

★ Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

35

Date October 8, 2007

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE 2006 PERFORMANCE REPORT

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines City Council received and filed *Building Community: the City of Des Moines 2006 Performance Report* on February 26, 2006 by Roll Call No. 07-371; and,

WHEREAS, the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) has identified several noteworthy features in the Report, including the use of art for the design, mailing a copy to every household, and providing a transmittal letter that summarizes the positive and negatives results and accomplishments for each section; and,

WHEREAS, AGA has acknowledged the City's outstanding efforts by awarding the prestigious *Certificate of Achievement in Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting*; and,

WHEREAS, by receiving the Certificate of Achievement for three consecutive years, the City of Des Moines is now recognized as a leader in excellent performance reporting and serves as a model for other state and local governments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, that the City receive and file the letter of recognition and Certificate of Achievement from AGA.

(Council Communication No. 07- 599)

Moved by _____ to adopt.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Bruce Bergman, City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVED

Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

City Clerk

35



June 11, 2007

RECEIVED

JUN 14 2007

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Mr. Michael Matthes
Assistant City Manager
City of Des Moines
400 Robert D. Ray Drive
Des Moines IA 50309

*Advancing
Government
Accountability*

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Dear Mr. Matthes:

On behalf of AGA's Certificate of Excellence in Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting program, I would like to congratulate the City of Des Moines for the excellent 2006 Performance Report. We are again honored to acknowledge the City's outstanding efforts by awarding the AGA's prestigious *Certificate of Achievement in Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting*.

The Certificate of Excellence in Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting program has been established to encourage and improve performance reporting by state and local governments and to publicly recognize outstanding performance reports. The program is based on the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) suggested criteria for reporting performance information, which address all aspects of what should be considered for a performance report. The Certificate of Achievement recognizes those reports that meet the GASB suggested criteria. Attainment of the Certificate represents a significant accomplishment by a state or local government entity and its management.

As in the prior year, we were again impressed with several innovative and noteworthy features in Des Moines's Performance Report. They were:

- Mailing the Report to every resident.
- Providing in Spanish on the report's cover instructions for obtaining the report.
- A content and a writing style that made the report easy to read, and enhancing the text with graphics and art that further increased reader interest..
- Focusing the report on the areas with the most relevance to the City's strategic plan.
- Providing an Overview of Results that states the vision statement sentence to which the results in each of eight priority areas relate; identifies, through a color code and a page number, the section and page in the report presenting the detailed information for the area; and providing a symbol that graphically indicates progress, lack of progress, or progress with some remaining concern.





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- Reporting actual expenditures for each program, in contrast to the budgeted expenditures.
- Using italics to signify terms in the report that readers might not be familiar with and providing a Glossary to define them.

Recommendations for improving the report are enclosed with this letter. Also enclosed is a Scoring Sheet that identifies the reviewers' impressions of the Report in relation to the suggested criteria. It should be noted that the Program's guidelines state that receiving the Certificate requires that at least 13 of the 17 suggested criteria be fully applied and 0 criteria be deemed as not applied; and that for Des Moines' 2006 Performance Report, 13 of the criteria were considered fully applied and 0 as not applied. Hence, continuing to receive the Certificate will necessitate that Des Moines carefully consider the recommendations, and particularly those pertaining to the criteria considered only partially applied, i. e., numbers 11, 13, 14, and 16.

A copy of the current guidelines, which include the suggested criteria, can be obtained by visiting www.agacgfm.org/performance/sea or contacting AGA at 800-AGA-7211. A copy of the suggested criteria can also be obtained by visiting the GASB home page at www.gasb.org.

We hope the recommendations are helpful, that your interest in the program continues, and that other state and local governments will follow your example in seeking and maintaining an appropriate standard of excellence in performance reporting.

We will contact you again later this year to obtain your evaluation of the performance report review program, ask for your insights about this experience and the value of the review team's recommendations, and ascertain your intention to again submit the City's report in order to obtain constructive feedback and public recognition.

Again, we commend Des Moines' active engagement in this pioneering effort. Hopefully, with your sustained leadership and commitment, Des Moines will continue this series of awards and serve as a model for excellent performance reporting by other state and local governments.

Sincerely,

Relmond P. Van Daniker
Executive Director

Enclosure: Review Team Recommendations
Scoring Sheet



Des Moines, Iowa
Scoring Sheet

Criteria No.	Criteria	Reviewer #1	Reviewer #2	Reviewer #3	Average score	Number of reviewers scoring 2 or above	Number of reviewers scoring 0
1	Purpose and scope	2	2	3	2.33	3	0
2	Statement of major goals and objectives	3	3	2	2.67	3	0
3	Involvement in establishing goals and objectives	3	2	1	2.00	2	0
4	Multiple Levels of Reporting	2	2	3	2.33	3	0
5	Analysis of results and challenges	2	3	3	2.67	3	0
6	Focus on key measures	2	3	2	2.33	3	0
7	Reliable information	3	1	2	2.00	2	0
8	Relevant measures of results	2	3	2	2.33	3	0
9	Resources used and efficiency	2	3	2	2.33	3	0
10	Citizen and customer perceptions	3	2	3	2.67	3	0
11	Comparisons for assessing performance	1	1	1	1.00	0	0
12	Factors affecting results	1	2	3	2.00	2	0
13	Aggregation and disaggregation of information	1	2	1	1.33	1	0
14	Consistency	1	1	1	1.00	0	0
15A	Easy to find and access	3	3	3	3.00	3	0
15B	Easy to understand	3	2	3	2.67	3	0
16	Regular and timely reporting	1	1	1	1.00	0	0
	Totals	35	36	36	35.67		

Summary

Number of criteria scoring 2 or above

13

Number of criteria scoring below 2

4

Number of criteria not addressed at all, i. e., scoring zero

0

**CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE IN
SERVICE EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORTING
RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City of Des Moines
Building Community:
2006 Performance Report

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Criterion 3-Involvement in Establishing Goals and Objectives. The City Manager's letter states that the "Vision Statement guides and tests the substance of the evolving strategic plan," from which the goals are assumedly derived (page 1). Although another part of the letter states that "the development of the statement involved a team of 28 citizens," summarizing their involvement, as well as the involvement of elected officials and employees, would enable readers to evaluate the extent to which the matters for which performance are reported is responsive to stakeholders' concerns.
2. Criterion 7-Reliable Information. The Data Sources and Reliability discussion states the City's performance results data are taken from the City's Fiscal Year 2006-2007 operating budget and that there could be one or more weak points associated with the data (page 4). Describing any steps taken to review the reliability of the data and including a statement regarding the data's completeness and reliability would increase readers' confidence regarding the quality of the reported performance information.
3. Criterion 9-Resources Used and Efficiency. The amounts spent for each goal and the amounts spent per resident for selected services are presented (e. g., pages 7, 11, 15, et. al.). Presenting measures that relate financial or other inputs to outputs or outcomes, i. e., efficiency and cost-effectiveness measures, would assure readers that the City is concerned about the efficiency and cost-effectiveness with which financial resources are used. (A similar recommendation was made last year.)
4. Criterion 9-Resources Used and Efficiency. The section titled Communications states "the budget does not provide information about the cost of services" (page 33). It also states that "if the City were to change the budget document in order to show service lines, it would take a significant amount of time, effort, and expense." Yet the Performance Report, which is taken in part from the budget, reports costs of service lines (e. g., \$2.1 million was spent to provide information to citizens and help keep the government accountable-page 31). Presenting the City's performance for Communications in this manner infers that the City does intend to report costs of services. This matter should be addressed.
5. Criterion 11-Comparisons for Assessing Performance. The report presents prior years' and other cities' performance as benchmarks for comparing Des Moines' performance. Establishing and presenting target results for the measures would provide

another way in which Des Moines can demonstrate accountability for performance. (This recommendation was made last year.)

6. Criterion 11-Comparisons for Assessing Performance. Graphic 2 in the section titled "Clean" shows that the number of cases initiated to force property owners to clean up their property has been increasing year-to-year (page 13). Explaining the reasons for this condition would increase readers' understanding of the City's performance.
7. Criterion 13-Aggregation and Disaggregation of Information. The report disaggregates the amounts of services delivered for some services (e. g. construction permits by type of construction-page 8; distribution of flowering annuals by neighborhood-page 9; rounds at City golf courses by course-page 29). Disaggregating geographically or demographically the results for at least some of the objective measures presented would enable the report to present possible variations in actual (in contrast to perceived) performance among areas, and thereby avoid the possibility of misleading readers about the levels of performance for specific groups.
8. Criterion 14-Consistency. The transmittal letter states the report "does not report all results from all services" (page 1). Identifying the changes in services and measures reported, if any, and the reasons for the changes would preclude readers from assuming changes were made in order to report only positive results.
9. Criterion 15B-Easy to Understand. Using color codes to differentiate among the report's eight sections is an excellent idea. Using colors that contain more contrast would facilitate readers being able to benefit from the color coding.
10. Criterion 16-Regular and Timely Reporting. The report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006 was issued January 31, 2007, which is twenty days earlier than the previous performance report. Issuing performance reports closer to the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain, e. g., no later than six months after the end of the fiscal year, increases the likelihood that the information will be used for decision-making.

Also, the report states that the performance measures are taken from the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 operating budget (page 4), which means the measures are for the year ended June 30, 2005. Consideration should be given to using data directly from the departments, rather than extracting it from the budget, in order to be able to present more timely performance results in the Performance Report. An alternative could be to present estimated results for measures for which the actual results are not yet available. This would assure readers that the City desires to report the latest information.