

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.

PRESENTED BY ANHEUSER-BUSCH  
**Axios Cities**  
By Kim Hart · Apr 01, 2020

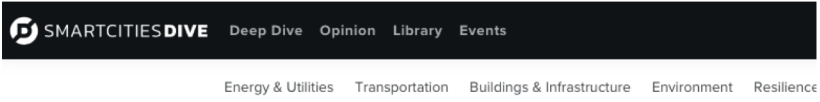
**Mark your calendars:** Axios will be hosting a live virtual event on how the private sector can contribute to social good in the midst of a global pandemic. Join us Friday, at 12:30pm ET, for this in-depth discussion featuring the owner of the Dallas Mavericks, **Mark Cuban**, Michigan Gov. **Gretchen Whitmer**, and Edelman U.S. CEO **Richard Edelman**. Register [here](#).

- Was this newsletter forwarded to you? Sign up [here](#).
- Today's edition is 1,828 words, a 7-minute read.

1 big thing: How the pandemic will reshape cities



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



## 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



\* 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.



Connecting state and local government leaders

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## To Budget for Equity, Cities First Must Define Equity



October 14,  
2020

Government  
Innovation

What Works  
Cities  
Certification

## 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*

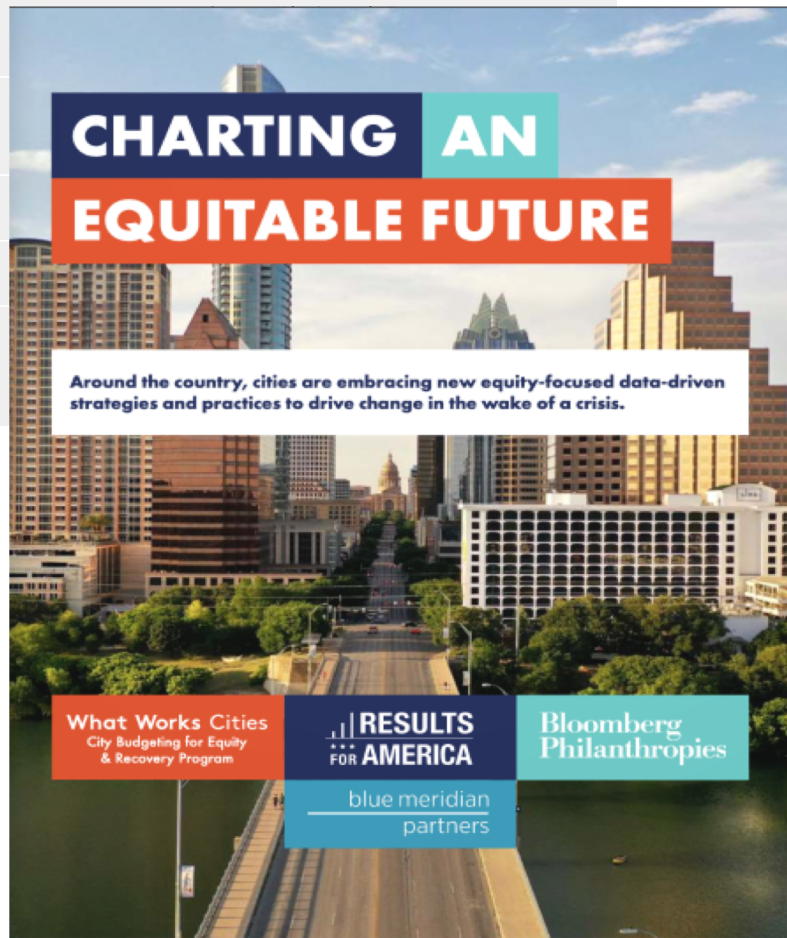
**New York, NY:** Bloomberg Philanthropies today announced the 30 U.S. cities that will participate in the What Works Cities [City Budgeting for Equity and Recovery](#) program, a new effort that will help cities confront budget crises while strengthening their commitment to equity in the wake of COVID-19. The program will

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.

### 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
<b>Gather Data to Build a Clear Mandate</b>  <i>Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, meetings, and other tactics to identify problems, set priorities, and grasp public sentiment.</i>	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

What Works Cities  
City Budgeting for Equity  
& Recovery Program

RESULTS  
FOR AMERICA

blue meridian  
partners

Bloomberg  
Philanthropies



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.

**What Works Cities** @WhatWorksCities · Mar 28 ...  
What a treat to see @CityofTacoma Mayor Woodards at @leagueofcities' 2023 Congressional City Conference!

We're honored to work with so many leaders using data to make their communities stronger! 🙌



**What Works Cities** @WhatWorksCities · 22h ...  
Join us for a chat with @CityofPhoenixAZ's @MayorGallego and @RVHaynes!

The conversation will focus on tactical ways to build a more robust open data infrastructure and the role #opendata plays in promoting equity.

Register ➡ [bit.ly/MayorGallego](https://bit.ly/MayorGallego)



4 4 806

**What Works Cities** @WhatWorksCities · Mar 9 ...  
Thank you @MayorTimKelly for being an #opendata champion in Gold-Certified @Chattanooga\_gov!

**Tim Kelly** @MayorTimKelly · Mar 6  
Open Data Week is all about the power of data to set goals and track progress, and how you, as a resident, can access and use our city's data. Follow along this week at @Chattanooga\_Gov for ways to get involved! #OpenDataWeek



6 701



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



## 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](#)



#### DM8. Disaggregated Data for Decision-Making

Your local government collects and analyzes data disaggregated by geographic and demographic subgroups to inform decision-making on key citywide priorities.

San Antonio is charting its way to an equitable and prosperous future for all, guided by the [city's Equity Atlas](#). In a city dedicated to moving the needle on racial equity and income disparities, local government leaders are taking a measurable approach by tracking and illustrating key indicators like education level, race, household income, and languages spoken. All city departments now utilize this disaggregated data atlas to ensure that their budgets and priorities are in line with tackling the systemic issues and inequities represented in the Atlas. By disaggregating data, cities can better understand who is — and isn't — being served and how their needs and experiences might differ. Due to this commitment, the [San Antonio Equity Atlas](#) is a leading example of how cities are utilizing data disaggregated by geographic and demographic subgroups to inform decision-making, a new criteria in the What Works Cities (WWC) Certification Standard (DM8) criteria.

According to Liz Provencio, first assistant city attorney and current acting director of the city's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department, San Antonio first began exploring equity atlases in 2019, looking at examples in Portland and Austin. Kristine McLaughlin, senior GIS analyst with the Information Technology Services Department, was part of this work from the very beginning, working with the city's Chief Equity Officer on developing an atlas for the city. McLaughlin helped gather data on median household income and race/ethnicity, plus education levels and English language abilities, by census tract...no easy feat when the city boundaries and districts aren't aligned to tracts. Once the data had been calculated to match the city lines based on things like population density and distribution, McLaughlin did a quintile classification to score each area based on the above metrics.

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.



Mayor Andy Schor

October 1, 2020 · 🌐

...

Thanks to [What Works Cities](#) for helping as we work to make the dream of college and other post-secondary educational pursuits a reality for the city's lowest-income families, and transform the lives of our residents and economy.

We couldn't have built the new [BOLD Lansing](#) Initiative without the vision of community partners like [MSU Federal Credit Union](#), the [Lansing School District](#), [Lansing Promise](#), [Capital Area College Access Network](#), [Cristo Rey Community Center](#), [Capital Area United Way](#) and the [CEDAM: The Community Economic Development Association of Michigan](#).

Economic mobility is a key part of the growth of our city. I am focused on lifting up all of our residents. BOLD Lansing is one way that the city provides tools and resources to residents to help them grow and reach their dreams. Lansing is leading the nation in creative thinking about how to lift all residents up to their dreams.

Want to learn more? <https://boldlansing.org>



MEDIUM.COM

### Lansing Makes It Easier to Save for a Lifetime of Success

Michigan's capital city is determined to put college within reach of low-income families



## 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 will join a national pilot, and measure the impact of the program over the next 18 months. Cincinnati is one of the first cities to join the pilot, and will use the program to help low-income workers and businesses overcome economic challenges. The Regional Chamber will lead the effort.

"The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Corps is our corporate community partner, growing their business and supporting the community at all levels."



Feds fund mental health crisis teams to stan...

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## Feds fund mental health crisis teams to stand in for police

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR April 23, 2021



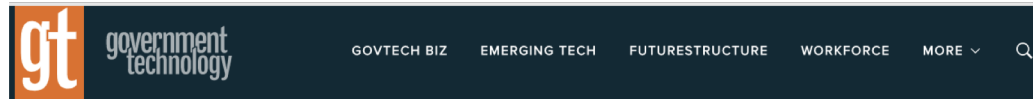
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Working closely with city leadership, we helped celebrate and promote the participation and achievement of cities involved with a wide-range of What Works Cities programs, learning opportunities and cohorts developing Economic Mobility initiatives, Alternative Emergency response, and Guaranteed Income piloting, to name a few.



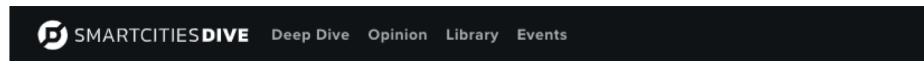
Consistently celebrating cities for their data-driven work was a central part of the What Works Cities model, and a central function of my work there.



CIVIC INNOVATION

## What's New in Civic Tech: Cities Recognized for Data Use

Plus, Columbus, Ohio, announces a partnership aimed at collecting data on gun violence throughout the city, and Pittsburgh, Pa., launches a new "Universal Basic Mobility" pilot program for low-income residents.

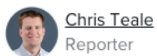


Energy & Utilities Transportation Buildings & Infrastructure Environment Resilience

BRIEF

## What Works Cities awards 4 cities top honors for data usage

Published July 14, 2021



Chris Teale  
Reporter



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## Memphis, Tenn., fostered data culture through competition, mayor says

