City of Austin, TX

Sustains MFR for Over a Decade as a Way of Doing Business

"After ten years of Managing for Results, the process of linking performance with budgets has become ingrained in the City of Austin's culture. It's the way we do business. Staff at all levels of the organization know that budget requests need to be backed by solid performance data."

-Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, City of Austin

Ed Van Eenoo, reflects on the critical success factors in Austin sustaining MFR over a decade:

1. Expectations of the Community: The City Manager is fond of saying that here in the City of Austin we practice "advanced citizenship." In short, our citizens pay close attention to what is happening in their City and expect an open, inclusive, and transparent budget process. The focus that MFR places on tying budgetary decisions to measurable outcomes has been and continues to be foundational to meeting these expectations.

2. Attention of City Council: Much more so than other cities I am familiar with, the Austin City Council pays close attention to performance data. As a result, budget discussions between staff and Council are centered on programs and results as opposed to budgetary line items. Council members and their aides routinely ask questions about program performance trends and how changes in performance is related to budgets. There is also an expectation among Council that any new programs and/or funding requests be supported by performance data.

3. Commitment of City Management: The City Manager has made it his overarching goal for the City of Austin to become known and recognized as the Best Managed City in the Country. As such, he is highly committed to the City's business planning, performance measurement, and budgeting efforts. Under his leadership, the City has greatly expanded opportunities for community input, increased the level of executive review of departmental business plans, and is in the process of developing new performance reporting tools that will focus on "key indicators of success."

4. Centralized Budget Office: Since its inception in the City more than a decade ago, the implementation and administration of MFR has been led by the City's Corporate Budget Office. This has resulted in the City's business planning process being fully integrated with the City's budget process. Corporate sponsorship has also provided the flexibility for MFR to evolve and improve as the needs of the organization have changed while still maintaining the level of consistency across departments that is necessary to effectively integrate the City's business planning process with its budget process. I believe having a single point of responsibility for the overall MFR process has likely been the single greatest factor in its continued long-term success in the City.

Note: The City has used the term Business Planning to describe the MFR initiative.

Results as Written by the City of Austin

Note: In 2009 and 2010 Austin received the ICMA's Certificate of Excellence in Performance Measurement

Civilian (Non-Employee) Fire Deaths Per 100,000 Population

For FY 2006, the city of Austin reported 1.13 civilian (non-employee) fire deaths per 100,000 population. The mean and median values for all jurisdictions reporting that year were 0.92 and 0.00 respectively. As it compared its data with data of other ICMA Center for Performance Measurement™ (CPM) jurisdictions in FY 2006 and other years, the city of Austin recognized that its performance could be improved and it conducted further research to develop improvement strategies.

City uses CPM data to analyze rise in fire deaths

For many years the City of Austin experienced five to six accidental fire deaths per year. In FY 2002 and FY 2003, however, both the number of fatalities and the fire death rate per 100,000 residents nearly doubled, and Austin scored among the highest in death rates in comparison with similar cities. In response, the fire department intensively studied local fire deaths and determined that the core problem was inadequate maintenance of smoke alarms.

Poor smoke alarm maintenance was the culprit

The result was the development of a massive public education program, geared to the general public, to encourage the routine testing and maintenance of smoke alarms. After the deaths of three young boys in a Christmas Eve fire, a local marketing firm volunteered time and materials to develop "Freddy the Finger," a cartoon mascot that urged residents to "put a finger on it" and test their smoke alarms. The general public was targeted because the data at that time indicated the risk of having a nonworking smoke alarm occurred among many disparate population subgroups.

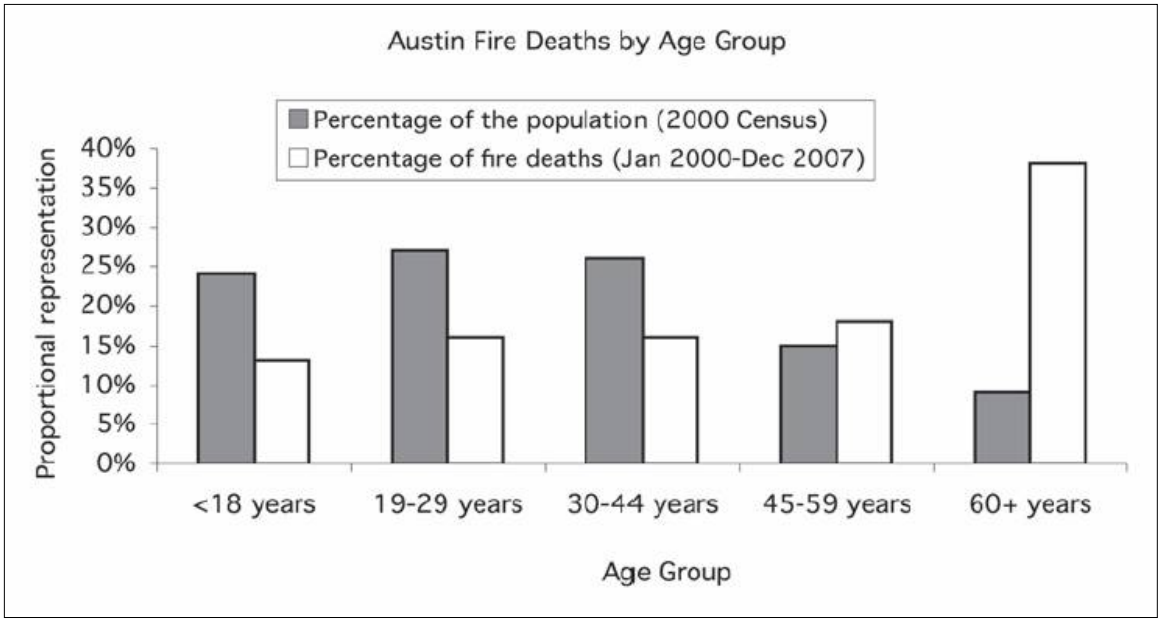
Education reduced fire deaths for a time

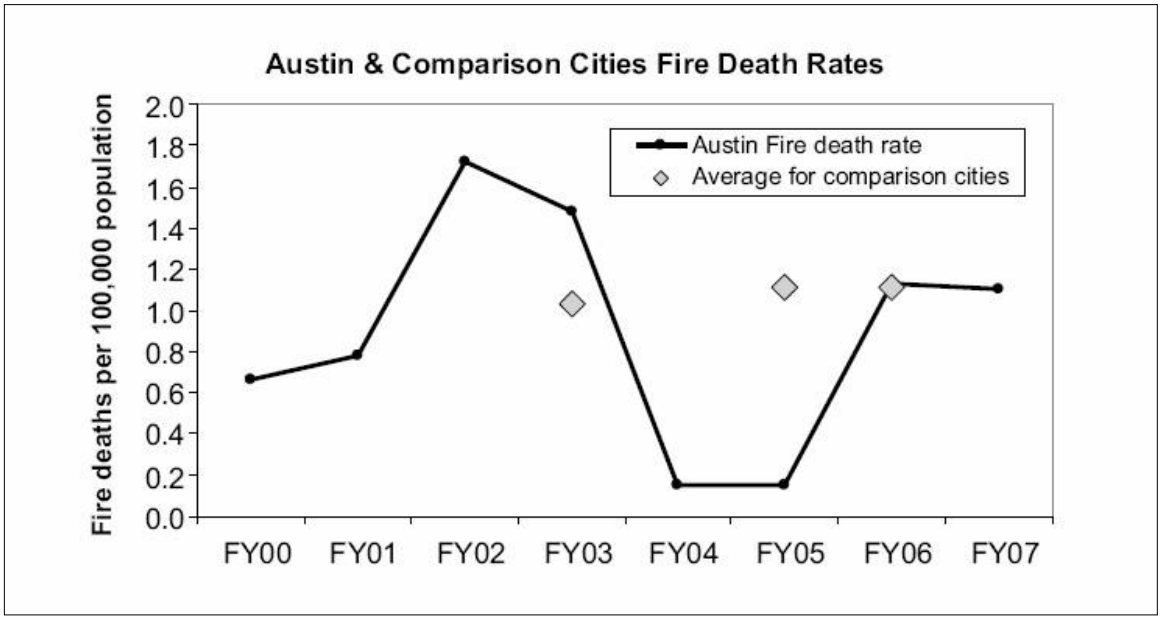
After the Freddy the Finger campaign was launched in July 2003, for two years in a row fire deaths dropped to historic lows for Austin. Only one fire death each occurred in FY 2004 and FY 2005, yielding a fire death rate among the lowest in comparison with other CPM communities. During that time, Freddy the Finger was also credited with six "saves," incidents when residents called the fire department to report that smoke alarms they had recently fixed in response to the campaign had subsequently alerted them to fires in their homes.

Fire deaths in Austin surged again (see the graph on the next page). Eight fire deaths occurred in both FY 2006 and FY 2007, yielding a death rate that, while similar to comparison cities, is still unacceptably high for Austin. Analysis of the most recent deaths has yielded a new insight: an emphasis on testing smoke alarms, while appropriate for the general public, is not an effective approach for the elderly, a population segment that experiences both a high risk of fire death and barriers to effectively maintaining battery-operated smoke alarms in their homes.

Statistics show that, similar to the elderly nationally, the elderly in Austin are significantly more likely to die in fires than other population subgroups. In the 2000 census, only 9 percent of the city's residents were over 60 years of age, yet that age group accounted for 38 percent of Austin fire fatalities between 2000 and 2007 (see the graph below).

Why is fire so deadly for the elderly? Older homes, older smoke alarms—and perhaps slower or less able physical responses to fire danger—contribute to increased risk. According to the 2000 census, 92 percent of older heads of households live in single-family residences, which unlike apartments are not subject to routine fire inspections. Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) live in housing built before 1980, a much higher percentage than found in the general population (52 percent). Houses built before 1980 are likely, if they have smoke alarms at all, to rely on smoke alarms powered by batteries instead of hard-wired into the electrical system. Older smoke alarms also have failure rates that increase by 3 percent each year; a smoke alarm that is 10 years old has only a 70 percent chance of working properly.


Austin Fire Deaths by Age Group
Percentage of the population (2000 Census)
Percentage of fire deaths (Jan 2000-Dec 2007)
Proportional representation
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
<18 years
19-29 years
30-44 years
45-59 years
60+ years
Age Group


Austin & Comparison Cities Fire Death Rates
Austin Fire death rate
Average for comparison cities
Fire deaths per 100,000 population
2.0
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.2
1.0
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0.0
FY00
FY01
FY02
FY03
FY04
FY05
FY06
FY07

Citizen survey data provided additional insight

The city's annual customer survey provided further, more direct information on the fire risks of older homeowners. The fire department had added two questions about smoke alarms to the city budget office's annual survey of Austin residents. In the 2006 survey, older respondents were more likely than other residents to report not having a smoke alarm. Among those 65 years or older, 8.4 percent reported having no smoke alarm, compared with 6.5 percent for the 55–64 age group and 4.8 percent among respondents less than 55 years old. The differences among age groups were statistically significant.

Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of those with smoke alarms who were over age 65 were unable to report when they last changed smoke alarm batteries. Overall, only 70 percent of older respondents to the 2006 survey reported that they both had smoke alarms and changed batteries at least once a year. Even when older persons remember to change batteries, the process of doing so creates an additional risk—the risk of falling while trying to reach alarms placed at or near ceiling height. According to the Centers for Disease Control, about one-third of the elderly experience falls in any given year. Falls are the leading cause of injury death for people age 65 and older, and they account for 95 percent of hip fractures.

Low maintenance smoke alarms seem to be helping

Based on this analysis, the Austin Fire Department identified the need to provide the elderly with low-maintenance smoke alarms that are easy to test and do not require climbing ladders or chairs to replace batteries. The department obtained a grant from the Department of Homeland Security to purchase 2,500 low-maintenance smoke alarms with 10-year batteries; residents are able to test these alarms by remote control. The fire department has been aggressively marketing the program and building partnerships with groups that serve the elderly. Although it is still too soon to evaluate success, as of June 2008 there had been no accidental fire deaths in Austin (nearly three-quarters of the way through the FY 2008 fiscal year).

Performance measures represent a key to reducing fire deaths in Austin

Performance measurement has contributed substantially to Austin's ability to identify trends in fire deaths and see how Austin's rates compare with data in other communities. Performance measurement data are especially well suited for identifying problems that need to be addressed.

One challenge, after problems have been identified, is to figure out their causes; this requires additional time, effort, and sometimes data resources. In addition to existing data systems and census data, the Austin Fire Department benefited substantially from having smoke alarm questions in the community survey.

Although community surveys have been used primarily to obtain feedback about government services, one potential further use has been to adapt them to measure community risks to facilitate the planning of mitigation efforts.

City of Austin Police Department CompStat Report

Citywide		Offenses				
Part I Index Offenses UCR Rules Reported Date of Offense		MAY 2010	MAY 2009	YTD 2010	YTD 2009	% YTD Change
Murder	(# of victims)	2	3	13	6	116.7%
Rape	(# of victims)	26	31	99	96	3.1%
Robbery	(# of offenses)	115	129	518	574	-9.8%
Aggravated Assault	(# of victims)	248	248	999	979	2.0%
Total Violent Index Crimes		*391*	*411*	*1,629*	*1,655*	*-1.6%*
Burglary	(# of premises entered	713	740	3,447	3,679	-6.3%
Theft	(# of offenses)	2,883	3,217	14,056	15,343	-8.4%
Auto Theft	(# of vehicles	225	190	1,064	972	9.5%
Total Property Index Crimes		*3,821*	*4,147*	*18,567*	*19,994*	*-7.1%*
Total Part I Index Crimes		**4,212**	**4,558**	**20,196**	**21,649**	**-6.7%**
Part II Index Offenses Count of Incidents Reported Date of Offense		MAY 2010	MAY 2009	YTD 2010	YTD 2009	% YTD Change
DWI		491	430	2,249	2,449	-8.2%
Prostitution		29	43	120	92	30.4%
Narcotics		621	659	3,061	3,613	-15.3%
Weapons Law		35	28	170	176	-3.4%
All Other Part II Offenses		7,146	8,262	34,921	39,066	-10.6%
Total Part II Index Crimes		**8,322**	**9,422**	**40,521**	**45,396**	**-10.7%**
Total All Index Offenses		**12,534**	**13,980**	**60,717**	**67,045**	**-9.4%**

CityWide / Northwest / Northeast / North Central / Downtown / Southwest / Central West / Central East / Southeast / South Central /

Chief's Monthly Report
Citywide

MAY 2010

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT DATA DISCLAIMER

A.) The data provided is for informational use only and is not considered official APD crime data as in official Texas DPS or FBI crime reports.

B.) APD's crime database is continuously updated, so reports run at different times may produce different results. Care should be taken when comparing against other reports as different data collection methods and different data sources may have been used.

C.) The Austin Police Department does not assume any liability for any decision made or action taken or not taken by the recipient in reliance upon any information or data provided.

Library Potential Budget Reduction as an example of using performance information to make budget decisions.

Department: Library
Proposal ID: LIB-3
City Rank:
Dept Rank: 2
Fund Dept: 1000-8500
Program: 2PBS - Public Services
Activity: 2AHC - Austin History Center

Describe Proposed Reduction
Eliminate a vacant Librarian III at the Austin History Center

Quantify service delivery and performance measure impact
This position is the head of Public Service / Reference for the division and the service impact will be delivered across the entire division. Remaining History Center staff will be required to spend more hours working in reference and fewer hours in their primary job functions (either processing archival materials or neighborhood outreach). This includes reducing the amount of City of Austin records that can be reviewed and processed by archivists for inclusion in the City Archives. Currently, the backlog of archival items to be processed grows annually at a 3:2 ratio (approximately 65% of incoming materials, including city records, are processed in the year received), and this will be reduced to as much as 4:2 ratio (only 50% being processed). Performance measures impacted: Percent of customers who find the materials they need (the less that is processed, the harder it will be to provide the materials to customers), Number of customer visits, Number of direct customer contacts, Number of archival materials processed / made available to researchers, and Number of new items digitized.

Current Personnel and Budget
Austin History Center = 14.0 FTEs; Total Budget = $888,104

Other considerations: i.e. revenue impacts
None

Personnel Impacts

Personnel	Status	FTE	Position Title	Salary	Fica/ Med	Ins	Retirement	Stability	Personnel Total
102277	V	1.000	Librarian III	$ 48,568	$ 3,715	$ 9,309	$ 3,885	$ 0	$ 65,477

Contractual/Commodity/Expense Refund/Other Impacts

Describe Items	$ Reduction
TOTAL: $ 0	

NET COST REDUCTION: $65,477

Project Description

Written by Managing Results, LLC

In 1998, the City of Austin engaged Managing Results (MR) to design and deliver a Managing for Results system integrating Strategic Business Planning first in the Austin Fire Department, then City-wide and creating the City's first Performance Based Budgets. The implementation of the City-wide Managing for Results initiative produced Strategic Business Plans for all 24 major City departments, alignment of the accounting structure and budget to the Activity structure in each department's Strategic Business Plan all within a six-month period.

MR designed and delivered extensive training for City-level executives, 200+ managers, and facilitators creating internal capacity for sustained effort over time. The City restructured the accounting and budget systems to fully match the structure of the Business Plans so corporate and policy decision makers could make resource allocation decision based upon cost and result of information at the operation level as well as at the strategic level.

This resulted in a complete and successful transition to a Performance Budget; presented successfully for FY99-2000 and every year since, linking specific budget requests to department performance results, proposed within the context of performance in other jurisdictions, prior year's performance, and community survey results. Further, the employee performance system, Success Strategies Performance Results, integrated individual performance with the operational performance measures in department Strategic Business Plans within the first year of MFR.

By the third year of Managing for Results, 2001, organizational surveys indicated positive results regarding integration of their individual performance plan measures within Strategic Business Plan goals and measures.

The initiative helped the City secure one of two Grade A's given to Cities in Managing for Results from Governing Magazine's national Government Performance Project (GPP) study.

At the writing of the case study in 2011, Austin is in its 12th year using MFR. Most recently, Deputy Chief Financial Officer Ed Van Eenoo, conducted a survey of Austin City Departments on how they are using MFR/Business Planning and what they would like to see changed and improved. The survey was conclusive that Departments find high value in MFR/Business Planning and provided input for the next round of innovations.