

## City Feature: Louisville, KY

### Building a world-class culture of data to transform city services



#### The Opportunity

Louisville has had dramatic success in finding ways to leverage their current data to drive better results for their residents, including using open data and citizen engagement to track asthma rates; working cross-departmentally to decrease the rate of euthanasia and increase the rate of adoption in animal shelters; and making Metro Government work more effectively by decreasing the time it takes to hire new employees and reducing the number of hours taken in unscheduled overtime. However, even the most accomplished leaders and organizations have opportunities to improve. Mayor Greg Fischer and his leadership team sought to provide their employees with additional tools to continue to improve city services.

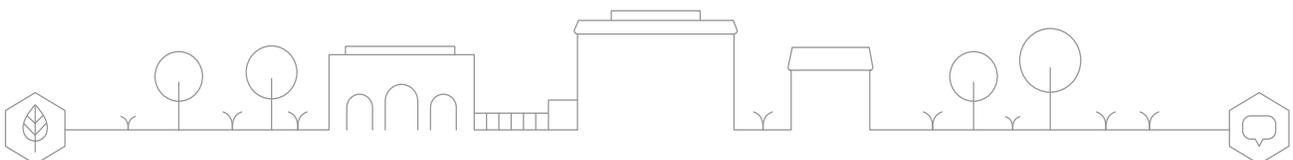
#### Setting the Stage

Mayor Fischer took office in 2011 with a goal to use data to drive resource allocation and focus on evidence-based improvement. To formalize this work, he established the Office of Performance Improvement and engaged Louisville residents, agencies, and community partners in a strategic planning process that would inform metrics tracked in LouisStat, the city's performance management program. The Mayor continues to attend these meetings regularly, as well as meet with senior leadership to review performance and address barriers, using data as the backbone of those discussions.

To facilitate this effort, Mayor Fischer established an executive order creating an open data plan in 2013, which requires IT staff to work across departments to release data and to collaborate with communities to develop innovative technologies that can solve city-wide problems. As such, the city maintains an open data portal that comprises over 100 critical data sets and is tied to six Metro-wide key performance indicators that are core to measuring citywide performance.

#### Our Work Together

With a strong commitment from Mayor Fischer and enthusiasm from his team, What Works Cities (WWC) identified two main ways for Louisville to partner with the experts at the Behavioral Insights Team, the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University (GovEx), and Results for America.



First, Louisville worked with the GovEx team to strengthen its open data program and improve the way the city runs LouieStat by standardizing processes and reducing the amount of manual effort involved in liberating civic data. This work is enabling the city to:

- Eliminate data silos and enhance the quality of its data and metadata, without requiring significant ongoing maintenance, by bringing several departments together to create a new workflow
- Identify opportunities to create new structures that more deeply integrate open data across city departments, following a review of the city's open data policy and governance policies
- Engage residents around community data priorities and collect, analyze, and publish data that is targeted and relevant to them, by convening a roundtable of stakeholders to highlight gaps in their current offerings and aspirations for future development

This work builds on Louisville's position as a leader in open data among its peers nationwide.

At the same time, Louisville worked with the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT) to test opportunities to improve their existing services using low-cost evaluation practices. Louisville worked closely with BIT staff to learn how to design and implement randomized control trials, ensuring that key stakeholders—including the Mayor, the county attorney, IT, operations staff, and select department heads—are informed about the process and support a sustained investment in low-cost evaluations. The team then identified three areas that were ripe for testing:

- Improving parking enforcement by testing new letters to increase collection of outstanding fines
- Increasing the compliance rate on addressing property code violations and collecting related fines, by testing language in code enforcement letters
- Assessing the efficacy of a program soliciting charitable donations from city staff, by testing the impact of using different email senders

Each evaluation helped to better integrate low-cost evaluation tools into city processes and positions the city to deliver more effective services and programs.

## Key accomplishments

By starting to break down departmental silos and reorienting the city's culture toward data, the low-cost evaluation and open data work help the city incorporate data and evidence in all aspects of decision-making. As a result, the city and WWC have:

### *Elevated the city's use of open data*

- Created a process to liberate Planning & Design Services data from Hansen into an ArcGIS platform, while cleaning and enhancing that data with records from the Louisville/Jefferson County Information Consortium
- Uncovered community needs and identified potential avenues for future open data development, by engaging stakeholders in a roundtable facilitated by GovEx
- Identified policy, governance, and staffing changes to help Louisville's open data program become world-class

### *Increased the effectiveness of city services*

- Recovered parking fines worth upwards of \$100,000 a year
- Redesigned the code enforcement correspondence to be much easier to understand, improving the resident experience and reducing the burden of unnecessary questions on code officers
- Supported Louisville staff-in-training in designing and launching their first independent low-cost evaluation
- Refocused staff time on higher-value work after uncovering that emailing city staff to request charitable donations was ineffective, even when the messenger was altered

