King County

KingStat

Guidance Document

August 2006

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 What is KingStat?

The purpose of KingStat is to use performance-based data to drive decision-making in King County. Successful organizations rely on performance measurement to inform leadership about how well they are reaching their goals and where improvements can be made. The KingStat program is based upon three main elements:

1. Measuring performance;
2. Using measurement data to manage county activities; and
3. Sharing measurement data and analysis with the Executive office.

At the heart of KingStat is a regularly occurring management meeting where key decision-makers share and discuss data to help inform policy decisions and achieve results. KingStat meetings will be conducted both at the Executive and department level to ensure that departments stay focused on top priorities.

1.2 Design

KingStat meetings provide decision-makers with data on:

- Individual department operations (the Department Dashboard);
- Executive initiatives; and
- Countywide measures.

Initially, meetings between Executive and department leadership will focus on the Department Dashboard and Executive Initiatives. A separate meeting will be held to discuss countywide measures. In the future, KingStat meetings will likely center on specific issues of concern that cross departmental boundaries.

KingStat meetings, however, are only one element of performance measurement. *This guidance document is meant to help departments get started with their internal KingStat process and develop materials to communicate with the Executive office.*

1.3 What is the history of performance measurement at King County?

The County Executive's performance measurement effort had its beginnings in 1998, when the seven Executive departments embarked on a strategic business planning effort called the Executive's Performance Initiative. With support from the Office of Management and Budget, each of the Executive branch departments was asked to develop a vision, mission, and goals to be submitted as part of departmental business plans.

Currently, departments submit business plans annually with their budgets, and include a discussion of their vision, mission, goals, core businesses, change dynamics, and performance measures. The business plans and performance measures are used by the County Executive and OMB to help make budget decisions that ensure the best use of resources. Starting in 2002, these measures were also presented in a document that accompanied the Executive budget request to the County Council, *Executive Performance Measurement Initiative*.

The KingStat concept is loosely based on several noteworthy and award-winning performance management programs. The New York City Police Department's management and accountability program, COMPSTAT (for Computerized Statistics), uses map-based data to identify and discuss problems. The City of Baltimore developed CitiStat to manage multiple city departments from an enterprise perspective. Most recently, the State of Washington created GMAP (Government Management Accountability & Performance) to hold leaders and managers accountable for achieving results.

In 2004, the Executive Office convened the departmental Deputy Directors to examine the above programs and other best practices in performance management. The workgroup was tasked with identifying those practices that best fit King County's needs and history.

Building on past performance measurement efforts, KingStat is just one vehicle by which the Executive and departments will manage county operations and service delivery. KingStat is separate from, but will work in tandem with, the following existing efforts: management and oversight through current management practices, business planning, the Auditor Performance Measurement Workgroup, and existing individual departmental performance measurement programs.

1.4 Why are we doing KingStat?

KingStat is not just a mandate from the Executive Office. There's something in it for everyone.

What's in it for you?

- You'll develop the ability to tell your department's story.
- Employees will be able to see how they contribute to the department's accomplishments.
- You'll be able to identify what steps need to be taken to achieve desired results.
- You'll have the opportunity and the ability to make a strong case for the resources you need to achieve results.
- You'll gain clarity on Executive expectations and priorities.
- You can improve coordination with other departments to achieve better results.

What's in it for the Executive?

- The Executive will gain a better understanding of what departments need to achieve desired results.

- The Executive will be able to identify opportunities for partnerships between departments and with external organizations.
- The Executive will be able to clearly establish priorities with departments.
- The Executive will be able to engage in problem solving with department leadership.

What's in it for residents of King County?

- Residents will benefit from increased transparency. They will gain a clearer picture of county work and accomplishments.
- Residents will have a better understanding of how they are influenced by county programs.
- Residents will be able to hold the Executive departments accountable for results.
- Residents will be able to see the value they are getting for their tax dollars.
- Residents will be better informed and be able to be more active participants in the public process.

Most importantly, everyone will gain a sense of accomplishment from being part of a team that is achieving important county goals.

Chapter 2. KingStat Meetings

The primary purpose of KingStat meetings is to establish a forum where decision-makers can use performance data to enhance their ability to carry out the important work of our region. For KingStat meetings to be successful, all of the participants must be committed to collaborative problem-solving.

2.1 Who will be at the meetings?

1. KingStat Staff

2. Executive office representatives:

   - County Executive
   - Assistant County Executive
   - Chief of Staff

3. Department representatives:

   - Department Director
   - Department Deputy Director

Executive and department representatives may be added on a case-by-case basis.

2.2 What happens at the meetings?

KingStat meetings are about teamwork. While departments are expected to come prepared with presentation materials, the meeting is not intended to be a "show and tell." Executive staff is given the briefing materials ahead of time so that the meeting time can be focused on the content. You should expect questions such as: Is this the most appropriate measure? Why is this target set at this particular level? Is our performance meeting our expectations? At the same time, KingStat meetings are not meant to put any single department or individual in the hot seat. The overall spirit of the meetings is designed to be collegial. Executive staff may ask challenging, direct questions; but the goal is to improve performance, not to play a game of "gotcha."

KingStat staff will serve as liaisons between the department and the Executive panel in the weeks before the KingStat meeting to help you prepare. KingStat staff will work to ensure the briefing materials are clear, and will share key questions or concerns with both Executive staff and the department.

The measures you present at KingStat will mostly be high level outcomes that describe the overall performance of the department. Executive staff is there to engage in problem-solving, so be ready to drill down with more detailed supportive data when relevant. Be prepared to answer probing questions and to jump to areas of particular interest.

"Dry runs" or department-level KingStat sessions will help you identify areas of interest and opportunities for improvement.

2.3 What happens after the meetings?

Follow up is a critical step in the performance management cycle. During the meetings, KingStat staff will take minutes. Following the meeting, KingStat staff will send out a memo outlining agreed-to tasks and major points of discussion.

At the department's next KingStat meeting, you should be prepared to discuss progress on assignments from the previous meeting, as well as the "next steps" suggested in your presentation (See Section 5.3.4).

2.4 When do we meet?

Two-hour KingStat meetings will be held on a regular basis. After the initial department meetings, meeting frequency may change. In addition, KingStat meetings may begin to focus on specific issue areas that came out of the first round of meetings or cross departments. Departments will be given sufficient lead time to prepare for meetings and KingStat staff will always be on hand to provide technical assistance.

Chapter 3. Measuring Performance

3.1 Where do we start?

3.1.1 Review current performance measures

You're already measuring performance. Every department already has measures that it submits with the business plan. In addition, many departments or divisions produce reports for external or internal constituents that include performance data. Some use balanced scorecards or other tools to track performance.

Start by assessing what data you already have. Then you can begin to think about whether the measures you have accurately illustrate what you do and what you're trying to achieve.

3.1.2 Telling your story

If the purpose of KingStat is to assess whether department activities are leading to desired results, departments must be able to articulate the relationship between activities and results. A logic model can help you understand this relationship and clearly communicate your story to others.

A logic model is a great way to tell your department's story—from the resources it uses to the activities it performs and the outputs that result. Most importantly, a logic model demonstrates how the process ultimately leads to a desired outcome.

Below is an example of a high-level logic model for the King County Health Reform Initiative. The example illustrates how a logic model can convey the relationship between department processes and results. More information on creating a logic model and where to get help can be found on the performance measure website.

Example Logic Model: King County Health Reform Initiative – Draft

RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES: Short-Term	OUTCOMES: Medium-Term	OUTCOMES: Long-Term
Joint Labor Management Insurance Committee Health Reform Initiative Interventions Best practice research: employee health improvement Best practices research: Employer medical care cost containment HRI annual budget allocations Human Resources Department (HRD) Staff Third Party Administrator Benefit Plan Consultant King County employees and dependents King County managers and supervisors	**Wellness Assessment/ Personalized Action Plan** **Live Well** (education, awareness) ▪ Eat Smart ▪ Move More ▪ Quit Tobacco	# of worksites displaying posters # of newsletters distributed # of employees with a Wellness Assessment Plan # of resources distributed to make healthy choices	**Increased employee awareness about healthy lifestyle options** ***Measure:*** *% employees & dependents that participate in HRI* Increased support for positive employee/ dependent decision-making and action related to health.	Increased ability of employees and dependents to maintain or improve their health status. **Increased employee and dependent responsibility for maintaining and/or improving their health status** ***Measure:*** *Forecast per-member medical care costs--healthier members are forecasted to have lower costs*	**Reduced rate and acceleration in rising medical care costs** ***Measure:*** *Trend in medical care costs compared to forecast costs – total and per employee*
	Choose Well (education, awareness) ▪ Choose a Health Provider	# of web hits attendance at presentations			
	Use Well (counseling, guidance) ▪ Nurse Line ▪ Disease Mgt ▪ Case Mgt	# of nurses available # of consultations			
	Organizational Alignment	attendance at workshops # of vending machines sold # of manager toolkits downloaded			
	Provider Performance ▪ Provider Best Practice ▪ Specialist Efficiency	# of claims reviewed # of contacts with physicians			

3.1.3 Measuring Outcomes

Outcomes are the results that a department or program aims to achieve. An outcome statement describes the desired impact of a department or program on customers or the broader public.

Outcomes should be distinguished from *outputs*, which are the products or services that a department or program delivers. Outcomes, in contrast, are the intended *results* of those products and services.

SMART Outcomes are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-Bound

In a logic model, outcomes are categorized as short-, medium- and long-term. This distinction often identifies where the department can have the most impact. Long-term outcomes can often not be controlled by a single department, but they can be influenced by department activities.

Why measure outcomes? Focusing on outcomes allows you to assess the value of your work. Measuring outcomes will help you:

- Communicate achievements to stakeholders;
- Communicate to employees how their work relates to the department's accomplishments;
- Make an effective case for appropriate resources;
- Identify effective strategies;
- Focus staff on common goals; and
- Improve program implementation and service delivery.

3.1.4 Choosing the right measures

Creating performance measures that accurately reflect outcomes allows us to answer the question: "How well are we doing?"

What makes a good measure?

There is no one set of agreed upon "rules" for what makes a good measure. Best practice shows that good measures typically are:

- Useful: The measure provides information that is valuable to the department or decision-makers.
- Self evident/understandable: The measure does not need a lot of explanation.
- Evaluative: The measure helps the reader evaluate something, not just describe something.
- Instructive or important: The measure tells the reader something significant or something that would not be known from other sources.
- Valid, reliable, and economical: The measure captures the intended information in an accurate and cost-effective manner.

Types of measures

There are several different types of measures. For the purposes of KingStat, as well as the business plans, departments should be looking at outputs, effectiveness, and efficiency measures.

> **Outputs:** Products or services that a department delivers. Outputs are most useful if they are proven or seem likely to contribute to the desired outcome. Output measures only indicate how much work was done, not if it was the right work to achieve a desired outcome or if it was done efficiently. (Examples: *Tons of refuse collected; Miles of roads cleaned; Number of customers served*).
>
> **Effectiveness (or outcome):** The degree to which the organization has achieved its desired objectives or goals. Effectiveness measures can include the impact of program services on customers, the community, or on the broader environment. *(*Examples*: Percentage of clean streets; Timeliness of services; Customer satisfaction).*
>
> **Efficiency:** The cost-effectiveness of services in terms of money, time or other resources; often defined as the ratio of inputs to outputs. *(*Examples*: Employee-hours per ton of refuse collected; Dollars spent for one mile of snow removal)*.

Additional types of measures that may be important, depending on the organization or governmental function, include:

- **Demand:** the amount (and/or difficulty) of work coming into a program (Example: *severity of inmate conditions coming into the jail health program*)
- **Workload:** output relative to staff resources used
- **Cost-effectiveness:** cost per unit of outcome

Departments will have many measures, but only a select few will be presented at KingStat meetings. The meetings offer an opportunity to discuss “dashboard” measures, as well as Executive initiatives. When choosing measures to discuss at a KingStat meeting, ask yourself several questions:

1. Are the measures relevant to the department’s overall mission and goals?
2. Do the measures help us manage department operations?
3. Are there measures that reflect the progress of Executive initiatives?
4. Are issues/outcomes that have high visibility represented?
5. Are there measures for outcomes that are of key importance to stakeholders?
6. Are there measures of efficiency or cost-effectiveness for most outcomes?
7. Do we have customer satisfaction data to report?

8. Can we reflect employee satisfaction or morale?

Your measures don't have to be perfect to have a successful KingStat meeting. Being transparent is most important: if there's something you want to measure, but don't have the data, communicate that to KingStat and Executive staff. Data needs can be part of the KingStat discussion. Assessing your data needs will make your analysis, presentation and the KingStat meeting more fruitful and complete.

3.1.5 Creating an Index

An index allows you to examine multiple outcomes simultaneously and to create a comprehensive picture of overall performance. An index is a tool to simply communicate a diverse set of complex data with a single number. For example, a stock market index represents the composite value of a set of stocks. The index does not, however, reflect the performance of any individual stock in the group.

"Aggregate to communicate, disaggregate to manage."

In performance measurement, an index is used primarily to communicate an overall sense of how you are doing. It is not a useful *management* tool because it does not identify specific areas of good or poor performance.

Each department should develop at least one index to communicate overall performance on community-level outcomes. You will first need to identify key outcomes and their related measures that represent a holistic picture of your department's performance and impact on the broader public.

Indices are not limited to community-level measures. They can be used for any group of measures with some common theme and a common unit. For example, you can create a customer service index if there are a number of different customer groups you survey.

The Simple Approach to Indices

Once you have identified a group of measures, take the average of those measures using a common unit (e.g., dollars, percentages). The result is an index. If there is a target for each of the individual measures, then the targets can also be averaged to create an "index target."

The Expert Approach to Indices

An index can also be comprised of a group of measure-to-target ratios. The first step remains the same: Choose a group of key measures. Instead of averaging the measure results, you'll average the measure-to-target ratios. For example:

- Last year, 60% of all children under the age of 2 received all of their immunizations;[1]

[1] This is only an example and not reflective of true performance in King County.

- Our target was 75%; therefore,
- The measure-to-target ratio would be 60% ÷ 75%, or 80%.

The number 80% would then be averaged with other measure-to-target ratios. The advantage of this approach is that all measures are standardized relative to their target.

In an index, measures can also be *weighted* so that one or more measures have a greater effect on the index than others. For example, the Dow Jones does not simply average the price of each stock. Rather, it weights stocks based on market price and the number of shares available. Similarly, you may decide that one indicator is more indicative of departmental performance. That indicator can then be weighted more heavily than others so that it has a greater influence on the index result.

When presenting an index, it is important to show what measures were included and whether they were weighted. The Executive Panel will likely want to see the next level of detail and drill down into specific measures.

3.1.6 Creating Context: Targets & Benchmarks

Now that you've got the right measures, how can you assess whether your department's performance is good or in need of improvement? If 75 percent of King County's roads are clean, is that good? In order to evaluate performance, we must answer two questions:

1. How are we performing in relation to the target we set out to achieve?
2. How does our performance compare to that of others?

Setting targets and identifying appropriate benchmarks is the first step in analyzing your department's performance and providing the answers to these questions.

Targets

Targets are almost as important as the results. Without a target, someone external to the organization may have no idea what to make of a certain level of performance because it has no context. A target represents the desired result of a performance measure. Targets may be based on regulatory or industry standards, policy decisions, or the performance of similar organizational units.

Desired results aren't achieved in a day. Establish realistic short-term and more ambitious long-term targets to help you get there. Short-term targets will keep staff motivated and allow you to document steady progress. Long-term targets will help the department stay focused on reaching your ultimate goals.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks are standards or measures against which you can compare your department's performance. Types of benchmarks include:

1. Historical – the department's past performance;
2. Industry standards; and
3. Performance of similar jurisdictions or organizations.

Historical benchmarks are generally the easiest to obtain, and are almost always relevant and informative. Comparing current and past performance allows you to evaluate whether performance has progressed or deteriorated over time. In order to compare performance, reporting periods must be the same length—whether they are monthly, quarterly, or annually.

Accepted industry standards may be set by another level of government or a professional association. For example, the Wastewater Treatment Division uses the National Association of Clean Water Agencies' annual performance award as a benchmark. The award is not a direct comparison against other organizations (in other words any agency can get the award if they perform adequately), but a recognition that the agency complied with 100% of all permit requirements.

Many industry standards are not mandated. Rather, they serve as benchmarks against which individual jurisdictions can compare their own performance and targets.

Another type of benchmark might use national averages. King County's recycling rate is about 60%. Without context, a rating of 60% wouldn't seem necessarily impressive or good. But when King County's rate of 60% is compared with the national average of 30%, the significance of this number stands out.

Comparing your own performance to that of similar jurisdictions is the most difficult type of benchmarking. Finding other jurisdictions that are measuring performance isn't hard, but in order for the comparison to be valid, the jurisdiction must have a similar mission and customer base. In the case of county government, this means identifying jurisdictions with similar population, land use mix, etc. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has a number of benchmarks for municipal services with actual performance for participating municipalities.

Another way to approach benchmarking is to identify best practices, regardless of the strict comparability of the organization. Finding innovative programs being implemented by cities, counties or even the private sector can allow you to identify best practices that impact a specific area or process that is similar to your own. See the performance measurement website for additional benchmarking resources and links to other jurisdictions.

Chapter 4. Analyzing Performance

KingStat relies on capacity within the departments to interpret outcome data and make suggestions or decisions based on the analysis.

At KingStat meetings, each outcome measure will include a brief analysis of the performance reported (see Section 5.3.3). Below are some tips for getting started.

4.1 Analyzing Performance Data

4.1.1 Evaluate disaggregated data

Averages can be useful, but they don't allow you to identify outliers of good or poor performance. For example, is there a geographic area or service center where performance has improved notably? What can you learn from the activities carried out there? Are certain areas performing significantly below average? Why? What changes are needed to improve performance? Is program implementation consistent across regions or service centers?

4.1.2 Assess changes over time

As mentioned earlier, comparisons of past and current performance will help you assess whether performance has improved or worsened over time. The important question is why. Ask yourself:

- Has there been a change in strategy or program implementation that has influenced performance?
- Are external factors (e.g., the economy) significantly affecting performance?
- Have inputs (e.g., staff, funding) changed in a way that has affected performance?
- Have legislative or regulatory requirements been changed in a way that impacts outcomes?
- Are there any special events (e.g., natural disasters) during the time period covered affected the department's outcomes?

4.1.3 How do we compare?

If performance data from other comparable jurisdictions are available, compare your outcomes to theirs. If better performance is indicated in other jurisdictions or organizations, have staff examine why. Are there resource differences? Are different programs or strategies being pursued that might be appropriate in our jurisdiction? This process of identifying best practices is a valuable tool in improving performance.

Chapter 5. The KingStat Presentation

Now that you've identified outcomes, developed measures, collected data and analyzed performance, how will you communicate your findings with the Executive Panel?

Departments will prepare a PowerPoint presentation that will be used as a handout for each meeting. These presentations may eventually be posted on a KingStat internet site and be available to the public.

Depending on the focus of the meeting, the panel may choose to jump around to areas of particular interest instead of walking through the presentation in a step-wise fashion.

5.1 Agenda

KingStat staff will work with you to develop an agenda for the meeting. The initial KingStat meetings will focus on individual departments. Future meetings may bring together various departments to concentrate on a particular issue, such as criminal justice.

5.2 Department Context

Beginning the presentation with a basic department profile may be valuable to Executive staff. Consider including the information on budget, number of employees and a simple logic model. The logic model will remind everyone why you have chosen the measures that you are presenting.

5.3 "Quad Charts"

Quad charts are a useful way to present performance information clearly and concisely. As the name suggests, the page (or slide) is split into four sections, each covering a key element:

1. The measure and its significance;
2. A graph or other visual that displays the performance data;
3. An analysis of the data; and
4. Next steps.

Not all four elements will necessarily fit onto one slide. Try to be succinct, but use more than one slide if necessary.

The recommended quad chart layout and an example* follow on the next two pages:

Department Name

Outcome: What is the desired outcome that you are measuring?

Measure: What data are we looking at to measure progress toward the desired outcome?

Significance: How is the measure related to the outcome?

Target: What are we trying to achieve?

Chart or Map

- Show progress toward the target
- Keep it simple
- Note the time period for the data
- Use two graphs if necessary
- Maps may need to be on another slide

Analysis

- Don't repeat what's in the chart
- Evaluate variations in performance in different regions
- Explain changes over time & special events
- Provide external benchmarks for comparison

Next Steps

- Answer the question "now what?"
- Be specific
- Provide both short- and long-term actions
- Ask questions of (or assistance from) the panel

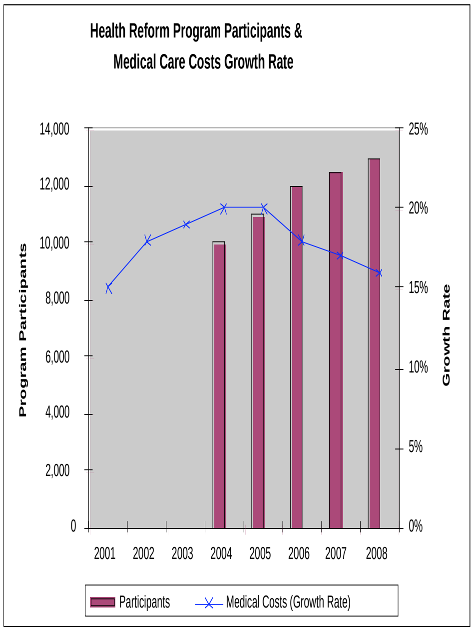
Department of Executive Services

Outcome: Reduce growth of employee and dependent medical care costs

Measure: Annual growth rate of medical care costs compared to # of participants in Health Reform Initiative

Target: Reduce growth of medical care costs below 15% by 2010

Data Source: HRI Program, Benefits Office



Analysis

- Widespread participation (90%) in HRI exceeded industry predictions
- Increases in program participation correlate with slowed growth in annual medical care costs
- Based on actual claims information since 2004, costs are forecasted to level off further
- Slowed growth in medical care costs indicative of positive trends in employee health

Next Steps

- Increase program participation through "New Year's Resolution" campaign
- Continue tracking medical care costs
- Achieving further cost reductions may require additional programming or incentives

*Not based on actual data and analysis. For example purposes only.

5.3.1 The Measure

Start by explaining what you're measuring and how it relates to a key outcome. Outcomes may have more than one measure. Often a suite of measures is needed to illustrate performance (e.g., number of violent infractions in jails among inmates; number of violent infractions against guards; number of violent infractions perpetrated by guards; percent of inmates attending programming). Include more than one measure on a slide only if it can be presented clearly.

If the target is not clear in the graph, use this space to define the target.

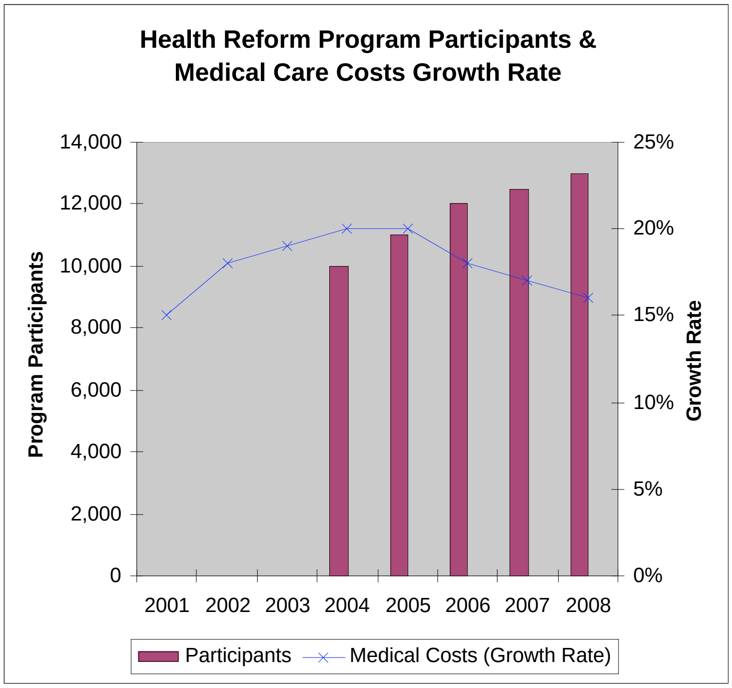
Finally, include the source of the data.

5.3.2 The Graph

Most people are more visually, than analytically, oriented and therefore graphs are often the best way to communicate performance information. Graphs should show progress toward the established target, or track performance over time.

Some key points to help make your graphs clear:

- *Bar graphs* should be the most common graph presented. They are especially useful in showing comparisons or multiple sets of data.
- Use *line graphs* primarily to show performance over time.
- Use *pie graphs* less frequently, and only to show percentages of a whole (e.g., % budget allocated to various programs).
- A combined *line* and *bar graph* with two y-axes is useful for showing multiple sets of data that require different scales (see example*).



*Not based on actual data. For example purposes only.

Graphs should be zero-based: the data represented ranges from zero to an appropriate level. The default upper-boundary is generally 100%, or any number that allows the reader to see both the results and the target on the same axis. If this isn't possible, be clear about the range you are using. Remember to include a descriptive title and labels for your x- and y-axes.

A variety of information can be included on a chart that provides the audience with some context. Consider including your target, benchmark data, or external factors affecting the performance of a measure. For example, a line graph can illustrate both the average time to answer 911 calls and the total response time of emergency services.

5.3.3 The Analysis

Because your graph should be self-explanatory, your analysis need not re-state the results, target or trend already illustrated. If you have used a bar chart to show that performance is exceeding your target, you should not describe that in the text, as well. Rather, the analysis should be used to explain what is affecting performance and what the level of performance means.

Are there important limitations to the data presented? Why was performance so much higher last year? What explains the difference among geographical areas? What would it take to reach the target? What other resources might you need? Are there external stakeholders that you could partner with? Do you have confidence in the data? Is there key explanatory information that the reader needs to know that is not self-evident? Refer to Chapter 4 to guide your analysis, and then point out the key concepts here.

5.3.4 Next Steps

This section should answer the question "now what?" What strategies have you come up with within the department to improve performance? Strategies or proposed actions should be as specific and measurable as possible. Point out who is in charge of the follow-up and by what date a follow-up action will be completed. If appropriate, discuss both immediate and long-term plans.

Other questions to consider are: Have you been working with other departments or stakeholders to devise an action plan? Who are they? Do you need help from the panel in the form of resources, partnerships or technical assistance?

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King County Annual Growth Report
http://www.metrokc.gov/budget/agr/

Fairfax County, Virginia
http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/omb/perf_measure.htm

Maricopa County, Arizona
http://www.maricopa.gov/cio/

San Diego County, California
http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/

Governing.com - Grading the Counties 2002
http://governing.com/gpp/2002/gp2intro.htm

International City/County Manager's Association
http://www.icma.org

Performance Management Network
http://www.pmn.net/