How to Run a GovStat Program

Step-by-step guidance for building a successful government performance system based on data

By Beth Blauer

GovStat

Contents

GovStat

Until recently, governments made decisions largely based on instinct and rhetoric. They lacked the time and resources needed to fully review the outcomes of various programs. But now, technology is changing that.

Thanks to cloud technology, application programming interfaces (APIs), and easier data collection, the public sector is becoming a seat of innovation. Forward-thinking governments are optimizing the power of data to create greater efficiency and better results for citizens.

Already a leader in providing cloud-based, open data platform solutions for government, Socrata now offers a product called GovStat. GovStat is a cloud-based system that facilitates public sector performance management efforts, shepherding the government into the new era of data-driven, connected operations.

A ROADMAP FOR SUCCESS

The idea of government performance management based on an open data platform is a new one with few examples to follow. One of the strongest examples of such a program comes from my home state of Maryland.

Just after he was elected in 2006, Governor Martin O'Malley spearheaded a StateStat initiative that I helped to lead. We improved test scores in public schools, reduced crime, and created new efficiencies in many agencies through our efforts. And we learned a lot along the way.

The following are my insights, based upon years of working on the StateStat initiative in Maryland, about how to deploy a similarly successful performance management program using GovStat.

Keep in mind, the most difficult part of running a GovStat program is finding the will to simply get started. The following information will tell you how to ensure success once you've decided to start.

What Is GovStat?

In our increasingly tech-savvy and connected world, government entities' performance is closely watched. Why not embrace this reality and optimize for it?

GovStat blends technology and professional services so that government organizations can openly set goals, connect to stakeholders, track progress, and achieve results.

The GovStat solution helps governments centralize priority data and reduce the friction in accessing data. It also facilitates data analysis across agencies, breaking through traditional data silos.

GovStat helps you get started with simple ways to analyze and create reports on your data. You can then create citizen-friendly maps, charts, dashboards, and graphs so that your reports are contextualized. And, all of those visualizations can be automatically updated in real time.

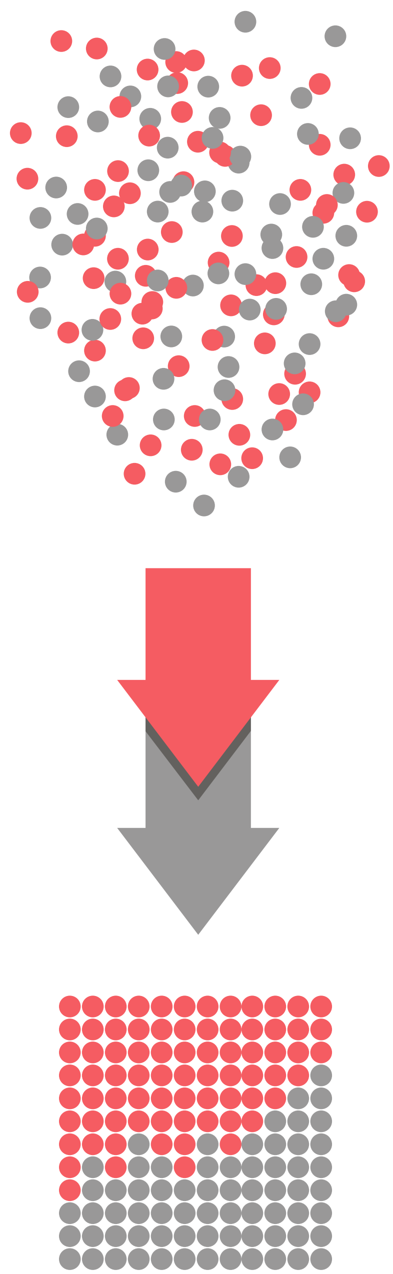
While all of this public, real-time data serves your constituency, it also assists in the management of your government. You have an agile environment that enables continuous, evidence-based, decision making and implementation.

INTELLIGENT, INFORMED DECISIONS

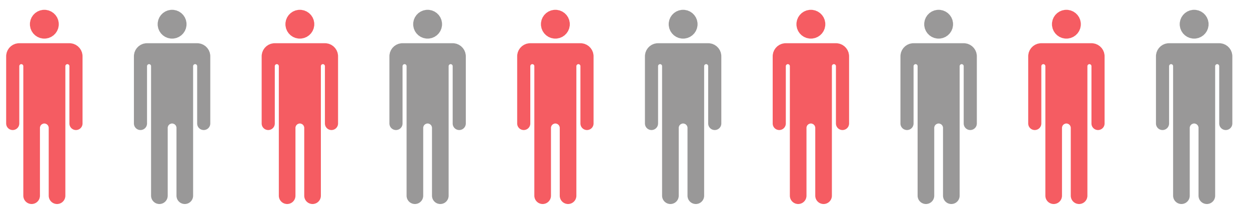
GovStat transforms your government into a data-driven organization with tools that:

- Collect data
- Map data to key priority areas
- Track progress
- Dynamically visualize data
- Build custom reports
- Build custom dashboards

GovStat pairs nicely with Socrata's other tools that allow you to publish your data sets and build application programming interfaces (APIs) to make your data more accessible. Your data becomes organized in a way that makes the "in the room" analysis easier and more meaningful.



Gathering Your Team and Your Data



It's good to gather your key players and engage them right at the start. You'll need certain people to lead with a birds-eye view of the entire initiative, while others will get into the details of the data, day-to-day.

Throughout this document, I will refer to these various key players. The following list provides a description of each:

Principal: The governor, mayor, county executive, or any other (typically elected or appointed) leader who has the desire to manage a government or a branch of a government utilizing a data-driven approach.

Agency Lead: The cabinet secretary, agency director, or division administrator who owns the data that is being utilized to measure progress. This person is ultimately accountable to the principal for making progress on shared goals or a strategic plan.

GovStat Lead: An appointed member of the principal's team that is responsible for overseeing the agencies through the GovStat process. This person must have some credibility with the agency leaders and direct access to the principal and their senior team. When thinking of this position, think of a state's chief operating officer or deputy chief of staff. This is someone who has the gravitas to make things happen.

GovStat Analyst: The person responsible for managing the data involved in the GovStat program. This is the first consumer of the agency data and the person responsible for preparing analyses and reports.

Agency Contact: A person on the agency leader's staff, ranging from a director of research, business analyst, or database manager, to a chief of staff. This person should have the best information related to the metadata (descriptive and structural), current use of the data, and the general value and quality of the data. This is the person who will provide the data or connection to the data. They are responsible for curating the data itself, and ensuring that it is clean and in compliance with the metadata.

WHY AN OPEN PLATFORM?

According to Socrata's "Open Government Data Benchmark Study," 67.5 percent of people surveyed believe that, "In the 21st century, if government data is supposed to be public, it should be available online." Further, 67.9 percent believe that, "Government data is the property of taxpayers and should be free to all citizens." By a margin of three to one, respondents in this survey said they are more likely to vote for politicians who champion data transparency.

Public: For many GovStat programs, the public will be an important end user of the platform. Public use of GovStat will generally occur in three broad forms:

- A basic user seeking services or general information.
- Press or non-profit organization seeking details or context for government data. This is usually to support the writing of an article, grant application, or other purpose.
- A developer who wants to understand the capacity of the data, but would be more likely to go right for the underlying data sets via the API.

HOW TO SELECT YOUR AGENCY CONTACTS

Along with gathering your team, you must gather your data. The effort to collect and keep track of all of your data will be lead by the GovStat analyst. A word of warning: Before you begin to inventory all of your data, prepare to be amazed at the amount and variety of data that you own. Once you have a sense of it, that information will support your next steps: designing a strategic framework and setting goals.

The GovStat analyst should set up a meeting with the agency lead and their leadership team. The agency lead should invite to this meeting anyone who has "research" or "analyst" in his or her title.

Other key participants in this preliminary conversation are GIS professionals, database administrators, and internal auditors. These are the people in your organization who manage data or who have an idea of where data lives. They are also probably not currently working together on a consistent, coordinated, or regular basis.

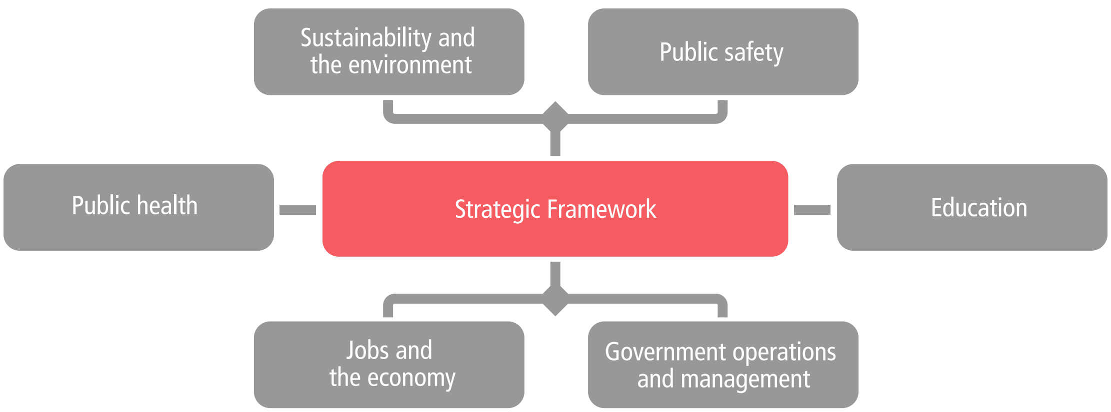
Prior to this first meeting, ask the invitees to come to the table with any data they own. For many, they will not see themselves as data owners or managers. It is critically important to help them understand what you mean by data and what you want to know about the data they oversee.

The following list of questions can help with the data collection and data discovery needed before the meeting:

1. Do you provide information for reports on federal, state, or nonprofit grants?
2. Do you manage a database?
3. Do you compile reports for a legislative body (congress, state legislator, city or county council, or cabinet meeting)?
4. Does your agency have a strategic plan or any other organization of key performance areas or objectives?
5. Is your organization under any oversight from federal agencies, external auditors, or investigators? Is there a corrective action plan?
6. Do you already have performance-based budgeting or program evaluation program?

The agency lead should designate one person at the agency, the agency contact, to shepherd the data. This person may already exist if the agency has a chief data officer or a director of research on the team. This person will be the main point of contact for the GovStat team and will play a critical role in making sure your GovStat program is a success.

Setting Up the Strategic Framework



While you work to uncover all of your organization's data assets, the principal should begin to think about his or her broad strategic framework.

In a framework, the principal prioritizes their desired outcomes for the organization as a whole. For example, what they want to achieve in the next four years.

This framework is frequently informed by promises made during a campaign or driven by large, long-term goals. This framework then informs the GovStat taxonomy, meaning that it will be used to organize the sitemap on GovStat for the organization.

To assist in the creation of the framework, the principal should identify a manageable number of high impact areas where they would like to demonstrate results. These areas are generally consistent across governments, plus the GovStat tool has some suggested areas pre-loaded as "categories."

The following is a list of GovStat's default categories:

1. Public safety
2. Public health
3. Education
4. Sustainability and the environment
5. Jobs and the economy
6. Government operations and management

PITFALLS TO AVOID WHEN SETTING UP A FRAMEWORK

There are some common trouble spots the principal may face when deciding on a framework. Without proper attention, these roadblocks could compromise their progress.

To start, the principal must make the framework specific enough so that each agency's goals are, in turn, highly specific. They should demand significant outcomes and require support from multiple departments. This is a time to think big.

Here are some additional strategies to follow:

Find Advocates: It is very important for the principal to engage a wide variety of stakeholders in the process of articulating strategic goals. Any time you attempt to reform a government, there will be forces that you must work extra hard to motivate. The best way for you to do this is to find advocates, both inside and outside government, to help gather energy and resources around the strategic framework. This is done by including them in goal setting. If this work is done in isolation, it will inevitably fail to get traction.

Be Realistic: The principal must give perspective from the frontlines. If your strategic framework, your goals, or your data are disconnected to the realities of the day-to-day process, the framework will be ineffective.

A way to include those perspectives is to establish a feedback loop from the frontline service delivery levels. This is critical and should be done immediately.

Very often in government, as in many organizations, there is an incredible amount of positive energy and innovation that happens on the frontlines. There is also typically a mirrored level of energy and innovation at the top of agencies.

The danger often rests in what is the "permafrost" of government. This is typically a difficult layer of bureaucratic midlevel career managers that have seen many leaders come and go. They are the most important element of lasting change.

For any progress to take hold, a principal and an agency lead must make decisions that are credible and get traction with the midlevel managers. A top-down, forced approach will rarely work when attempting reform. The fastest and most effective way to reform is to identify internal champions for change.

Choose Cross-Cutting Initiatives: In this new economy, all governments will be forced to shrink, work with fewer resources, and be creative. Let your government's implementation of GovStat assist in facilitating this transformation, starting with the identification of cross-cutting, multi-stakeholder goals.

Often, agencies duplicate efforts around like subjects. Consider workforce development, for example. There are workforce development programs in most agencies. If they are not coordinated, there is likely duplication in how they are administered and funded. When you bring agencies together there are some natural ways programs can be consolidated.

Avoid creating a framework that will maintain the status quo and reflect government's historic deference to silos and data hoarding. You will see faster results and higher returns if you are working together and sharing resources.

Stay Connected and Open: All participants, inside and out of your GovStat team, must be confident that this is an ongoing process throughout which they will have an opportunity to contribute feedback. GovStat system facilitates this feedback loop in an end-to-end environment. GovStat allows the public to monitor the goal setting process, contribute to the dialogue of reform, suggest data to track, and apply expertise that has historically functioned outside government.

By allowing the public to participate in the process, the process itself is inherently improved. The principal should make strategic requests of stakeholders to engage the right thought leaders, and this engagement should play out in an open environment.

Goal Setting

Once the framework is established, agency leaders and other high-level players must establish goals and define measurements of success for everyone involved.

Useful goals will have the following elements:

Well-Defined: You must address the strategies the agency lead will employ to use resources most effectively, and tell how the agency will improve services for constituents. Some examples of specific goals would be to reduce overtime, increase acres of land using cover crops, or reduce error rates in the administration of benefits.

Measurable: You must be able to measure your results to show you've achieved your goals. Being able to align data with your goals brings credibility to your efforts.

Clear Timeframe: Giving each goal a timeline improves accountability internally and externally. Build in time for reevaluation, progress reporting, and check-ins.

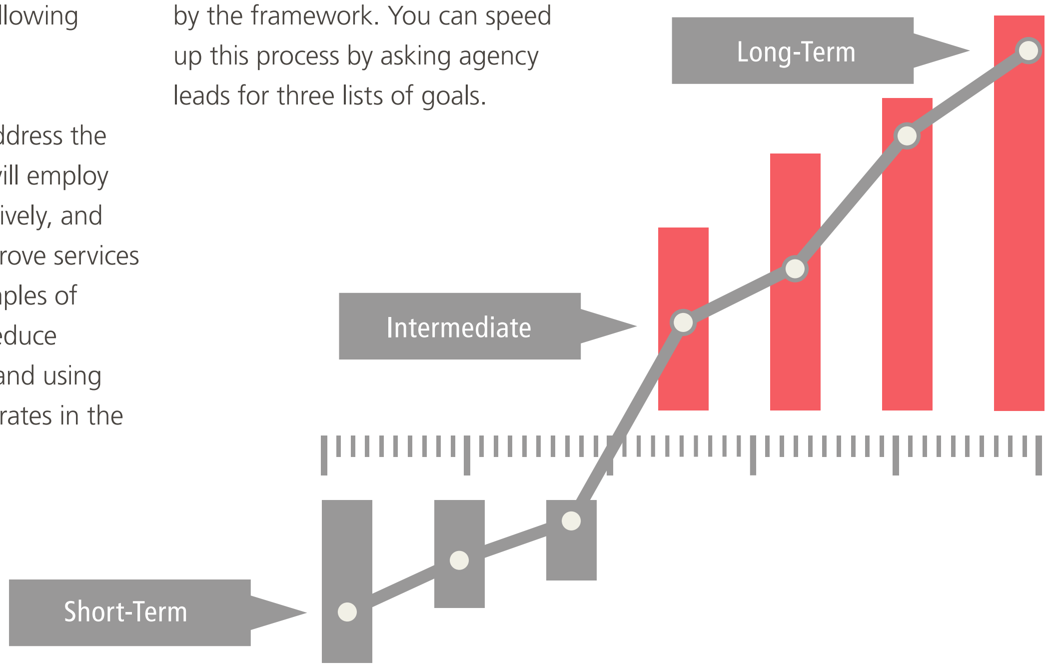
SHORT, INTERMEDIATE, AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Think about the short, intermediate, and long-term goals that the GovStat effort can achieve. These will be informed by the framework. You can speed up this process by asking agency leads for three lists of goals.

Short-Term: These are typically operational or programmatic goals that can be achieved in the next one to two years.

Intermediate: These goals usually fit into a political term, achievable in the next two to four years.

Long-Term: These goals are more out of the box, loftier, and can be achieved in the next four to 20 years.



SHORT-TERM GOALS

Your short-term set of goals should focus on a blend of operational and programmatic targets. Operational goals deal with the processes for getting things done, while programmatic goals focus on how well those processes are followed.

SUCCESS IN MARYLAND

Between 2006 and 2011, the state of Maryland decreased violent crime by 24.4%, outpacing their goal of 20% reduction by 2012.

Examples of Short-Term Operational Goals

1. Reduce the use of overtime by 20% by 2013.
2. Increase spending with minority firms by 20% by 2013.
3. Reduce repeat findings in next audit report by 100% by 2013.
4. Increase the number of services available online by 25% by 2015.
5. Eliminate service backlog by 2014.

Examples of Short-Term Programmatic Goals

1. Reduce pending placement population in juvenile detention by 30% by 2013.
2. Increase the number of farms using cover crops by 30% by 2015.
3. Increase the number of children visited by social workers by 15% by 2014.
4. Increase the number of inmates who return to the community with an ID card by 30% by 2015.
5. Increase the number of parents who receive safe sleep training in hospitals by 20% by 2015.

INTERMEDIATE GOALS

Your intermediate goals can be broader and contemplate more collaboration with others.

Examples of Intermediate Goals

1. Reduce the number of homicides by 5% by 2015.
2. Increase transit ridership by 2% by 2016.
3. Increase the number of citizens who have health insurance by 10% by 2016.

LONG-TERM GOALS

The most effective long-term goals are driven by outcomes that are easily identified and of high value, equally, among government stakeholders and the public.

The principal should play a critical role in identifying the long-term goals. These goals are most effective if they create a forcing mechanism for cross-agency, or multi-agency, collaboration.

Examples of Long-Term Goals

1. Reduce violent crime by 20% by 2016.
2. Recover all jobs lost during the 2008 recession by 2016.
3. Decrease the infant mortality rate by 10% by 2020.
4. Improve eighth grade reading and math test scores by 20% by 2016.
5. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10% by 2020.

How to Align Data to Your Strategic Framework

Once the principal and the agency leads have settled on the strategic framework and have set goals, it is time to align data with your goals.

Throughout the data uploading process, the GovStat team will have the ability to map the data to both the goals the data will support, and the agencies that own those goals. The first data uploaded to GovStat will likely be what was gathered at the inception of the process. It should be data that already exists and is reasonably well organized.

The final product of this alignment informs the first version of your GovStat data templates. A data template is an aggregation of data from a single agency that will be used by the agency lead and the GovStat team to measure the progress the agency is making toward the strategic goals.

It is important to introduce some organization across goal areas to this collection of the data. To help with this process, you can assume that most GovStat data can be organized in two general categories: operational data and program or subject matter data.

Operational Data: Operational data is typically collected across multiple organizations, such as financial or human resources data. Some of the most commonly collected operational data includes the following:

- Budget – burn rate and actuals
- Procurement - process and spend measures
- Personnel – leave, vacancies, and hiring process measures

Program or Subject Matter Data: Subject matter data tells the leadership about the performance of various programs. Some common examples of it include:

- Acres of agricultural land using cover crops
- Error rate for benefits administration
- Average length of stay in juvenile detention
- Third grade reading test scores

OUTPUT AND OUTCOME MEASURES

It's important that your short-term and intermediate goals are measurable and that they are "outcome measured." Understanding the difference between an output measure and an outcome measure is important.

Output measure - measures a quantity, volume, or production value of data

Outcome measure - measures impact that data has on a desired result

Your goals may have one prevailing metric, but several outcome measures, that provide insight on how your organization is performing relative to the prevailing metric.

Take, for example, Chesapeake Bay restoration in Maryland. Our prevailing metric was the amount of nutrients in the Bay (water quality), but there were several outcome and output measures used to track our progress:

1. Are farmers in the critical area around the Bay using the best farm practices?
2. Are we using the best available technology for our wastewater treatment plants?
3. Are we limiting growth of harmful septic systems?
4. Are we limiting the amount of manure stored on farms?

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR FIRST DATA SETS

Once you have identified your goals and their corresponding outcome measures, you are now ready to create your data templates.

You will upload a broad variety of data to map to your outcome measures and goals. When possible, your first data sets should be organized by data type, typically in the following categories:

- Operational data
- Subject matter data
- Validating (external) data

OPERATIONAL DATA FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES

There will always be some standard operational data that will be collected consistently across your organization. This operational data will most likely come from a centralized personnel system or financial management system.

These are high value data sets because they are usually collected across agencies, and typically they're standardized. Because of this, they will be used frequently and relied upon when you're conducting analyses. They should be prioritized when beginning to embark on performance management work. The following are examples of data to include:

- Budget spend or burn rate
- Personnel hours: leave earned and used, scheduling
- Workforce demographics
- Open and filled positions

SUBJECT MATTER DATA FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES

There should also be subject matter data used to measure outcomes. Subject matter data measures program performance, evaluates performance of key functionality, and gives your leadership an indication of how the broad tentacles of your organization are working together to produce outcomes.

Often this is the data that will serve as a prevailing metric or a critical indicator that is tracked closely with your goals. By way of example, some subject matter metrics for public safety goals are found in:

- An offender case management system
- Localized crime data
- Court processing data
- Warrants
- Serious offender tracking data, if different from your offender case management system
- Any other data that senior managers are using to manage their business functions

VALIDATING DATA FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES

Validating data is data that is recognized as the standard, or that by its nature, is endorsed publically as the key metric for specific measures. The following are common examples of validating data:

Unemployment Rate: In this changing economy, most governments are focused on employment and use the unemployment rate as a bellwether for economic recovery. This information is provided in a data set from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and is universally used as the benchmark employment data.

Crime Rate: The Uniform Crime Reports (FBI) are used domestically as the standard for measuring crime from the national level to the local level.

Educational Test Scores: Test scores from standardized tests are frequently used to measure average student achievement and readiness. These can be local or national tests and provide prevailing data for a particular jurisdiction's education systems.

MAPPING DATA TO OUTCOMES

Once the indicator data is identified and uploaded, it is now time to map your data to outcomes. GovStat makes this process simple.

The GovStat solution will prompt the user to describe the data that is uploaded. An easy-to-use form has been created that allows any agency contact to tag data sets to their related outcomes and goals. This alignment should follow a consistent taxonomy across all measured units or departments of your organization.

GovStat's taxonomy organizes the process of measuring outcomes in the following way:

1. Category
2. Goal or outcome
3. Prevailing metric
4. Indicators

Here are some examples of the GovStat taxonomy applied:

1. Public Safety
2. Reduce Violent Crime by 20% by 2015
3. UCR (FBI) Violent Crime Data
4. Number of Open Warrants, Number of Inmates, Crimes Committed, Domestic Violence Crimes, Visits of Probation Officers for Serious Offenders, Technical Violation of Parole or Probation, etc.

CHOOSE HOW YOU'RE MEASURED

With GovStat you not only define your goals but how they will be measured and against what standard.

How to Prepare for Your First GovStat Meeting

Once you have decided to be a more data-driven organization, have architected your framework, and have identified your initial data sets, the most difficult part of beginning this process is behind you.

The next step is to begin to analyze your data and prepare for your first GovStat meeting. At these meetings, agency leads, the principal, and a panel of stakeholders will participate in a collaborative discussion of the data. This discussion is framed by analytics prepared by the GovStat analyst and the discussion is led either by the principal or the GovStat lead.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVSTAT ANALYST

The GovStat analyst always has important work to do before every GovStat meeting. They will provide the materials that guide the focus of the meeting. They need to pay attention to areas addressed in the strategic framework - keeping the legislative cycle, current events, and pressing administrative issues in mind.

The GovStat analyst will work with the GovStat lead to determine the priority areas for the first GovStat meeting. Input from the agency is also important when determining this starting point. The GovStat analyst now begins to look at the indicator data in GovStat that has been mapped to that issue or agency and crafts the first memo.

The memo will go out to the principal and the panel, but not the agency leads. The agency lead will need to come to the meeting prepared to address any data collected and included into the memo.

The GovStat tool provides access to data visualization tools. Using it, the GovStat analyst will be able to create charts, graphs, maps, and other visualizations of the data.

MEETING PREP TIPS FOR GOVSTAT ANALYSTS

If the GovStat analyst wants to prepare for the meeting efficiently, they need to have two important pieces in place:

1. Know the team, especially the agency contact, at each contributing agency. The analyst should already have established working relationships with every agency involved in the program during the data collection phase.

2. Understand the agency well. The GovStat analyst should have a working knowledge of an agency's:

   - Strengths and weaknesses
   - Current priorities (policy and legislative)
   - Current budget
   - High-level, internal benchmarks and key calendar events

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN HIRING A GOVSTAT ANALYST

The GovStat analyst plays a crucial role in the success of the program. At a minimum, they need to possess the following skills:

Strong intellectual curiosity. They must want to dig in and discover lessons from the data.

Good interpersonal skills. They will need to gain the respect of everyone involved in the GovStat program, including agency heads and frontline workers. A common pitfall is an analyst who thinks they know more than the subject matter experts because of the relationship they have with the data and the data practitioners.

Excellent writing skills. Not only will they mine the data, they will need to communicate what they have found in a clear, concise, and compelling way.

Confidence. They must be willing to take risks and accept that they may make mistakes.

Basic technical abilities. To create reports and visualizations, they must have some basic technical skills.

Team attitude. They must understand the relationship their work has to the work of other analysts on staff.

There should be one point of contact in the agency that has direct access to the agency head, but is still willing to work and understand the data. This person is typically a chief data officer or a chief performance officer.

THE GOVSTAT MEETING MEMO

The analyst should work with the senior team to develop a hierarchy of priorities that the GovStat process will focus on as it begins. This initial focus should include input from the agency leadership, the goal owner (if applicable), the principal, and the GovStat director.

The GovStat analyst should then draft the memo for every GovStat meeting, based upon that hierarchy of priorities. These meetings should occur at least once a month per agency and include all internal stakeholders. This means that those involved in the overall GovStat program will likely attend multiple GovStat meetings per week so that every agency or issue receives a monthly review.

DATA REPORTING IN AN INSTANT

GovStat makes meeting preparation simple, helping you produce reports that update automatically as new data comes in.

Here are some guidelines for drafting a GovStat meeting memo:

MEMO INTRO

The beginning of the memo should include a list of the topics that will be covered in the meeting. This introduction sets out the organization, agenda, and flow of the meeting.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

Each portion of the memo should have a title, a data visualization, and an estimate of how much time will be dedicated to the subject. The first topic in the memo, if the meeting is for a single agency, should always be a review of the agency's indicator data that has been mapped and identified as informative of progress for the principal's core goals. This is important because it allows the principal to reinforce the importance of the agency, their work, and their data to the overall strategic framework.

TIMING OF THE MEETING

During my time working on Maryland's StateStat program, there were typically between six to eight topics that were detailed in a single meeting memo, and the amount of time spent on each ranged from five to 30 minutes.

In Maryland, our regular meetings were always 90 minutes long. Having a finite time allotted for the meeting allows for predictable and easy scheduling with agency heads (who are typically very busy).

REVIEW OF DATA

In general, the GovStat memo and analyses should be organized in the following way:

1. Review of goals and related data
2. Review of any outstanding follow-up issues prompted by the prior GovStat meetings
3. Review of the operational data
4. Review of the subject matter data
5. Review of any overlapping operational or subject matter data

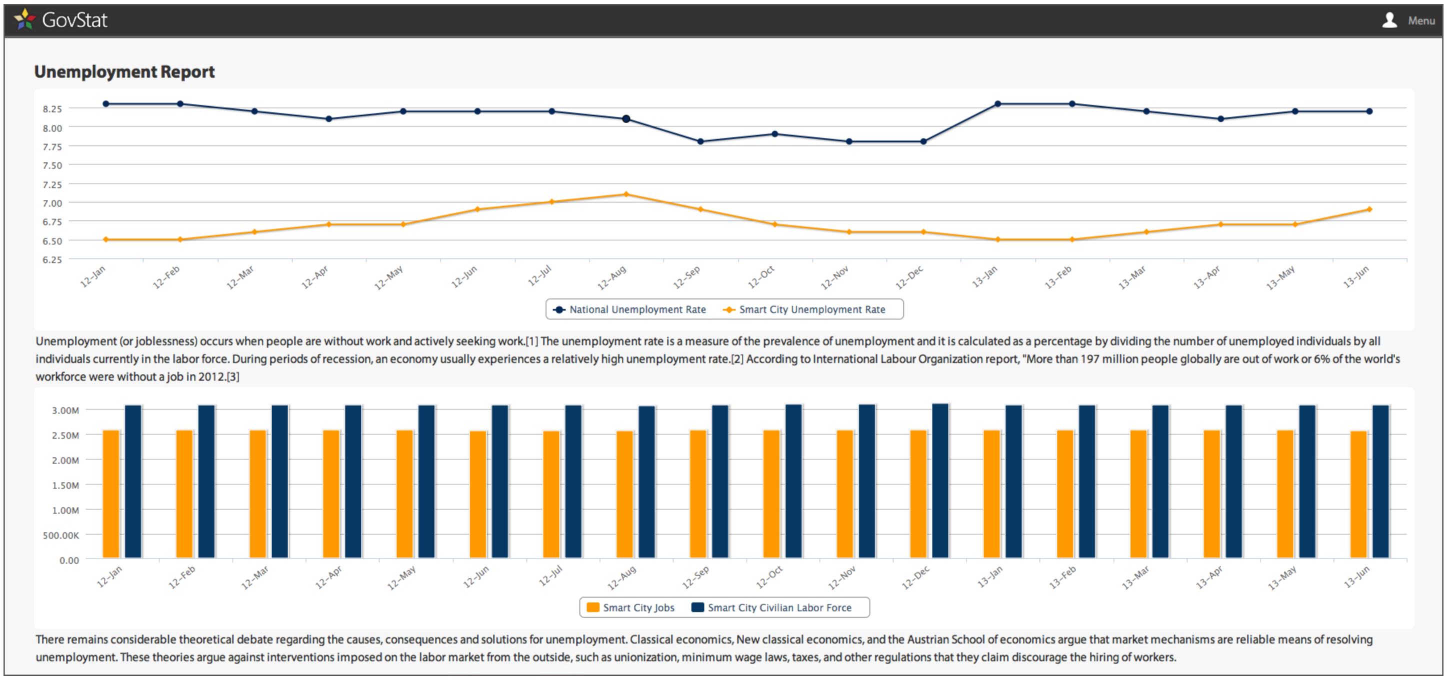
ESSENTIALS FOR EACH TOPIC

Each discussion topic in the GovStat memo should include the following elements:

Introductory Narrative: Introduces a particular topic and describes the data that was used in the analysis.

Data Visualization: Can be a map, chart, graph, table, photograph, or any other visualization.

Data Source: The GovStat team is never the source of the data, the agency contact should provide the appropriate data source.



Leading Questions: The GovStat Analyst should construct recommended questions for the GovStat Panel to ask the agency leader(s). These questions should help to further explain the data, should be based in analysis, and be well researched by the GovStat Analyst.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GOVSTAT MEMO

Determining who gets the memo before the initial GovStat meeting depends on the goals of your program.

In Maryland, we distributed the meeting memo to the panel only. The agency did not get a copy of the memo. At the beginning of the meeting the agency has an opportunity to open the discussion with an update or some news, but presentations are discouraged and the memo serves as the agenda for the discussion.

The rationale behind our approach was that we wanted the agency head to have a deep awareness of their data, their connection to the strategic or goal framework, and be prepared to discuss how they are doing.

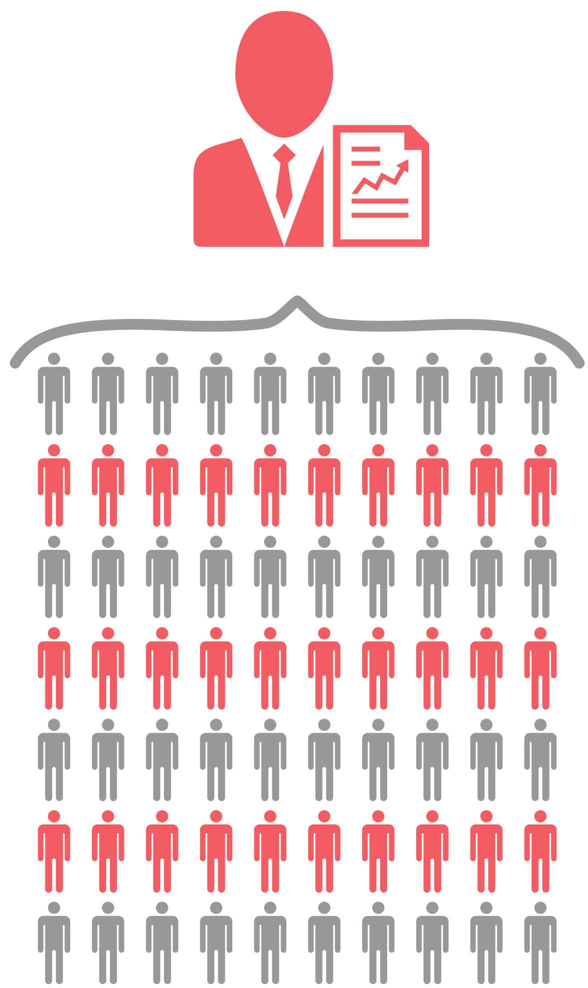
We also wanted to avoid having the agency lead come to the meetings with a presentation that addresses the issues raised in the memo. The idea is that the memo serves as a basis for a conversation, not a presentation by the agency lead. If the agency knows what will be covered in the session, then there is a very real possibility that it will have a diminishing effect on the conversation style sought.

The main benefit we realized by not sharing the memo prior to the session was that the agency heads create internal stats in order to prepare for the GovStat session. This engagement is a sign that the process is taking hold within the agency. These increased reviews of the data, internal to the agency, were certainly an added value to the overall quality of the formal GovStat sessions. The agency heads were typically well prepared.

Also, because the agency heads prepared "blind," the data received more attention, which helped to produce better analysis and encouraged more people to review and rely on the data. This effort strengthens the engagement of the agency in the formal GovStat process.

How to Host a GovStat Session

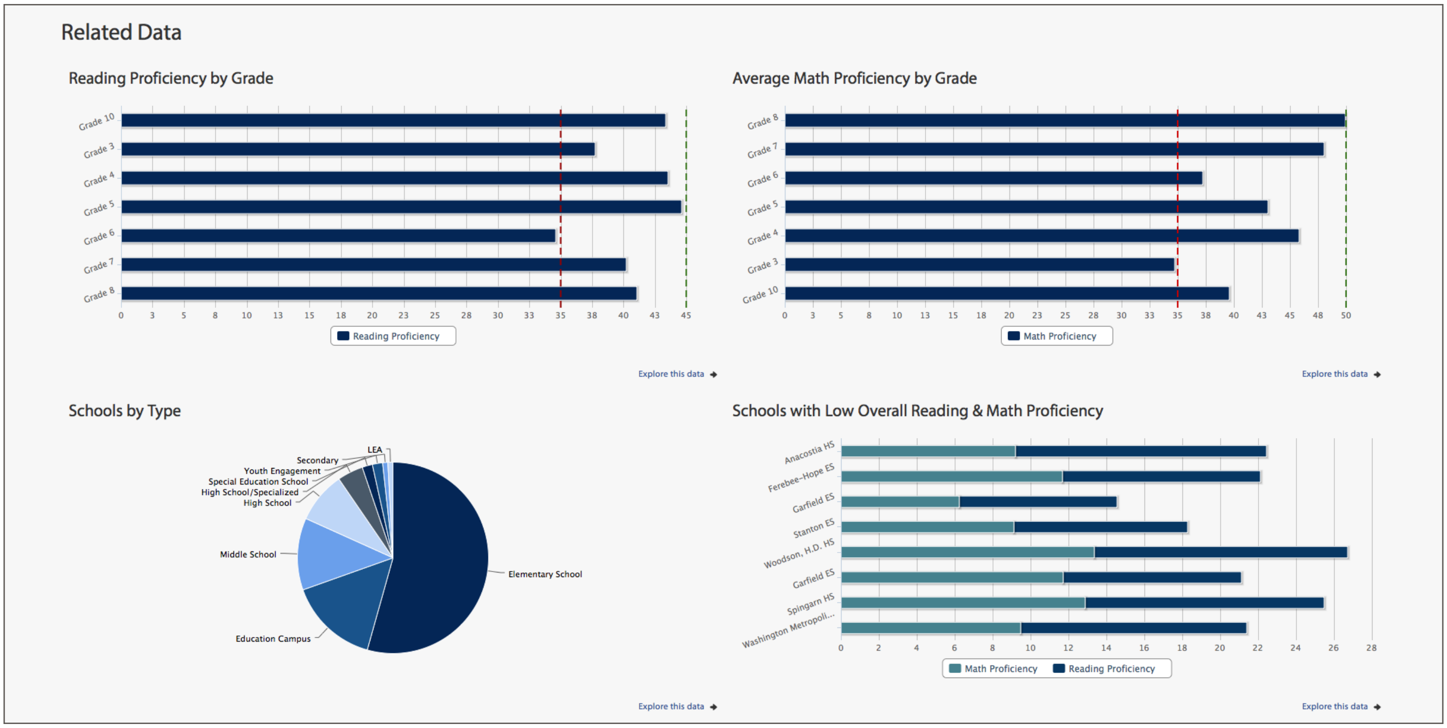
Now that you have your GovStat memo drafted, it is time to assemble your GovStat panel and have your first GovStat meeting or "session."



WHO TO INVITE TO A GOVSTAT SESSION

Principal: The principal should always attend the first session to set the tone. In Maryland, Governor O'Malley always attended the initial meetings. This signaled to the agency that this program was how they would be held accountable to their progress, and it was how they would be managed. But more importantly, the principal's attendance was confirmation that the process itself - the participants, the data, the dialogue - was important.

Chief of Staff: The chief of staff or the operational supervisor of the agency should always attend. It's important that the agency leader sees his or her supervisor at the table. This will also help to confirm the importance of the process in the overall governance methodology of the administration.



Agency Budget Analyst: The budget analyst should attend. In Maryland, and in many other states, there are independent budget agencies responsible for assembling and administering the state's budget. There is typically a budget analyst assigned to each agency. That analyst should always be present at his or her assigned agency session. This allows for continuity between the performance management process and the budget process.

In turn, the GovStat analyst should always participate in the budget hearings and meetings for the agency. The budget analysts can also provide background on how decisions around budget were made, what priorities were protected through the budget process in the past, and how decisions around the current budget are shaping up. They add enormous value and should be encouraged to participate in the GovStat process.

Legal Counsel: Always have legal counsel at the table; the principal's own legal counsel is best. Avoid having the agency's attorney on the panel. The purpose of independent counsel on the GovStat panel is to expedite conversations where legal barriers are present or perceived to be present.

In Maryland, the office of legal counsel never missed a session. Their participation was invaluable and they were instrumental in not only determining legitimate legal issues, but helping to recommend remedies.

Agency Head: The agency head (cabinet secretary or agency director) and key personnel should always be at the table. The GovStat team should rely on the agency head to invite the correct people from their organizations. Having other staff at the meetings helps with the flow of the conversation. On average, there were at least ten agency leaders at GovStat meetings with some agencies bringing significantly more participants.

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

It is also important to invite frontline staff to observe some meetings. This helps illustrate the value of data collected and helps the GovStat panel stay connected to the barriers to progress that exist on the frontline. Any other management stakeholder should participate. The agency's data officer or data organizer should be present at all meetings.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MEETING

Keep in mind that these are not typically public meetings, particularly in the beginning. The session should be no more than 90 minutes and follow the same format every time. Being respectful of everyone's time is very important. The session should be driven by the data. The agency leader should always have an opportunity to start the meeting with good news, then get into areas of concern, and outputs of internal data analysis.

INCORPORATING THE DASHBOARD

If a GovStat dashboard has been built for the principal to review how the agencies are performing, it should always be the landscape for the beginning of the GovStat meeting. All the data visualizations and the data should be available in the room for on-the-fly analytics and discussion.

CHOOSE A MEETING LEADER

The meeting should have a leader. When the principal is in the room, he or she should always lead the meeting. There should be a director or owner of the process that can lead the meeting in the absence of the principal. This person should have the authority to make decisions and the capacity to allocate resources or authorize the allocation of resources.

This person should have direct access to the principal and this should be well known to the agencies and agency contacts.

THE ROLE OF THE ANALYST AT THE GOVSTAT SESSION

The analyst should be the formal recorder of what occurs in the meeting. They should be prepared to contextualize any questions concerning the data, as well as drive the data visualizations and have access to the data for in-meeting analytics.

After the meeting, the analyst should prepare a follow up memo from the GovStat session and distribute it in the days following the session. This document will be used as the basis for the next session and should include clear time frames for a reasonable response.