

Excellence in Performance Management: Clayton, Missouri

THE ST. LOUIS SUBURB OF CLAYTON, MISSOURI, demonstrates how a smaller city can excel in performance management. Clayton has received a Certificate of Excellence in Performance Management from the ICMA Center for Performance Analytics each year since 2011. Here are some of the things the city has done to earn that recognition.

Organizational culture and leadership

Internally, Clayton fosters an organizational culture that embraces performance management. Orientation for new city staff includes a one-on-one meeting with City Manager Craig Owens, who describes the city's philosophy and explains how the staff member's job contributes to the overall performance management strategy. "We are indeed passionate about demonstrating value," says Owens.

Owens also meets annually with all employees in small groups to review the three elements of the organization's culture: team pride, quality services, and high value. The quality services element focuses heavily on benchmarking and emphasizes the city's strong performance.

"We feel it is important to benchmark our citizen satisfaction," says Owens. "The worst performing fire department is likely to have higher satisfaction than a top performing code enforcement department just because of the nature of the work. We need a relative scale to make sure we aren't shooting for the wrong targets and can celebrate results achieved on a tougher grading curve."

Internal processes

The city has formally collected performance data for more than eight years. At the start of the annual data collection cycle each January, an e-mail alerts staff that the data collection period has begun. Staff responsible for data collection, entry, and approval are required to watch the applicable training courses provided on the ICMA website, taking special note of any definitions that may have changed.

Internal data collection is overseen by George Ertle, assistant to the city manager, who also serves as the "primary coordinator" with the ICMA Insights™ performance analytics program. He ensures that staff are trained on how to enter data correctly. Then he reviews the data for accuracy and consistency with past data, taking into account any changes in external circumstances or internal practices that might account for apparent aberrations.

CASE PROFILE



Clayton, MO

Residential population:
16,000

Daytime population: 46,000

Square miles:
2.48

Median household income:
\$89,479

Form of government:
Council-manager

At least quarterly, Owens reviews performance data with department heads, and performance results are discussed as part of performance evaluations for department heads and employees.

Resident feedback

The city conducts an annual community survey covering 45 measures that are surveyed across more than 30 cities in Kansas and Missouri. The 2014 survey showed that Clayton rated above the national and Kansas/Missouri averages on all 45 measures.

In addition to asking residents to rate services, the 2013 survey sought input on services that could be reduced if necessary. Results were used to evaluate the cost of providing several services and to identify opportunities to improve efficiency.

Public reporting

Clayton reports financial, operational, and survey data, including comparative data, on its website (www.claytonmo.gov). Residents can view

- Operating and capital improvements budgets and two-year plans for the current and past fiscal years
- The city's annual reports from the last five years
- The city's strategic plan ("C the Future"), focusing on four key performance areas: (1) exceptional city services; (2) livable community; (3) strategic relationships; and (4) economic development and vibrant downtown.

The annual report shows performance measures for key service areas and, where data exist, shows how Clayton's performance compares with the average performance of 15 peer cities, separated into two groups: (1) St. Louis area peer cities and (2) ICMA peer cities, which include cities from across the country that have reported data to ICMA. The report also shows year-to-year comparisons for many key measures, including residents' ratings on the community survey.

In addition to showing comparisons for measures collected regionally or nationally, Clayton reports on measures of local interest, such as retail/office vacancy rates and average commercial rental rates per square foot.

The Exceptional City Services Scorecard

The first key performance area in the strategic plan, exceptional city services, includes a commitment to performance measurement and benchmarking and thus lies at the heart of Clayton's performance management initiatives. The city has developed an Exceptional City Services Scorecard showing resident satisfaction; cost and revenue measures; police, fire, and EMS response times; employee training hours; and facility utilization.

The scorecard is published in the budget book, summarizing historical and current performance data along with goals for the fiscal year. The scorecard also captures results from an internal employee engagement survey.

| Public Safety | | 2012 Actual | 2013 Actual | 2014 Goal | 2014 Actual | 2015 Goal | 2016 Goal |
|---------------|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Customer | % residents surveyed who feel safe | 94% | 94% | 95% | ✓ 96% | 95% | 95% |
| | % of EMS patients surveyed rating service as good or better | 97% | 100% | 96% | ✓ 100% | 96% | 96% |
| Financial | Police cost per capita | \$123 | \$129 | \$125 | ✗ \$136 | \$125 | \$125 |
| | Fire/EMS cost per capita | \$86 | \$92 | \$95 | ✓ \$93 | \$96 | \$96 |
| Process | Response time for priority police calls (dispatch receipt to arrival on scene) | 3:53 | 3:55 | 3:51 | ✓ 3:04 | 3:51 | 3:51 |
| | Response time for priority EMS calls (dispatch receipt to arrival on scene) | 5:30 | 4:53 | 5:00 | ✓ 4:36 | 5:00 | 5:00 |
| | % of fires contained in room of origin | 100% | 97% | 100% | ✓ 100% | 100% | 100% |
| | UCR Part I crimes per 1,000 population | 18.55 | 14.10 | 13.50 | ✗ 15.08 | 13.50 | 13.50 |
| | % cardiac arrest patients who exhibit a pulse upon delivery to hospital | 60% | 60% | 40% | ✗ 27% | 40% | 40% |
| People | Average annual training hours per employee | 125 | 95 | 106 | ✗ 77 | 106 | 106 |
| | % employees meeting requirements to promote | 88% | 71% | 75% | ✓ 76% | 75% | 75% |
| | Police Employee Engagement Index | 4.22 | -- | 4.25 | ✗ 4.03 | -- | 4.00 |
| | Fire Employee Engagement Index | 3.71 | -- | 3.75 | ✓ 4.26 | -- | 4.20 |

Example from Clayton's Exceptional City Services Scorecard.

Networking

In 2014, City Manager Owens spearheaded a regional performance measurement initiative and persuaded more than a dozen municipalities in the St. Louis region to collect data that permitted comparisons among the cities while taking account of differences that can affect services. The East-West Gateway, a regional council of governments, coordinated the data collection. The initiative was in response to queries from elected officials about how Clayton compares with other cities in the area.

Public reporting

In the final analysis, Clayton has embraced performance management by instilling it as a value throughout the organization, ensuring the accurate collection and verification of data from residents and local government operations, sharing results publicly, comparing performance with benchmark cities, and using the results to continuously improve services.

This case summary was prepared by Barbara Moore, Performance Management Outreach Coordinator, ICMA. It originally appeared in the December 2015 issue of *Public Management Magazine*.

About ICMA

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government worldwide. Our mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional management to build livable communities that improve people's lives. ICMA provides member support; publications; data and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 10,500 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.