

# Performance Measurement ...Matters

[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/dmb/perf\\_measure.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/dmb/perf_measure.htm)

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## EIGHT YEARS RUNNING - FAIRFAX COUNTY HOSTS REGIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CONSORTIUM

On May 12, 2005, participants came from as far away as Albemarle County and Virginia Beach, and as near as Loudoun and Prince William counties, with a number of members from the County's Performance Measurement Team to attend the Regional Performance Consortium held by Fairfax County. Since 1998, Fairfax County has hosted semiannual and now, annual gatherings of staff from jurisdictions in the region who are interested in advancing performance measurement in their respective localities.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Kathryn Newcomer, Director of the School of Public Policy and Public Administration at The George Washington University. Dr. Newcomer is an internationally known expert in the field of performance measurement. Her presentation on "The Future of Performance Measurement – Where is it Headed?" was very insightful and reinforced the concept that performance measurement is here to stay as a fundamental management practice. Newcomer extensively discussed how performance measures relate to the federal OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) program. She explained how performance measures and PART have been instrumental in helping federal agencies focus on strategic planning and performance evaluation. Newcomer emphasized the importance of performance measures for accountability, as well as its use in supporting budget decisions, improving program operations and guiding planning efforts. In addition, she elaborated on the consequences of cross-agency comparison of performance, providing particular emphasis on how such comparisons affect the behavior of oversight officials, clients and program staff.

Newcomer emphasized that two of the primary challenges in developing effective performance measurement

information systems are communication (vertical and horizontal) and measurement, specifically zeroing in on links to program missions, legitimacy, understandability, consistency, comparability, and reliability of organizational performance measures. Finally, Newcomer examined a couple of models being used by federal managers for program management, evaluation and oversight, citing examples of effective measurement practices and common barriers.

The afternoon session included time for a roundtable discussion on what each of the respective jurisdictions were doing as part of their performance measurement efforts. John Greiner of Montgomery County shared his jurisdiction's latest report on that county's performance. This report can be found online at: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ombtml.asp?url=/content/omb/fy06/mmurec/index.asp> and is useful for examples of a similar, nearby jurisdiction's performance measures.

Other attendees spoke of just getting started in the process and had questions for their peers who were a little further advanced in the process. No matter where the attendees were on the spectrum – fairly advanced or just beginning – there was something for everyone to learn from their peers.

**"You can't wait for  
inspiration. You  
have to go after  
it with a club."**



**- Jack London (1876 - 1916)  
US adventurer, author, &  
sailor**

## AUGUST BROWNBAG LUNCH

Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, August 9 at noon in Room 120C at the Government Center if you want to attend the annual PM refresher. While this does not take the place of the Basic Performance Measurement Class, it is intended to help you brush up on the terminology, methodology and PM database if it's been a while since you worked on performance measures. Feel free to bring your lunch to listen to this hour-long presentation. Please contact Performance Measurement Coordinator Barbara Emerson ([Barbara.Emerson@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Barbara.Emerson@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-3009) if you plan to attend and/or request reasonable accommodations.



## PM TEAM

The Performance Measurement (PM) Team consists of 16 members from 13 different agencies who meet monthly and provide input on the County's performance measurement efforts. The following is the list of current PM Team members. Feel free to contact any of the following if you have questions or need assistance with performance measurement.

<u>Team Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Barbara Emerson, Coordinator	Department of Management and Budget	324-3009
Lisa Blecker	Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board	324-4426
Michael Cash	Office of Human Rights	324-2953
Norman Chmielewski	Department of Administration for Human Services	324-5978
Kristen Cigler	Department of Community and Recreation Services	324-5306
Sara Daleski	Department of Systems Management for Human Services	324-7135
Evy Duff	Health Department	246-8652
Liz Henry	Department of Family Services	324-7889
Mila Jao	Department of Finance	324-3150
Ed Jones	Department of Public Works and Environmental Services	324-5028
Laura Lazo	Department of Management and Budget	324-2049
Allison Lowry	Department of Family Services	324-3528
Doug Miller	Fairfax County Public Library	324-8322
Eric Mills	Department of Vehicle Services	324-3527
Cathy Spage	Department of Information Technology	324-3870
Bill Yake	Department of Management and Budget	324-2030

## PM RESOURCES

Find out what others around the globe have known – that Fairfax County has a wealth of information related to performance measurement on its website. (Yes, we do get inquiries from around the world from others who have found the County's information and are using it.) Even more is included on the County's Intranet at: <http://infoweb/DMB>:

- Manuals for the four courses offered (Basic Performance Measurement, Data Collection, Surveying for Customer Satisfaction, and Managing for Results). If you couldn't attend the annual training, these manuals will help you understand the concepts and the processes. In addition, the manual for the PM Database is also available on the Infoweb for those needing assistance in using this web-based tool.
- Quarterly *Performance Measurement Matters* Newsletter – Previous issues of this newsletter are all available on the website. This newsletter is intended to keep County staff abreast of what's going on with performance measurement in the County.
- A list of resources that are available in the PM Library located in the Department of Management and Budget. Please call ahead (703-324-2391) to ensure availability of the room and materials. Please note that they are for reference and cannot be checked out. This is to ensure that these materials are available for others.
- Links to local, state, federal and other sites that have useful performance measurement information.

*Performance Measurement Matters* is published quarterly by the PM Team. Editors: Barbara Emerson and Bill Yake; Technical Support: Lynda Pham, Department of Management and Budget.

These resources can be used to identify best practices and measures used by other organizations and jurisdictions.

**“Almost every wise saying has an opposite one, no less wise, to balance it.”**



**- George Santayana  
1863-1952**

*Spanish-born American Philosopher and Writer*