

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MATTERS

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET
Fairfax County, Virginia

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FAIRFAX IS ONE OF 40 COUNTIES TO BE GRADED

Readers of *Governing* magazine are probably familiar with the annual issue each February for the past few years in which various levels of government have been graded on their management performance. The effort results from a collaboration between Syracuse University and *Governing* that is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. This collaboration has four main goals:

- 1) inform the public about what contributes to effective government management;
- 2) enable governments to learn from each other;
- 3) acknowledge changes (and particularly improvement) in management performance over time; and
- 4) study/document the importance of management in achieving results.

Both the journalists from *Governing* magazine and the academics from Syracuse University stress that this is not an effort to “get government,” but an initiative to discover and publicize good management practices.

Titled the “Government Performance Project,” the effort began in 1996. The first pilot ratings were conducted during 1997. In 1998, the 50 states and 15 federal agencies were graded, the results of which were published in the February 1999 issue of *Governing*. Then in 1999, the 35 largest cities (as determined by overall revenue) were rated, with grades published in February 2000. In February 2001, the state ratings were revisited. Now it is the counties’ turn.

A total of 40 counties were selected based on geographic distribution and total revenue. Fairfax County is one of the 10 counties in the South Region.

West

Los Angeles County, California
Orange County, California
San Diego County, California
Sacramento County, California
San Bernardino County, California
Santa Clara County, California
Alameda County, California
Riverside County, California
Contra Costa County, California
Clark County, Nevada
King County, Washington
Maricopa County, Arizona

Midwest

Cook County, Illinois
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin
Wayne County, Michigan
Oakland County, Michigan
Cuyahoga County, Ohio
Hamilton County, Ohio
Franklin County, Ohio

South

Metro Dade County, Florida
Hillsborough County, Florida
Broward County, Florida,
Palm Beach County, Florida
Fairfax County, Virginia
Harris County, Texas
Dallas County, Texas
Fulton County, Georgia
Shelby County, Tennessee
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

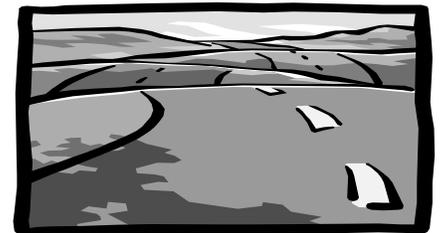
Northeast

Montgomery County, Maryland
Prince Georges County, Maryland
Baltimore County, Maryland
Anne Arundel County, Maryland
Nassau County, New York
Suffolk County, New York
Westchester County, New York
Erie County, New York
Monroe County, New York
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

The Government Performance Project selected five key areas on which to grade governments. These include:

- Financial Management
- Human Resource Management
- Capital Management
- Information Technology
- Managing for Results

Fairfax County can anticipate receiving the written survey in April 2001 and will have approximately two months to respond. Individual agencies will be contacted to provide responses as necessary. Timeliness and complete answers will be critical. As part of this written survey, documents supporting responses will also be provided. After receiving this material from Fairfax County and the 39 other jurisdictions, the Government Performance Project staff will spend the second stage reviewing the responses and accompanying materials. In the third stage of the project, they will conduct interviews with County staff to further clarify policies and practices. Synthesizing such a multitude and volume of information is certainly a formidable task. Waiting until February 2002 for the results will be almost as challenging.



STRIVING

There is never a crowd on the extra mile.

— Unknown

Performance Measurement Matters is published quarterly by the PM Team. Editor: Barbara Emerson, Technical Support by Frann Shurnitski, Department of Management and Budget. Advisory staff: Sara Simmons, Department of Planning and Zoning.

Join the PM Team and See the World

Well maybe not *the* world, but the world of performance measurement in Fairfax County. Each spring, agencies have an opportunity to nominate staff to represent them on the Performance Measurement (PM) Team. This team has been working since 1997 to develop, implement, and advance a methodology for measuring and improving performance in Fairfax County.

The typical term for members is approximately one year, with the option to extend participation. A number of members have commented that it often takes a year to learn the system in order to become fully contributing members. For this reason, many choose to stay on for a second year. Most of the existing members joined last spring, with a few cycling off in May. This creates the opportunity for other County staff to join the PM effort. The Team is now seeking 3-4 new members. Here are the requirements and benefits of participating on the PM Team.

Qualifications

Excellent communications skills (written and oral)

Strong initiative

Knowledge of Fairfax County programs and services

Team player

Recommended for participation by the agency director

Time Commitment

Preparation for and attendance at regular meetings (3 hours/month)

Attendance at PM brownbag lunches as available

Additional time as needed to perform the functions of the team and handle special projects

Term of Service

One year, with ability to extend pending the mutual agreement of the team and the agency director

Benefits

Association with other professionals committed to measuring and improving performance

Enhanced understanding of the County's PM methodology

Opportunity to influence the future direction of the effort

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please send a brief synopsis of your skills and how your participation will benefit you, your agency and the County. Please include this information in a memo from your agency director indicating his/her approval. Forward this to: The PM Team, c/o DMB by **May 1, 2001**. Applicants will be notified shortly thereafter.

Training

As noted in the January 2001 edition of the *Performance Matters* newsletter, the PM Team will be offering four different classes during May and August 2001. The Basic Class provides an introduction to the PM system that Fairfax County uses, particularly its terminology and methodology. The Advanced Class, entitled Managing for Results, is intended for those who are responsible for using performance measures to manage. A prerequisite is to have attended the Basic PM Class. Based on popular demand, the Data Collection and Surveying Classes will again be offered. Each of these classes is three hours and can be registered for by contacting Barbara Emerson of the PM Team at 324-3009 (e-mail BEMERS). Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

EVENT	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Basic PM Training	May 3, 2001 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Data Collection	May 3, 2001 / 1-4:00 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Surveying for Customer Satisfaction	May 4, 2001 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Managing for Results	May 4, 2001 / 1-4:00 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Basic PM Training	August 15, 2001 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Data Collection	August 15, 2001 / 1-4:00 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Surveying for Customer Satisfaction	August 16, 2001 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Managing for Results	August 16, 2001 / 1-4:00 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC

Visit the PM Website:

<http://infoweb.co.fairfax.va.us/OMB/pfmeasure.htm>



OPPORTUNITY

The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.

— Winston Churchill