

The Challenge: Making Every Program Get Better Every Year

We are in the throws of the appropriations process and the PART process is well underway. The demands we are placing on ourselves are immense – but they are the price of ensuring that we can say in a few years time that every program is getting better every year.

Many, many programs can already say this:

- The National Weather Service increased tornado warning lead times by 30%; improved flash flood warning accuracy; and more accurately predicted hurricane paths.
- The United States Agency for International Development improved bus traveling time on the road from Kabul to Kandahar, Afghanistan, from 30 hours to 16 hours.
- The Environmental Protection Agency is increasing by fifteen percent the number of people who receive healthy drinking water per million dollars spent.
- The Small Business Administration is reducing the administrative cost of a small business loan from \$2,349 to just \$729 and the Office of Personnel Administration is reducing the cost to process a retirement claim by \$10 – from \$92 per claim to \$81 per claim.

Because the PART is the tool we'll use to measure our progress towards this goal, we have to recommit to improving the performance of PARTed programs, especially those that are now rated *Results Not Demonstrated*.

This quarter, a couple of agencies declined in status on the scorecard because not enough of their programs improved their ratings. While these agencies did develop performance goals and remedy some of their Results Not Demonstrated ratings, their pace was not aggressive enough to meet the standard. In the future, I will more clearly communicate the number of programs that need to improve their ratings in order to upgrade or retain an agency's status score. What should agencies do?

Implement recommendations: Agencies should be taking actions necessary to improve not only programs rated *Results Not Demonstrated*, but all programs. Every PART includes recommendations – next steps – that are designed to improve a program's performance. The quality of implementation of PART recommendations is a factor in your initiative scores. Be sure that program managers are committed to taking PART's recommended next steps as part of their efforts to ensure their programs improve every year.

Congress: Many of the recommendations to improve a PARTed program's performance require Congressional action. Agencies must develop detailed action plans for implementing such recommendations, whether they involve authorizing or appropriating committees.

Set clear goals to improve performance and efficiency: Programs rated *Results Not Demonstrated* are developing better programs performance goals. The targets must also be aggressive and demonstrate *improved* performance. Targets must show that we strive to achieve more for less. If targets show deterioration in performance, there must be a clear explanation for why.

In all of these areas, OMB is eager to help. One way we are doing that is by developing

PARTWeb, a tool that improves the collaboration on PARTs between OMB and agencies. It will also make it easier to track the implementation of PART recommendations. I strongly urge all agencies to take advantage of this new tool.

All of these activities are necessary to meet the ambitious goal of every program getting better every year. It's a goal we will all be proud to have been a part of.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Shea
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