

What is What Works Cities?

What Works Cities is a Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative that provides free technical assistance in focused content areas aimed at helping cities leverage data and evidence in the decision making process.

How are cities selected to participate?

The What Works Cities initiative is specifically seeking to partner with 100 cities from around the nation with populations between 100,000 up to 1,000,000 before 2018. To date, there are 66 cities participating in the program. Glendale submitted an application providing detailed information about the organization, where we have been, and where we are headed. The City Council and executive team were then invited to participate in a site visit and workshop presented by What Works Cities so they could learn more about the issues facing the community and to talk in detail about the What Works Cities program and expectations. Glendale was subsequently selected to continue moving forward in the process.

Why is this important for Glendale?

One of the key criteria for being selected for this program was the city's commitment to improvement. The selection of Glendale as a What Works City is a validation of Council's efforts to improve city hall; and, this program is aligned with the work that Council has already begun with regard to the support for the strategic planning initiative and the recent formulation of mission, vision, and value statements.

What is the benefit of participating?

The program provides access to a network of technical experts and communities that have experienced improvements in specific content areas. Participating in the program will allow Glendale to leverage the experiences of the What Works Cities team and other communities to make our own organization better.

What are the content areas?

Scope Complete: The Sunlight Foundation has been identified as the What Works Cities partner agency for the Open Data project. Their mission is to make government and politics more accountable and transparent to all with the intent of using technology to enable more complete, equitable and effective democratic participation. Our work with them will include exploration of an open data policy and community engagement in collaborative problem solving. Work is just beginning on this project and the initial focus is going to be identifying best practices around open data and bringing those to Council for consideration. Our goal is to create opportunities for problem-solving and engagement around data.

Scope Pending: The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab has been identified as the What Works Cities partner agency for the Results-Driven Contracting project. Their mission is to conduct research on how governments can improve the results they achieve for their citizens through hands-on involvement in communities. Our work with them would include assessing one or two strategic or significant procurements to set up systems, measure outcomes, and assess impacts of these procurements using analytical methods and administrative data. The goal would be to adopt a model of improved contract development and performance management city-wide. **This project will require Council approval of a Memorandum of Understanding and the full project scope is still in development.**