In March of 2020 the world we know changed forever. In January 2020 I began work with Results for America (RFA). It was clear we had a part to play in supporting cities through the crisis.

U.S.News & WORLD REPORT NEWS

How Data Is Shaping the Way Cities Respond to COVID-19

SMARTCITIESDIVE   Deep Dive   Opinion   Library   Events

Energy & Utilities   Transportation   Buildings & Infrastructure   Environment   Resilience
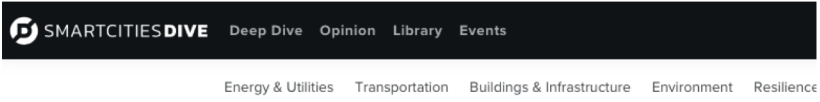
Cities play 'matchmaker' to connect residents, services amid pandemic

During a Cities of Service webinar, experts discussed how cities like Seattle and St. Paul, MN are leveraging community organizations to better mitigate COVID-19.

HEALTHCARE   JANUARY 10, 2022 / 12:01 AM / UPDATED A YEAR AGO

FEATURE-As pandemic bites, U.S. cities use data to fight race and income gaps

By Carey L. Biron, Thomson Reuters Foundation   7 MIN READ   f   t

* Data increasingly used to target aid and resources

* Pandemic, demands for racial justice drive innovation

"We were hearing two very real, parallel concerns at a volume we hadn't heard before - one focused on equity, and the other on the lack of money," said Stacey Gillett, who leads on government innovation for Bloomberg Philanthropies, referring to conversations with city leaders.

When the federal government started disbursing unprecedented aid to city authorities in March 2021, local officials turned their attention to how to spend the windfall fairly, she said.

"So we said, 'let's start somewhere: Do you know what the needs are, at the neighborhood level, at the race level? So many cities don't even disaggregate data by race," she said.

In October 2020, Gillett helped start a program with Bloomberg's What Works Cities initiative, bringing together budget and finance heads from several dozen cities to look at how to foster an equitable recovery from the pandemic.

Responding to the gross disparities shown by the pandemic, the role of Equity took center stage in civic policy reform. It was crucial for What Works Cities (WWC) to assert its expertise in data's role in this time of wide-ranging opportunities for progress.

To Budget for Equity, Cities First Must Define Equity

October 14, 2020

Thirty U.S. Cities to Tackle Budget Crises and Advance Equity with Support from Bloomberg Philanthropies

Through What Works Cities, the Program will Assist with Pandemic Recovery and Share Lessons with Other Cities
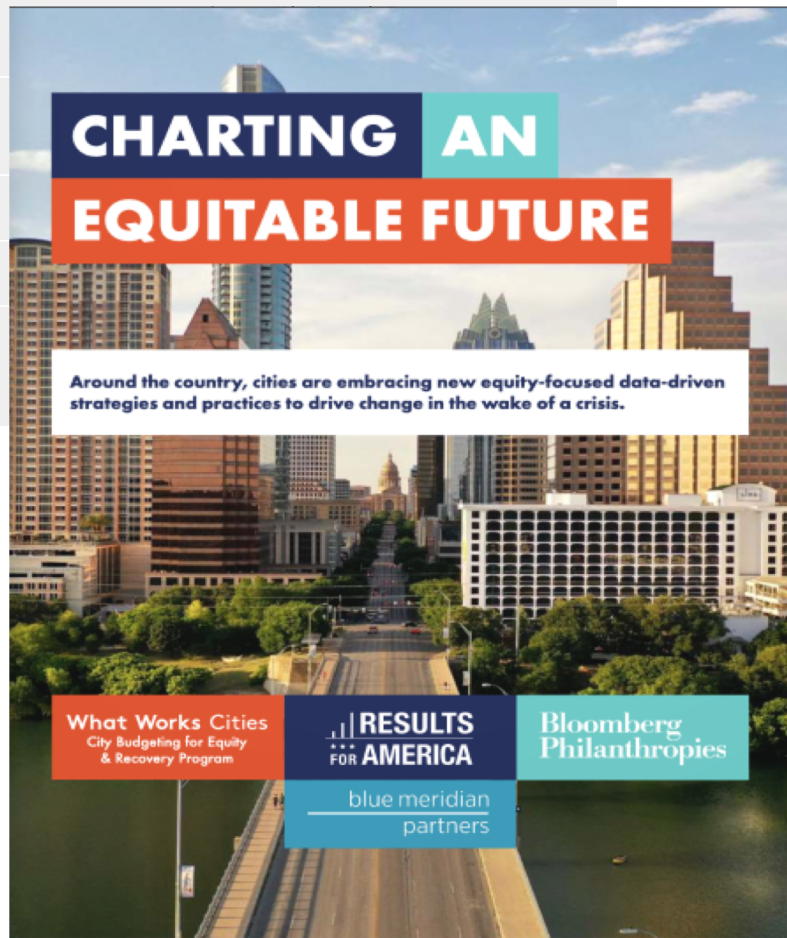
New York, NY: Bloomberg Philanthropies today announced the 30 U.S. cities that will participate in the What Works Cities City Budgeting for Equity and Recovery program, a new effort that will help cities confront budget crises while strengthening their commitment to equity in the wake of COVID-19. The program will

---

Avoiding Common Pitfalls In Community Engagement

Equitable budgetary decision-making should aspire to include diverse city residents in the process. The right style of engagement will depend on the nature of the decision: Your city might release a survey to gather data in order to determine budget priorities, or you might decide to partner with a local organization to learn how to improve the operation of an existing program.

Once you have defined your goals and selected the community engagement approach, watch out for common pitfalls that can turn a well-intentioned strategy into one that fails to produce the needed results, or worse, harms your city's relationship with the community. For each of the three community engagement approaches below, check the potential pitfalls and consider the tactics suggested in order to be more inclusive, gather better data, build trust, and make superior decisions. Learn more about community engagement here.

Goal	Pitfall	Solution	Example
Gather Data to Build a Clear Mandate *Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, meetings, and other tactics to identify problems, set priorities, and grasp public sentiment.*	Your engagement generates useless or irrelevant data		
	Your engagement does not achieve sufficient or representative turnout		
	Your engagement feels extractive or condescending to participants		
	You leave marginalized communities feeling unheard or excluded		
	Your engagement activities feel performative or pointless to participants		

PG 1 OF 3

From launch through published e-book, I led on the many editorial, partnership, and project management needs and opportunities around WWC's City Budgeting for Equity and Recovery program (a Bloomberg Philanthropies programmatic response to the looming financial struggles the Pandemic presented). This included multiple wide-ranging media and speaking opportunities, as well as resource and toolkit(s) development and delivery for cities and organizations nationwide.

Identifying, securing, and supporting a presence at targeted events, powerful thought leadership, and promotional opportunities, was a key aspect of my duties at What Works Cities.

Building relationships with editors, mayors, and organizations like Next City and the African American Mayors Alliance (to name a few) was a key part of What Works Cities' growth in recent years.

Pueblo's Libraries Are Thriving Thanks to Equity-Focused, People-Powered Budgeting

The city's new budgeting framework let residents come up with an idea to hold a reading challenge.

EMILY NONKO   DECEMBER 2, 2021

SHARE

Q&A with Mayor Sharon Weston Broome: Using Data To Tackle Pressing Challenges And Deliver Results

Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome is on a mission to solve problems. In 2021, Baton Rouge achieved Silver certification in the What Works Cities Certification program - a first-of-its-kind standard of excellence for data-driven, well-managed local government launched in 2017 by Bloomberg Philanthropies and led by Results for America. Under her leadership, Baton Rouge is joining a community of cities using data to increase economic opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses, improve city infrastructure, develop long-term stormwater solutions, and much more. We spoke to Mayor Broome to learn about how the city uses data to deliver better outcomes for all residents.

See The Entire Interview Here

Explaining how cities can better collect, manage and use data can be hard, and needs a bit of a deep dive for those doing the work.

While at What Works Cities I maintained and guided our relationship with "Data Smart City Solutions" at Harvard, to produce dozens of resources cities can use to better understand the methodology behind What Works Cities' recommended best-practices.

Similarly, I was responsible for maintaining and developing our relationship with Bloomberg's Spark newsletter to ensure synchronicity amidst our "in-house" publications and opportunities.

Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber

Cincinnati to Join New Initiative to Increase Economic Mobility

Announcement Made by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ballmer Group

Cincinnati Will Use Data to Identify Barriers to Economic Opportunity for Residents, Test Promising Strategies, and Share Learnings with Other Communities

June 18, 2019: Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ballmer Group announced today that Cincinnati pilot, and measure th next 18 months, Cinc low-income workers Regional Chamber la challenges.

"The Workforce Innov our corporate comm growing their busines community at all leve

AP Feds fund mental health crisis teams to stan... Top Stories Topics ✓ Video Listen

Feds fund mental health crisis teams to stand in for police
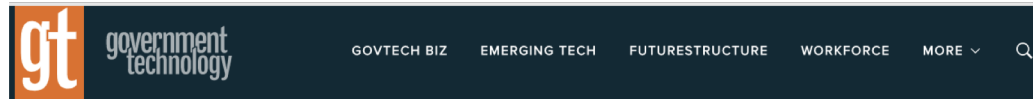By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR   April 23, 2021

Working closely with city leadership, we helped celebrate and promote the participation and achievement of cities involved with a wide-range of What Works Cities programs, learning opportunities and cohorts developing Economic Mobility initiatives, Alterative Emergency response, and Guaranteed Income piloting, to name a few.
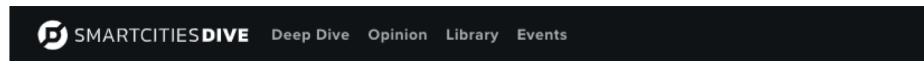
Consistently celebrating cities for their data-driven work was a central part of the What Works Cities model, and a central function of my work there.