

Real Story No. 1

Citizen-driven Performance: Truckee Meadows Tomorrow and Washoe County, Nevada

Project Highlights

Truckee Meadows Tomorrow (TMT) was crafted out of an Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) committee in response to research showing quality of life as the major reason businesses relocated to the region. TMT started as an “organization of organizations,” whose members helped spread the idea at the grassroots level that indicators could be used to measure the region’s quality of life in relation to the impacts of growth. The original partnering organizations included Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, EDAWN, Washoe Medical Center (now Renown Health) and the Washoe Education Association.

TMT has introduced citizen engagement programs, such as: Quality of Life Compacts that formalize collaboration agreements between organizations to mobilize and concentrate resources to bring about significant change within one or more indicators; Adopt an Indicator, which promotes personal involvement, improvement and stewardship one indicator at a time; and Caught in the Act, an opportunity for citizens to nominate others who promote quality of life in their everyday lives.

Washoe County was one of the first governmental organizations to use TMT indicators to advance the county’s mission and to measure staff performance. Katy Simon, Washoe County Manager, initiated a citizen Organizational Effectiveness Committee in 1996 to develop and emphasize a comprehensive and consistent approach to the evaluation of services. As an early partner with TMT, Washoe County first used the indicators in environmental scans and strategic planning. The Board of County Commissioners officially adopted five indicators in 1998, pledging improvement actions as part of TMT’s [Adopt an Indicator Program](#).

How Washoe County integrates TMT’s community indicators:

1. County commissioners use the indicators in strategic planning to establish strategic priorities important to citizens.
2. Departments then use the indicators to identify the purpose of their units in measurable and auditable terms—through outcomes achieved, rather than services provided.
3. Departments set annual objectives and identify “metrics” to measure how they’ll meet their objectives—often the community’s indicators.
4. Management sets annual performance targets—including benchmarks compared to prior years or other jurisdictions or agencies.
5. Budgets are developed based upon achieving the objectives.
6. Managers monitor performance and adjust the allocation of resources.
7. TMT uses the performance measures in tracking the indicators and reporting quality of life improvement and decline over time.

In 2001, Washoe County implemented TMT’s first collaborative [Quality of Life Compact](#) to measurably improve the community’s natural resources—the first time county staff worked across departments while focused on specified performance measures. In 2004, Washoe County began integrating community indicators into performance measurement—using the indicators as tools for budgeting, policy and decision-making to improve service delivery with ever-scarcer resources in a measurable way responsive to citizen priorities.

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