

For almost a decade, the Pew Center on the States, Governing Magazine and a group of academic experts have collaborated on this project to assess the quality of management in state government.

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR EXCELLENCE
IN GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Washington

A-

Amid growing concerns among Americans about job stability, health care and education, there is a new demand for government to work better and cost less. Innovative solutions, particularly at the state level, are driving reform and progress.

Long a standout in using data to drive decision making, Washington faces a challenge in improving the quality of and access to available data. It can accomplish this by making thoughtful decisions about information technology and cultivating cooperation among various stakeholders.

Executive Summary






Washington has long been a leader in results-based governance. Begun in 2002, the Priorities of Government initiative has flourished and is now complemented by periodic public forums. During these Government Management, Accountability & Performance forums, agency managers are held accountable by the governor, but they're also given the support they need to solve problems and achieve results.

The state has made strides in human resources management in the past few years, thanks partly to high-level statewide monitoring of key metrics, such as sick-leave use and time-to-hire. However, agency human resources professionals are still acquiring the skills the new system requires, which will allow them greater flexibility. Hiring and recruitment strategies, for example, are now decentralized but require more creative managerial thinking in order to be effective. Washington's hiring Web site is among the best in the country, and the state has had much success in recruiting high-quality candidates who perform successfully.

Although the state's volatile revenue structure and powerful citizen-initiative process create uncertainty, Washington manages its finances quite responsibly. Sophisticated forecasting






PEOPLE

A-

-  Strategic Workforce Planning
-  Hiring
-  Retaining Employees
-  Training and Development
-  Managing Employee Performance






INFORMATION

A

-  Strategic Direction
-  Budgeting for Performance
-  Managing for Performance
-  Program Evaluation
-  Online Services and Information






MONEY

A-

-  Long-Term Outlook
-  Budget Process
-  Structural Balance
-  Contracting/Purchasing
-  Financial Controls/Reporting

INFRASTRUCTURE

B+

-  Capital Planning
-  Project Monitoring
-  Maintenance
-  Internal Coordination
-  Intergovernmental Coordination

 weakness  mid-level  strength

capabilities and the political willpower to create reserves for specific purposes have put the state in good shape to weather unexpected fiscal storms. The state's pension system is well funded, though Washington does carry a relatively high level of debt. Public input takes center stage in the budget process, which is particularly notable for the emphasis it places on communicating with citizens about the relationship between the budget and performance. This was a key focus of Gov. Chris Gregoire's recent series of town hall meetings.

Washington's unmet maintenance needs are substantial, but it is making significant improvements in managing its infrastructure. The Office of Financial Management now oversees all facility investments, including leased facilities and the facilities of agencies that do not report directly to the governor. And the state is replacing its legacy facility-information system with an inventory and asset-management system that will provide more useful data.

THE PEW CENTER ON THE STATES' Government Performance Project

The Pew Charitable Trusts applies the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. **Pew's Center on the States** identifies and advances effective policy approaches to critical issues facing states.

The mission of the **Government Performance Project**, an initiative of the Pew Center on the States, is to improve service to the public by strengthening government policy and performance. The Project evaluates how well states manage employees, budgets and finance, information and infrastructure. A focus on these critical areas helps ensure that states' policy decisions and practices actually deliver their intended outcomes.

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