



Measuring Progress

A performance measure guide
for Washington state agencies

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Washington State



WASHINGTON STATE
Office of Financial
Management

OFFICE OF
EQUITY

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Executive summary

This performance measure guide will provide Washington state agencies with information on:

- The importance of performance measures
- How to develop well-rounded measures that assists agencies with measuring their progress towards their overall mission, vision, and strategic goals
- Criteria to include within a measure set to meet the requirements for statewide reporting under current law
- The process to submit, update, and review measures being reported statewide

This guide is designed to meet a wide variety of agency needs (whether your agency is just beginning to create measures or currently has established measures in place) and is tailored to all levels of performance management expertise.

It is purposely open as to what needs to be reported so agencies feel empowered to propose measures *they* believe are crucial to measure, monitor and report on at the statewide level. Agencies have varying business needs, partners, and community members they serve, so it's imperative that they lead with what information will help them serve their customers best.

By the end of this guide, agencies will have the necessary information to create new measures or update existing measures that include the following criteria:

- Establish quality measures for each major activity in your budget
- Develop a diverse set of measures that represents your agency's core programs and services, budget-related activities, legal requirements, and strategic planning
- Identify specific measures required by enterprise-facing agencies and how they align with your other statewide measures
- Create measures that:
 - Provide an overview of your work and its challenges
 - Answer questions to guide future work
 - Are specific, relevant, actionable, understandable, timely, reliable, cost-effective, inclusive, equitable, accessible, and sustainable
 - Include information at all levels of the agency (front-line staff, management, and executive leadership)

If you need additional guidance and support on creating performance measures, reach out to Results Washington's [Statewide Performance Management team](#).

Introduction and purpose

Results Washington is directed to provide innovative, data-driven performance management across the state as stated in [Executive Order 13-04](#). Our agency is responsible for deciding reporting requirements for performance measures to help ensure we are aligning policy, budget, and performance objectives to make fact-based decisions that create a legacy of performance and accountability for the future.

This guide was created to support Washington state agencies in moving toward a comprehensive statewide performance management system that provides meaningful information for decision-making at all levels of state government. Staff in the governor's office who oversee budget, policy, performance, and equity need access to accurate and timely information on how the state is progressing on its strategic priorities as well as how the state is performing in its core programs and services. State agencies also need a cohesive reporting system to save time and duplication of effort.

If we want to strengthen public confidence and trust in the government, keeping our focus on results that benefit Washingtonians is critical. The people of Washington depend on easy-to-access, prompt services that are free from discrimination or historical systems designed to benefit a few. They need to trust that our limited resources are going towards programs that maximize their results. Additionally, state agency staff depend on leadership to ensure their hard work is having an impact.

This guide, and the accompanying resources linked throughout, should enable state agencies to measure and report data that supports decision-making with a focus on breaking down barriers to access and ensuring everyone benefits from services and programs. Our ultimate goal is improving statewide performance measure requirements and criteria that not only comply with state law, but are also useful to agencies, all parts of the governor's office and the Legislature.

We will continue to work on improving our current statewide performance management system so that eventually, all the information necessary to make informed, data-driven decisions is in one place while building a cohesive platform that agencies use to relay their progress on how their services and programs are performing to continue receiving the support and funding from decision makers.

Terminology used in the guide

The way we talk about performance measures varies between organizations and has changed over time. Because so much of performance measurement is about building shared understanding about the problems we are trying to solve, a critical first step is ensuring we are talking about the same things with the terms we use.

This guide seeks to use plain language as much as possible, and we encourage agencies to do the same. Performance management isn't just the job of specialized staff; every single person in an organization has responsibility for the system and benefits from it working right, so the terms we use must be understandable for everyone.

Many of the concepts are like ones used in previous guides for the state, but we are intentionally using new language to support our shift in focus as we make performance management in Washington more inclusive, collaborative, equity-focused, and actionable.

See Appendix 1: Terminology for a list of common terms used throughout this guide and their context for this guide's purposes.

Requirements and criteria

After reading this guide, our goal is that agencies have helpful information to begin creating new measures or updating existing measures to ensure the following requirements and criteria are met:

- Establish quality measures for each major activity in your budget
- Develop a diverse set of measures that represents your agency's core programs and services, budget-related activities, legal requirements, and strategic planning
- Identify specific measures required by enterprise-facing agencies and how they align with your other statewide measures
- Create measures that:
 - Provide an overview of your work and its challenges
 - Answer questions to guide future work
 - Are specific, relevant, actionable, understandable, timely, reliable, cost-effective, inclusive, equitable, accessible, and sustainable
 - Include information at all levels of the agency (front-line staff, management, and executive leadership)

What is a performance measure?

A performance measure is data from any source that answers questions about:

- How much we are doing
- How well we are doing
- If anyone is better off

It includes any data measuring the:

- Quantity of work
- Quality of work
- Results for those we're serving directly
- Progress on implementing changes
- Indicators of conditions in the populations we serve

What makes a performance measure meaningful isn't the type of data, but *how* it's used. Performance measures are used to answer questions about our progress to inform what is needed going forward. They can help us identify barriers in a specific process or the root causes of a complex problem. Many of these barriers and problems lead to disparities, so performance measurement is a powerful tool in working towards equity.

For example, a well-rounded data set for a fictional child welfare program could look like:

- The number of children served (*helps inform how much we are doing*)
- The workload ratio of children to workers (*helps inform how well we are doing*)
- The percentage of cases without repeat abuse/neglect (*helps inform whether anyone is better off*)
- The overall rate of child abuse/neglect (*provides an indicator*)

The quality of your data is also important when developing performance measures. High-quality data ensures we have reliable information to assess how we're doing and inform decision-making and next steps. However, we know that not all data will be perfect but being clear on what the data represents is important.

It is critical to understand that performance measurement is **not about incentives or punishment**, but about **learning and continuous improvement**. In general, outcomes are often difficult to measure in the short term and can include measures we have the least amount of control over, but insights from performance measures can help governments and their partners improve target outcomes over time. Basing incentives on measures that are proxies or intermediate steps risks focusing on the wrong actions. The challenge is to keep our focus on results, and we use measurement as one tool to help us understand and to continually check and adjust how to reach them.

Examples of Performance Measures

- The number of people served by a call center every month
- The average wait time to receive an answer on an application for a clean energy grant
- The percentage of Washingtonians who live within 20 minutes of a service center
- Infant mortality rates among families who receive a service, disaggregated by race and ethnicity and/or geographic regions
- Kindergarten readiness among children living below the federal poverty line

Why do we need performance measures?

There are several reasons to measure, monitor and report on the progress and status of our work, including:

- It's the law.
- It's the right thing to do as public servants.
- It allows for more informed budget decisions.
- It creates better management of programs and services within agencies.
- It creates transparency and shared understanding between government and the public.

It's the law. Washington's budget law requires agencies to measure performance and report measures alongside budget information:

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [43.88.090](#) states:

(2) Each state agency shall define its mission and establish measurable goals for achieving desirable results for those who receive its services and the taxpayers who pay for those services. [. . .]

(3) For the purpose of assessing activity performance, each state agency shall establish quality and productivity objectives for each major activity in its budget. The objectives must be consistent with the missions and goals developed under this section. The objectives must be expressed to the extent practicable in outcome-based, objective, and measurable form.

[. . .] Objectives must specifically address the statutory purpose or intent of the program or activity and focus on data that measure whether the agency is achieving or making progress toward the purpose of the activity and toward statewide priorities.

In addition, RCW [43.06D.040](#) requires performance measures that allow the determination of our effectiveness in reducing disparities.

It's the right thing to do as public servants. We measure many aspects of our lives outside work, both to check progress towards our goals and to monitor for emerging issues.

For example:

- Our children regularly bring home measures to help us understand their progress and barriers at school (i.e., test scores and report cards).
- We get monthly measures on our households to show progress on our goals and highlight potential issues (i.e. investment performance, water and electricity usage, etc.).
- We monitor our health through a variety of measures that tell us what's happening inside our bodies (i.e. weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels).

Work is no different; measuring our progress and monitoring for emerging problems should be what we do to assess if our services are working and identify potential changes that may be needed to improve results.

It allows for more informed budget decisions. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) requires agency budget requests to be linked to performance measures so budget analysts can understand what results or improvements to expect from an investment of resources. This carries out the Legislature's policy that each agency's budget recommendations must be directly linked to the agency's stated mission, goals and objectives, and that agency budget proposals must integrate performance measures "that allow objective determination of an activity's success in achieving its goals," as stated in RCW 43.88.090(5). In addition, OFM uses performance data as criteria for assessing which activities are most effective, and thus, should be the highest priority for investment.

OFM has built data systems to help agencies meet these requirements. Agencies use the Activity system to describe their work activities and expected results, and then create performance measures in the Results through Performance Management (RPM) system to tell a story about this work. Budget requests must describe incremental changes in performance that can be expected from the investment.

It creates better management of programs and services within agencies. Performance measures tell leaders something important about the agency's products, services, and business processes. Measures are a tool to help learn, grow and improve.

Effective performance measures enable us to:

- Monitor performance to identify barriers and issues as they arise
- Track progress towards our goals
- Identify unintended impacts of our decisions
- Adjust our strategies, processes and actions continually to keep improving and adapting to new circumstances

The best performance measures start conversations about organizational priorities, allocation of resources, and ways to improve performance. They answer the questions we need to make decisions at every level of government.

Performance audits by the State Auditor and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, as well as Results Washington and the Office of Equity, rely on performance measures to determine the results of policies and programs.

It creates transparency and shared understanding between government and the public. With limited resources, government needs the ability to have open conversations about the impact of our work and where we can get the most benefit with what we have. Taxpayers and the Legislature want to make informed spending decisions, and we can't have those conversations without performance data. Openly sharing our progress and barriers builds trust, making hard conversations easier. This fosters true accountability, at every level of government, that is based on our priorities, values, and the best information available. Accountability means telling the truth and improving where we can serve people better.

What makes a good performance measure?

Answering questions to guide future work

A good performance measure always **starts with a question**. Think about the decisions that need to be made in the coming years and what questions should be answered to make those decisions. Where is the gap between what's currently happening and what we desire to happen? How can it be measured, and what strategies could we implement to address the root cause of the gap? This aligns closely with the strategic planning process; many of the questions will inform your strategic plan, flow from it, or both. Below are some sample questions to start the conversation:

Are we reaching everyone who needs our services?

- Does everyone who needs us know about us?
 - How many people are we reaching with our outreach, and who/where are they? How does that compare to who could benefit from our services?
- Is everyone who needs us eligible?
 - Are our eligibility requirements furthering disparities in who benefits from our work, or helping resolve them?
- Do we have capacity to serve everyone who needs us?
 - Where are the bottlenecks in our work?
 - Which resources could we be using more efficiently to broaden our impact?
- Are there barriers to accessing us, such as physical, time, technology, culture or knowledge constraints?
 - How much effort do people have to put in to reach us?
 - How long do people have to wait to receive our services?
 - Are there disparities in who these barriers impact the most?
 - Are all audiences able to find and use our website, forms, resources to access the resources they need regardless of disability?

Is our service having the impact on lives we intend?

- How does this service relate to the broader social problem we want to solve?
- Does this work overlap, compete or conflict with other policies and programs?
- Are outcomes improving for those we serve? How much?
- Are the impacts focused on the populations where the need/burden is greatest?
- Is our service harming anyone directly or indirectly?

Are we doing our work in a sustainable way for the effectiveness of our organization in the future?

- Do our staff and partners have a sense of belonging that allows them to bring their whole selves into our work?
- Are we attracting and retaining the people we need to do our best work?
- Do our staff and partners feel they are able to impact their work?
- Are we using our spending in a way that promotes justice and economic wellbeing in the communities we serve?
 - Are our purchasing and contracting procedures fair to the people we do business with?
 - How quickly are we paying contractors for their work?
 - How much time are we giving businesses to develop proposals when we have opportunities?
 - Are we spending with women- and minority-owned businesses proportionate to the business community?
- Are we meeting our obligations to Washingtonians for transparency and privacy?
- Are we managing organizational risk to protect our customers from foreseeable crises?

Characteristics that make performance measures helpful

Below are some of the characteristics that make a helpful performance measure. With limited resources, we must focus our attention on the measures that are most likely to support good decisions.

- **Specific** measures are well-defined and focused. Having a clear understanding of the “who, what, where, when, which and why” of the question you are trying to answer will help create a measure that is specific enough to truly answer it.
- **Relevant** measures matter to your audience and clearly relate to the work being measured.
- **Actionable** measures help connect specific actions or events to strategic goals and are used to make decisions, regardless of results.
- **Understandable** measures are clear, concise and easy for a non-specialist to comprehend. This applies to the terms we use in titles and descriptions, and technical aspects of the measure such as the scale used in charts or selection of performance targets. Making extra effort at the beginning to define a measure that is understandable will save time, effort, and frustration when we are sharing the measure in the future.

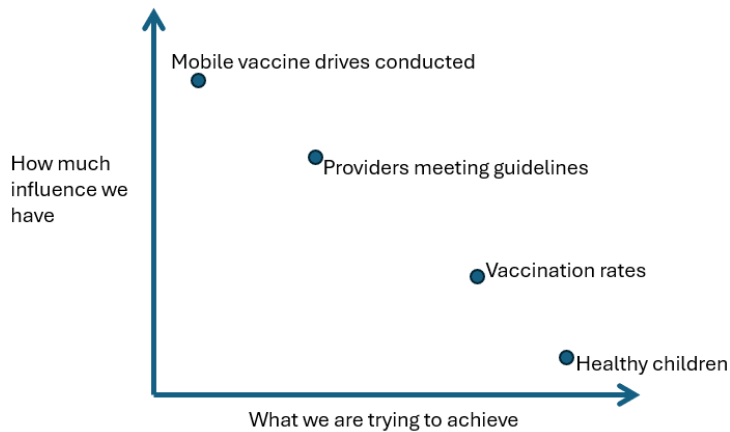
- **Timely** measures have information available frequently enough to have value in making decisions and assessing accountability. Think about the timing of the decisions you'll be making – will this measure support decisions for annual or biennial budget requests, quarterly progress meetings on your strategic plan, monthly team meetings, etc.?
- **Reliable** measures have data that is verifiable, free from bias and an accurate representation of what it is intended to be. Data should be gathered in the same way from person to person, and a standard process for data collection helps ensure that what is gathered and when it's gathered stays consistent no matter who is obtaining it.
- **Cost effective** measures are feasible and worth the time and effort to collect, record, display and analyze the data.
- **Inclusive** measures provide accurate representation for communities by incorporating varying perspectives and ensure we are measuring what matters to all Washingtonians impacted by our work, not just the loudest voices or those with the most power.
- **Equitable** measures provide the insights we need to act in addressing injustice, inequity or oppression in our work.
- **Accessible** measures ensure that performance data is accessible and understandable by all members of the public as well as employees.
- **Sustainable** measures are those that can be measured repeatedly over time. Although it can be very difficult and time consuming to get structured data for certain types of information, improving internal processes in your agency to support obtaining these measurements can be done if deemed important enough, and those improvement efforts themselves can also be measured.

Influence

One other consideration to think about when deciding on a set of performance measures is **influence**. Influence relates to an agency's ability to change or affect a measure. In general, the closer we get to the outcome we are trying to achieve, the less influence we have over what we are measuring. As a result, it can be tempting to collect only measures we can directly influence. However, that can lead to incomplete information, short-sighted decisions and losing focus on our ultimate goals.

For example, although state agencies don't have direct control over the health of the children in Washington, we do have the ability to positively influence their health through specific programs and assistance (i.e. mobile vaccine drives; nutrition assistance programs;

compliance units to ensure healthcare providers meet mandated guidelines and requirements).



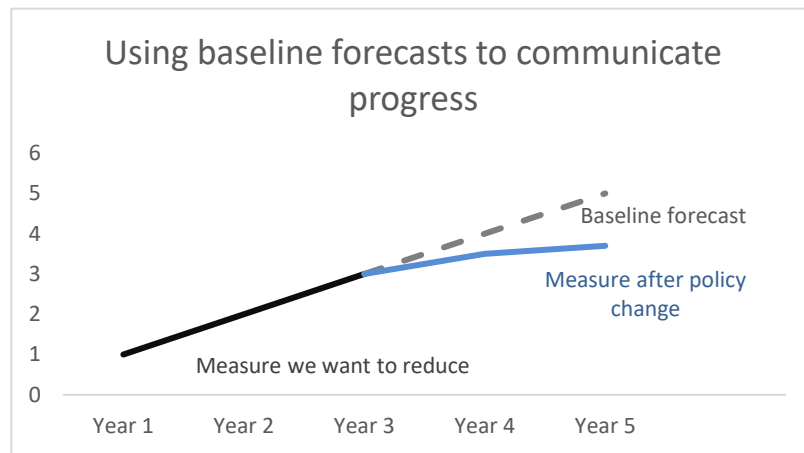
Tracking a range of measures, from those we have the most influence on to those that measure the outcomes we’re trying to achieve, will give a full picture of the actions we are taking and the results they are producing. We must be clear in how we communicate these measures, so we can set appropriate expectations in advance.

Targets and baselines

Whenever it is feasible, measures should include information about their baseline and trends, including forecasts (predictions based on past and present data) if they are available. Baselines are particularly helpful when we’re discussing measures that relate to an upcoming policy or program change. When we seek funding requests, for instance, showing the expected measure without new funding and what could change with it will support informed conversations about resources and priorities.

Once the change is implemented, we will be able to go back and see if it had the result we expected. The purpose is not to determine whether we are trying hard enough or whether everyone is doing their job. When a target isn’t reached, it leads to crucial conversations about barriers and resources. Did we lack information about how quickly to expect results, did we find a barrier we didn’t anticipate that we’ll need to navigate, or have our priorities shifted since the measures were created? Whatever the answer is, the conversation is critical.

Accurate forecasting is particularly helpful for measures that are difficult to influence. If an indicator is going up and we ultimately need it to go down, first we will need to slow the rate of increase. During the time we are slowing the increase, it can be difficult to communicate progress because the numbers are still going up. But by including a baseline trend from the beginning, we can show that the measure is lower than it would be without our changes, and that we are closer to the result we want. Or, if we don't see a difference from our baseline, that will tell us the plan needs to change.



Targets can be helpful in some circumstances. For instance, there may be minimum standards that must be met due to legal or funding requirements, or benchmarking based on other states might give us a good idea of what level of service we can fairly expect. If they exist, those standards should be explicit. But adding a target arbitrarily for the sake of having a target provides no benefit, makes honest conversations harder, and erodes trust by creating unrealistic expectations. This is where influence is a key factor: the less influence an agency has over a measure, the less likely a target is to be helpful, and the more likely a baseline trend will be informative.

How do we decide what to measure?

There are almost infinite possibilities for agencies to measure, and always with limited resources. With that in mind, each agency should have a diverse set of measures that provides a good overview of its work and the challenges it is addressing. Agencies should have several different types of measures for different purposes.

- **Indicators**, or community conditions, are signs of the overall wellbeing of the communities and populations we serve. These are generally the closest we'll ever get to measuring the outcomes we actually want to achieve. They can help us set

priorities going forward by identifying either positive or negative trends and/or areas where needs or disparities aren't being addressed. Indicators reflect impacts that are influenced by the work of many agencies and factors. Therefore, the work of any one agency, or even group of agencies, can't fully control the trend, but are critical to facilitating conversations across state and local governments, private partners and communities. Indicators help keep efforts focused on our shared goals, rather than the intermediate steps we take to reach them.

- **Examples:** student standardized test scores; area of eelgrass beds in Puget Sound; Washington interest rates.
- **Operational measures** relate to our ongoing core programs and services. They can help identify trends so that we can quickly respond to changing circumstances like an increase in demand, or a bottleneck in our processes. These measures will tell your leadership when a budget request might be needed will help you communicate that need to the Office of Financial Management and other decision makers. These measures are most helpful when we track them over long periods of time so that trends can be recognized.
 - **How much are we doing?** Operational measures might track the demand for our services and how much we are providing. How many people do we serve?
 - **Examples:** the number of applications processed; the number of calls answered; the amount of food distributed.
 - **How well are we doing?** Operational measures might track the quality or efficiency of our services, or our role as an employer, purchaser, or member of the community.
 - **Examples:** The percentage of issues resolved on the first customer call; the percentage of applications processed within the promised window of time; the rate of employee engagement; the disparity in our rate of contracting with women-owned businesses.
 - **Is anyone better off?** Operational measures might track the impact our programs or services have on the people we serve.
 - **Examples:** The percentage of participants who were still employed 12 months after a program ended; the infant mortality rate in families who received a service.
- **Strategic measures** show our progress on strategic changes to the way we do our work. They are likely to have shorter timelines than operational measures. They can often be paired with operational measures to show what we are trying to change and how. An operational measure can also be a strategic measure while its improvement is part of an agency's strategic plan.

- **Examples:** the number of community partners that have implemented our new initiative; the initiative was implemented by the expected deadline; the initiative did what it intended and moved the desired measures or impacted the outcomes it aimed to move.

If an agency reported only measures that answered the question “is anyone better off?,” the data might show the effectiveness of the program but might leave unanswered questions about next steps if the results didn’t meet expectations. If an agency reported only measures that answered the question “how much are we doing?,” audiences would have no way to know if all that hard work was having an impact.

Note: these categories are only meant to help you think through what is important to measure and report. Some measures might fall into more than one category, or a different category depending on your position. What matters most is the measure and the question it answers, not how you categorize it.

How many performance measures should we have?

State law requires agencies to report a minimum of one measure per [budget activity](#). A budget activity is a plain-English description of an agency’s work, what it produces or accomplishes, and how it makes a difference. Beyond that, there is no magic number of performance measures for each agency. State agencies vary widely in the volume and complexity of their work, and the right number will vary widely as well.

Different measures will be relevant at different levels of organization. There are some measures that are critical for front-line staff, some for management, and some for executive leadership and the governor’s office. Think about each person’s sphere of responsibility and what information will help them make decisions. **A good general rule is that each level of an organization should focus on at least 3 measures but no more than 15 measures at a time.** Beyond that, it becomes difficult to know what is important.

While Results Washington is here to assist agencies in developing performance measures, facilitating the statewide measure approval process, and managing the statewide

performance management system, please note that budget activities are managed by the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

See OFM's [activity guide](#) for more information on budget activities and contact [OFM's Budget Office](#) if you have questions about your agency's budget activities or if a core service of your agency is not reflected in existing budget codes or activities.

How do we know which measures to report?

Core programs and services, budget-related, legal requirements, and strategic planning

The measures you report at the statewide level should be a mixture of indicators, operational measures, and strategic measures as explained above. This will tell the story of what and how much you're doing, how and how well you're doing it, and why it matters.

- **Core programs and services** – Each of your agency's core programs and services should be represented in performance measures and aligned with your budget activities. Consider which programs and services are called out in your strategic plan, annual report, and other regular communications with customers and taxpayers.
- **Budget-related** – The measures that enable you to make decisions about funding requests are likely the same ones you'll want to report in decision packages. If a large part of your operating costs is determined by the demand for services, or the complexity of cases, those are likely important measures for budget staff to see as well.
- **Legal requirements** – Measures you are directed to collect and report by statute are more likely to be of interest for the governor's policy advisors and others at the statewide level.
- **Strategic planning** – Under state law, the measures featured in your strategic plan should align with statewide strategic priorities and should also be critical for determining your budget requests. As a result, they are likely to be of interest for the governor's budget, policy, and performance staff. For more information and resources on strategic planning, please visit [OFM's Strategic Plan Guidelines](#).

What is the statewide reporting process?

The new processes below for developing, reporting, and reviewing statewide performance measures are intended to be collaborative between those directly serving Washingtonians

and those using the data for statewide decision-making. Performance measures fail when they are developed by leadership far away from the work and imposed from the top-down. However, they also fail to influence state policy and budgeting when they don't meet the needs of their intended audience.

Results Washington is committed to partnering with other enterprise-facing (agencies and commissions that rely on or collaborate with other state agencies to meet their mission and vision) agencies to simplify and streamline reporting. To the extent possible, we will avoid duplication of effort and empower agencies to tell the stories of their own data.

Submitting new measures

Agencies in the process of establishing their performance metrics or who are missing measures that meet the specific requirements and criteria outlined in this guide will use this process to develop and submit new measures for their agency.



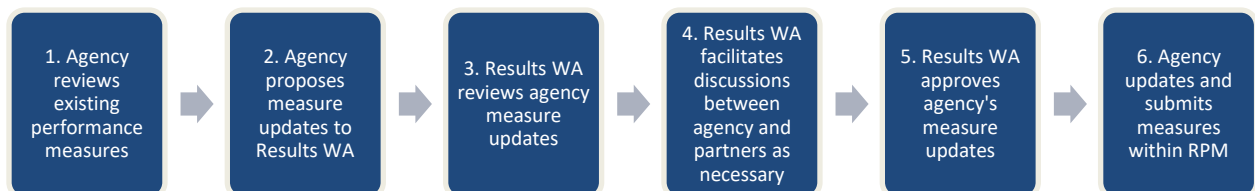
1. Agencies will develop new measures as needed in accordance with the requirements and criteria in this guidance document. Development of performance measures should involve intentional, internal discussions with affected front-line staff and leadership to help clarify objectives, anticipate data collection and interpretation challenges, and ensure measures are strategically aligned with agency goals. Ongoing meetings to review data with the subject matter experts involved in the work being measured will foster a culture of continuous improvement, inclusion, and accountability.
2. Agencies will submit their draft measures to Results Washington's [Statewide Performance Management team](#) for review. See Appendix 3: Information to Include for New Measures for details on what to include when you submit your new measures.
3. Results Washington will review the agency's draft measures to ensure all requirements are met. They will engage with state budget and policy staff and other enterprise-

facing agencies (our partner agencies) to ensure the proposed set of measures provides actionable information and is helpful for each partner’s work.

4. Results Washington will facilitate discussions between the agency and our enterprise-facing partners if additional information is required or different measures are needed. Our goal is for all parties involved to reach an agreement that balances the need for information with time, resource, and data availability constraints for reporting agencies.
5. Results Washington will approve the agency’s proposed set of measures.
6. Agencies will create and submit the new measures within the Results Through Performance Management (RPM) system. Agencies will be responsible for updating data for their measures within RPM based on the measures’ reporting frequency and time period.

Updating existing measures

Agencies who currently have established performance metrics or whose current measures do not meet the specific requirements and criteria outlined in this guide will use this process to develop and submit updated measures for their agency.

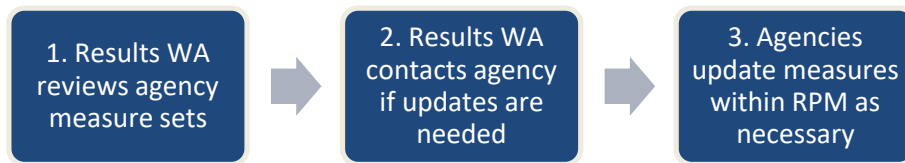


1. Agencies will review their existing measures within RPM to ensure their measures meet the requirements and criteria in this guidance document.
2. Agencies will submit their proposed measure updates to Results Washington’s [Statewide Performance Management team](#) for review.
3. Results Washington will review the agency’s measure updates to ensure all requirements are met and engage our partner agencies as necessary to review and approve the updates.
4. Results Washington will facilitate discussions between the agency and our enterprise-facing partners if additional information is required or different measures are needed.
5. Results Washington will approve the agency’s proposed measure changes.

6. Agencies will update and submit their measure updates within the RPM system. Agencies will continue to be responsible for updating data for their measures within RPM based on the measures' reporting frequency and time period.

Reviewing measures

Agencies with established performance measures in RPM will follow this process to review their measures on an annual basis.



Once performance measures are developed and implemented by agencies within the RPM system:

1. Results Washington will review agencies' measures annually in alignment with the budget cycle. We will ensure measures are current, have data submitted by identified frequencies and time periods, and are in alignment with agencies' budget activities. However, we understand that there is often time after a time period ends that data is not yet available to submit, so we will focus on measures that have not been reported on at all or have missing data well passed the end of a time period.
2. Results Washington will contact agencies if measure updates are required.
3. Agencies will update their measures within RPM with the appropriate information and data.

Proposed measure changes

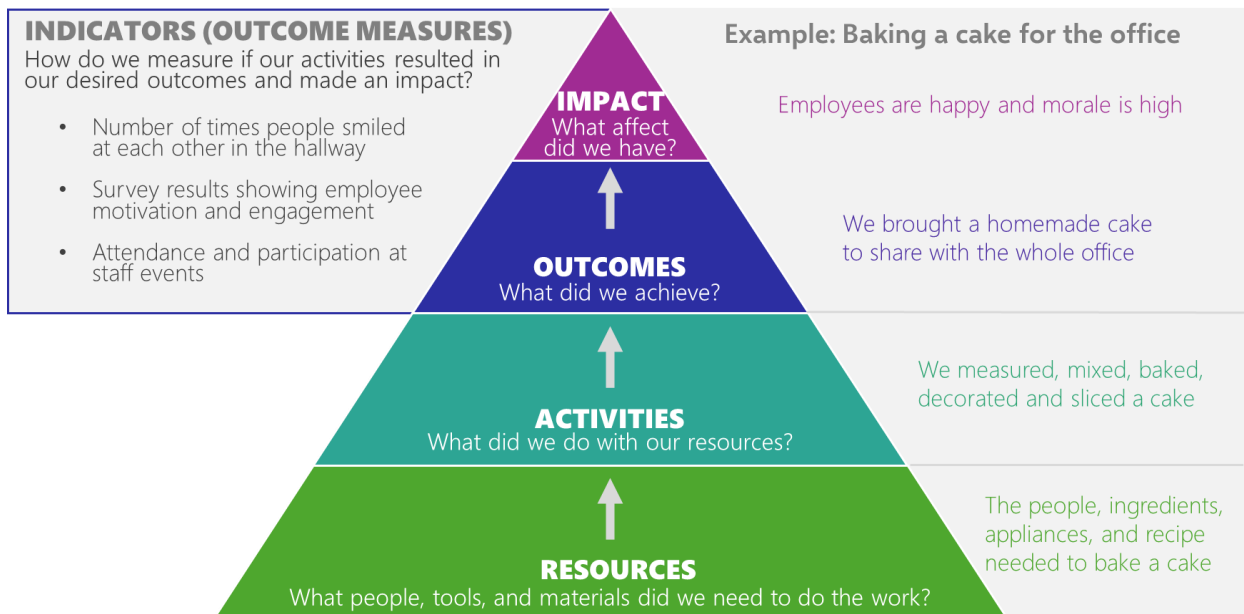
During the annual review, agencies can submit proposed measure changes if necessary. Changes can include updates to measures to add additional parameters or remove measures that are no longer relevant. While changes to measures may be proposed by agencies at any time, agencies may choose to propose changes during the review process because of new legislation and/or strategic priorities. Results Washington will coordinate with partner agencies to review and approve the proposed changes or facilitate conversations to reach an agreement. Once approved, agencies will update their measures within the RPM system.

Appendix 1: Terminology

- **Accountability** is a system of relationships, data, and communication that leads to informed decision-making and process improvement. It includes truth and reconciliation: finding out and telling the truth, and then supporting efforts to improve and address what may not be performing as well as we would like. Performance management is a critical piece of accountability and is a tool for identifying and righting issues in real time. Accountability is **not** about blame or punishment.
- **Baseline** data serves as a reference point for future comparison and helps us evaluate how a program, initiative, or action is doing. Baseline data can be the first time something is measured or can describe a situation that existed before a program or initiative was created. If a measure has been steadily increasing or decreasing, that trend should be considered as part of the baseline, since any change we make is likely to slow that trend before it reverses.
- **Disaggregated** measures contain data that has been broken down into smaller units. This can allow for an in-depth look at trends across different population groups, as well as across an entire population.
- **Disparity** refers to a lack of equality or similarity, especially in a way that is not fair, and is often used to describe a social or economic condition that's considered unfairly unequal.
- **Equity** is true access to opportunities, power, and resources that allow all people to achieve their full potential and thrive. It requires the elimination of barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression. All agency actions and decisions should be guided by the acknowledgment that our systems are not currently equitable. Our goals should be driven by developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that prioritize and distribute resources to identified groups of people who have been historically and are currently marginalized and underserved, and are done in partnership with those groups. Essentially, every agency goal should embed equity and leverage targeted universalism as a policy framework that aims to address specific needs for each group and achieve universal outcomes for all people. For more information on equity and targeted universalism, visit the Office of Equity's [Equity Hub](#).
- **Impacts** are the value being added by or contributing to our outcomes. To show what impact we're making, it's important to have data that answers the question: "is anyone better off?" Tracking our impact can help us assess the actual effectiveness of our

programs and ensuring they deliver tangible benefits to the communities receiving our services.

- **Indicators** refer to data we can use to make inferences about conditions in the community or environment and adds helpful context to what’s being measured. Interest rates, birth rates, and the number of chum salmon on spawning grounds are all examples of indicators. These measures are critical for the state to understand the needs of Washingtonians even when they aren’t things that any single agency, or even a group of agencies partnered, can influence. These types of indicators are a vital part of performance management for government.
- **Outcomes**, often referred to as results, describe the ultimate state we expect to be caused by our actions. Outcomes are often looked at as both short-term and medium-term effects. Working backwards from the change we want to see to the actions we’ll need to take can help us identify the right places to measure a process to find issues as they arise. However, true outcomes can be difficult to measure, but insights from these measures can help governments and their partners improve target outcomes over time.



Note: specific terms such as inputs, outputs, leading and lagging indicators, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) are not used in this guide, but these types of frameworks can help agencies understand how to set goals and measures results. For a helpful guide on strategic planning and goal-setting that uses these terms, see Results Washington’s past presentation materials: [Strategic Planning - Lean Community of Practice 11/2022](#)

Appendix 2: Specific measures required by other agencies

Some measures that are relevant across state government are reported to other enterprise-facing agencies, such as the Office of Equity, Department of Enterprise Services, Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises, and State Human Resources. In addition, agencies like our state peer commissions may not have their own data collection mechanisms and can benefit from agencies including these data points in their existing reporting system.

Results Washington partners with these agencies, as well as state peer commissions, to ensure the data you report to them is integrated with your other performance measures so that all this critical information will be displayed in the same place.

Equity goals and performance

The Office of Equity (EQUITY) serves state agencies and community members with the goal to enact systems change throughout state government. EQUITY is tasked with setting statewide goals for equity ([Executive Order 22-04](#)) and assessing the effectiveness of agency programs and services on reducing disparities ([Revised Code of Washington 43.06D](#)).

The **Determinants of equity** are the social, economic, geographic, political, and physical conditions that collectively represent the needs that each person, family, and community in needs to thrive in Washington. As such, these also represent the statewide goals for equity and how current and future progress toward becoming a fair and just society can be measured.

To measure progress as a state government, we must address disparities within our communities through our state resources to find the best ways to serve them. Not only is this a main purpose of government, but it allows us to address the ways in which government has negatively impacted these communities.

Determinants of Equity

[Digital Equity](#)

[Quality Education](#)

[Economic Justice](#)

[Housing & Home Ownership](#)

[Early Childhood Development](#)

[Food Justice](#)

[Health & Human Services](#)

[Healthy Built & Natural Environments](#)

[Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources](#)

[Transportation & Mobility](#)

[Community & Public Safety](#)

[Justice Systems & Laws](#)

[Vibrant Communities](#)

Workforce Equity (coming soon)

Equity in State and Local Practices (coming soon)

Agencies are expected to use this document to guide their delivery of equity-focused performance measurements. This document serves to create the path forward and provide our state agencies with the guidance needed to measure performance for the purpose of addressing disparities, and, ultimately, work towards an equitable Washington. A few types of equity that can be measured include:

- **Distributional equity** refers to the fair distribution of benefits and burdens across everyone within the community and organizations that impact the community.
- **Process equity** refers to inclusive, open, and fair access by everyone who will be impacted by a decision process. Process equity ensures that all affected parties have access to and meaningful experience in government engagement, and public participation, and that they have a voice in what happens to them.
- **Cross-generational equity** refers to the effects of current actions on the fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens to future generations of communities. Examples of issues with cross-generational impact include income and wealth, health outcomes, white privilege, resource depletion, climate change and pollution, real estate redlining practices, and stewardship of resources.

We must invest where the needs are greatest to ensure that agency programs and services meet everyone's needs regardless of location or identity. To target the investment of our time, resources, and efforts, we must apply different strategies, goals, and performance measures based on geography and demographic identity.

Demographic data and performance

Demographic data is necessary to assess agency effectiveness at reducing disparities and achieving equitable outcomes, both internally for our employees and externally, for the communities we serve through our programs, services, and funding throughout Washington. Additionally, every agency budget request submitted to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) must include an explanation of how it will impact equity in the state. Agencies are required to include both demographic and geographic information about communities impacted by their budget proposals ([RCW 43.88.090](#)).

EQUITY recommends that agencies incorporate equity performance measures and pro-equity anti-racism strategic action planning into their organization's primary strategic planning process to embed equity across all goals and actions, strengthen budget requests, and reduce duplication of efforts (see [Chapter 16: Strategic Plan Guidelines](#) for more details).

If your agency is not already doing so, we urge agencies to begin collecting demographic and geographic data as a standard. Based on the [Statistical Policy Directive 15](#) issued by the federal Office of Management and Budget, agencies should, at minimum, use the following racial/ethnic categories for the collection of demographic data:

- Black
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latine
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Pacific Islander
- White

EQUITY also recommends that agencies further disaggregate these categories to collect information on subpopulations, for which there are significant disparities in conditions and outcomes. An interagency workgroup is working develop disaggregation standards for Washington State, but you may refer to the [federal recommendations](#) or reach out to the relevant peer commissions for guidance in the interim.

Other recommendations for demographic data are:

- **Asking both about how an individual identifies versus how an individual is read and treated by those around them.** A person may identify one way, but still experience the privileges or barriers of another. This can help us better understand the complex intersection of identity, policy, and inequity.
- **Do not provide an option for “two or more races”.** The Statistical Policy Directive 15 indicates that agencies should no longer include this option in demographic data collection practices. Instead, allow individuals to select multiple options.
- **Collect information on sexual orientation and gender identity** (refer to the “Gender and Sexual Orientation” section below).
- **Collect disability status, citizenship status, and military service status** where it serves a purpose and does not expose these vulnerable populations to harm.
- **Collect income ranges rather than specific income** and only collect this data as necessary if not already required.

Geographic data and performance

Equity and disparities are inherently tied to geography. For example, institutionally mandated redlining policies determined where people of specific racial or ethnic communities were allowed to purchase homes. The geographic locations where members of these communities purchased homes were often less desirable due to environmental factors, such as tree coverage, density of homes, lack of amenities and services, or proximity to pollution sources (highways, power plants, refineries, airports). This led to greater disparities in economic and health outcomes for these communities.

Alternatively, capital projects and funding were systematically directed away from these communities (such as Flint, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi water systems) or undesirable infrastructure, such as major highways, were constructed through these areas. The former starved a community of funding for improvements to infrastructure such as water systems and roadways; the latter divided vibrant and deeply connected communities. All these factors would have caused the health of the environment and community to decline, and that community would have been disproportionately represented by individuals belonging to non-white racial or ethnic groups.

The historical context and complex intersection of geography and race are linked to the state's current policies, programs, services, and regulations. If we do not disaggregate our performance measures by geographic location, we will not be able to determine if there if we are effectively and equitably serving all communities across Washington.

When collecting geographic data, the more precision the better. However, agencies should strike a balance between precision and eliminating any potential for harm.

- The agency should not collect specific addresses if it can't guarantee that the location of vulnerable individuals will not be exposed or disclosed. Instead, EQUITY recommends **collecting nothing more specific than a zip code**.
- If the agency finds that zip code is too specific, **consider collecting city, jurisdiction, and/or county**. County is the largest geographic boundary that agencies should consider capturing and, even so, there is significant differences in the composition of communities within a county, including demographic makeup of the area, the needs of that community, and disparities in outcomes for individuals.
- The agency should consider collecting qualitative information, such as **whether the individual resides in a rural, suburban, or urban community**. The experiences for individuals residing in these different types of community vary dramatically. Therefore, the agency should be able to disaggregate performance measure data to see where the programs and services meet the needs of those communities.

Gender and sexual orientation

The LGBTQ Commission works to improve the government's interface with the LGBTQ+ community by identifying the needs of its members and ensuring that there is an effective means of advocating for LGBTQ+ equity in all aspects of state government.

Including gender and sexual orientation in performance measures for state agencies is crucial for fostering equity and inclusivity. By collecting and analyzing data on these demographics, agencies can identify and address disparities in service delivery and outcomes, ensuring that policies and programs effectively meet the needs of all individuals. This approach promotes accountability and transparency, helping to uncover and rectify systemic biases that may disadvantage certain groups.

While specific measures of gender and sexual orientation are not currently required to be submitted, the LGBTQ Commission would significantly benefit from the gathering of this data. It would provide the commission with a clearer understanding of the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, enabling them to advocate more effectively for policies and resources that address these needs. Additionally, comprehensive, disaggregated data can help the commission monitor the impact of implemented measures, ensuring they are achieving desired outcomes. This data-driven approach would not only enhance the commission's ability to support the LGBTQ+ population, but also contribute to a broader effort to create a more inclusive and equitable state.

Resources on collecting and measuring gender and sexual orientation include:

- [Measuring Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation | The National Academies Press](#)
- [SOGI-Measures-FAQ-Mar-2020.pdf \(ucla.edu\)](#)
- [Federal-Evidence-Agenda-on-LGBTQI-Equity.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)
- [Executive Order on Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals | The White House](#)
- [Response Order Can Affect Sexual Orientation Measurement | NORC at the University of Chicago](#)
- [LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center](#)
- [The Longitudinal Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: A Study of Identity Change in a Nationally Representative Sample of U.S. Adults and Adolescents | LGBT Health \(liebertpub.com\)](#)
- [Response Order Can Affect Sexual Orientation Measurement | NORC at the University of Chicago](#)

Visit the [LGBTQ Commission's website](#) for additional information.

Greenhouse gas emissions

The Department of Commerce, in partnership with the Department of Ecology, oversees efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by Washington state agencies. In 2020, the Legislature and governor updated the State Agency Climate Leadership Act codified in [Chapter 70A.45 RCW](#) that directs state agencies, universities, colleges, and community and technical colleges to lead by example in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions to:

- 15% below 2005 baseline by 2020
- 45% below 2005 by 2030
- 70% below 2005 by 2040
- 95% below 2005 by 2050; achieve net zero

The greenhouse gas emissions limits were established to hold state government agencies accountable for reducing emissions and to demonstrate leadership on climate change policy. [Executive Order 20-01](#) for State Efficiency and Environmental Performance (SEEP) builds on this commitment and emphasizes that reducing greenhouse gas emissions from state government operations contributes to better health outcomes for communities in Washington and helps mitigate risks associated with climate change. Organizational risk can be managed by supporting state agency performance with emissions reporting and strategy development, and continuing to invest in measures that contribute to better climate outcomes.

State agencies will need ongoing staff resources to meet the requirements of RCW 70A.45.050, EO 20-01, and related goals and directives. SEEP convenes subject-specific working groups and can provide training and technical assistance to support these employees.

Specific measures

To track state agencies' progress toward meeting these limits, each covered agency must report the following directly to Commerce:

- Every year
 - Estimate emissions using an emissions calculator.
- Even-numbered years
 - Report greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies to the Department of Commerce's [SEEP Office](#), including:
 - Actions taken over the last biennium to meet these emission-reduction targets.

- Actions planned for the next two biennia to meet emission limits.
- Long-term strategy for meeting the emission limits.
- Odd-numbered years
 - State agencies will submit progress reports to SEEP.

Each biennium, the Department of Ecology collaborates with SEEP to publish a progress report to the Legislature.

Visit the [Department of Commerce](#) and the [Department of Ecology's](#) websites for additional information.

Permit timeliness

The Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) helps people navigate Washington's environmental and business regulatory systems. ORIA provides citizens and businesses with information and understanding about local, state, and federal regulatory requirements and collaborates with agencies and stakeholders on ways to improve regulatory systems for more effective services, including for small businesses.

ORIA created the Permit Timeliness program to provide the public with better information about permit decisions to help with planning and decision-making for business owners, developers, and project managers. The goal of Permit Timeliness is to ensure permit performance data is accessible to the public and businesses to improve timeliness, hold the government accountable and enhance public service.

Each of the state's [major regulatory agencies](#) are required to report permit application and issue information directly to ORIA each year. ORIA compiles and posts performance data annually from agencies on the [ORIA central repository](#) hosted on [data.wa.gov](#).

For more information on this program, please visit [ORIA's Permit Timeliness webpage](#).

Significant Legislative Rulemaking

Significant Legislative Rulemaking guides how regulating agencies adopt rules which impact regulatory programs and require that these agencies determine the costs and benefits of a new rule, determine least burdensome alternatives, coordinate regulations with the requirements of state and federal law, and develop an implementation, evaluation and education plan (as specified in [RCW 34.05.328](#)).

ORIA is also responsible for collecting data from [required agencies](#), organizing it, and preparing a report each even-numbered year that details the effects these rules have on our

rulemaking process. ORIA distributes the report to the governor, legislature, agencies, and stakeholders.

The three main goals within Significant Legislative Rulemaking that participating agencies and stakeholders support include:

1. Report on their rulemaking process
2. Ensure agencies are not duplicating rules and that rules do not contradict one another, and
3. Ensure the rules are necessary, cost effective and minimizes the barriers of bureaucracy.

Reporting is done through an [interactive reporting tool](#) to make it easier for agencies to submit information and for businesses, environmental groups and labor organizations to review.

For more information on Significant Legislative Rulemaking, visit [ORIA's Significant Legislative Rulemaking webpage](#).

Information technology

Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) operates the state's core technology services – the central network and data center – and provides strategic and comprehensive information security to protect state networks from growing cyber threats. WaTech also leads the implementation of a strategic direction and enterprise architecture for information technology (IT) and oversees the portfolio of major IT projects for state government.

An agency's IT portfolio is a good way to measure performance. Besides looking at how well an agency is doing in its own business, WaTech also uses information about the agency's IT usage to assess how effectively the state is deploying and managing technology.

Agency specific measures

State agencies are required to develop IT portfolios that reflect the agency's objectives, business plan, and technology, as well as the effect of agency's proposed new technology investments on existing infrastructure and business functions (see [RCW 43.105.341](#)). These agency specific IT portfolios are to be used to inform decision making and strategic planning, including in the following areas (see [RCW 43.105.230](#)):

- System refurbishment, acquisitions, and development efforts.
- Setting goals and objectives for using information technology.

- Assessments of information processing performance, resources, and capabilities.
- Ensuring the appropriate transfer of technological expertise for the operation of new systems developed using external resources.
- Guiding new investment demand, prioritization, selection, performance, and asset value of technology and telecommunications; and
- Progress toward providing electronic access to public information.

When evaluating new technology purchases or services, agencies should develop performance metrics following the requirements above and use the information to drive decision making. While these metrics are not currently required to be submitted, agencies should consider setting performance targets such as quality of service delivery, availability of the service, and the targets associated with each. Technology solutions should be linked to business outcomes and are uniquely positioned to provide detailed information about the efficacy of business services provided by an agency.

Enterprise performance measures

WaTech monitors IT investment across the state to analyze and draw conclusions about where the state is investing, and how the state is performing on its deployment of IT projects and systems. The agency measures project investment levels by analyzing IT spending data of agencies and using benchmarking to ensure the state is investing in the right areas and at the right levels.

Besides measuring how state agencies use and invest in IT, WaTech also monitors IT performance across the entire state. Each year, WaTech collects data from agencies to ensure they comply with its policies and standards. This data helps WaTech identify which policies have the most waivers and track the state's progress in meeting IT policy goals. The information is also used for reports required by law, such as biennial performance reports and funding recommendations. Additionally, the performance data helps develop and update the state's Enterprise Technology Strategic Plan. Accurate performance data from agencies is crucial for WaTech to fulfill its responsibilities.

Visit [WaTech's website](#) for additional information.

Executive branch workforce data

The State Human Resources (SHR) division of the Office of Financial Management (OFM) manages statewide human resource (HR) policy functions including classification, compensation, workforce data, civil service rules, recruitment and other policy functions.

Agencies rely on workforce data to inform the achievement of strategic goals, policy compliance and for regulatory reporting. The source system for executive branch workforce data is the central human resources and payroll system, SAP-HRMS. Data in SAP-HRMS is keyed in and submitted by HR and Payroll employees within agencies across the enterprise and higher education. This data marks and tracks key moments and business processes throughout the employee life cycle. Employees can use the employee self-service tool “MyPortal” to access and update employee specific information such as demographic and contact information.

The SHR division is the business owner for this and other enterprise HR systems. This system contains employee information such as pay, benefits, leave and attendance, position, job class, organizational assignment and demographic data. Other systems include employee exit and employee engagement survey data.

Accessible via the [OFM-State HR website](#), the [Workforce data and trends](#) pages offer a wealth of insights through multiple dashboards, reports and detailed analyses. All publicly accessible data undergoes rigorous aggregation and employs safe harbor practices to protect individual privacy.

For agencies needing more tailored insights, the agency [HRMS Data Steward](#) and/or agency HR office staff are available to assist in crafting ad hoc queries and reports. Additionally, OFM State HR subject matter experts can consult on workforce data needs. Agencies can direct inquiries to Strategichr@ofm.wa.gov for consultation and guidance.

Appendix 3: Information to include for new measures

New measures should include all the information necessary below for internal and external readers to understand what you are measuring, why it is important, what questions it answers for you and what kind of decisions it can support. Readers should be able to understand how the results compare to your expectations and whether they are better, worse, or neutral over time. They should also have the information to understand any anomalies that might be impacting the results for specific time periods.

For over 15 years, Results Through Performance Management (RPM) has been Washington's statewide performance management system that agencies use to report their performance measures and data. We are making improvements to RPM and are also considering other solutions for the future. In the meantime, OFM publishes a [RPM user guide](#) and a [short training](#) in The Learning Center for agency staff. For technical help with RPM, please contact [OFM IT support](#).

Below are the fields that should be completed for each measure:

- **Focusing question** – this is the most important piece of information to share. What question is this measure intended to answer to inform future decisions or corrective action/improvements?
- **Relevance** – this works together with the focusing question. Why is this measure important? How will answering the focusing question impact your future work? If you don't have an answer to this question, this may not be the right performance measure. For example, if the focusing question is "are we processing applications fast enough for applicants to rely on us?" the relevance might be that it informs decisions about resourcing and whether process improvements are needed.
- **Title** – your title should describe, as simply as possible, what is being measured. A good formula to use is "The [unit] of [what is being measured] per [time period]". A few examples:
 - The average number of days it takes to fill a posted job vacancy per quarter
 - Percentage of trainees finding a job within 30 days of training per quarter
 - The ratio of wetland acres cleaned of invasive species per year

Note: these are all neutral statements describing the measure itself, not the results we are looking for. A person reading the title should get a very general idea of what it is about so that they can decide whether to select it and read further.

- **Definition** – This is more technical. How are you defining the words you use in your title? How is the data collected and calculated? This information is critical for readers to understand, especially when trying to compare with information from other sources. A few examples to consider:
 - What is excluded from the data? If this measure relates to the number of cases, does it include cases that were withdrawn before any work was done?
 - How is it measured? If this measure counts people, is it a point-in-time count or an average over the time period, or a cumulative total?
- **Reporting frequency and time period** – How frequently should this measure be reported, and for how long? As a general rule, state law requires measures to be reported at least quarterly. However, a different cadence makes more sense for many types of measures: such as those relating to the school year or legislative session, and data that takes months to compile and clean after collecting. Ongoing operational measures and indicators are most helpful when they are reported over many years, allowing trends to develop and inform us on what is natural fluctuation and what is a signal that things have changed. But many critical strategic measures have shorter timelines. If a measure has an expected end-date, communicate this clearly from the beginning.
- **Determinant(s) of equity** – Which determinant(s) of equity does this measure relate to? Determinants of equity are detailed on the Office of Equity’s [Determinants of Equity webpage](#) as well as the [Equity Hub drop-down menu](#).
- **Goal areas** – Which of the Governor’s goal areas does this measure relate to? For the governor’s goal areas, visit the Office of the Governor’s [Efficient Government webpage](#).