

ROLE 1: AUDIT PERFORMANCE OR PM SYSTEMS

Practice 1a. Audit performance: Measure or assess performance during an audit or other study based on authoritative auditing standards.

Phoenix, Arizona, City Auditor (<http://phoenix.gov/AUDITOR>): The City Auditor Department does not have a regular annual program of performance audits. However, the Auditor Department does do performance audits, special studies of performance measures, and program evaluations, based on Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book), on request. Reasons the Auditor Department is likely to become involved in such projects include:

- There is a change in department or division management;
- There has been a major shift in department focus (as when new funding became available for public transit), creating a need to re-evaluate the performance measurement focus;
- A major new program has been started—especially a complex interdepartmental or cross-jurisdiction program—and a performance measurement or evaluation approach is needed, which is the reason the Auditor Department undertook the sample project described below.

The Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) funds “Safe Schools Teams” in the Phoenix area, and pays for Maricopa County Probation Officers, Police School Resource Officers from the City of Phoenix and one from the City of Glendale, and City of Phoenix Social Workers. Although the grant is administered by Maricopa County, the Phoenix City Auditor Department was asked to develop a performance evaluation approach, and used it to evaluate the program for its first three years (1999-2000 through 2001-02). The City Auditor Department developed the project scope in collaboration with the City Human Services Department and Police Department, and the County Juvenile Probation Department. Performance measurement and analysis approaches used by the City Auditor Department in these evaluations included:

- Annual surveys of JAIBG school students, parents, and teachers on perceptions of school safety, awareness of the JAIBG team, and whether they think the team can make a difference.
- Evaluation of key processes of the program, including benchmarking different approaches used by teams at different schools to determine best practices, including different ways the teams measured “target groups” of at-risk students designated at several schools;
- Comparisons of crime rates in the 14 JAIBG schools over the three program years (individually and as a group), and against all schools countywide.

The third year audit report included school-by-school and overall performance results from the surveys and crime data (e.g., crime reduction at the JAIBG schools exceeded crime reduction at schools countywide over three years). The audit also reported on the extent of implementation of the previous year’s recommendations, identified a list of best practices, and made further recommendations, many having to do with improving communications and “marketing” the teams to increase parent awareness and build stronger working relationships with school staff. The Auditor Department’s involvement from the start added value to the program by helping the implementing departments and staff sort through the many program complexities, learn from performance comparisons and from different practices attempted by different teams, and adjust the program for improvement from year to year.