at reduced cost to the taxpayer.

New municipal programs frequently begin by focusing on **cost containment** within their public works departments, and subsequently on reducing overtime, absenteeism, and redundancy elsewhere in the bureaucracy. \$6 million of the \$13.2 million saved by Baltimore’s CitiStat during its first year of operation, for example, was saved on staffing costs. CitiStat now claims an aggregate \$350 million savings since its inception. “SyraStat” in Syracuse emulated Baltimore’s success, cutting \$14 million from operating costs within the Department of Public Works. This type of Stat initiative relies on administrative and human resources data which are well organized and easily available in most cities, and this potential for quick return often justifies the initial investment.

Applying PerformanceStat to **improve public services** requires more extensive data and a set of clear benchmarks—something Stat managers generally must negotiate with departments over time. Many government processes are still paper-based; others are undocumented. It took Providence nearly two years to collect the data to support ProvStat, and new “Stat” cities like Philadelphia still lack detailed and accurate information for every service they oversee. This is a costly, if inevitable, gap, because performance management is an area where the value is in the details:

“At one meeting [of SomerStat], we were scheduled to evaluate the fine structure for the city’s non-criminal ordinances. But what we discovered was that the computer managing this was misclassifying them, and not escalating the fines. Just fixing that computer earned the city \$236,000—it virtually paid for our office that year.”

—Interview with Tara Acker,
Director of SomerStat in Somerville, Massachusetts

CapStat Director Victor Prince argues that both of these improvements—cost savings and better service delivery—are a function of PerformanceStat’s ability to focus the “relentless attention” of the chief executive on his or her agencies:

- ▶ When items on his agenda stalled in the city’s bureaucracy, Washington D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty would vow to host special sessions of CapStat “every week” until he saw progress. He generally got it.

► In Baltimore, the mayor hosts each city agency every two weeks, like clockwork. Her attention to continuous improvement across all agency activities in Baltimore ranges from the small (decreasing “high grass and weed” resolutions from an average of 131 days to 13 days in 2007) to the large (remapping the city’s trash collection system to increase recycling 53% in 2009), and at hundreds of points between.

The benefit of these incremental improvements to cities is larger than the sum of its parts, says Matt Gallagher, who oversaw the creation of CitiStat as Mayor O’Malley’s chief of staff. He credits CitiStat with “creating an expectation of city services” on the part of residents and, by improving public services and holding the line on government costs, improving the property values of Baltimore’s homeowners.

Problem Solving

Many PerformanceStat administrators report that their meetings developed into venues for tactical problem solving and strategic thinking that extend beyond Stat’s core concentration on dollars and service response times.

For example, Mayor Fenty brought his CapStat team a puzzle:

“[Mayor Fenty] had a question as to why the city’s commercial corridors were full of used car lots—in places where it didn’t really make sense, where they were eye-sores. So we had a CapStat session on that—we ended up having nine, altogether, over several months—where we kept peeling the onion to figure out what was really going on with these car lots. The solution ended up being a real crack-down by our code enforcement officers to cleanup these car lots which, it turned out, were acting more like warehouse than retailers.

—*Interview with Victor Prince,
Director of CapStat in Washington, D.C.*

PerformanceStat directors interviewed by Fels placed a high value on these meetings as a space to work between the administrative “silos” that confound cooperation between different arms of the government. Programs in Washington State (GMAP) and King County (KingStat) have deliberately altered the agency-specific approach pioneered by Baltimore to encourage this cross-departmental problem solving toward thematic goals of government, such as public welfare, child safety, and economic development.

Often, these conversations do connect resources among departments in a way that can be measured in dollars and cents. “We have an infinite number of examples like this,” says SomerStat’s Tara Acker:

In [a recent meeting] we saw that there was a confluence between [the Department of] Traffic and Parking and Police, where Traffic and Parking would generate this “boot list” for cars that were to be booted from having accumulated numerous tickets. The Police Department simultaneously happened to purchase a license plate reader system so that when they’re in the vehicle just driving, it scans license plates as a way of looking for scofflaws. And so, as a result of the SomerStat meeting, we encouraged Traffic and Parking to download their “boot list” and upload it into the Police license radar system. That resulted in an additional \$38,000 for the city.

—*Interview with Tara Acker,
Director of SomerStat in Somerville, Massachusetts*

These brainstorming sessions have proven useful enough that many Stat directors have modified their workflow to protect them. Several have created semiformal “prestat” meetings where departments have an opportunity to explore their performance data and problem solve before reporting to the chief executive later in the week. “It can be important to do this away from the podium,” points out Acker, where “if you throw out an idea, all of a sudden you might own it”—whether or not you have the departmental resources to follow-through.

Reporting & Accountability

Jurisdictions with PerformanceStat programs have found them easily adapted for reporting and accountability purposes. Though not all Stat programs have developed public-facing reporting and visualization tools, both major state-level programs—Washington State’s Government Management Accountability and Performance tool (GMAP) and Maryland’s StateStat—have incorporated the Recovery Act into their existing frameworks. Boston recently extended its Oracle Hyperion Scorecard to allow residents to track the city’s stimulus spending in relation to its existing priorities and performance targets, and NYCStat’s “Stimulus Tracker” has been active since early 2010. In each case, the existence of PerformanceStat programs facilitated the pivot from accountability to internal managers to reporting for stakeholders outside of government.



Adherents to the PerformanceStat process—and there are many—argue that the system amounts to more than

a way to drive cost savings and solve problems across the bureaucracy: it can provide a rare window in on the mechanics of the city’s business for senior staff; it is a venue to set and enforce the administration’s priorities; it provides departments an opportunity to communicate their constraints to the chief executive and negotiate solutions; it is, in the hands of someone like Governor O’Malley, an entire approach to public management.

Yet despite these merits and its many admirers, the diffusion of PerformanceStat has been slow and subject to setbacks.

The following section of this report explores where “Stat” has underperformed expectations and suggests that several very common misapprehensions have contributed to its slow start.

The Limits of PerformanceStat

The Fels Institute of Government's survey of PerformanceStat programs reveals that, while "Stat fever" has carried the model into several fields of public administration, its adoption among each has tended to be shallow. For every successful PerformanceStat program, there is another that struggles or has been suspended—a problem our research suggests is less with the PerformanceStat model than with its uneven implementation.



While the adoption of PerformanceStat has been broad, it has not been *deep*. For every school district or state agency that has experimented with Stat, there are a dozen local governments that visited Baltimore or another active program and declined to participate. Whereas CompStat and its methods spread to nearly a third (146) of large police departments within five years of its popularization in New York and 60% within twelve years, less than two dozen municipalities appear to have adopted PerformanceStat programs in the six years since CitiStat received its "Innovators" award.

Some Stat programs have struggled at startup; others have declined over time. While many PerformanceStat directors interviewed by the Fels Institute of Government remain positive about their programs' contributions to improving service delivery and budget performance, others are concerned that lack of executive support, uneven agency buy-in, and uncertain strategic directions could undermine their efforts. Syracuse and the District of Columbia are both undergoing mayoral transitions which could alter (SyraStat) or even end (CapStat) their PerformanceStat programs. "PhillyStat", a major initiative of Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter in 2008, was suspended in 2010 and bluntly described as "ineffective" by the city's new

Managing Director, Richard Negrin. (The city is restructuring the program for another launch in 2011.)

The popularization of "Stat" in so many different contexts, and with so many modifications, may have obscured the merits of the original. Some public executives attracted to Stat's "good government" pedigree have inevitably adopted the suffix without understanding its principles. Others may deliberately weaken the follow-up and accountability elements of Stat due to pressure from agency directors, political sponsors or municipal unions. Still others will inherit established PerformanceStat programs to which they have no personal allegiance. These are dynamics that are active in several existing PerformanceStat programs. The result, over time, is what one interviewee derisively labeled "Stat-lite", where PerformanceStat programs have a tendency to devolve into management meetings—but with extra paperwork.¹

These observations do not detract from the very real value of PerformanceStat programs described above; a value which was substantially confirmed by the Stat directors interviewed for this report.

It is puzzling, however, that public managers have failed to consolidate and standardize the "Stat" phenomenon, to leverage its early results into a professional standard adopted as widely by state and local governments as CompStat has been by police organizations, and to take advantage of increasingly useful business intelligence tools to drive better and cheaper public services. Why has PerformanceStat stalled?

¹ This dynamic is familiar within CompStat as well, as George Mason University's Professor James Willis describes: "What's happened in many places, there are so many different goals that it becomes a very diffuse information sharing meeting. A session might begin with a recap of events, announcements, changes to standard operating procedures, and so on. It can metastasize."

Two Crucial Misunderstandings That Inhibit Stat

Misunderstanding #1: PerformanceStat programs create an adversarial relationship between administrators and departments. This pervasive concern, which is shared by both active and would-be Stat administrators, often leads governments to “pass” on Stat altogether.

Stat’s reputation for abrasiveness developed at CompStat, which contemporary (and complimentary) reports described as fierce. John Timoney, who was Chief of Department at the NYPD during CompStat’s development, believes that the “rough-and-tumble world of CompStat meetings” was overblown by press accounts and “completely misunderstood by the majority.” Matthew Gallagher, chief of staff to Mayor O’Malley in Baltimore, shared Chief

Timoney, Gallagher, and the several of the municipal PerformanceStat administrators interviewed by the Fels Institute of Government argued that competent public managers generally find ways to use Stat programs to their own advantage:

“The main benefit . . . was that it highlighted and rewarded productive performers. Young captains, who prior to this never would have had the opportunity to talk with the chief of department or even to meet or see the police commissioner [...] now could interact with these individuals on a weekly basis. In an organization as large as NYPD, this was revolutionary. And while this revolution was going on, we were creating, for the first time, a meritocracy” (Timoney 2010).

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Timoney’s annoyance that the occasional confrontation has commanded such “a disproportionate share of the historical coverage of the Stat process”:

The appropriate tone [for a Stat meeting] is “candid.” I’m not trying to sound insensitive. But if you’re talking about your Police Commissioner or your Public Works Director and they’re running nine-figure agencies commanding millions of dollars, I’m not going to be apologetic about asking a tough question. I think the public would want that level of accountability.

—*Interview with Matthew Gallagher,
Chief of Staff to Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley*

As Gallagher explained, “if you’re a good effective manager, you love this.”

These assurances have mostly fallen on deaf ears, however, and it is apparent that PerformanceStat’s reputation as a high-stakes, high-pressure approach is still discouraging many public organizations from taking even the first step to adopt it.

Misunderstanding #2: PerformanceStat is a “good government” tool that can be successfully implemented by an administration independent of its chief executive.

This cannot be stressed enough. PerformanceStat is, first and finally, a leadership tool. **Stat programs derive their**

effectiveness entirely from the direct attention and explicit conferral of authority from the most senior elected official in the administration.

Successful PerformanceStat programs track carefully with the chief executive's agenda, as has been noted, whether that is to reduce overtime and absenteeism in the Department of Public Works, create affordable housing, or eliminate car lots from commercial corridors. Each of these mandates, while they may change or evolve, is as clear as CompStat's original imperative: *to reduce crime*.

By the time Mayor Fenty began using “CapStat” as a verb, departments were committed to the system.

In his excellent brief, *The Seven Big Errors of Performance-Stat*, the Kennedy School of Government's Dr. Robert Behn reserves the highest level of ignominy for programs with “no clear purpose:”

Too often, PerformanceStat is nothing more than the latest government fad. Upon hearing about the approach, the manager exclaims, “ooh, cool hammer” and goes looking for some convenient nails to pound.”

The review of active PerformanceStat programs conducted by the Fels Institute of Government for this report confirmed Dr. Behn's insight precisely. One Stat administrator described the immense frustration of department heads at being required to present, perfunctorily, at meetings where the senior administration either did not attend or used their time to catch up on email correspondence.

Conversely, agency heads respond immediately to the attention of the chief executive. As CapStat Director Victor Prince noted, “I knew that this was really working when the mayor didn't answer his phone in Stat sessions.” By the time Mayor Fenty began using “CapStat” as a verb, departments were committed to the system.

PerformanceStat programs are frequently linked with efforts by public agencies to improve their information technology infrastructure and to be more transparent to their stakeholders. Our research hypothesized that both of these would be important elements of a successful Stat program. Instead, we found that, while both are useful “extras”, neither is indispensable.



Transparency

It is a basic tenet of ‘good government’ advocates that transparency can ensure public accountability and that accountability for its results will drive a government to innovate and improve. Evidence in support of this theory, from our conversations with Stat practitioners, is mixed.

Government performance data, however effectively it is presented, does not have a broad constituency. Apart from the occasional “super citizen” or press request, PerformanceStat programs rarely receive thoughtful review. The average Stat program is generally lauded at their launch, modestly eulogized if it is suspended, and otherwise overlooked. (As the Philadelphia Daily News jeered in September: “PhillyStat has been out of order since July. Have you missed it?”)

This popular neglect is not necessarily a problem. As Victor Prince stressed, “the attention should not be on [Stat]. It should be on the Mayor’s initiatives.” PerformanceStat is, first and foremost, an internal management tool for holding the government agencies accountable to their executive director. This elected official—the mayor or the governor—is keenly aware of his or her own electoral accountability to citizens.

To be sure, several cities have made remarkable efforts to open their books to the public. (See in particular Washington, D.C.’s “ResiStat” and the initiatives being explored by Boston About Results.) Many, however, view the Stat process as private and its information as proprietary. This does not, insofar as Fels can determine, undermine the purpose or effectiveness of Stat programs or the ultimate accountability of the administration for their results.

Information Technology

Enterprise-level data management systems can provide tremendous benefits, but many of the best municipal PerformanceStat programs are still self-built—and Excel is still the most common denominator.

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” sums up the attitude of many PerformanceStat directors toward information technology. Baltimore’s CitiStat began by organizing its information through Excel templates, which it generously shared with any city who wished to emulate its program. In many cases these remain the lowest (and most important) common denominator for active Stat programs.

Boston is the exception that proves the rule. The city’s modified PerformanceStat program, Boston About Results (BAR), leveraged leadership from Boston’s Office of Budget Management to deploy Oracle’s Hyperion tools throughout the city government in 2006. The result, according to Senior Project Manager Devin Lyons-Quirk, is not only a tremendously more robust system of performance targets and interactive reports, but also a way to centralize information about municipal activities so that effective performance management tasks continues seamlessly through transitions in agency leadership. “From an integrity and consistency-of-data perspective, it takes us light-years ahead” says Boston’s Chief Information Officer Bill Oates (Oracle 2009).

But while most Stat administrators interviewed by Fels expressed interest in this category enterprise-level data warehousing and visualization technology, few had the financial or administrative support to pursue it. PerformanceStat directors are responsible for collecting data across dozens of departments, many of which control their own information technology platforms, have inherited “blue screen” legacy systems, and maintain plenty of paper-based processes. All of these are significant challenges to implementing business intelligence platforms.

Immediate Prospects For Stat

The budget climate is a key factor affecting the development of Stat over the next several years, and Fels believes it is likely to weaken existing programs but provide an excellent opportunity for incoming executives to adopt PerformanceStat as a proven tool for wringing bigger results out of smaller bureaucracies. The evolution of Stat programs toward monitoring thematic rather than departmental goals should continue, as should the emphasis on creating environments for interdepartmental problem solving. Upgrading their data warehousing and customer relationship management systems is on the “to do” list of most Stat directors—but little progress is likely to be made until the pressure on the public purse relents.



PerformanceStat is an important tool for managing scarce resources—but it is also one of the first offices to be emptied during a budget crisis. Nearly every Stat program interviewed by Fels was short-staffed. Several had recently lost analysts to other departments, and others suffered from mission-drift as they were required to compensate for gaps elsewhere on the chief executive’s team. It is likely that existing Stat programs will continue to lose capacity while public budgets remain squeezed through 2012.

Stat administrators will continue to modify their programs to better-fit new organizational contexts. Our research suggests that two particular innovations will continue to gain momentum:

- Movement toward *subject* rather than departmental performance management, especially at the county and state level. The pioneering models here are KingStat (King County in Washington) and GMAP, of Washington State.

- An emphasis on *problem solving* and interdepartmental initiatives, beyond routine departmental benchmarking. Stat administrators have found these activities valuable enough to build in extra time to accommodate them, and describe them as an important prophylactic against the “stat fatigue” that overtakes many programs in their second and third years.

The use of service request data will expand as quickly as information technology budgets can support it.

The volume and variety of *input* to PerformanceStat management systems has increased substantially since CitiStat’s launch, and should be expected to continue to grow. Virtually all new Stat programs begin with some customer relationship management or “ticketing” capability, often integrated with 311 telephone call centers. (See Robert Last, 2009, for a review of 311 and municipal non-emergency call centers.) Applications for mobile devices like Pittsburgh’s “iBurgh”, and online services such as “SeeClickFix” will expand to other jurisdictions and provide additional raw material for information-hungry Stat administrators. (Boston’s Office of New Urban Mechanics is a particularly aggressive innovator in this area, and is currently porting the city’s integrated 311 mobile application to the Android operating system.) This flood of data has been, as a rule, welcomed by Stat administrators who feel that whatever “crowd sourced” data may lack in completeness, it compensates for by providing an immediate and unmediated window in on citywide service issues.

Innovations such as these, and the professionalization of Stat programs should drive information technology investment—though slowly. As previously discussed, public organizations face substantially greater barriers to

implement enterprise-wide technology than their private counterparts, and should be expected catch up only slowly. The majority of the Stat administrators interviewed by the Fels Institute were aware and interested by the substantial performance improvements available here; but tight budgets and long implementation times point to little movement over the next several years.

The ongoing public budget crisis is an opportunity, rather than a challenge, for new executives interested in PerformanceStat as a proven belt-tightening strategy.

Committed and purposeful executive leadership is by far the most important determinant of a Stat program's success. Well-run programs are immediate money savers, and the 26—28 new governors expected to take office in 2011 have first-class models available in Washington's GMAP and Maryland's StateStat. New mayors and county executives will note that PerformanceStat has a successful record at local governments that range in size from a few hundred thousand to several million.

Suggested Research

This report on the “State of Stat” and its future prospects is based on the insights of PerformanceStat's current practitioners and the excellent work of Dr. Robert Behn, the Center for American Progress, and those who have written on the creation of CitiStat. A great deal less is known, however, about the model's diffusion and evolution over the past five years. Further research is needed to answer several of the questions raised by the PerformanceStat directors interviewed for this report:

- ▶ Why has this model not been adopted more widely in state and local governments, given its excellent early results? What accounts for its slow diffusion, relative to CompStat?

- ▶ How many of the “Stat-curious” jurisdictions that visited active programs in Baltimore, Syracuse, or Washington still have ambitions to implement a PerformanceStat program? How many have lost interest—and why?
- ▶ Has PerformanceStat's reputation among professional networks such as the “big seven”², local professional associations, and municipal leagues improved or faded since CitiStat's popularization? Does Stat still attract the attention of ambitious new elected officials?
- ▶ What technical, administrative, and educational gaps account for the slow integration of business intelligence tools into PerformanceStat operations? How do programs share and incorporate the growing body of best practices outside of regional networks such as New England Stat?

Studies on the diffusion, impact, and evolution of CompStat programs in the United States provide an excellent model for this research (Weisburd 2004, Willis 2003 & 2010). Fels' conversations with Chief Timoney and Professor James J. Willis suggest, moreover, that CompStat and CitiStat have lessons for one another, having developed separately in very different organizational contexts over the past decade.

² International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Council of State Governments (CSG), National Association of Counties (NACo), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), National Governor's Association (NGA), National League of Cities (NLC), U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM).

Conclusion

All of the elements that contributed to PerformanceStat's popularization in New York City and its celebration in Baltimore ten years later remain strongly relevant in today's public management environment. Whereas Mayor O'Malley's administration inherited the economic hangover from the bust of the dot-com bubble, today's elected officials are wrestling with the most severe downturn in 70 years. Local governments across the country face service demands that are growing against a shrinking tax base, and are looking for strategies to avert municipal layoffs or tax increases. Elected officials are entering office at a time of deep public skepticism with government and—in many cases—with a strong mandate to challenge the status quo. PerformanceStat is, above all, a tool for executives to build persuasive arguments for making significant changes to the operation of government and to ensure that those changes are enacted.

These leaders have something that the New York Police Department and Martin O'Malley's administration did not: the benefit of an existing “proof of concept” and a record of achievement for PerformanceStat across several state and local governments. This report can confirm through the experience of those governments that PerformanceStat has, by and large, kept its central promise to improve public services and reduce their cost. Moreover, a new set of tools, including the expansion of service request data through 311 call centers and mobile applications and improved enterprise-level information technology, has greatly expanded the potential reach and effectiveness of the basic PerformanceStat model.

The risk, for Stat advocates who would see this trend continue, is that executives who are now entering office may misunderstand the PerformanceStat model and view it as adversarial, technocratic, or otherwise irrelevant to achieving their goals. The Stat brand has suffered somewhat in the past several years. PerformanceStat directors, technology consultants, and professional associations concerned with public administration have a role, here, to encourage new public administrators to comprehend PerformanceStat as its founders did: as a leadership strategy to drive the chief executive's agenda through—as Victor Prince quipped—“the power of relentless attention.”

The reason stat programs are so successful [. . .] is the benefit of, in a systematic way, bringing data and analyses to bear on a problem to make informed decisions as opposed by making decisions by anecdote. This has to be executive-driven. It has to be tailored to the chief executive that you're serving. Otherwise, he or she won't invest the most precious resource that they have—their time. And all of [PerformanceStat's] power derives from the mayor choosing to engage.

—*Interview with Victor Prince,
Director of CapStat in Washington, D.C.*

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