



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' USE OF EVIDENCE IN POLICYMAKING

A Report of the First Cohort of Results for America's Local Government Fellowship

March 2016



Invest in
What Works
Policy
Series

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In September 2014, Results for America (RFA) launched a Local Government Fellowship, creating a national network of senior local government leaders from 11 jurisdictions across the country and helping these leaders demonstrate evidence-based policy “wins” within their city halls. As the first cohort of this Fellowship ends, RFA has produced the following report describing the Fellowship program and highlighting the main accomplishments of participating cities.

BACKGROUND

Local governments spend billions of taxpayer dollars each year to ensure the safety and improve the well-being of their citizens. Yet, without a strong and on-going commitment to 1) evaluate the impact of these investments, and 2) use data and evidence to understand which policies and programs are working and which are not, it is unclear whether public resources are being spent effectively and efficiently. Given constrained public resources and growing needs of urban populations across the nation, local governments must make decisions that are informed by the best evidence and data available.

It is against this backdrop that in September 2014, Results for America launched its inaugural Local Government Fellowship program. The mission was to build and support an influential cohort of key local government leaders who were in a position to drive evidence-based policy change in their municipal governments, and to enlist effective champions for the national movement for governments to invest in what works.

Results for America interviewed more than 25 top local leaders before selecting 11 Local Government Fellows. The selection was based on criteria that included personal commitment to using evidence and data; enthusiasm about being part of a peer network; experience in implementing projects that focused on the use of evidence and data; as well as diversity across geography, city size and political affiliation of the Mayor.

The 11 Fellows represent a diverse cross-section of local government, including: Albuquerque, Atlanta, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Louisville, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Salt Lake County, Seattle and Tulsa.¹ These jurisdictions collectively represent nearly 19 million people (roughly 6 percent of the U.S. population) and almost \$110 billion in annual local government spending. By enhancing municipal leadership and supporting individual examples of change in these 11 jurisdictions, RFA's Local Government Fellowship program advances local public investment in results-driven solutions in order to improve outcomes for youth, families and their communities.



RFA's Local Government Fellowship Goals:

1. Support the individual local government leaders' efforts to demonstrate the use of evidence and data to address a specific municipal need;
2. Help local government leaders assess the current state of their city's progress toward using evidence and data;
3. Advance a "what works" agenda in selected cities;
4. Connect local government leaders to a forward-thinking professional community committed to advancing the national movement for evidence-based policymaking; and
5. Develop an active network of senior-level government "champions" for evidence-based policymaking in a diverse range of cities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FELLOWSHIP CURRICULUM

Results for America developed and implemented a fellowship curriculum that included:

EDUCATION ABOUT BUILDING EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND POLICY

Each Fellow participated in discussions and workshops to learn about the four core components of moving city practice from the use of data and performance measurement, to the use of evidence and evaluation. Specifically, the continuum includes:

- Commit—City leaders make powerful, public commitments to getting better results for their residents by using data and evidence;
- Measure—City leaders use the data and tools at their disposal to measure progress and engage citizens along the way;
- Take Stock—City leaders consistently review and reflect to measure progress, learn, and make corrections and improvements; and
- Act—City leaders conduct evaluations and use evidence and public engagement to inform funding, policy, and operational decisions and take action.

CITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Fellows completed a self-assessment to identify where their city is on the "continuum of practice" and identify current gaps. This self-assessment allowed fellows to prioritize areas for action as well as become more familiar with the various strategies being used by governments across America to become more data-driven and evidence-based. Through these assessments, Results for America was able to identify cities' relative strengths and weaknesses and tailor subsequent discussions and workshops to address specific knowledge gaps.

EXECUTION OF INDIVIDUAL CITY PROJECTS

Each Fellow selected, outlined and advanced a city-priority project with the support of the Fellowship. Working virtually, in small groups and individually, with support from a coaching team, the Fellows regularly reported on progress and challenges, which helped to sustain momentum despite competing priorities.

PARTICIPATION IN A PEER NETWORK

Fellows participated in quarterly in-person convenings, for the purpose of learning from experts, engaging in peer-to-peer networking and sharing progress updates and lessons learned. Outside of the meetings, Fellows exchanged work products and materials including strategic plans, job descriptions, organizational charts, reporting templates, and planning documents.

ACCESS TO EXPERTISE

A subset of Fellows also received support from best-in-field expertise and technical assistance (“SWAT” visits). These engagements were selected based on project needs and available resources.

Additionally, as part of our robust effort to document and elevate lessons from the Local Government Fellowship program, Results for America:

- Developed, with close input from the Fellows, two “playbooks” to help mayors and local government leaders understand the continuum of practice, and learn more about effective strategies to help drive decisions based on data and evidence (see page 10); and
- Dispatched several Fellows to participate in and speak at events across the country, accelerating and expanding the national movement for evidence-based policymaking (see page 11).

FELLOWS’ INDIVIDUAL PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS



ALBUQUERQUE, NM

2014 Population: 557,000 FY16 Budget: \$915 million

Mayor Richard Berry

Fellow: Gilbert Montaña, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor

Accomplishments:

- Established a new executive-level agency, the Technology and Innovation Department, responsible for identifying and tracking performance measures across departments, as well as storing and analyzing performance data.
- Worked with each city department to identify measurable results and outcomes.
- Automated and enhanced the City’s public-facing data dashboard, <https://www.cabq.gov/abq-view/abq-dashboard>.
- Educated the media about the City’s progress as one way to inform the public about the purpose of this work.



ATLANTA, GA

2014 Population: 456,000 FY16 Budget: \$1.98 billion

Mayor Kasim Reed

Fellow: Matt Malament, Director, Office of Innovation Delivery and Performance, Office of the Mayor

Accomplishments:

- Established clear strategic priorities and associated performance metrics for all city operating departments.
- For the first time, issued “Letters of Expectation” to each department commissioner, codifying metrics and strategic goals to set a clear vision of success citywide.
- For the first time, implemented quarterly performance review meetings with department heads and the Chief Operating Officer.
- Set in motion an initiative to implement outcomes-based budgeting, leveraging a newly created budget team co-located with the City’s performance management program.



BALTIMORE, MD

2014 Population: 623,000 FY16 Budget: \$3.23 billion

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Fellow: Andrew Kleine, Budget Director

Accomplishments:

- Held first citywide “OutcomeStat” Conference in September 2015—more than 200 agency officials and community partners gathered to review the Mayor’s Priority Outcomes and begin developing “Turn the Curve” plans for each of 21 measurable indicators, including shootings, childhood asthma, and recycling.
- Launched an [OutcomeStat website](#) to better inform and engage the public.
- Developed and launched Outcome Leadership Teams for each outcome area and used “Turn the Curve” plans to guide the Fiscal 2017 budget process.
- Implemented the “Turn the Curve” planning process at the service level to improve performance measurement and get better results across city government.



LOS ANGELES, CA

2014 Population: 3.9 million FY16 Budget: \$8.5 billion

Mayor Eric Garcetti

Fellow: Miguel Sangalang, Executive Officer, Budget & Innovation, Office of the Mayor

Accomplishments:

- Created a performance management structure for the chief executives of city departments which includes “Letters of Expectations,” to document strategic goals set by the Mayor and review performance and progress toward stated outcomes at the department level.
- Launched outcomes-based budgeting initiative, aimed to link performance assessment and program evaluation directly to the City’s budget process.
- Implemented the Los Angeles [GeoHub](#), the City’s new public platform for geographical open data.ⁱⁱ
- Established funding through the [Innovation Fund](#) for research and development of metrics and data for city initiatives.ⁱⁱⁱ



LOUISVILLE, KY

2014 Population: 613,000 FY16 Budget: \$903 million

Mayor Greg Fischer

Fellow: Theresa Reno-Weber, Chief of Performance & Technology

Accomplishments:

- Worked to identify [common metrics](#) to track performance and outcomes across anti-poverty programs delivered at the City’s eight Neighborhood Place centers.^{iv}
- Signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding with neighborhood partners that requires data sharing and participation in LouieStat.
- Partnering with University of Chicago’s Poverty Lab to to analyze metrics and outcomes for all community services programs.
- Signed contract to create new online portal for individuals to enter in their information and receive immediate information on and connection to the anti-poverty programs for which they qualify.



NEW ORLEANS, LA

2014 Population: 384,000 FY16 Budget: \$1.03 billion

Mayor Mitch Landrieu

Fellow: Oliver Wise, Director, Office of Performance and Accountability

Accomplishments:

- Launched [NOLAytics](#) in the spring of 2015, bringing unrivaled predictive modeling power to the City of New Orleans.^v
- Hired two new analysts to support ongoing predictive analytics program.
- Assembled comprehensive dataset to surface factors statistically correlated with [fire fatalities](#)—such as houses least likely to have a smoke alarm—and worked with the New Orleans Fire Department to leverage data to launch targeted programs that reach homes at greatest risk of fire.^{vi}
- Created a structured decision-making tool to inform the Department of Code Enforcement’s determinations regarding whether to sell or demolish [blighted properties](#) ^{vii}. Shortly after implementing the tool, the Department cleared a year-long backlog of blighted properties awaiting city action.
- Created a plan to execute eight new predictive analytics projects in 2016.
- Working with an external business group to create a steering committee of corporate, academic, and nonprofit partners to help contribute pro bono services to analytics and innovation projects.



NEW YORK, NY

2014 Population: 8.5 million FY16 Budget: \$81.7 billion

Mayor Bill de Blasio

Fellow: Mindy Tarlow, Director, Mayor’s Office of Operations

Accomplishments:

- Developed an Inequality Investment Tracker to measure aggregate investments in reducing citywide inequality.
- Spearheaded development of a standard set of metrics that allows for comparative and longitudinal assessments across the City’s wide-ranging workforce development programs.
- In partnership with the Office of Workforce Development, reviewed evidence of effectiveness of workforce development funding streams and began reallocation of funds toward those programmatic approaches with the greatest positive outcomes.



PHILADELPHIA, PA

2014 Population: 1.6 million FY16 Budget: \$4.11 billion

Mayor Michael Nutter (Note: as of January 2016, Mayor James Kenney)

Fellow (former): Maia Jachimowicz, Policy Director, Mayor's Office

Accomplishments:

- Launched a “best practices” website, which includes evidence-based programs the City is currently using across departments, as well as resources for staff looking to conduct program evaluations, <http://www.phila.gov/bestpractices/>.
- Hosted four internal and external convenings with government leaders and staff to share currently available data-driven public management tools and demonstrate their applications in Philadelphia government.^{viii}
- Created an external research partnership between the City, workforce development partners and the University of Pennsylvania to evaluate the impact of Philadelphia's youth summer jobs program.
- Provided briefings and support to city leadership on the value of rigorous external evaluations and ways to develop research partnerships.
- Established a framework for Pay for Success projects in Philadelphia by commissioning a [feasibility study](#) and convening internal and external partners.^{ix}



SALT LAKE COUNTY, UT

2015 Population: 1.1 million FY16 Budget: \$1.05 billion

Mayor Ben McAdams

Fellow: Beth Mitchell, Policy Advisor, Innovation & Performance

Accomplishments:

- Identified cross-cutting outcomes, indicators, baselines, and targets for the Mayor's 'Future We Choose' goals.
- Developed Mayor's first public dashboard, launched in February 2016 at <https://dashboard.slco.org>.
- Instituted a plan for Salt Lake MetroStat, to track progress on the County's goals and targets. The first MetroStat meeting is scheduled for June 2016.
- Creating a master data warehouse for internal and public access.



SEATTLE, WA

2014 Population: 668,000 FY16 Budget: \$5.1 billion

Mayor Ed Murray

Fellow: Kate Joncas, Deputy Mayor of Operations

Accomplishments:

- Established performance management program, including launch of <http://performance.seattle.gov> dashboard website for departmental operating metrics, reestablishment of annual department director performance plans and monthly meetings with department performance managers.
- Launched <http://openbudget.seattle.gov> interactive website for citywide budget data.
- Completed a pilot project of analyzing and publishing some performance data within the city budget.
- Launched <http://capitalprojects.seattle.gov> interactive website for displaying capital project data and information, starting with the transportation department.
- Launched SeaStat operational biweekly meeting series open to the public to report, analyze and respond to crime and other public safety trends, including new www.seattle.gov/seattle-police-department/crime-data/crime-dashboard dashboard website for Seattle crime statistics reporting.



TULSA, OK

2014 Population: 399,000 FY16 Budget: \$758 million

Mayor Dewey Bartlett Jr

Fellow: G.T. Bynum, City Councilor, District 9

Accomplishments:

- Convened cross-agency planning retreats to build consensus around the importance of setting citywide policy goals, and measuring progress toward them.

CONCLUSION

Between September 2014 and March 2016, 11 cities took important steps toward using data and evidence to make better decisions and better serve their residents: All 11 Fellows completed an individual project on a city priority; all 11 Fellows say that they would continue to make the use of evidence and data a priority in their work; all 11 Mayors have committed publicly to supporting the use of data and evidence in their city work; and there is a dynamic and influential national network of city leaders who are learning from each other, exchanging ideas, and active champions in the evidence-based policy movement. As a result of RFA's Local Government Fellowship, the participating cities are better equipped and more fluent in their ability to use data and evidence to drive decision-making.

Building on this momentum, and with the generous support of The Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Results for America will launch the next phase of the Fellowship in the Fall of 2016. For more information, or to recommend local government leaders, please contact Results for America at info@results4america.org.

Want to learn more? Read these reports on the Local Government Fellowship at <http://results4america.org/policy-hub>:

- [Seattle: Measuring Outcomes to Improve Outcomes](#)
September 22, 2015
- [Tulsa: Using Data to Improve Performance and Efficiency](#)
September 22, 2015
- [New Orleans: Using Data to Drive Innovation and Improve Performance](#)
June 30, 2015
- [Louisville: Open Data, Performance Management and Continuous Improvement](#)
June 30, 2015
- [Local Moneyball for Government: Focus on Review](#)
April 27, 2015
- [Local Moneyball for Government: A Brief Overview](#)
April 27, 2015

APPENDIX: LOCAL GOVERNMENT FELLOWSHIP'S RELATED EVENTS

As part of the Local Government Fellowship program, fellows were represented at each of the following public events. *Where indicated with an asterisk (*), all fellows were invited to participate.*

- Results for America / RealClear Politics, "Mayors' Best Practices: How Mayors are Using Data, Evidence, and Evaluation to Address Pressing Local Issues," held at the Newseum in Washington, DC on September 19, 2014 *
- Results for America / University of Chicago, "Moneyball for Government: Can Big Data Do for Public Policy What It Did for Baseball?" held at the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics in Chicago, IL on November 12, 2014 *
- Governing Magazine / City of Louisville, "Summit on Government Performance & Innovation," held in Louisville, KY on February 11-12, 2015 *
- Results for America / Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Civic Engagement at Drake University, "2015 Iowa League of Cities Leadership Summit," held in Des Moines, IA on April 10, 2015
- Code for America Summit, "How to become a what works city," held in Oakland, CA on October 1, 2015.
- Results for America, "Gambling vs Investing In What Works," held in Las Vegas, NV on January 27, 2016.
- 2016 SXSW Interactive, "Better Living Through Data and Evidence" and "Cities Unlocking Impact" held in Austin, TX on March 11-12, 2016 *

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ABOUT THE INVEST IN WHAT WORKS POLICY SERIES

This report is part of Results for America's Invest in What Works Policy Series, which provides ideas and supporting research to policymakers to drive public funds toward evidence-based, results-driven solutions. Results for America is committed to improving outcomes for young people, their families, and communities by shifting public resources toward programs and practices that use evidence and data to improve quality and get better results.



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ⁱEach participating local government provided a unique perspective to the fellowship cohort. In particular, Salt Lake County represented a county perspective and Tulsa was represented by a City Councilor, providing insight from a legislative approach.

ⁱⁱThis information comes from the City of Los Angeles website, accessed at <http://geohub.lacity.org>

ⁱⁱⁱThis information comes from the City of Los Angeles website, accessed at <http://innovate.lacity.org/index.htm>

^{iv}This information comes from the Louisville Metro Government website, accessed at <http://louiestat.louisvilleky.gov/node/6496/date/2016-01-19>

^vThis information comes from the City of New Orleans website, accessed at <http://www.nola.gov/performance-and-accountability/nolalytics/>

^{vi}This information comes from the City of New Orleans website, accessed at <http://www.nola.gov/performance-and-accountability/nolalytics/files/full-report-on-analytics-informed-smoke-alarm-outr/>

^{vii}This information comes from the City of New Orleans website, accessed at <http://www.nola.gov/performance-and-accountability/nolalytics/files/nolalytics-blight-abatement-tool-brief/>

^{viii}This information comes from the PlanPhilly website, "Map Measure Manage" event, accessed at <http://planphilly.com/events/2015/11/17/map-measure-manage>

^{ix}This information comes from the Generocity website, "Here's a Brief History of Pay for Success in PA," accessed at <http://generocity.org/philly/2016/03/01/history-pay-for-success-pa/>