

IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge

St. Louis

Summary report

The City of St. Louis is one of 24 cities to earn a grant from IBM as part of the company's philanthropic efforts to build a Smarter Planet™. IBM's Smarter Cities™ Challenge aims to contribute to the improvement of high-potential cities around the world.

During a three-week period in March 2011, a team of six IBM executives worked in the City of St. Louis to deliver their recommendations on public safety to Mayor Francis G. Slay and a wide range of stakeholders.

Challenge: improving public safety

In recent years, St. Louis has been labeled the “most dangerous city in America”, despite an overall downward trend in crime rates. This perception has harmed the City's image, its ability to retain families and its prospects for economic development. We were told Mayor Francis G. Slay's main concerns were safe neighborhoods, the provision of an improved quality of life and better education for St. Louis' citizens. Specifically, the Mayor asked the IBM team to develop a set of recommendations that he and his extended team could implement in order to ensure the right information getting to the right people in the public safety extended team. This would enable better decision-making and have a positive influence on crime rates in the City.

Defining the public safety ecosystem

During the engagement, the IBM team defined the ‘public safety ecosystem’ as the communal reach and interaction of those participants in the public safety arena: Mayor, Board of Aldermen, Metropolitan Police Department, Circuit Attorney, Circuit Clerk, Circuit Judges, Sheriff, Corrections, Probation and Parole. Due to a unique institutional structure, the St. Louis public safety community includes many autonomous actors: the Circuit Attorney, Circuit Clerk and Sheriff are elected; the Circuit Court Judges and St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners are appointed by the Governor of Missouri. As a result, all efforts to improve public safety have to be coordinated across the entire team through a collaborative approach.

Highlights:

- Coordinated business processes and flows of data are key to identifying the top-priority offenders moving through the public safety system
 - Accountability for public safety outcomes must be driven by shared metrics and objectives, across the public safety extended team
 - Improved asset management, operational streamlining and policy changes can yield significant cost-savings
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Overall themes

The long-term solution for public safety is to provide sufficient education, jobs and economic opportunity for all members of a community. As public safety is connected to virtually every City issue from housing and education to economic development and the social safety net, so all these systems must be aligned if we are to prevent crime rather than react to it. The City must renew its focus on using data to track, analyze and predict outcomes across the range of city systems. While these problems cannot be solved in three weeks, the following are a set of suggestions that should help to move the needle in the right direction. If addressed, both in the core public safety team and throughout the wider community, they will provide the city with the right foundation for a deeper understanding of the issues and the means to measure the success of actions taken – something not possible under current systems. Using data in such a way will enable the City to begin to tackle some of the underlying issues with greater certainty and precision.

- **Unified view of the individual:** Each individual team currently maintains separate systems for tracking information about offenders. Providing a unified view of the individual across the public safety system would ensure that each actor has the information they need to drive better outcomes.
- **Performance management framework:** To provide accountability for public safety outcomes, the extended team must align all programs, budgets and metrics to improve operational and financial performance and drive down costs. In addition, each member of the team should look to peer organizations and networks around the country to identify and draw upon best-practices to improve existing programs.
- **Process integration:** The public safety system must coordinate processes across organizational borders to prevent crime and recidivism effectively.
- **Asset management:** Physical and IT assets are crucial to efforts to achieve better public safety outcomes and drive economic benefits.

Top-priority recommendations

We believe that the following are the initial set of recommendations the City should consider and act upon in order to build momentum quickly and begin cultural change. Some suggestions focus on how to begin sharing information more effectively, while others concentrate on cost reduction to fund the next wave of actions. One of the first steps should be to get all the key people in one room, identify the top-priority recommendations and secure the wholesale commitment of staff with support from each individual team.

- **System-wide:** In order to achieve a unified view of the individual, the extended team must work to establish a common language as information crosses institutional boundaries and improve data flow in individual agencies and across the system.

- **Mayor:** The Mayor should fill the open Chief Operating Officer position and appoint a Chief Performance Officer to drive accountability and coordinate efforts to agree upon a common public safety mission and goals.
- **Police Department:** To facilitate a culture of accountability, the Police Department should establish a performance-based appraisal system, including patrol metrics and adherence to operating procedures. Capital assets should be shared with other public safety agencies to achieve cost savings.
- **Circuit Attorney:** The Circuit Attorney should create an offender coversheet based on common criteria for identifying top-priority offenders and should support broader strategic intelligence collaboration across the system.
- **Circuit Courts:** Extending current trials of electronic monitoring for low-risk offenders and video arraignments will cut costs and improve effectiveness. Paper-based records and processes should be replaced by digital systems.
- **Parole and probation:** Scorecards for measuring client outcomes and the performance of probation and parole officers should improve accountability and effectiveness.
- **Funding:** To identify funding sources or cost-savings for new initiatives, all actors should explore federal grants, shared risk agreements with private sector partners, operational changes and reallocation of existing funding. Investments in electronic monitoring, organizational streamlining and rehabilitative services could yield conservative savings of \$350-\$950 thousand in year one, and annual savings of \$1.5-\$5 million thereafter.

Conclusion

Despite its unique institutional structure, The City of St. Louis faces much the same challenges as other cities. These have implemented similar solutions with best practices that can and should be replicated within the extended team. St. Louis is well positioned to improve accountability and outcomes across the public safety community.

For more information

To learn more, send an email to ccca@us.ibm.com or visit smartercitieschallenge.org

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Produced in the US – April 2011

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