The What Works Cities Standard

The What Works Cities Standard defines how local governments can create a strong foundation for the effective use of data and evidence. The Standard's four components—Commit, Measure, Take Stock, and Act—build on each other to help cities understand and invest in what works:

Commit

What Works Cities leaders make powerful, public commitments to achieving better results for their residents by using data and evidence when making budget and policy decisions;

Measure

What Works Cities leaders collect and use data and tools to measure progress and engage residents along the way;

Take Stock

What Works Cities leaders consistently review and reflect on the data and evidence they have to learn and make improvements; and

Act

What Works Cities leaders use data and evidence to inform major decisions and take action to improve outcomes.

Technical Assistance Framework

- Open Data
- Results-Driven Contracting
- Data Governance
- Evaluations
- Performance Analytics
- Repurpose for Results

COMMIT

#	Question
1.	Does your local government have a codified open data policy?
2.	Does your local government's open data policy call for regular maintenance and at least an annual proactive release of government data online?
3.	Does your local government's open data policy require a process to ensure data quality and usability (i.e. Quality Assurance process, publication of metadata, searchable)?
4.	Does your local government's open data policy establish a governance structure that calls for actionable steps for local government staff and oversight authorities to follow to see the policy through to implementation?
5.	Does your local government's open data policy require periodic review for potential changes to the open data policy and program?
6.	Does your local government have a data governance practice to ensure data quality and usability (i.e. Quality Assurance process, documentation of metadata)?
7.	Does your local government classify data according to sensitivity and need for protection?
8.	Has your local government defined and made publicly available time bound, measurable citywide strategic goals (e.g., reduce homicide by 20% in three years)?
9.	Does your mayor or chief executive publicly commit to strategic goals and progress toward them?
10.	Does your local government have a policy or ordinance establishing a performance management program for the city (e.g., Stat, performance measurement, etc.)?
11.	Does your local government have a policy or ordinance requiring evaluation of city-funded practices, programs, and/or policies?
12.	Does your local government's policy require at least an annual evaluation for the newest city initiatives programs, and policies?
13.	Does your local government's policy require an evaluation budget for budgetary investments?
14.	Does your local government have a policy or ordinance requiring the modification of practices, programs, and/or policies that have consistently failed to achieve desired outcomes?

The What Works Cities Standard

MEASURE

15.	Does your local government have an open data portal (i.e. a website for making electronic data records accessible in whole or in part to the public in machine-readible formats)?
16.	Does your local government have a written and routine process to determine the release of open data?
17.	Does your local government use (where they exist) civic data standards when publishing open data?
18.	Does your local government maintain a comprehensive data inventory?
19.	Has your local government established or adopted data standards (e.g., address and date formats, preferred geospatial projections)?
20.	Does your local government publish progress on city goals on at least a quarterly basis (e.g., via a dashboard, update to city's strategic plan, etc.)?
21.	Does your local government define strategic objectives and desired outcomes for each key procurement?
22.	Does your local government measure outcomes, impacts, and/or cost-effectiveness of at least five key procurements, contracts, and/or grants (i.e. monitor performance data in real-time and troubleshoot with contractors to achieve the goals of the contract and/or grant)?
23.	Does your local government have an evaluation system or scorecard for key procurements, contracts, and/or grants that facilitate comparison of outcomes across contractors to determine which contractors are most effective?
24.	Does your local government have publicly available baseline evaluation standards or evaluation protocols to protect rigor of city-funded evaluations?

TAKE STOCK

25.	Does your local government have a designated person or team responsible for managing data?
26.	Does your local government have a designated person or team responsible for performance management?
27.	Does your local government convene a performance management program (i.e. Stat meetings)?
28.	Does your local government have a set schedule for performance management or Stat meetings?
29.	Does your mayor or chief executive as well as department commissioners regularly attend performance management or Stat meetings?
30.	Does a senior official with budget and decision-making authority chair these meetings?
31.	Has your local government selected specific performance measures as key indicators to highlight and visit on a quarterly basis?
32.	Does your local government's performance management program collect and store outcomes and performance data on city contracts?
33.	Does your local government have a dedicated person or team responsible for strategically managing the city's portfolio of most important procurements that are due in the upcoming year?
34.	Is the procurement and contracts function organizationally directly below the local government manager or mayor?
35.	Does your local government structure the procurement and contract process (including selecting the appropriate contract type) to incorporate incentives and align to strategic goals?
36.	Does your local government actively manage ongoing key contracts / grants? That is, does your local government use performance data in real time and troubleshoot with contractors to achieve the goals of the contract or grant, as needed?

The What Works Cities Standard

TAKE STOCK

37.	Does your local government have a designated person or team responsible for managing evaluations?
38.	Does your local government have a publicly available or fixed protocol or process for conducting external research and evaluation projects (i.e. data sharing agreements, IRB-style internal review process, etc.)?
39.	Does your local government have senior-level managers empowered to repurpose funds from practices, programs and/or policies that, through rigorous data analysis and evaluation, have consistently failed to achieve desired outcomes?
40.	Does your local government have a written process for determining what action should be taken when a practice, program or policy has consistently failed to achieve its established outcome-based performance targets?

ACT

41.	Does your local government have a written process that calls for the public release of data that is relevant to stated city/department goals and objectives, fundamental services, or core mission?
42.	Does your local government have a process to receive public data requests and to release data that is responsive to residents' requests?
43.	Does your local government make future contracting decisions based on a contractor's past performance?
44.	Does your local government apply results-driven contracting strategies for your five most important (either tying to high priority goals or representing large dollar amounts) contracts or procurements?
45.	In the last 12 months, has your local government initiated low cost or randomized evaluation of priority city programs or services in five of the city's largest departments and/or programs?
46.	In the last 12 months, has your local government allocated budget specifically designated for evaluation as a condition or sign-off for new projects?
47.	In the last 12 months, has your local government used the results from low cost or randomized evaluations to make operational or policy changes?
48.	In the last 12 months, has your local government used rigorous data analysis and evaluation to publicly identify practices, programs and/or policies that have consistently failed to achieve their desired outcomes?
49.	In the last 12 months, has your local government shifted funds away from a practice, program or policy that, through rigorous data analysis and evaluation, has consistently failed to achieve desired outcomes toward a more effective and efficient practice, program or policy?
50.	Has your local government communicated the decision to shift funding based on practices, policies, and/or programs that, through rigorous data analysis and evaluations, are consistently failing to achieve desired outcomes to the public (e.g., residents, customers, elected officials)?