

ACTIVITY HANDOUT: COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

A Community Excellence Journey Resource

This resource is designed to help your community excellence group articulate the meaning of COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE and identify KEY measures to help track your progress and RESULTS on your journey to excellence.



PART 1: What is Community Performance Excellence?

You are encouraged to complete the following activity with other members your community excellence group including your Navigation Team (core team) and/or your Action Network (task forces, work groups, etc.).

Step 1: Defining Community Performance Excellence

Activity	Key Instructions	Needed Resources	Time
Review the definition of COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE found in the Communities of Excellence 2026 Framework as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Display the definition so that it is visible to the entire group. ● The definition can be found on page 30 of the framework booklet. ● An integrated approach to community performance management that results in <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) delivery of ever-improving value to residents, other customers, and stakeholders, contributing to ongoing community success; 2) improvement of your community's overall effectiveness and capabilities; and 3) LEARNING for the community and for people resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Facilitator ● Copy of the framework booklet for each person OR digital or written display of the definition 	5 minutes

Step 2: Discussing Community Performance Excellence

Activity	Key Instructions	Needed Resources	Time
Divide your group into three parts. Discuss what each element of COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE means in the context of a community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assign each group a part of the definition from above. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) delivery of ever-improving value to residents, other customers, and stakeholders, contributing to ongoing community success; 2) improvement of your community's overall effectiveness and capabilities; 3) LEARNING for the community and for people resources ● Ask each group to discuss what their specific part of the definition means when considering the community as a whole. How is it different than in a single organization? How is it the same? ● It may be helpful to consult the framework during the discussion time. ● After allowing approximately 10-15 minutes for discussion, invite each group to share the highlights of their discussion with the larger group. Each report out should only last about 3 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Facilitator ● Several copies of the framework booklet ● Pens ● Paper 	20-25 minutes

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Step 3: Discussing Community Performance Excellence in YOUR Community

Activity	Key Instructions	Needed Resources	Time
As a larger group, discuss what these elements of COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE mean in the context of your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the whole group includes fewer than 10 people, the group should remain whole for this part of the activity. ● If the group is larger than 10, divide into smaller groups for this conversation. Groups should have no more than 10 people and shouldn't include the same composition of individuals as in the previous step. If multiple groups are required in this step, allow time for a report out from each group. ● Be sure to discuss all three elements of the definition. What will progress towards excellence look like? How will you identify and track it? ● Once your group has agreed on the meaning of COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE in your community, record the information for use as part of future conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Facilitator ● Whiteboard or wall ● Flip chart paper, as needed to record the groups' responses ● Marker for making notes for the group 	15-20 minutes

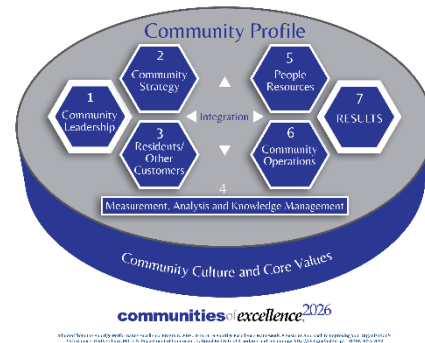
Step 4: Next Steps

Activity	Key Instructions	Needed Resources	Time
Discuss how your group will use this activity as a catalyst for future conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define the next steps for your community excellence group, based on this discussion. ● Identify any additional stakeholders that need to participate in or be updated about this conversation. ● Determine what, if any, tools your community excellence group has in place to measure community performance excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Facilitator 	10 minutes

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PART 2: Measuring Results on Your Journey to Community Performance Excellence

Using data to measure, analyze, and improve community performance is an integral part of your journey to community excellence. The following resources and tools are provided to help you along this journey.



Groupings

You will identify and track MEASURES AND INDICATORS for each category within the Communities of Excellence 2026 Framework. At first, it may be helpful to consider them in three broad groupings.

For each grouping, any type of measure may exist: Input Output Outcome Efficiency Quality Explanatory		
COMMUNITY COMPETITIVENESS	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES	COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE GROUP PERFORMANCE
Measures that assess how well communities can compete with neighboring or similar communities to create an environment where residents can reach their full potential.	Measures that assess the impact of the community excellence group's work towards improving conditions in the community.	Measures that assess the operations, progress, and performance of the community excellence group as they work towards improving their community.
Part A: What measures does your community excellence group want to achieve in each one of these groupings?		
Part B: What data sources will your community excellence group use for each one of these groupings? What qualitative data are you gathering that can be analyzed quantitatively?		

Types of Measures and Indicators

Within each grouping, any type of measure may exist including: input, output, outcome, efficiency, quality, or explanatory.

	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Input	Number of resources used	Grant funds received, number of people resources used, number or residents requesting the service
Output	Units produced or services provided	Patients treated, un-sheltered housed, customers for program or service

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	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Outcome	Results of the services provide; Assesses impact & effectiveness	School graduation rate, testing scores, air & water quality, crime rate, un-sheltered rate
Efficiency	“Cost” per unit of output or outcome	Number of students graduating as a % of number of students enrolled, hospital occupancy rates, number of people receiving service compared to number of people eligible for service
Quality	Effectiveness in meeting the expectations of residents & other customers	Number of complaints, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, partner engagement, accuracy of information
Explanatory Information	Explains the environment & other factors that might affect an organizations performance	Funding for key community organizations, economic indicators, measures related to key community offerings

Important Terms

ANALYSIS: The examination of facts and data to provide a basis for effective decisions. Analysis often involves determining cause-effect relationships.

BENCHMARKS: Processes and results that represent the best practices and best performance for similar activities or initiatives, inside or outside your community.

Bias: Systematic and/or human errors that occur in data analysis or interpretation.

Change over time: How much an indicator changes between measurements taken at different times.

PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS: Estimates of future performance.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Data: Qualitative data is non-numeric information. Quantitative data is information that can be counted or measured. Considering both are important. Qualitative data is what ensures inclusivity of many diverse perspectives.

Rank: Compares relative position of a geographic area based on a particular metric.

TRENDS: Numerical information that shows the direction and rate of change of your community’s or community excellence group’s results or the consistency of its performance over time.

Communities of Excellence Tools and Resources

Communities of Excellence 2026 offers many tools as part of its developing Performance Excellence Measurement System (PEMS), which can all be accessed through the COE 2026 online portal. You are not required to use these tools. They are simply suggested resources that will provide you with the content needed for your National Learning Collaborative share outs of progress, community engagement communications, and annual applications to Communities of Excellence 2026 for feedback through the Assessment & Recognition Program.

Self-Assessments of Readiness and Progress: The readiness assessment is designed to help your group determine where to start in embarking upon your Communities of Excellence Journey. The progress assessment is designed to help community excellence groups determine if the perceptions of all involved in your leadership and activities are the same and help you understand if progress is being made.

COE Common Community Scorecard: Communities of Excellence 2026 has established a Common Community Scorecard of results that all communities are requested to track for the value of benchmarking participating communities across the country. The five indicators have been chosen based on their long-term impact measurement and free access to data by any community in the United States, regardless of population size.

COE Interactive Scorecard: The COE Interactive Scorecard is a resource for communities to access life expectancy data for their communities. Additional metrics from the COE Common Community Scorecard will be added over time.

Assessment & Recognition Program and Pathway to the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award: the purpose of Communities of Excellence 2026 Assessment and Recognition Program is threefold:

- 1) To develop a nationally recognized standard of community performance excellence
- 2) To establish role models of that standard through the Recognition Program
- 3) To encourage continuous improvement through sharing of best practices and provision of feedback to communities on the performance excellence journey that will lead to better outcomes for the residents they serve.