

Citizen-Initiated Performance Assessment: Lessons from Iowa Case

Teaching Notes (for use in Management Decision Making)

Class Use Objectives

As a case addressing citizen participation in the development of performance measures, it informs students on the development and implementation of ways to increase citizen input in government decisions. Instructors may use this case to familiarize students with how citizen participation in other areas of government affairs (e.g., how to keep communities cleaner) can be introduced, promoted and implemented in a community. This case also provides the opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of citizen participation in the activities of government.

Pre-Requisites

Familiarity with the concept of citizen participation in government activities.

Pre-class reading of the case.

Discussion Questions

1. How pervasive is citizen participation in management decision making in Iowa? How effect has it been?
2. To what extent does “management” dominate the decision making process? To what extent are the elected and other political officials receptive to citizen participation?
3. What other measures can be taken to increase citizen participation in Iowa and it’s communities?
4. Do some areas of government activity lend themselves more readily and easily to citizen input than other activities? Define which activities are more amenable to citizen participation.
5. Have performance measures in Iowa government lent themselves to citizen participation? What can be done to increase citizen participation in the development of performance measures in Iowa?

Possible Activities

1. Check online to learn if other Iowan communities have since made provisions for greater citizen participation. How have these programs been developed and implemented?
2. Select two to three on the nine cities in Iowa participating in the CIPA project. Compare and contrast the activities of each. Which has been more successful and why?
3. Provide recommendations to Iowa on how it can improve the CIPA project for additional city involvement. What should be done differently (e.g., how should performance data be collected and disseminated?)
4. On-line role play. Divide the class up into the various participants in the CIPA project. For example, create groups of elected officials, city managers, supervisors and citizens. Each person in each group is required to develop a report on their view of how the process worked, and the ultimate outcome. One person from each group will collect the individual reports to create a single report from the group.