

What Works Cities

Sprint

Comms for Cities: Chief Executives Edition

Kickoff: June 10, 2019

Chief executives' public commitment to driving progress by using data is one of the strongest predictors of a city's success in building a well-managed local government. That's because leaders are uniquely positioned—at the helm of City Hall and in the public spotlight—to set, drive, and build support for a strategic vision. At every step, public communication has a key role to play. Whether your city is just getting started on using data or already has compelling examples of impact to share, communicating your progress is a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate your government's commitment to delivering results. Led by What Works Cities Associate Director of Communication Kristin Taylor, this Sprint will introduce you to best communications practices in the field and examples of how other cities and chief executives have put them to use effectively.

Recommended Participants:

- Chief executives
- Staff who support/prep chief executives
- Public information officers/communications personnel
- Other staff—in particular, open data program managers and/or departmental data stewards—who want to support their executive leaders to communicate more effectively about their data-driven work

You're encouraged to form a local team by participating in the Sprint alongside colleagues in your city and working on the exercises together; cross-departmental/functional teams are especially encouraged.

What to Expect

This Sprint kicks off on June 10, 2019, and lasts four weeks.

Blue = action item.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<p>Cities receive all Sprint materials (June 10)</p> <p>Complete: 📄 Pre-Sprint Course Survey</p> <p>Complete: 📖 Reading Material (Part 1)</p> <p>Attend: 📅 Webinar #1 June 13 at 2:00 ET</p>	<p>Complete: 📄 Worksheet #1</p> <p>Attend: 📅 Webinar #2 June 20 at 2:00 ET</p> <p>Complete: 📖 Reading Material (Part 2)</p>	<p>Complete: 📄 Worksheet #2</p> <p>Complete: 📖 Reading + Viewing Material (Part 3)</p> <p>Complete: 📄 Worksheet #3</p>	<p>Attend: 📅 Webinar #3 July 1 at 2:00 ET</p> <p>Complete: 📄 Post-Sprint Course Survey</p>

On the Path to Certification

During this Sprint, you'll work toward the following Certification criterion:

General Management 3

Your mayor and/or chief executive uses data and evidence to publicly communicate the work and impact of government.

Checklist

To achieve the above criterion, your local government must have achieved 4 of the 6 below:

- The mayor or chief executive communicated at least one such example in the most recent State of the City or equivalent address.
- In the past 12 months, the mayor or chief executive has shared unique examples at least three times on her/his social media channel(s).
- In the past 12 months, there have been at least two unique instances of the mayor or chief executive publicly engaging residents about the local government's data and evidence work.
- In the past 12 months, the mayor or chief executive has communicated unique examples via two or more pieces of owned media (e.g., a blog post, a video, a public newsletter, etc.).
- In the past 12 months, the mayor or chief executive has communicated unique examples via two or more pieces of earned media (e.g., a news clip, a TV spot, an op-ed, etc.).
- In the past 12 months, the mayor or chief executive has referenced unique examples in at least two public appearances other than the State of the City (e.g., at conferences, panels, presentations to local groups, etc.).

Week 1

Pre-Sprint Course Survey

Please complete the Pre-Sprint Course Survey prior to beginning any of the assignments. The purpose of the survey is to share more about your goals for the course and your current level of experience with the topic.

Reading Material (Part 1)

Make your way through the below articles. The first two share why local governments should prioritize publicly communicating about their data work. The third introduces a set of 7 communications best practices being used across cities that are successfully sharing their progress. In the final piece, a Q&A, you'll meet Kristin Taylor, who is leading this Sprint, and get insights from her work with cities.

- *GovTech: The Importance of Celebrating Data Wins*
- *Data-Smart City Solutions: Storytelling Powers Change in Cities*
- *Communicating with a "What Works" State of Mind: 7 Practices of Cities Leading the Way*
- *Communication as Pollination: Helping Your Local Gov Work Flower*

Webinar #1

Master Class on Chief Executive Communications with Mayor Mitch Landrieu

Thursday, June 13, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

Join this hour-long webinar featuring former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who will share insights from his own experiences as a chief executive. Come with questions!

Week 2

Worksheet #1

Fill out the "Building a Foundation of Communication Best Practices" worksheet to reflect on what you learned from the first set of readings and prepare to come to the second webinar ready to engage.

Webinar #2

Thursday, June 20, 2:00–3:15 p.m. ET

Join this webinar in which we'll take a deeper dive into the 7 practices you learned about in your reading materials, study successful examples of communication from chief executives, and together, unpack what made them effective.

Reading Material (Part 2)

Make your way through the below readings. You'll learn from case studies on communications-focused city halls, how chief executives are supporting that culture, and the staff they're empowering to thrive.

- *In Arlington, a Can-Do City Connects and Communicates with Data*
- *Gilbert Gone Digital: Creating a Connected Community*
- *Bloomberg Cities: How Detroit's 'chief storyteller' is crafting a new narrative for his city*
- *Bloomberg Cities: What Denver's 'chief storyteller' can teach you about listening*

Week 3

Worksheet #2

Fill out the “Communications for Your Chief Executive” worksheet to brainstorm examples of how your chief executive can more effectively communicate about and support your city’s data-driven work.

Reading + Viewing Material (Part 3)

Make your way through the below resources. The video and first reading focus on strategies for transforming the often-wonky topic of how your city is using data into stories people will care about. The second and third readings highlight concrete examples and strategies of how cities are sharing their data-driven work. In the final two readings, you’ll hear directly from staff in Gilbert, Arizona, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, who are driving wins in their cities through digital communications and earned media, respectively.

- [Video] TEDxBroadway: Making Data Mean More through Storytelling
- *Data-Smart City Solutions*: What Makes a Good Data Story
- Telling Your “What Works” Story: Effective Communications Examples from Cities
- Bloomberg Philanthropies Blog: 4 strategies that are defining the future of city communications
- “Go Where Your Residents Are”: A Q&A with Gilbert Chief Digital Officer Dana Berchman
- Use Data as a Flashlight, and Other Tips on Earning Media Coverage: A Q&A with Tulsa’s James Wagner

Worksheet #3

Fill out the “Implementing Communication Best Practices” worksheet to brainstorm ways to begin putting your newly acquired skills to use.

Week 4

Webinar #3

Monday, July 1, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

Come together for a guided discussion with your fellow Sprint participants. During the call, we’ll reflect on your takeaways from the Sprint and have time for questions. Come prepared to share at least one way you’d like to apply what you’ve learned over the next three months.

Post-Sprint Course Survey

Complete the Post-Sprint Survey to evaluate your experience taking this Sprint. Your feedback will be invaluable as we look to continuously improve this Sprint and other What Works Cities learning opportunities in the future.