

Performance Measure Assessment FAQ

What are these assessments? The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is reviewing every Washington State agency's activity-related performance measures as directed by ESHB 1242 (ch. 386, Laws of 2005, RCW 43.88.090(4)). The assessments focus on measures and data currently reported to OFM.

The goal of the legislation is to assess whether agencies are making progress toward statewide results and to improve the quality of performance measurement information used by OFM, the Governor, and the Legislature during the budget development process.

What resources will we need to commit to the assessment? Ideally, very little - The review will focus on information already reported to OFM, and will be conducted by OFM staff. Assessment staff will need some time with the agency budget officer and performance measurement personnel for an informational kick-off meeting and a wrap-up feedback session, and will need access to them to answer any questions that arise during the review process.

What connection is there between this assessment and the other initiatives like GMAP, Performance Audits, and the internal self-assessment? All the initiatives have one thing in common: they need good data from meaningful performance measurements to be useful. The short-term goal of this assessment is to give you suggestions about whether you are measuring the right things and whether those measurements tell a compelling story about your agency's performance. Over time, these assessments should help refine the performance measure information you report externally and use internally, and minimize reporting redundancies.

How will my agency benefit from this assessment? OFM staff conducting the reviews will be available to agencies for general training and consultation on performance measure-related topics. The reviews will offer an opportunity for OFM and agencies to collaborate on the assessment of performance progress.

What will the assessment cover? The primary focus of the review will be the budget activities and associated performance measurement information reported to OFM in the Performance Measure Tracking System. Expect specific answers to the following questions:

- Do the measures and data tell a compelling story about agency performance and intended outcomes on budgeted activities? Is the contribution to statewide results apparent?
- How well do the existing performance measures conform to the standards of relevance, timeliness, understandability and reliability?
- Does analysis of the data indicate stable and predictable future results, or is something changing that may require attention?
- What does analysis of the data demonstrate about progress toward targeted performance levels?

What won't the assessment cover? The assessment will not attempt to cover all the performance measures used by the agency, how performance measures are used in the agency or management practices or strategies. This is not an audit.

What happens if significant performance shortfalls or measurement gaps are identified? First, the OFM assessment staff will work with the agency to explore possible problems with the measure itself. Is the target unrealistic? Is the measure definition or data collection problematic in some way? If the measure and target are fine, agencies will be encouraged to identify strategies to close the performance gap and, if relevant, ensure information about those strategies are available for consideration during the legislative and budget request process.

Who will get a copy of the assessment? Before the assessment is completed, agencies will have an opportunity to give the OFM staff feedback on its content. Identified agency contacts will receive a copy of the final assessment results, along with assigned OFM Budget Analysts and members of the Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) team. The assessment summaries will be posted on the OFM website beginning March 2007.

What sources of information will be used in the assessment? In addition to the performance information reported to OFM in the Performance Measure Tracking system, assessment staff will also review the agency's strategic plan, other performance information published by the agency, GMAP presentations, and relevant statewide indicators developed as a part of the Priorities of Government (POG) process.

When will my agency be assessed? The first round of assessments will probably not be completed until the end of 2007. Your agency will be contacted in advance of the assessment by the OFM assessment staff to schedule an in-person kick-off meeting approximately one month before the assessment begins. OFM will try to accommodate any agency requests for a particular timeframe for the assessment.

Who can I talk to if I have questions or comments?

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