



Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
LEADING BOLDLY, WORKING TOGETHER

ROCKSTAT GUIDELINES

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These guidelines are a resource to help City of Rockford Operations integrate the RockStat methodology to their daily operations. The information provided will enable the user to better plan for RockStat meetings, use the analytical models needed to provide the required data and analysis, and build on the knowledge and experience of their frontline employees to build a responsive, accountable team.

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ROCKSTAT PRINCIPLES

RockStat is a forum designed to hold City of Rockford leadership accountable to customers, taxpayers, and citizens, for the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of services.

1. Engage all levels of the organization. The RockStat philosophy anticipates that leaders can be found at all levels of the organization. Senior managers are expected to work directly with their staff in the analysis and problem solving that defines the RockStat process.
2. RockStat is an analytical tool. It is not a presentation. Effective measurements require clarity on:
 - a. Direct correlation to organizational goals.
 - b. How operations will use measures to manage programs and get results.
3. Develop & use timely and accurate performance data to set targets and inform decisions.
 - a. ICMA benchmarks must be integrated into reports
 - b. Timely and accurate data gathered from the city's reporting programs will act as the primary source of information.
4. RockStat forums are an opportunity to hear honest feedback from your peers. Candor and creativity are both expected from the participants of the RockStat meetings. It is important that the forum is an opportunity to both celebrate the organization's successes as well as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement.
5. When the data indicates action is needed, quickly and clearly specify what needs to be done, who will do it, and when it will be done. Action plans developed during a RockStat analysis forum will be reviewed for status at the follow up meeting.
6. Persistent follow up and clear accountability are two distinct features of the RockStat forum. City leaders will monitor not just immediate follow up but will continue to monitor results over time to verify change is real and sustainable.
7. The success of our RockStat forum is strongly contingent upon the creation of a learning environment. Operations invest in both training and teaching for their employees to integrate this philosophy at all levels. In addition, managers should invest in implementing:
 - a. Lean training & other process improvement tools
 - b. Performance management for better alignment of individual and operational goals.

WHAT ARE ROCKSTAT MEETINGS?

RockStat Forums are built around open forums where the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of critical city business processes and services are candidly evaluated and monitored. Forums focus on the ability to bring to the forefront the operational issues that may be limiting the city organization from reaching its goals, while building on the collaborative resources of the RockStat team. City leaders, with the authority to make policy, budget, and procedural changes are in at the RockStat meetings.

There are two focuses to the RockStat meetings:

Mayor's Discussion: These meetings are focused on high-priority initiatives and are geographically based. They typically involve multiple operations and improvements that require inter-departmental cooperation.

Executive Discussion: All City departments are expected to use the RockStat tools to monitor and improve performance in their operations. Operational Forums will focus on the daily activities that drive the city organization.

WHO CAN ATTEND ROCKSTAT MEETINGS?

RockStat meetings are attended by the Mayor and his staff, Department Heads, managers of all levels, and city staff. The meetings are also open to the public and the media. In requiring our staff report agency status in a public forum, we are holding ourselves to the highest level of accountability to our citizens.

One important feature of the Mayor's Forum is that they are organized by geographic area. These geographic areas were designed through analysis of census tract data and the integration of our Community Policing zones for the Rockford Police Department. In addition to the geographic design, the RockStat process aligns the city's strategic planning process in the analysis. Each meeting must:

- Align with the City's priorities and maintain a focus on results
- Encourage cross functional teams by allowing leaders and staff from different departments to participate in the forum.

Results Areas:

- Education, Health & Human Services
- Public Safety
- Environment, Housing, & Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Culture & Recreation

The Operational Discussions focus on the nuts and bolts of our individual operations. It is this context that we will more closely examine data relating to customer service requests, work orders, and other outputs of our data systems.

RockStat dialogues are open and direct – often challenging. Discussions and decisions are based on analysis, benchmarks, and community expectations. Each manager and staff person is held accountable for follow-up and reporting back on the outstanding issues.

ARE ROCKSTAT MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC?

Members of the general public, Council members, the media, and representatives from both the public and private sector are invited to attend RockStat meetings. These invited guests are observers in the RockStat process and are not directly involved in the discussions. If our guests have questions which are germane to the discussion, there are Request Forms which can be completed and given to the Chair. If the Chair feels the questions are appropriate, he may include them in his analysis. Questions which are not part of the verbal discussion will be followed up with a direct communication from the appropriate staff member. Media may conduct interviews after the RockStat forum.

WHEN ARE THE ROCKSTAT MEETINGS?

RockStat meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of each month. Reports are posted to the City of Rockford website (www.rockfordil.gov) on the proceeding Monday. Any questions on scheduling or reports can be sent to Julia Scott Valdez, the Assistant City Administrator, at Julia.Valdez@rockfordil.gov or by calling 815-987-5580.

HOW MEASURES AND REPORTS ARE DEVELOPED FOR ROCKSTAT?

The City developed an internal team of analysts and practitioners to develop RockStat measures and reports. The team met for several weeks reviewing each step of the forum's process, the measurements and benchmarks, and the needed templates. Information was gathered from resources such as ICMA and professional organizations and the best practices of several communities were studied for practicality in our forum.

In preparing for your first RockStat meeting, review your current performance measurement systems. Evaluate your current reports and data collection processes to see what is already in place to support the RockStat principles. To every extent

possible, RockStat should build on existing processes and allow you to better clarify your business needs.

In identifying the “right” performance measures for your operation, you should ask your self the following questions?

- What is the business problem or issue we are trying to identify?
- How will this improve the delivery of our service to our customers?
- What is the benchmark we are trying to meet or exceed?

Once you have determined your operational benchmarks, we will work with your department to define its performance index. The performance index is your defined rating on a scale from 1 – 10 that indicates the health of your operations. The Assistant City Administrator will work with your operations to help you better define the criteria for your index.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON PITFALLS IN PREPARING FOR A ROCKSTAT MEETING?

Preparing for a RockStat meeting can be a daunting task for city staff. Since our first RockStat meeting in 2007, the participants have noted four common pitfalls.

1. Approaching RockStat reports as a presentation: RockStat reports are focused, data driven reports. Content is more important than appearance. It is important that a report quickly and efficiently tell a story without redundancy in slides or data. The key to an effective report are predetermined benchmarks, strong analysis, and a direct correlation to our strategic plan.
2. Insufficient analysis: An analysis is not a restatement of data and its outcome. A strong analysis provides an evidence-based explanation of what factors influenced the results. Anticipate that your analysis may be challenged, reviewed for accuracy, or become a part of a discussion on improving operations.
3. Vague actions plans or lack of follow through: One of the defining factors of a RockStat meeting is the ability to improve our operations through analysis. The success of this factor relies heavily on the development of a strong action plan and immediate follow-through on suggested improvements or changes.
4. Deviation from the reporting format: The templates created for the RockStat report have been created by an internal team and have been tested to be the most effective method of reporting our data. Reports that deviate from this format often lack the appropriate data and analysis. In the case of a RockStat

meeting, the preparation process is as important as the public discussion, therefore, the integrity of our reports must be respected.

One of the most essential components in preparing for the RockStat meeting is your attendance at the prep meeting. Prep meetings will be held the Friday before a RockStat meeting. These meetings will allow staff to come together, review the reported data, identify the area's need and define the reporting topics and agenda. This will allow your operation to prepare your data and analysis in a timely fashion.

The Assistant City Administrator will work with your operation in preparing for your first RockStat meeting. She will also act as your main contact and coordinator of the RockStat process. Any questions or concerns you may have can be directed to this office.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF THE MEETING?

Rockstat meetings will break down as follows:

1. Mayor's Discussion
 - a. Focus on one geographic area each month
 - b. Teams will be cross functional and consist of operational and internal support departments and Aldermen for the given area will be invited.
 - c. Strategic goals will be integrated into geographic location
 - d. This section of the meeting will be limited to 90 minutes
 - e. Analysis on this level will focus on operational & organizational improvements needed as it pertains to the location.

2. Executive Discussion
 - a. This will be a closed meeting
 - b. HR issues will be discussed in this forum
 - c. Analysis at this level will focus on operational and management improvements.
 - i. Discussions will be open, honest, and frank.
 - ii. Internal departments will take the lead on analysis

An important point to remember is that every RockStat meeting will follow up from the proceeding. The first order of business will be to address any open questions or present any additional information that had been requested. It is the responsibility of the operation to prepare for these follow up discussions.

WHAT IS THE MAYOR'S ROLE IN THE ROCKSTAT MEETINGS?

The Mayor personally chairs each RockStat meetings. The Mayor will use these meetings to personally review each operation's progress towards achieving the end results of our strategic plan. It is the Mayor's role to analyze the data on behalf of our citizens. He may suggest new approaches, request additional data, or require additional strategies. He will also use these meetings to discuss the follow up/action plans from the previous RockStat meetings. In the Mayor's absence, the role of Chair will be delegated to either the City Administrator or the Assistant City Administrator.

In addition to the Mayor's role as chair, an Analysis team which consists of the City Administrator, the Assistant City Administrator and representatives from Human Resources, Information Technology, and the Legal Department will participate in the discussions. Each member the Analysis team studies the data beforehand, formats appropriate questions and suggestions. Members from these departments are well-acquainted with both the defined geographic area as well as the operation of the department.

WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED TO PRESENT AT ROCKSTAT?

City managers should be able to articulate and defend the performance of all aspects of their operations at all times. Ownership and accountability are two vital pieces of the city values system and these values resonate in the RockStat process.

The participants in the RockStat meetings will ask a lot of questions. What does this measure tell us? How does it relate to other goals? How do we know if it's working? What resources do we need: Why is this important to citizens? The managers and staff should be prepared with the back up data, logic models, and action plans to effectively answer these questions.

Every manager that reports at a RockStat meeting should have the ability to:

- Clearly explain how an individual program contributes to a high level result
- Explain the program's results, related expenses, and needed outcomes
- Diagnose performance problems and correct them
- Integrate problem-solving into daily activities

In addition the abilities listed above, each operation should develop the internal capacity in the following skills:

- Linking resources to results using a logic model or similar tools to explain how programs contribute to higher level results

- Developing performance measures that can help show whether or not we are making progress on towards results
- Collecting data that is valid, maintaining the integrity of the data, and defining data in ways it can be shared
- Analyzing data so that it can be understood what effect our decisions have on performance
- Improving processes by identifying the root causes of problems and coming up with solutions to improve performance
- Communicating with charts and graphs and other visual tools that make it easier to understand the information
- Managing performance problems with persistence and respect, can creating a learning environment
- Presenting information for decision makers and stakeholders that is concise and useful to those audiences

LESSONS LEARNED AND KEY SUCCESS FACTORS:

In evaluating the RockStat process to date, we can identify some key lessons we have learned:

- Goals and measures must relate to priorities
- A clear logic model is necessary
- The process is more important than the initial data
- Progress requires a great deal of time and effort
- Leadership commitment is critical
- Continuity enhances learning
- Follow up is essential
- Outcomes are more important than outputs
- What gets measured gets done.

Remember too, Performance measurement is hard work. Some experts have compared it to learning a foreign language; you must use it or lose it. Most importantly, RockStat meetings are only the beginning of the conversation. We anticipate that our managers will engage in the problem-solving, analytical, approach used in RockStat on a daily basis.

FINALLY:

The RockStat forum is just a part of the performance improvement process. It is deeply integrated into our strategic planning process, our budget planning process, and our daily operations. RockStat is our opportunity to focus on our progress in the

strategic plan in an interactive environment. The forums serve to analyze the submitted data, engage in problem-solving, and find ways to provide assistance and partnerships in order to achieve our end results.

See attached templates