

Teaching Notes for Introduction Module: Montclair Case

Class Use Objectives

As a case addressing citizen participation in government performance measurement, it informs students how citizen feedback could be included and sustained. Instructors may use this case to familiarize students with how citizens could be involved in designing appropriate performance indicators and measures, as well as providing feedback on service delivery quality. This case also provides the opportunity to discuss the benefits of promoting citizen driven performance measurement and the difficulties inherent in such initiatives.

Discussion Questions

1. From your experiences, would local officials be likely to grant citizens access to government performance information? If not, why wouldn't they do so? What are the institutional reasons? How could we overcome such constraints?
2. In some government areas, it is legitimate to protect government information from unauthorized citizens. Can you think of such areas? In common circumstances, would this be a concern?
3. In the Montclair case, citizens are encouraged to participate in performance measurement process. Would it improve government's transparency? Should we be cautious about it? How can we know that the information is correct or relevant?
4. Some say that even if citizens are solicited to participate, citizens are not competent or motivated to do so. Do you agree? Would citizens really care about government performance as long as it does not hurt their personal economic wellbeing?
5. Citizen feedback of government services is usually subjective. Sometimes, it is not in line with government's objective performance data. How would you answer this question if you were a manager trying to persuade elected officials to implement citizen-driven performance measurement systems?

Possible Activities

1. Check online to learn what other forms of efforts are underway in Montclair to foster greater citizen participation. How have these programs been developed and implemented?
2. Provide recommendations to Montclair on how it can improve the measurement project. What could have been done differently?
3. Look online, or via other sources, to find out more such measurement efforts. Compile a list of expectation areas, and compare them. Why communities have different expectations?