

Local Government Performance Center

An initiative of the Washington State Auditor's Office



Local Government Performance Center Leadership and Technical Experts Group Retreat – April 3, 2013

*Hal Holmes Community Center
City of Ellensburg
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

Members attending: Mike Bailey, Randy Beehler, Tracey Burrows, Charlie Bush, Mike Doherty, Sheila Gall, Steve Gorcester, Cheryl Grant, Michael Grayum, Michael Jacobson, Eric Johnson, Patrick Jones, Byron Katsuyama, Larry Keeton, Kim Krause, Jim McEntire, Kevin Phelps, Doug Schulze, Rich Siegel, Ken Smith, Iwen Wang

Others attending: Bruce Rohm (for Helen Price Johnson), Alicia Seegers Martinelli, Faith Trimble, Meagan Eliot

Staff attending: Larisa Benson, Scott Baird, Roxanne Lowe, Dan Masterson, Sheri Sawyer, Brian Willett, Adam Wilson

Small Break-out Session Reports: The following highlights major themes from discussions at each of the three small breakout tables:

Getting to financial health

- Interest in getting visits ahead of compliance audits, which would help entities understand the process.
- Interest in a single, city- and county-wide financial condition dashboard.
- Local governments need a third party to assess their overall financial condition (not just a compliance audit). They need advice on what to do about it.
- Interest in a road map to financial wellness.
- Governments need help with forecasting and assessing risk.
- Small and medium cities could use technical assistance (range riders).

Track and Measure Performance, and Report Publically

- All agree a dashboard is the goal, but have questions about how to get there.
- There are two audiences for a dashboard: general citizens, and decision makers.
- Need advice and common set of performance measures (including definitions).
- Governments would like help with data sources (automate when possible, confirm reliability).
- Would like common technology platform (these are expensive).

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- Entities would like help with development of citizen surveys for individual jurisdiction. This would enhance a state-wide survey effort.
- Governments need scalable solutions (small entities want more hands-on help and a prescribed solution, big entities want a set of solutions to choose from).

Continually Evaluate and Improve Performance

- The tools on the website are helpful but finding them on the website and then navigating to/through them can be overwhelming and intimidating.
- More hands-on/technical assistance is needed to explain and walk through the tools and available resources.
- Resources need to be scalable so that they can be used by both large and small organizations. Smaller organizations will likely need more help and resources.
- Like the idea of tying tools to leading practices identified in audits.
- How can we better utilize other cities and counties as benchmarking resources and as a helpful resource to our own cities and counties? Is there a buddy system or way to match up similar services across cities and counties that can be a resource?
- We need to identify ways to promote these same tools and resources to elected officials.

New Ideas Brainstorm: The group discussed new ideas for tools, products, and services the Center could offer in the future. Within the context that all ideas will be pursued at some level, polling was used to get a sense how the ideas should be prioritized. The following are the ideas that rose to the top:

- Create a baseline performance measurement system
- Develop tools to collect, disseminate and automate data
- Develop a roadmap to fiscal wellness
- Develop precise definitions for performance measures

Next Steps: Staff will use the information from the retreat to inform the business plan for the Center. A draft of the business plan will be circulated at the next meeting of the Leadership and Technical Experts Group (TBD).

For more information, please contact [Sheri Sawyer](#), Assistant Director, Local Government Performance Center, Washington State Auditor's Office, (360) 725-9745