OPENGOV

Bernalillo County, NM, Effectively Tracks Performance Measures and Saves Time with OpenGov

AGENCY TYPE
County Government

POPULATION
675,550

ANNUAL BUDGET
$538.8 Million

The most populous county in New Mexico, Bernalillo County has a rich cultural history that includes both Spanish colonial and Mexican rule. Today, Bernalillo County is a thriving and active community with diverse economic opportunities and a government committed to operating a high-performance organization. With 35 County departments – each with 10-12 specified key performance measures and objectives – Bernalillo County's staff sought a way to track and ensure effectiveness and accountability while also making that information available to the public.

Tracked Performance Measure Easily with OpenGov

Business Improvement & Performance Administrator Director Maria Zuniga explained that as part of its performance management program, Bernalillo County maintains operational effectiveness goals across five strategic areas. Government accountability is one of those performance areas, which first led her team to evaluate and adopt the OpenGov Smart Government Cloud™. "We implemented OpenGov because we were looking for a performance management system," Zuniga explained. "It is very important for local governments to ensure they provide efficient and effective services and make that information accessible to the public. OpenGov rose to the top when we were analyzing the available options."

With OpenGov, the County implemented dashboards that track performance measures for each of 35 departments responsible for delivering services ranging from animal care to zoning. Before implementing OpenGov, they tracked that information manually. "Before OpenGov, we used a lot of spreadsheets to track all of the different performance measures," she said. "Data was coming from many different systems, and it was difficult to keep organized and up to date – not to mention to make it accessible and understandable. There was no ability to graph or visualize the data in any way."

Emergency Communications

The mission of Emergency Communications is to enhance the quality of life by handling all 9-1-1 and other calls for service: dispatching necessary emergency services in a prompt, courteous, professional and correct manner. We strive to save lives, protect property, stop crimes, and prevent major fire loss while maintaining accurate information for our user agencies.
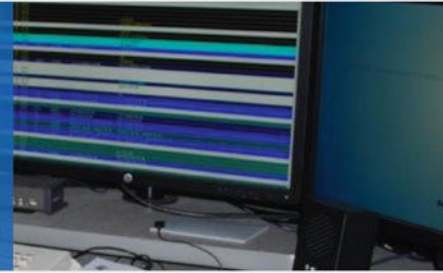
O71: Maintain Emergency Fire Dispatch and Emergency Medical Dispatch Reaccreditations (%)

Strategic Plan Goal:	Public Safety	Business Strategy:	Increased Effectiveness
Reporting Frequency:	Semi-Annual	Where Does the Data Come From?:	Aqua/PRO QA Program; Memos, meetings, Quality Assessment reviews

O71-1 - Dispatch Accreditation Achieved (%)
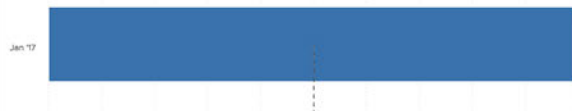
O71-2 - Dispatch Accreditation Year-to-Date (%)

50.00%

Annual Target

Bernalillo used OpenGov's dashboards instead of spreadsheets to easily track over 300 performance measures across 35 county departments.

OpenGov Delivered Meaningful Insights

To better track 300+ individual performance measures, the County's staff created dashboards for each department. "Using dashboards, we have come to think about the data differently. Once you can visualize the data in a graph, it really changes how you think about it, and has made us analyze whether we're tracking the right things and tracking them in the right manner," Zuniga said. For instance, the dashboards have helped County staff identify and follow important trends. According to Zuniga, having the dashboards for departmental performance data has vastly improved the ability to analyze internal operations for department heads and for the public. For instance, the County conducts periodic reviews of each department's performance. The team then has that data available at a glance in real time and can shift their focus to improvements in operations and resolving issues.

Beyond the dashboards, department heads use the platform to access their own budget-to-actual numbers in real time, making them relevant for planning given their content and timeliness. "We are using OpenGov to plan our budget, to load our budget for the next year, and to show budget-to-actuals to internal departments as well as to the public," Zuniga said. "It's been a great tool." She said having access to visual representations of information such as purchase order patterns and travel reports helps managers analyze their resources and better prepare for the future. "The visualization of that is just really easy in OpenGov," she said.
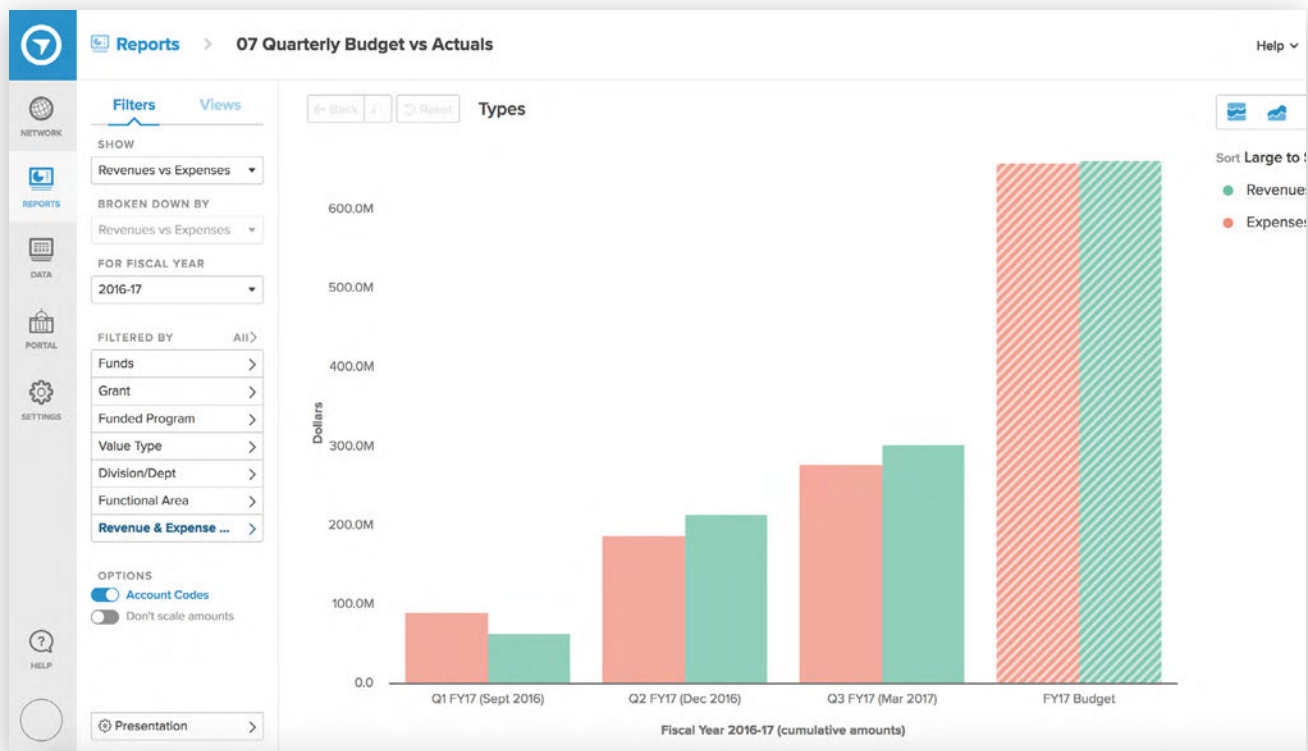
OpenGov's real-time access to their budget-to-actual figures and visualizations of the data helps Bernalillo's team plan their budget.

Significant Time Savings Realized

Zuniga noted the County realized substantial time savings by using OpenGov to prepare its budget presentations for County Commissioners. She estimated the staff spent just a third of the time they previously spent preparing for Commissioner presentations. "It used to take our analysts at least a day or two to pull together all of the different Excel spreadsheets for 35 different departments plus all the revenues and expenditures for the entire County. Now it takes an hour or two to set Saved Views for things the Commissioners might want to look at, and we can use those over and over again."

The platform's Saved Views feature offers bookmarks to common questions and frequently-accessed views of data for users. "We try to think of the most commonly asked questions and save those dashboard views to make answers easy, accessible, and quick," Zuniga explained. This frees staff from duplicative or time-consuming research in response to public and internal information requests.

While managing so many data points may seem onerous, Zuniga said OpenGov's dashboards enabled the County to automate so much of the data management process that it saved significant staff time. "In OpenGov, we've already loaded the graphs and dashboards for all of our different performance measures, so now all we do is load the data into the system, and the pre-built graphs update automatically. That has been a huge time savings for us," she explained.

OpenGov Enhances Communication

Using OpenGov enhanced communications with stakeholders, particularly County Commissioners. "Our Purchasing Director recently needed to report to a Commissioner on how many purchase orders we had in place in New Mexico," Zuniga explained. "We loaded a purchase order report in OpenGov, saved the view, she took the laptop in, and had a great discussion with the Commissioner." Enhancing officials' understanding of and comfort with data and associated staff decisions increases trust and strengthens collaboration, which, in turn, facilitates more effective service delivery.

"It has been amazing to show people the data," Zuniga said. "The visualization is key, because a picture says a thousand words. We know the data, but once we see the picture, it really transforms the way we can analyze and think about it."
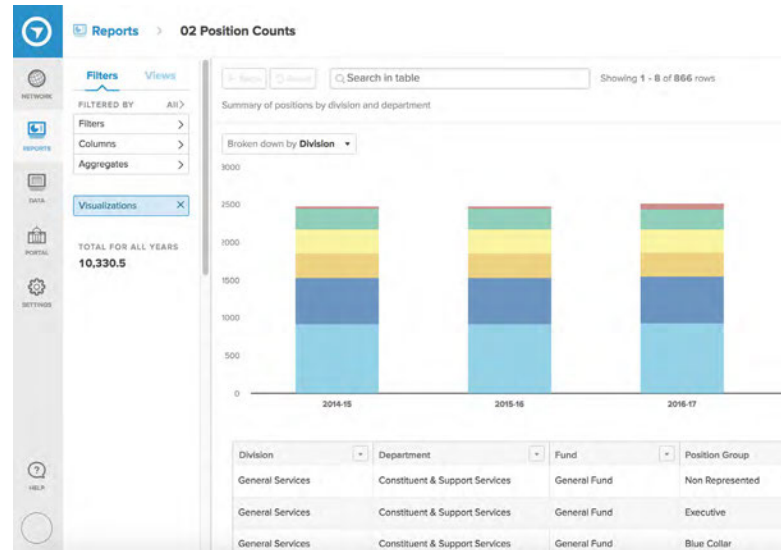
Because reports update automatically across OpenGov when new data is added, Bernalillo's staff now spends a third of the time to prepare for presentations to County Commissioners.

RESULTS

✓ **Performance measures across 35 departments.** County managers tracked meaningful performance measures and ensured accountability across departments.

✓ **One-third staff time required.** Staff spent a third of the time preparing presentations using Dashboards and Saved Views and facilitated the public's access to commonly-requested information without duplicative or tedious research.

✓ **Departments made more informed decisions.** OpenGov allowed department heads to track budget-to-actuals in real time and plan for future budgets.

✓ **Enhanced communication with Commissioners.** Providing elected officials with access to detailed data in OpenGov increased trust and collaboration.