ODJFS Performance Center

In 2002 the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services implemented the Performance Center, a performance management system that uses data, measures and analysis to improve productivity and service quality, while ensuring organizational and individual accountability. Over the years Performance Center has evolved from reporting individual office measures, to concentrating on results-based measures that give us a better understanding of how well we’re implementing our agency-wide goals and objectives, meeting our clients needs and expectations, and providing value to the taxpayers of Ohio through efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of our services. The data and information shared at Performance Center meetings shape our policy decisions, lead to strategy development and track progress toward meeting our goals.

A cornerstone of this system is the Performance Center meetings. These meetings bring together the agency decision-makers to:

• Monitor progress toward goals,
• Share best practices,
• Identify opportunities for improvement,
• Leverage knowledge and resources, and
• Develop solutions to agency challenges.

Today, as a part of the evolutionary process, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services conducts three different Performance Center meetings – Project Meetings, Strategy Meetings, and Executive Meetings.

Project Meetings focus on major ODJFS projects, and identify risks, resolve project issues and establish priorities for limited resources. The purpose is to achieve the best decisions possible in a timely manner, through joint participation of decision makers and ODJFS business and operations experts.

Strategy Meetings focus on reviewing, developing and enhancing strategies for improving performance where current performance is significantly below acceptable levels or when “hot button” issues have been identified.

Executive Meetings focus on outcome measures that indicate progress toward fulfilling the agency’s strategic plan and meeting it’s objectives.

These three meetings work in conjunction to ensure we are meeting and exceeding customer expectations, identifying and removing barriers to better performance, making progress toward implementing our agency strategic plan, and providing value to Ohio taxpayers.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services also encourages offices implement office-level Performance Center accountability to track performance measures that are critical to their program/office and agency’s overall performance.

ODJFS Performance Center Objectives

• To enhance communications.
• To establish priorities, facilitate strategic planning and manage resources.
• To institutionalize individual and organizational accountability.

Guiding Principles

• Accurate and timely intelligence to ensure complete analysis.
• Rapid deployment of resources to quickly address problems.
• Effective tactics and strategies to ensure proactive solutions.
• Relentless follow-up and assessment to ensure that problems do not recur.
Each Performance Center meeting has its own set of reports that provide information and help guide the discussion. This page shows an example of an Agency-wide meeting report, as well as a progress snapshot of the Director’s performance agreement.

The Child Support Program is a federal/state/local partnership:

- Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, establishes standards for state programs.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS), Office of Child Support (OCS), has the primary responsibility for the child support program.
- Ohio’s 88 counties are required to establish a Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) to administer the program.

With 985,863 cases, Ohio had the third largest "IV-D" designated child support caseload in the country in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009.

IV-D cases are those that qualify for collection, distribution, financial and medical support enforcement services, such as paternity testing, and delinquent-support collecting. All families that receive public assistance, Medicaid, or foster care benefits automatically receive IV-D services.

Non-IV-D cases are those that do not meet the criteria for automatic IV-D enrollment. In non-IV-D cases, OCSE provides only income withholding and payment processing services. Administrative costs associated with non-IV-D cases are not eligible for federal matching funds.

OCSE makes available to each state an annual pool of incentive dollars based on program performance. Incentive dollars can be earned when states meet or exceed federal performance standards, or when they outperform each other. A portion of the funding allocated to Ohio’s CSSEAs is the result of meeting or exceeding federal performance incentive standards. The five incentive categories that OCSE tracks are:

- Support-order establishment
- Paternity establishment
- Collections on current support
- Cases with collections on arrears
- Cost-effectiveness

In recent years, Ohio’s performance in these categories has been excellent. In 2009 the state collected over $1.7 billion in support and earned $28.3 million in incentives for FFY 2008 performance efforts.
Sample Reports

The first report, below, is an example of an ODJFS report card. The report at the bottom of the page provides an example of a report used at a Performance Center Project meeting.
Performance Management Tips

Key Components of a Performance Management System

Creating an agency strategic plan. This includes developing an agency mission, vision and values, as well as a broad set of goals and objectives for the agency.

Developing meaningful performance measures. This involves working with the relevant departments (from director, to frontline staff, and in some cases to citizens/customers/clients) to come up with meaningful measures aimed at judging progress (or lack thereof) in meeting goals and objectives. A full set of measures also will include data on activities (the type and amount of work being done) and on costs (including direct costs of providing services or doing other work, along with indirect and overhead costs). Governments generally develop input, output, efficiency, service quality, and outcome indicators to track the extent to which program and activity goals and objectives and desired outcomes are being achieved.

Collecting and using data to manage work processes. This involves developing systems (for example, databases, accounting) for collecting data at the desired program or activity level and then regularly monitoring the data for indications of the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved and how efficiently and effectively programs are operating. The results of these continuing assessments are then used at the operational level to make adjustments to programs and services.

Evaluating results. This is a formal assessment of what the data are telling the agency about the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs and services. Such assessments typically are in the form of formal periodic reports to the management team. Often these evaluations, which are used in setting policies and budgets for future operating years, are made quarterly or less frequently.

Reporting results. This involves communicating a comprehensive set of clear, decipherable performance measures. Reporting generally involves communicating the extent to which the agency’s goals and objectives are being achieved with information to assist users in assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of its program(s).

Benefits of a Performance Management System

Implementing a performance management system has many benefits, including:

- Focusing the agency more clearly on citizens (including citizens as “customers” or “clients”) and the services they need or want, and less on organization and process.
- Establishing goals and objectives and tracking whether those goals and objectives are being achieved.
- Answering such questions as: How efficient and effective are the government’s services? What are our service quality levels and how can they be improved?
- Determining the degree to which programs and services are aligned with agency’s strategic plan.
- Modifying policies, programs, services, or budgets in midstream based on performance data and results.
- Comparing the agency’s performance to itself over time, or with that of other governments (or in certain circumstances, the private sector if such a comparison is appropriate).
- Communicating to the public and legislature what your agency is accomplishing, the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved, and how efficiently and effectively your agency is functioning.
Performance Management Tips

How you will know your Performance Management efforts have stalled
Some reasons why performance management may stall in your organization include:

• Loss of energy
• Lack of champions
• Staying power of the prevailing culture
• Too many measures
• Failure to achieve short-term wins
• Premature declaration of victory
• Fear of measurement and new systems
• Mission and strategies not linked to individual actions
• Lack of meaningful employee involvement
• Measures that don’t align with core business

How to Ensure Successful Implementation
There are things you can do to help ensure successful deployment of your own performance management system.

• Document and continually improve core processes
• Support your planning with a high-quality measurement system
• Don’t make work – keep the appropriate existing strategic goals and measures
• Keep it simple – a few well-chosen objectives for each goal
• Align the department/division level measures with the organizational strategic objectives
• Create understanding mission achievement
• Begin with the end in mind
• Employ humble leaders (it’s not about them)
• Clarify that what is at stake is the good and future of the organization
• Confront the ‘brutal facts’ with data
• Reward and protect open and honest communication