

# South Bend

CDA and GovEx ‘knock on the walls’ of South Bend’s struggling, legacy performance management ‘house’ and advance major policy changes and bring home a Gold What Works Cities certification along the way.

## Highlights

Went from What Works Cities Silver certification at the start of the city’s CDA engagement to [Gold certification](#) in June 2023.

Based on a proposal in the city’s new Sustainability Stat program, the mayor committed the City of South Bend to a [40% urban tree canopy goal](#) and started a new Urban Tree Canopy Fund.

Conducted data-focused workshops to improve the capacities of the data workforce.

In the process of adding data-focused courses to its South Bend Academy as a clear strategy to hire and retain data workers.

## Background

South Bend started the program as a 2020 Silver What Works Cities certified city. The Office of Innovation and Technology—a centralized location for all things data—was the home of the city’s performance management program, a data training academy, and transparency initiatives like the Hub, a police accountability dashboard.

While they had a performance management program, it was a legacy of the previous administration and did not seem to be working particularly well for current leadership. Chief Innovation Officer Denise Riedl, the city’s CDA lead, asked the GovEx team to “knock on the walls” of their performance management “house,” and help them improve routines to integrate best practices and increase efficiency of performance management meetings.

## Impact

GovEx was able to identify strategies to better serve the current mayor and improve the use of the meetings for agencies to take ownership over their data and have challenging conversations regarding improvements.

CDA leaders worked closely with city staff to integrate elements of the Citywide Data Strategy action plan into the larger project of the Innovation and Technology Roadmap. Within the roadmap was a workforce development plan that included data-focused courses in SB Academy available during the summer of 2023, as well as a clear strategy to hire and retain data workers.

CDA's work with South Bend allowed the city to translate performance management and data analysis into action and apply it to inform decisions. The city's performance management system was adapted to pinpoint the Mayor's leadership style and goals. In particular, the results of this work can be seen in the system-level changes:

- South Bend leveled up to Gold What Works Cities certification in June 2023, a reflection of the city grounding its work more broadly in evidenced based practices.
- On Arbor Day, April 28, 2023, the Mayor committed the City of South Bend to a 40% urban tree canopy goal, and the city is starting a new Urban Tree Canopy Fund. This was a direct result of an initial proposal in the Sustainability Stat that the Performance Management team developed.
- Denise Riedl and David Finley worked together to integrate elements of the Citywide Data Strategy action plan into the larger project of the Innovation and Technology Roadmap. Within the roadmap was a workforce development plan that included data-focused courses in SB Academy available during the summer of 2023, as well as a clear strategy to hire and retain data workers.

