

Boston About Results – Performance Goals

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Menino believes that high quality City services are the building blocks for healthy neighborhoods and a successful city. For that reason, the City is continually developing new strategies that deliver improved services across all City departments at the same or lower cost.

A key component of these efforts is Boston About Results (BAR), the City's performance management program. At the foundation of BAR is a web-based system that collects and tracks data for over forty City departments. Implemented in 2006 and continuously improved each year, the enhanced BAR system has built on the City's long history of measuring performance by increasing the quality and usefulness of performance data collected in the City.

Leveraging this data foundation, the Boston About Results program helps City and departmental leadership to assess the impact of their programs and analyze progress towards their missions. Through monthly reporting, BAR provides City managers with timely, relevant, and consistent information to monitor performance and measure it against targeted service levels. Through regular BAR performance reviews, City leaders identify and analyze trends, use data to drive decisions, and develop improved management strategies that ultimately yield better services for City residents.

OVERARCHING PROGRAM GOALS

The Boston About Results program focuses on several overarching goals.

Focusing on the Mission: By presenting a targeted set of key measures and strategies, BAR helps departments and the City communicate about and focus on those areas that are most important to its core mission. While the measures are always being refined to more closely reflect the interests of constituents, the current set of measures help managers prioritize their time and attention on

those areas that will best serve the people of Boston.

Strategic Resource Planning: Boston About Results is an integral part of the City's strategic resource planning process, an effort which ties decisions about funding to analysis of past and projected performance results. In a time of limited resources, BAR serves as a key tool to measure the value of prior and future City investments.

Improving Accountability and Transparency: Above all, BAR represents a citywide effort to increase accountability and transparency both within government and with constituents. BAR is used internally to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, initiatives and staff. Externally, BAR data is posted on the Boston About Results website (www.cityofboston.gov/BAR) to communicate resource allocation and financial impact to constituents.

BAR IN PRACTICE

Performance results are updated in BAR monthly by administration staff or division/program managers in each department. To help achieve the overarching goals listed above, the data submitted to BAR is analyzed in a number of ways.

Quarterly Performance Reviews: Launched at the start of the 2010 fiscal year, the city's quarterly performance reviews provide a regular opportunity for senior City leadership to meet with the major departments and review operational, administrative and financial trends. These regular conversations allow for major issues to be identified, solutions to be developed, and implementation to be tracked over time.

These formal meetings are in addition to regular dissemination and review of reports on key departmental performance indicators, which consist of the department's most important performance measures. These reports are presented quarterly to the Mayor and his Cabinet.

Budget Development and Approval: Data from BAR is used in the budget development and approval process. Funding requests and projected service delivery outcomes are informed by prior year results and help frame a series of policy discussions held with the Mayor. Those discussions result in proposed budgets and corresponding performance targets.

Budget Accountability: Budget implementation follows City Council approval. Throughout the year, financial and operational performance is monitored against the established budget plan and expected service levels, utilizing monthly revenue and expenditure variance reports and data from BAR.

RECENT PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

During last year’s budget process, the City laid out several goals for the evolution of BAR during the 2010 fiscal year:

- Increasing the use of BAR data at all levels of City government;
- Enhancing on-line BAR materials;
- Tracking and communicating results of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on Boston.

Through the third quarter of FY10, significant progress has been made in reaching these goals:

Increasing the use of BAR data: Beginning with the fourth quarter of FY09, the City launched its new quarterly performance meetings. These meetings have provided an effective venue for identifying and addressing major operational, administrative and financial trends identified using BAR data. Among other issues, controlling trends in overtime and lost time (e.g., sick leave) have been major focuses of these meetings, with positive results. In response to similar challenges in these areas evidenced across multiple departments, the City has addressed these issues more efficiently through citywide trainings and the implementation of improved procedures.

Key Budget Dates/Requirements	
Action Required	City Charter (FY11 Dates)
Departments proposed budgets to Office of Budget Management	No Requirement (1/8/2010)
School Superintendent’s proposed budget to School Committee on or before 1 st Wednesday in February	Ch. 613 Acts of 1987 (2/3/2010)
Mayoral meetings with Departments to discuss funding, policy, and performance	No Requirement (February - March)
School Committee action taken on budget on or before 4 th Wednesday in March	Ch. 613 Acts of 1987 (3/24/2010)
Mayor’s budget submitted to City Council on or before 2 nd Wednesday in April	Ch. 190 Acts of 1982, as amended by Ch. 701 Acts of 1986 (4/14/2010)
Public Hearings held prior to budget adoption	No Requirement (April-June)
City Council action on budget on or before 2 nd Wednesday in June	Ch. 190 Acts of 1982, as amended by Ch. 701 Acts of 1986 (6/9/2010)
Mayor’s approval of budget adopted by City Council on or before July 1, 2010 (FY11)	No Requirement (7/7/2010)

Enhancing on-line BAR materials: In FY10, the City enhanced the BAR data available to the public on-line. In particular, based on user feedback, it redesigned the scorecards to more clearly highlight key information, added feedback functionality, and expanded web links to the scorecards to improve ease of use.

Tracking and communicating the results of ARRA on Boston: In FY10, the City created a scorecard dedicated to tracking investment from ARRA and its impact on Boston. That scorecard will be provided on-line for constituents to review.

Improving Measures: As part of the FY11 budget development process, BAR has been updated with improved measures across many of the City’s departments. Through the budget process, each department is given the opportunity to revise its

measures to better reflect its strategies and gauge its performance. During the FY11 budget process, significant updates were made to the performance measures for several departments, most notably the Boston Public Schools.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

In FY11, the City will continue to strengthen the Boston About Results program, extending its efforts from this fiscal year in several key areas.

Increasing the use of BAR data: In the upcoming fiscal year, the City will continue to expand the uses of BAR throughout its entire organization. At the senior level, the City intends to increase the number of departments participating in quarterly performance reviews and build off the rich analytical tool kit used in those meetings. At the department level, the City will develop BAR dashboards so that department managers can have access to BAR data and budget data in one convenient report.

Enhancing the On-Line BAR Materials: By the start of FY11, the City expects to have improved scorecards on-line for the Boston Public Schools. In addition, over the course of the next fiscal year, the scorecards will be enhanced to link strategies and measures more clearly.

Further Integration of Data from Citywide Management and Financial Systems: The City will expand the integration of data from the Constituent Relationship / Work Order Management system with the BAR system; additionally, the City will explore linking reporting tools between other citywide management and financial systems and BAR, including PeopleSoft and the Automated Permitting Information System.

Comprehensive Youth Development

Highlighted Measures For Select Strategies	Department	FY11 Target
<i>Closing Access Gaps For All Students</i>		
Four-Year High School Graduation Rate For English Language Learners	Boston Public Schools	60%
<i>Community Centers: Beyond Gym & Swim</i>		
Community Center Visits	Centers for Youth & Families	3,000,000
Civic Engagement & Leadership Programs	Centers for Youth & Families	250
<i>Healthy Communities</i>		
Youth Receiving Case Management Services Through Youth Development Network	Public Health Commission	275

Beyond the Walls and Into the Neighborhoods

Highlighted Measures For Select Strategies	Department	FY11 Target
<i>The Boston Public Library: In Buildings, Online and in the Community</i>		
Books & Audiovisual Materials Borrowed & Downloaded	Public Library	3,500,000
Program Attendance Total	Public Library	185,000
<i>Preventing Homelessness Through Public Health</i>		
Homeless Clients Placed In Transitional or Permanent Housing	Public Health Commission	680
<i>Cleaner, Greener Neighborhoods</i>		
Recycling Diversion Rate	Public Works Department	18%

A Shared Innovation Economy: Jobs of the Future

Highlighted Measures For Select Strategies	Department	FY11 Target
<i>Boston Business Hub & Expansion of Access to Capital</i>		
Businesses Assisted With Financial or Technical Assistance	Neighborhood Development	1,407
All Jobs Created Through Office of Business Development Programs	Neighborhood Development	1,938
<i>Reinvigorating Boston Main Streets</i>		
New Businesses Opened With Financial or Technical Assistance Through Main Streets	Neighborhood Development	144
Jobs Created Through Main Streets Programs	Neighborhood Development	475