

Speaking and communicating publicly about your work with data and evidence as a What Works city is a critical part of your successful participation in the initiative. Talking about the work will reinforce its effectiveness – if you're doing this work in a vacuum, no one will know about it and your ability to connect with the wider community will be limited, denying you the possibility of valuable partnerships with residents, academics, the local tech community, etc. As you articulate how you're using data and evidence to address city challenges, inform decision making and improve government effectiveness, you will affirm the work of those on your staff who are helping to support your data and evidence agenda, and advance the culture change toward a what works practice, building trust and engagement in your community.

At the same time you communicate with your city, you will be helping us build a national What Works Cities movement. As you amplify your work, you'll be sharing your experiences and providing support to local governments throughout the United States as we build a community of cities working together to reinforce these practices.

We encourage you to talk about your accomplishments and progress with data and evidence **at least three times** during the period of your engagement with What Works Cities (WWC). Here are some examples of communications opportunities - as well as some key pointers.



1. CELEBRATE THE WORK

Take advantage of opportunities presented at the completion of each stage of your work. Even if you think a press release or public remarks won't get much attention from local media, it's still worthwhile to communicate about signing an open data policy¹ or opening your open data portal². You can also highlight your work in the State of the City³, in a meeting with the editorial board⁴ or in a Town Hall format. Finally, WWC will publish a report⁵ on our website at the conclusion of your engagement, and we hope you will also share it on your city website.



2. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY BY LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Talk about your work on social media – it's a great way to engage your wider community, especially those who want to connect with the city around using data and evidence. For example, Kansas City⁶ tweets under the hashtag #KCStat during performance management meetings. Consider encouraging your front-line performance management staff to tweet about their work and, whenever possible, demonstrate outcomes related to the use of data, such as monies saved as a result of your work or a statistic around improved results. You can amplify data and evidence-related successes and goals during your Mayor's State of the City⁷. Consider inviting your Chief Data Officer or Chief Innovation Officer to work with the Mayor or City Manager to host a Twitter town hall or Facebook chat to field questions from the community about the city's work with data and evidence. Work with local civic tech groups and participate in national events like Open Data Day⁸.

¹<http://bit.ly/265Cpjl> • ²<http://bit.ly/1S7CRTN> • ³<http://bit.ly/1quCpJ7> • ⁴<http://bit.ly/1SbE4KN> • ⁵<http://bloombg.org/1YxED5B>

⁶<https://twitter.com/KCMO> • ⁷<http://bit.ly/1quE9C5> • ⁸<http://bit.ly/1OYxnZR>



3. WRITE ABOUT YOUR WORK

Blog posts can be as short as 500 words – you don't need to write a book! Enlist city staff who are leading the work to write something about a particular city challenge you're addressing with data, like this piece from San Jose⁹, or this piece from Las Vegas¹⁰, or this one in Denver¹¹. We'll be happy to work with you to brainstorm around the best venue to place the blogpost in your local media market, or we'll work to place it on a site managed by our partners or with one of the national publications we often work with.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

TO ENCOURAGE MEDIA COVERAGE OF YOUR CITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS WITH DATA & EVIDENCE

Consider a "Show & Tell" at City Hall where the press can see and interact with the open data portal or view new data sets; invite press to attend a performance management session either on background or for a feature story.

Use data to illustrate a city announcement on any topic (Create a map, a chart or an infographic).

Include a media representative on the city's Open Data Governance Board.

Organize a hands-on data workshop for local organizations (i.e., local Code for America group, Chamber of Commerce or academic organizations). These groups can act as validators for your city's data & evidence work.

Identify individual messengers outside city government, such as former city officials, business people, academics or the local tech community, who can speak with press and/or write op-eds or letters to the editor. Look for opportunities to invite these external validators to behind-the-scenes briefings so that they are up to date.

Call on the What Works Cities partners as expert sources to speak with local media. Suggest to reporters that they can make their stories national by also including other cities in the WWC program.

Arrange editorial board meetings with local media to explain what you're doing; plan on doing a show-and-tell to demonstrate how the city is using data.

Look beyond mainstream press – look for technology bloggers, alt-magazines and websites, etc.

⁹<http://bit.ly/1RGo7zB> • ¹⁰<http://bit.ly/1RUN9K9> • ¹¹<http://bit.ly/20I3dCq>