



## **Franklin County, OH** **Ranked Among the Top 5 Counties in the Nation**

*“The Commissioners’ Strategic Plan and agency Strategic Business Plans gave us the information we needed to prioritize services and programs and to reduce agency budgets by prioritizing programs and performance... Strategic Planning forms the basis for your future growth and the basis for your policies.”*

*— Arlene Shoemaker, Former Franklin County Commissioner*

### **Results written by Franklin Co**

#### **Economic Development & Planning Housing Program (Economic Development and Planning)**

100% of households received assistance within the program standards and costs  
Homelessness & Affordable Housing Program goal is to serve 800 households. Economic Development & Planning (EDP) continues to maximize the number of households in Franklin County that reside in decent, safe and sanitary housing and neighborhoods, given available resources. The Department will implement HUD's new Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The program provides communities with resources to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes, and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes. As a result of this measure, by tracking all households served, and developing procedures in the department for efficiency and savings, over 50% of the households have been served and EDP will meet or exceed the performance measurement goals by 2012. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2010, the agency served 442 households



## **Child Support Order Program (Child Support Enforcement Agency)**

### **40% of support orders established within one year**

For several years the agency had difficulty reaching its goal. A review of the program's processes suggested that innovations were needed. As a result, an automated case processing tool in the form of a targeted work list was developed and the Child Support Enforcement Agency has been able to consistently meet and exceed the target rate of the establishment of new child support orders within the goal of one year. The work list was developed with an Access database, which not only assists Support Officers work their cases, but also provides a tool for tracking and follow-up issues, stratification of cases to identify systemic problems and trends (such as the non-cooperation and sanction process), and allows them to automatically generate letters and notices and gives timed indicators for past due actions. Staff performance has consistently exceeded expectations in the year after implementation of the targeted work list. The backlog of cases has been reduced and new monthly records of support order establishment have been set several times during the year.

## **Child Protection & Family Services Program (Franklin County Children Services)**

### **99.2% of protective services child-days free of substantiated abuse or neglect**

### **Improved Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification in 4 years, as reflected by compliance with the Federal Child & Family Service Review (CFSR) standards for 'permanency' composite #1**

As a result of this performance measure the "Permanency Round Tables Brings Brighter Futures Program" was developed. Experiencing lifelong, lasting connections to family and friends is a fundamental right for every child and Franklin County Children Services is on the road to making that a reality. In partnership with the Casey Family Programs, the agency's first wave of Permanency Round Tables (PRTs) successfully concluded in September 2010 after carefully reviewing the cases of 110 children currently in permanent agency custody. Demonstrating that permanency can take many forms—from reunification with a mom or dad, adoption by a devoted foster parent, or a permanent commitment from a grandparent—positive PRTs results are starting to surface.



For 17-year-old TW (his initials are used to protect his privacy), who has been in placement since 2006, the PRTs helped his mom get the help she needed so the two could finally be reunified as a stable, healthy family. AC, a 15-year-old set to be adopted by his longtime foster parent, is another success story. The PRTs made clear to AC that he could be adopted without compromising his cherished ties to his birth mother. It also helped foster father realize that he could make a permanent commitment to the teen and support that vital connection with birth mom.

TW and AC are just two of many bright futures emerging from the innovative PRT process, which is designed to break down barriers to permanency, stimulate fresh, innovative thinking and take into account every child's specific needs. By establishing an individualized permanency plan for every child under agency care, the PRTs "assure stable connections for youth, creating a sense of urgency and momentum to keep the permanency process moving," according to Tina Rutherford, Franklin County Children Services' assistant director.

The PRTs mark an important paradigm shift at the agency, with the priority of permanence for all children moving to the forefront of Franklin County Children Services' daily practice, Rutherford said. "We hope to see a reduction in the numbers of PPLA status children in our care, but more importantly, an increased staff awareness of the importance of permanency for each and every child we serve."

## **Project Description**

### **Written by Weidner, Inc.**

Franklin County, Ohio, with a budget of 1.25 Billion, moved in the 1990's from extensive debt and a reputation for poor service to the achievement of an AAA bond rating. In 1999, Franklin County engaged Weidner to help design and implement a fully integrated Managing for Results and Performance-Based Budgeting initiative.

To kick off Franklin County's Managing for Results project, Weidner brought the County's executive leaders together to design the performance management system that would best fit the County. All elected and non-elected agencies used Weidner's methodologies and consultants to facilitate Strategic Business Plans. The County's Strategic Business Plans included performance measures for all activities, including outcomes, outputs, demand and efficiency.

Following the development of Strategic Business Plans, the County Commissioners developed a Strategic Plan for the County that was used throughout the decade beginning in 2000.



All County agencies developed Performance-Based budgets following their Strategic Business Plan and all agency budgets were accepted by Commissioners in fall of 2002. The first budgets submitted in the new MFR Performance Based process in the fall of 2002 included 15 agencies that submitted budgets lower than the previous year. As the County continued to move forward, beginning with the 2004 budget examined every program and its performance. Every agency's budget is linked to the performance metrics developed in the Strategic Business Planning process. Performance data is used to make the County's budget decisions. Strategic Business Plans are the key component in integrating planning, performance, and budgeting into one decision-making process.

Following Weidner's work with Franklin County, it was given a grade of B from Governing Magazine's Government Performance Project and was ranked among the top 5 counties in the nation.

At the writing of this brief case study in 2011, Franklin County continues to use MFR to develop department Strategic Business Plans, develop and approve the budget and use performance information to manage service delivery and customer experience throughout its operations.

