The Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance

Over the past decade, local leaders have made incredible progress toward using data to make decisions, shape policy, understand challenges, design and pursue solutions, and evaluate progress. The impact—and urgent need—of these efforts has never been more evident than over the past two years as mayors and senior leaders relied on data in unprecedented ways to communicate with residents, make life-saving decisions, and guide their communities through COVID-19.

Now, as we begin to look beyond pandemic response and recovery, city leaders are exceptionally well positioned to take their data expertise to the next level—to advance equity, to better engage, inform, and inspire residents, and think outside of the box to solve tough problems.

The Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance will help 100 cities accelerate their data practices and deliver exceptional results for residents.

What is the opportunity?

Bloomberg Philanthropies is launching the Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance, a program that will identify the 100 cities across North, Central, and South America that are the most sophisticated, ambitious, and advanced at harnessing data and help them set a new standard for local government committed to using data to power better results for residents. The City Data Alliance will help mayors:
- Become ever more confident consumers and users of data to understand progress and challenges;
- Leverage data to enhance equity, performance, and other key goals through foundational city processes like HR, procurement, and budgeting;
- Engage residents around data that matters in their lives; and
- Deliver high impact services.

What does the program offer?

The program is designed for those cities that are already committed to using data to improve lives and, as part of that commitment, now want to go to the next level. The two parts of the program, which are sequential in nature, provide a unique opportunity for mayors and their senior teams to deepen the ways cities use data to inform decisions, understand impact, and communicate results.
- Participating mayors will receive a six-month acceleration program including executive education and individualized city coaching and consultation. This includes individual coaching sessions, workshops with peer cities from across North, Central, and South America, and keynote instruction from leading international experts. This suite of supports will position mayors to set ambitious targets for their work, ask tough questions, invest in proven practices, and evaluate progress on their top goals.
- This will be followed by a 12-month investment to improve a critical data capacity such as performance management, procurement, evaluation, or data as a service. With hands-on support from an expert partner, the city will apply the practice to a top mayoral priority, while building the policies and infrastructure for that practice to be adopted citywide.

What are the critical data capacities the program will support?

Performance management

World-class service delivery requires that mayors take a world-class approach to performance management. This track will distill best practices from around the globe and offer technical support to help city leaders establish routines and processes to manage and measure their highest-priority projects.

Evaluation

Understanding what works through evaluations allows leaders to test new ideas, invest in the most effective programs, and maximize results for residents. Through this track, cities will create a citywide evaluation strategy to routinely perform evaluations that answer the most pressing questions and inform better policy decisions. World leading experts will help cities upskill an evaluation team to conduct evaluations that generate meaningful evidence and support high-profile mayoral efforts, showing the public and city staff how evaluation can lead to learning, course correction, and stronger results.

Results-driven contracting

As much as cities depend on their procurement system to effectively and equitably deliver key services, procurement too often serves as a back-office compliance function rather than a potential lever for powerful change. In this track, cities will learn to transform citywide procurement by adopting a strategic, outcomes-oriented approach that saves time for city staff, encourage new and diverse vendors, and achieve better outcomes for contracted services.

Data as a service

While open-data portals have helped cities make data accessible and transparent, it's no longer enough to make data "available." This track will teach city leaders how to move beyond a portal-only strategy and to a "data as service" approach, where they channel data into tools tailored to the internal and external stakeholder's needs.

What else should cities know about participating in the Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance?

Cities from across North, Central, and South America are welcomed to apply. Cities best suited for this program will meet the following qualifications:
- Mid-sized to large city (*i.e.,* approximately >100,000 residents in the U.S. and Canada; or approximately >300,000 residents in Central and South America);
- Bold mayoral ambition for how data can drive better results for residents;
- A mayor with at least 3 years left in office, including additional years through possible re-election; and
- Strong foundations of data use already in place across city hall and agencies.

We are seeking mayors ready to commit the time and effort needed to make a step-change in their use of data to improve life in their city. If your city is selected, your Mayor will be expected to:

- Attend an in-person convening at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore City, Maryland;
- Participate fully and actively in all mayoral sessions as part of the core training (approximately five hours a month over six months);
- Share successes, challenges, and insights with the program throughout the year;
- Have an empowered senior leader in city hall, who is responsible for driving the city's data strategy (e.g., Chief Data Officer);
- Nominate a team of approximately three additional senior leaders from your administration to participate in the core training (approximately six hours a month over six months), and dedicate additional staff as needed for your city's chosen technical assistance program;
- Identify a central point of contact for the program ("Data Alliance Lead") to liaise with program staff and manage the engagement of city participants;
- Follow up with your team to champion progress on the city projects for which your city receives technical assistance; and
- Participate in efforts to elevate successes from the program throughout the year.

Mayors and senior leaders participating in the program will be invited to attend an in-person convening at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore City, Maryland. Most Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance program activities will be delivered virtually to accommodate participants across regions and amid shifting travel restrictions related to COVID-19. Basic requirements include high-speed internet access and access to computers or mobile phones with audio and video capabilities. Program materials will be made available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and live interpretation of virtual events will be made available as needed.

By applying and participating in the program, the mayor and named participants are joining the Bloomberg Cities Network. Comprised of local government officials who share our commitment to data and evidence, bold leadership, innovation, and collaboration, the Bloomberg Cities Network helps local government innovators learn from one another and access cutting-edge resources and support. Network members receive exclusive resources, including access to world-class training and events, peer networking opportunities, powerful city solutions, and more. Learn more at https://bloombergcities.jhu.edu/.