

Briefing Notes No. 1

Community indicators and performance measures integration — A need or a luxury?

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Introduction

The [Community Indicators Consortium \(CIC\)](#) is spearheading an evolving community of practice for the integration of community indicators and performance measures (CI-PM) integration. Research continues to be collected, analyzed and disseminated, while a growing network of interested parties expands as we recognize successes and learn from each other. More information is available through [CIC's website](#), including Real Stories of CI-PM integration, a descriptive model for CI-PM integration, and awards to CI-PM efforts that best demonstrate the development and application of integrating these two forms of measurement to advance community outcomes and sustainable change.

Background

Hundreds of communities develop indicators to better understand and improve the conditions in which their residents live. Just as many, if not more, jurisdictions develop performance measures to better plan for and execute the delivery of services to their citizens. However, the value of integrating or linking these indicators and performance measures has yet to be discovered by most of these communities.

Issues

What is CI-PM integration?

Although indicators are defined differently across communities, *community indicators* (CI's) are generally measures of conditions (social, economic and environmental) or desired outcomes important to community residents, their quality of life and wellbeing. Often they are established and tracked overtime by a nonprofit organization, independent of government (although local jurisdictions may be an active partner). Examples include sustaining the natural environment, maintaining a vital economy, improving the health of the region, individual and family financial self-sufficiency, or taking part in arts and cultural activities.

In contrast, *performance measures* (PI's) are typically management results, efficiencies, outputs

or outcomes tracked by specific agencies or organizations that provide services or benefits to the general public as part of a planning, budgeting, management and evaluation process. Examples include, maintaining roads and sewers, improving public health, food safety and immunizations, injury and violence prevention, or parks and green spaces available to users.

Some communities have separate and distinct community indicators or performance measurement efforts, while others already have integration efforts underway; more have either CI's or a PM effort underway, but not both. CI projects typically engage the public more to identify community needs, and engagement is also a good way to integrate or link community indicators and performance measurement. Examples of the variation in CI-PM integration include the following [indicator projects can be referenced in the bibliography below, including places where CI-PM integration occurs]:

- The City of Columbus, Ohio created an Office of Performance Management, launching [Columbus*Stat](#), similar to Baltimore's CitiStat, but linked more to the Columbus culture and community needs. Regular Columbus*Stat meetings serve as a forum for education, problem solving and accountability fostering cross-departmental projects and tools for community improvement or replication.
- The City of Minneapolis, Minnesota improved its relationship with citizens through a long-range planning, budgeting and performance measurement system. [Results Minneapolis](#) focuses each department on the outcomes it wants to achieve by using business plans and key performance measures to direct weekly discussions with city leaders, rather than just discussing departmental service outputs.
- The City of Albuquerque, New Mexico identifies indicators through a citizen-driven process led by the [Indicators Progress Commission](#). These indicators become the basis of community goals and desired community conditions, and are

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then used by city government departments in a strategic management system to determine program strategies, resources, and ultimately employee performance workplans.

- The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davison County, Tennessee aligns daily employee performance with operational performance measures identified in departmental strategic business plans. Its managing for results program uses performance-informed accounting and budgeting to link scarce resources to results that are the most important for the city.
- [Washoe County, Nevada](#) uses the independent, nonprofit [Truckee Meadows Tomorrow's](#) (TMT) citizen-driven community indicators in the process of setting strategic priority outcomes, key performance measures, and allied departmental plans as part of an annual budgeting and performance reporting process. TMT, in turn uses the county's reported measures in tracking indicators and community wellbeing overtime.
- [Children's Services Council](#) (CSC) Broward County, Florida, created as part of an Independent Special Tax District, uses internal goals and objectives with performance measures for all funded programs derived from indicators in their Strategic Plan. "Making Children's Lives Better" includes the Children's Strategic Plan indicators focusing on the conditions of children's lives, as well as the Annual Children's Budget Forum and Funders Forum.
- The state-level project, [Virginia Performs](#), established the Council on Virginia's Future that worked with groups of public and private sector officials to establish the state vision, long-term goals and related societal indicators. State agency performance measures are then connected to these indicators and a "Guide to Virginia Performs" is provided to all members of the General Assembly, including an annual progress assessment report. "Virginia Performs'" website houses and displays all levels of agencies' strategic plans and performance measures, provides a mapping application for viewing and comparing regional and local data.
- The [Government of South Australia's](#) strategic plan engaged over 1,600 community members in 2007 to create community indicators. An Executive Committee of the Cabinet, Community

Engagement Board, Independent Audit Committee, and government agencies serve as individual community indicators "leads," while the agency's key performance indicators (measures) are then integrated with the community indicators.

Because CI-PM integration happens in diverse ways, a maturity model was developed to describe the relationship between indicators and measures and the stages communities and jurisdictions may go through to ultimately achieve measureable results that are community-driven and publically transparent. The four-stage *descriptive model of CI-PM integration* moves from separate CI and PM programs to "mature" integration with measurable results linked, community-driven and transparent (real-time). It is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to serve as a guide for communities to identify where they may exist along the integration continuum.

Why integrate community indicators and performance measures (CI-PM)?

Governments and communities often target the same desired outcomes, but citizen priorities, as reflected by community indicators, inform governments and agencies where to improve a community. At the same time, performance measures can and should provide accountable evidence that the conditions of the greatest concern to citizens and other key community stakeholders are meeting societal outcomes. Linking CI's and PM's provides a natural vehicle for residents, governments and key businesses or community leaders to achieve a community's collective vision and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Identifying significant unmet needs by linking residents and policy-makers to valid data and information about their communities, including conversations about responsibility for improving community conditions.
- ✓ Enhancing the use of data by citizens and public officials for evidence-based public debate, decision-making and allocation of scarce resources.
- ✓ Increasing trust and confidence in government through programs and services aligned with citizen priorities, as reflected through indicators and accountable evidence of program service performance and improvements.
- ✓ New processes and tools that link community assessment and outcomes measures with

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monitoring, performance evaluation and public reporting processes that directly support desired community change.

- ✓ Increased clarity of the contributions made, or needed to be made, by various sectors of society to improve community conditions.
- ✓ Tool-set for collaborative capacity-building for the general public, community leaders, public employees and policy-makers.

Are there consequences without CI-PM integration?

In an age of instant media, the public continues to demand greater accountability, transparency and performance from all levels of government. Not engaging the public in priority setting nor publically reporting performance based upon these priorities, risks detaching citizens even more, as well as increasing civic mistrust in government. Government programs are paid for largely with tax dollars, thus public officials may consider performance-based budgeting to be equivalent to accountability. Yet without measuring performance from the community's perspective, reporting effectively ignores citizen priorities, unique neighborhood needs, and opportunities for collective public/private/nonprofit impacts to achieve societal outcomes.

Conclusion

CI-PM integration is a need and not a luxury. Such efforts allow communities to engage residents and other key community stakeholders in using measurable and actionable information for better decision- and policy-making, while improving government transparency, accountability and community outcomes. As elected officials are increasingly pressured to reduce budgets, CI-PM integration can help communities optimize resources—public, private and nonprofit—to best address local demands and improve the wellbeing of residents. Additionally, CI-PM integration can help focus community conversations on the responsibilities and contributions of a variety of community organizations as stakeholders, just not government, to work together to improve community conditions and the wellbeing of its residents.

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Bibliography

- CI-PM integration resources (Real Stories, descriptive model of CI-PM integration, awards and additional references): www.communityindicators.net/communities-of-practice,ci-pm-integration
- CI-PM webinar archive: www.communityindicators.net/events,cic-webinars-archive
- Indicator projects online database: www.communityindicators.net/projects
- CI-PM resources: www.communityindicators.net/publications
- Community Indicators, American Planning Association: www.planning.org/pas/reports/subscribers/pdf/PAS517.pdf
- A Performance Management Framework for State and Local Government: From Measurement and Reporting to Management and Improving, National Performance Management Advisory Commission, 2010: pmcommission.org

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About the CI-PM Integration Project

In the fall of 2008, CIC received a multi-year grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to continue CIC's work to integrate community indicators and performance measures. The purpose of the grant was to promote, advocate for, and develop a community of practice around CI-PM integration, and for engaging citizens and other key community stakeholders in the process. We hope you will share your experiences seeking to improve community outcomes, citizen engagement, and public trust through integration of community indicators and performance measures. We welcome your ideas, interest and involvement, and can be contacted via CIPM@communityindicators.net.