

# The NolaStat Policy

NolaStat is a model for managing government reform in New Orleans.

The package of NolaStat policy recommendations improve upon “stat” models implemented in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., New York, and more than a dozen other cities:

## 1. Hold Regular NolaStat Accountability Sessions

Performance of agencies should be benchmarked and managed weekly, to increase the quality, efficiency, and equity of city services.

## 2. Create a NolaStat Data Catalog

Government transparency should be increased by publishing real-time administrative data on the city’s Web site, improving public knowledge of city operations, and enabling independent oversight and research.

## 3. Open a NolaStat Office of Transparency & Accountability

Continuity of the NolaStat model should be guaranteed beyond changes in leadership, and best practices exercised, by hiring performance management professionals and technical specialists.

## 4. Engage the New Orleans Community

Civic participation and feedback in the NolaStat process should be fostered by engaging the public to identify high priority needs. Weekly performance management reports should be published on the city Web site to demonstrate a link between community needs, government policy, and outcomes.

# Accountability

Findings from research on other cities that have implemented performance management policies:

## Performance management is a process.

Yearly reviews as part of an annual budget cycle are inadequate for managing the city’s performance and budget goals. The NolaStat weekly performance management process would foster systemic changes that reduce waste, and improve city operations.

## Reward risk-taking and accomplishment.

Cooperation between agencies, risk-taking, and learning that achieves desired performance, should be recognized and rewarded. NolaStat seeks to replace *patronage politics* — based upon the exchange of favors — and *process politics* — in which government workers view success in terms of adherence to official protocols — with *performance-based politics* — in which government agencies define success in terms of outcomes the public cares about.

## Define the objectives.

Performance management isn’t a hammer in search of nails. Determine what the goals of the performance management process are, so that outcomes are meaningful and aligned with community priorities.

## Data drives results.

A “stat” policy requires data, assessment, strategic resource utilization, and relentless followup, but implementation shouldn’t wait for expensive investments in technology. It should begin with best-available data, and then strive to improve the availability and quality of data.

# Transparency

Findings from research on other cities that have liberated their data for the public to use:

## Democratizing data improves government.

In an increasingly digital society, a healthy democracy requires public access to government data. But improving public access to data also improves the ability of government agencies to share data and coordinate their activities.

## Bad data isn’t transparency.

Unreliable data with errors, missing important information, or provided in inaccessible formats, is not transparent. On the other hand, the lack of data accuracy shouldn’t be an excuse to avoid releasing it to the public. Government business processes should change to improve the reliability and usability of data.

## Publish data, not “cool apps.”

The usability of the city’s Web site rated poor in independent tests. Instead of rewarding contractors for cool apps that aren’t usable, the city should simply focus on publishing reliable data. Independent innovators can design applications that better serve the needs of the community.

## Data is good for neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods, researchers, and non-profits all want more and better data from government for initiatives that promote development and healthy communities.

## Data informs honest discussions.

An uninformed citizenry is more susceptible to false claims. Public access to data allows for independent testing of government claims, thus fostering genuine discussions about policy choices.

[NolaStat.org](http://NolaStat.org)

A new operating system for New Orleans

## A Proven Model

### Baltimore's CitiStat Process

*Things that get measured, are things that get done.*

- \$350 million saved in the first 7 years.
- 97 percent of potholes repaired within 48 hours, using the 311 system to track repairs and notify the public of repair status.
- In 2008, the lowest murder rate in Baltimore in over 20 years.
- A 36% decrease in children with lead poisoning.
- Improved access to affordable housing.
- Increased drug treatment programs.
- High school graduation rose from 42% to 60%.
- Third-grader reading scores rose from 16% to 61%.
- Doubled the amount of city contracts to minority- and women-owned businesses, from \$45 million to \$94 million.
- Took control of 6,000 abandoned properties, and sold 1,000 of them.
- Reduced rate of teen pregnancy from 12% to 8%.

### Washington, D.C.'s CapStat process

- Weekly accountability sessions, and more than 270 city data sets available on the Digital Public Square Web site ([dps.dc.gov](http://dps.dc.gov)).
- Private programmers competing in the Apps for Democracy contest built 47 Web-based applications.

### President Obama's Open Government Initiative

- Over 100,000 federal data sets on [Data.gov](http://Data.gov).
- Halted 74 wasteful contracts totaling \$200 million using business intelligence tools.

*Those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account — to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day — because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.*

**Plus new application interfaces to city data in New York, San Francisco, and Boston.**

## Participate

- Sign a pledge of support for NolaStat.
- Use candidate forums and debates to ask candidates for their support of the NolaStat policy reform in full, and track their commitments to specific reform ideas.
- Ask candidates to sign a pledge of support for the NolaStat reform.
- Talk to your neighborhood association about why a NolaStat policy reform would be beneficial no matter who is elected to office.
- Distribute literature and bumper stickers, available at [NolaStat.org](http://NolaStat.org).
- Ask broadcasters, the press, bloggers, the League of Women Voters and other debate moderators, to ask candidates questions about NolaStat.
- Be wary of candidates or contractors who appropriate the language of reform but don't deliver on the full package of NolaStat policy recommendations.
- Foster independent oversight of city operations and reform implementation through a non-profit organization, "The NolaStat Project."
- Host an "Apps for New Orleans" contest, tapping the city's creative talent and technological innovators to build applications using city data that improve the public's ability to understand and oversee government operations.
- Become a social media ambassador for NolaStat. Use blogs, Facebook, and Twitter to raise awareness about the NolaStat reform.
- Join the NolaStat steering committee to lead the way forward, or contribute to the discussion on the NolaStat Google Group.

**[NolaStat.org](http://NolaStat.org) for more information**

**NolaStat 2010**  
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