Part One
What Should I measure?
Performance Measures are meaningful indicators that assess progress. Even the most data rich agencies can be information poor. The ability to properly use performance measurements can translate into insight that directs the behavior of organizations.

There are four questions that provide means of evaluation for these measures:
1. Is it a manageable measure?
2. Does it make sense?
3. Is there data available for it?
4. Can it bid meaningful information?

Steps determining what to measure:
1. What do you want/need to know?
2. What is the data collection objective?
3. How will you use the data?
4. What do you already know?
5. What else do you need to know

Foster Care Example
Outcome Objective: Provide safe and stable homes for at risk children.
Words that jump out are SAFE and STABLE
Measures could be: Percentage of children reporting abuse in foster care, and average number of placements per child in a 12 month period.

Part Two
Collecting and Reporting Data
The data selected should be valuable, reliable, and consistent. Filling out a template explaining the purpose and methods of data collection can be very useful for supporting reliability and consistency. It is also important to make someone accountable for collections. This person would have ownership over the process, be able to perform any support work for maintaining data collecting operations, and answer questions.

Data collection and reporting templates can include information on the measure, description, why it matters, collection and calculation method, the accountable individual/position, a data collection leader, data collection points of contact, and a target.

Foster Care Example
After establishing the measurements, the data was analyzed over the course of a fifteen-year period. The reports found that both percentages of children reporting abuse and the average number of placements per child per year had gone up substantially.

Part Three
Translating Data & Information to Insight
In order to gain any insight or address any problems revealed by the data, you need to be willing to accept what the data is saying, even if it is not saying what you want it to. Regularly review the data collected. If something comes as a surprise then try to find the cause of it. Look for things that arouse questions, and be inquisitive with the right people about it.

When developing a scorecard, be sure it is accurately reflective of performance, and insight can be drawn from the information it displays. If a scorecard reports success across all measures, it may not be very robust of a system. The selected measure might not be meaningful, targets may not be challenging enough, data collections itself may not be thorough.

Foster Care Example
A deeper look into what caused increases in these measures revealed that in the last fifteen years there was a dramatic rise in the average age of children being placed in foster care. It is more likely for older foster children to exhibit emotional behavioral issues, which makes it difficult to place them.
1. **How do you come up with measures and targets for internal service departments such as city/county attorneys, human resources, and IT services?**

There are a number of ways that these services have been measured in the past. Typically for attorneys measurements are money saved and money lost, results of contract negotiations, and compliance. For human resources it can be percentage of first offer acceptance, voluntary turnover rate (more specifically: turnover rate of high performers), employee satisfaction survey results, learning and growth opportunities, and percentage of internal promotions. In IT measures may look like complete inventories, number and amount of time related to open tickets, and timeliness of information provided for council actions.

2. **If you are collecting data that doesn’t influence decision-making and is simply used for mandatory reporting, is it worth collecting?**

There is some information we collect to manage our daily systems, and this is necessary. However, if it is for mandatory reporting and you have flexibility with what is included in the report then explore something else. If it is not meaningful to you and your organization then search for something that would tell the story you want others to hear.

3. **How do you keep the momentum going once you implement these performance measures?**

Start by creating a strong culture that uses data. Make sure the information being stored can actually be used. Are they reporting something that can help them? Is it important for members of your team in the way they do their job? Sometimes when you get too many measures it can zap the energy of the organization. Reward people and provide incentives for people coming to the table and using data. Good stories also need to provide good justification for things like requested expenditures. There is also a lot of value in branding something. Give your efforts a name and an icon/symbol gets people excited about the goodness of the cause. Develop that excitement and channel it into your targets and outcomes.