

Intergovernmental Solutions Awards Entry

Virginia's Performance Accountability System Council on Virginia's Future

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IT Solution Description

The Council on Virginia's Future (COVF) was established by the 2003 General Assembly to create a vision for Virginia's future and a governing system that aligns with and supports achievement of the vision. The Council is chaired by the Governor and includes Cabinet members, senior General Assembly members and business leaders. The Council must develop, monitor and publish performance indicators that track productivity, service performance and progress in achieving long-term objectives. To help achieve these goals, the Council has developed a comprehensive, agile and user-friendly Web site, "Virginia Performs," www.vaperforms.virginia.gov, to track performance, improve productivity and provide transparency. It supports broad policymaking decisions in pursuit of long-term objectives and engages citizens in informed dialogue about Virginia's future.

The new information system vastly improves the way state government measures progress and reports results. It enables aggregation, comparison and analysis of performance data at societal and agency levels. Users can select, display and report data by local and regional geographic layers.

The Web site aligns with the Council's published long-term goals and desired outcomes; <http://www.future.virginia.gov/roadmap.htm>. For each goal, indicators answer the question, "How is Virginia doing?" Users can monitor progress on key objectives and measures related to government functions. The Web site includes a description of each indicator, a summary of its importance, Virginia's progress, major influences and the state's role; <http://www.vaperforms.virginia.gov/s-HealthFamily.php>. Data is also presented in graph format to facilitate interpretation. Where possible, information is displayed for Virginia over time, by regions and in comparison to other states.

Technology Leadership

To provide effective baselines and progress measures, COVF aggregated and published multiple sources and disparate societal data sets, from U.S. Census data and student test scores to crime statistics. Sophisticated mapping and reporting functions allow users to view selected measures (such as percent of citizens without health insurance) by regions and localities, where available. Agency service areas, objectives and measures are mapped, with attributes and current data at the performance measure level. A sophisticated keyword search assists users. The full measures report displays all agency data and performance.

Intergovernmental and Collaborative

Agencies work with the Governor's office, the Department of Planning and Budget and others to set performance targets and measure progress. Virginia Performs manages and makes that information public. Data elements and their presentation were determined collaboratively by a multi-agency work group that balanced relevancy, comparability, and sustainability considerations. The result is a comprehensive policy and accountability framework.

Business Transformation

The Virginia Performs Web site displays how Virginia is doing in areas that affect quality of life for citizens and business. Users can see how the Commonwealth is performing from region to region and compared to other states, track progress in their communities, and monitor activity on important issues.

Achieving high priority results in alignment with long-term vision and goals will form the Enterprise Leadership Agenda for Virginia state government. Making progress toward goals is an enterprise-wide activity and sometimes encompasses entities outside state government.

As part of their strategic planning process for the 2006-2008 budget, agencies established objectives and measures for programs and services. Agency strategic plans, including key objectives and measures, form the foundation for Agency Leadership Agendas and the performance accountability system. Agencies now regularly report performance results within state government and to citizens and the General Assembly; <http://www.vaperforms.virginia.gov/agencylevel/>.

Impact and Results

Data housed on Virginia Performs was publicly available previously, but spread across multiple and often obtuse locations. A citizen looking to relocate might be interested in factors including personal income, employment growth, crime and graduation rate. Prior to its online aggregation, that citizen could have researched data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. and Virginia Departments of Education, FBI Crime Reports and other sources. Once located, it was difficult if not impossible to compare localities and other states; comparing variables over time was even more complicated. Similar roadblocks confronted business and policy makers.

This online platform now informs citizen, business and government users. Government decision making, budgeting, transparency and thus accountability have

been expedited and improved. Through troubleshooting, innovation and use of technology, Virginia will continue to lead as a “best managed state.”

Available and Transferable

Accessibility to important and often actionable information is one of the most important functions and results of the Virginia Performs initiative. The framework of this agile information system easily transfers and shares data to benefit multiple stakeholders and decision makers. The information share model is easily replicated at any level of government and the Web platform facilitates transfer to other entities.

List all supporting organizations and public and private partners that assisted in this innovation:

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