

## **ROLE 4: ENCOURAGE OR ASSIST MANAGEMENT**

***Practice 4b. Assist management: Assist management in designing, improving, or maintaining performance management systems, or build the capacity of management to do so.***

**Austin Texas, City Auditor** ([www.ci.austin.tx.us/auditor](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/auditor)): In 1985, when the Austin City Auditor's Office initiated performance auditing, it began training managers on the development and use of performance measures. The City Auditor's Office continued training managers in performance measurement through 2002, and in those years devoted an average of 1,200 hours per year of audit staff time to this practice. By 1997 the Auditor's Office was formally partnering with management to provide model guidelines, criteria summaries, and suggestions to the Budget Office for use in preparing instructions to departments for the shift in 1997 to a performance based budget. The Auditor's Office also worked with Budget Office staff to develop a written set of questions for a checklist to review Fiscal 1997 program performance measures proposed by departments, and made audit staff available to provide assistance.

That same year, the Auditor's Office provided input to the Human Resource Department's organizational development staff in improving guidance to departments on integrating strategic business planning with performance measurement and other management practices. Then they provided input to the Assistant to the City Manager regarding the need to clarify corporate strategic direction through the consistent focus and monitoring of long-term and short-term indicators of the City's corporate priorities. These efforts facilitated Citywide and departmental initiatives to develop performance management systems which eventually were incorporated into the City's formal Managing for Results/Business Planning initiative which began in 1999.

In 1999, the Austin City Auditor's Office increased its level of performance measurement-related partnering with management when the City reinvented its performance measurement system as a key component in Managing for Results. Through an intensive business planning process, City departments defined their programs to align their basic business units (activities) with the City's vision, and defined measures and program budgets accordingly. The Auditor's Office first worked with management to develop business planning guidelines through an "editorial board" of representatives from City departments. Two Auditor's Office staff then served as equal partners with City management staff on the Corporate Business Planning Team that reviewed all departments' plans. The business plans were first reviewed for alignment among mission, goals, objectives and the business units associated with them. The alignment review extended to how well the business units were tied into the accountings system so that cost could be aggregated at an appropriate level for performance measurement. A second review focused on the relevance and completeness of each activity's family of measures. Suggestions were made by the corporate team to add, delete, or revise measures. Since the City Auditor reports to the City Council, the audit staff on this team reviewed the measures with the needs of external stakeholders in mind. The Auditor's Office found that working with management in a proactive role was preferable to auditing the performance measures after they were developed and having to recommend after measurement had already started that the measures be improved. Now, when auditing a program or activity, there is a reasonable assurance that the measures being audited are, at least, relevant.

In 2002, The City Auditor's Office trained the City's Health and Human Services Department managers on using performance measurement data as part of a performance accountability system. This two-day training program provided trainees with multiple examples and hands-on exercises that showed trainees how performance measurement data can be used for management and budgetary decision making, and for strategic and short-term planning.