Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
NCSHA 2009 Awards

Category: **Management Innovation**
Sub-Category: **Technology**
Entry Name: **HousingStat**

"What gets measured gets done."

BACKGROUND

Governor Martin O'Malley brought a new management tool and technology innovation with him
to Maryland state government. Modeled after CitiStat, which the governor implemented during
his tenure as Mayor of Baltimore City, StateStat is a data-based management approach designed
to make state government more accountable and more efficient. The CitiStat program won the
"Innovations in Government" award from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government
and has been studied and replicated by many jurisdictions in the United States and around the
world.

The StateStat program is delivering no less for the people of Maryland. The customized data
templates have allowed Maryland to be among the national leaders in the expenditure, tracking
and public accountability of federal stimulus funds. GoodJobs First, a Washington, D.C- based
non-profit research center recently ranked Maryland number one in the nation for best reporting
of spending from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act after evaluating the quantity and
quality of state government online disclosure in three categories: economic development
subsidies, state procurement contracts and lobbying activities at the state level.

The StateStat tenets are:

> ➤ Accurate and timely intelligence, shared by all
> ➤ Rapid deployment of resources
> ➤ Effective tactics and strategies
> ➤ Relentless follow-up and assessment

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) embraced StateStat in 2007
by incorporating all key housing programs and initiatives into the StateStat process. DHCD
refers to its version of StateStat as HousingStat, this technology innnovation has already
improved the department's strategic planning processes and produced results in both program
efficiency and accountability. Having real-time data has enabled the department to respond with
programmatic agility and focused resource allocation to meet the challenges of a dynamic
economic environment and the critical housing needs of Maryland's citizens.

HousingStat relies on the development of key performance indicators, recording and reporting of
accurate and timely data and trends, and frequent face-to-face meetings between the governor's
executive staff and the department's executive and senior-level program staff.

Through this formal process of continually evaluating performance and making it available
online, the department has been able to formulate and implement new strategies and tactics more

quickly, identify and respond to changes in housing needs and activity, and adapt existing policies and programs in a cost effective manner using resources at hand.

Technology Innovation in Process

Like the award-winning Baltimore CitiStat, StateStat is a process of continually evaluating performance at the highest levels while seeking opportunities to improve coordination and formulate strategies on an ongoing basis – not just during annual budget reviews. The governor and his executive staff meet frequently (usually every other week) with agency executives and managers to report and answer questions on agency performance and priority initiatives. A comprehensive executive briefing is prepared for each agency that highlights areas of concern. Briefings are based on key performance indicators from the customized data templates submitted to the governor's StateStat office. Data is carefully analyzed, performance trends are closely monitored and strategies to improve performance are developed.

Applied to DHCD, the process has been particularly useful. HousingStat became operational while the foreclosure crisis was unfolding and gave state officials the information they needed to identify troubling trends and respond quickly with programs and outreach events to intervene and assist Marylanders.

Replication

Other states should have the ability to successfully adopt and adapt the StateStat or HousingStat template. In fact, the idea for this type of data-driven approach originated in New York City by Jack Maple, a member of the New York Police Department, who initiated a program called COMSTAT. Using charts and data to locate and detail criminal activity, NYPD precinct commanders were held accountable for crime in their areas. Crime in New York City went down. Governor O'Malley replicated the program in Baltimore City during his term there as mayor. Using COMSTAT as a model, then-Mayor O'Malley created CityStat to improve services and efficiencies across service agencies. The award-winning CityStat model has already been adopted by numerous local jurisdictions around the country and even the world. In short, this is an approach worth copying, it has been copied many times, and it works by providing an easy-to-replicate template that allows users to adapt it to their needs.

Measurable Improvements in Agency Operations

Measurable improvements include:

- Development of a close working relationship with a new Administration (i.e., Governor O'Malley and his executive staff)
- Increased cooperation with other state agencies
- Improved data collection, data analysis, data reporting, and data mapping (GIS)
- Rapid response to program development and redevelopment
- Early identification of trends, both positive and negative.
- Improved use of existing technology to manage data
- Improved levels of data integrity
- Improved data sharing among DHCD divisions, units, and staff
- Expanded marketing, outreach
- Faster response to media inquiries and provision of timely and accurate data

Benefits Outweigh Costs

Rather than requiring expensive and inflexible new information technology systems, Maryland uses existing databases and information technology, such as payroll and geographic information system (GIS) mapping. The Department now aggressively monitors overtime, fund expenditures, and business processing times relative to critical programs and services, including homeownership, rental housing development and services, foreclosure prevention, and the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities, which are critical in Maryland. HousingStat has low start-up costs, requiring no new staff or purchase of software, hardware, or other costly contracts. At a time when software developers, management consultants, and technology integrators regularly attempt to sell governments seven-figure technology solutions, HousingStat and StateStat use existing standard GIS mapping systems and off-the-shelf software (Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint). No new staff members were required since the process was incorporated into existing performance and strategic planning processes and program operations.

Strategic Objectives

Perhaps the main benefit of HousingStat (apart from clearly improved service to Marylanders) has been its use in the Department's strategic planning and performance management processes. Program innovations, service improvements, and new business processes are now based on data and trends identified early and clearly through data and information sharing and discussion among key decision makers and staff. And, in spite of the sometimes challenging face-to-face StateStat sessions, the benefits of "relentless follow-up and assessment" are clear and even appreciated!

Over the past year, the department has been able to better see trends emerge and anticipate change instead of reacting to events because of this technology innovation. In particular, the department's handling of BRAC and the foreclosure crisis continue to be effective in large part due to implementation of HousingStat. As the Department of Housing and Community Development moves forward with new strategic initiatives, HousingStat will continue to be the tool that makes it happen effectively and efficiently.