The 2014 Public Sector for the Future Summit: Creating the Agenda for Delivering Public Service for the Future

Insights from the Summit: Working with Stakeholders to Improve Public Service Delivery

Video Transcript

Wendy Korthuis-Smith, Director, State of Washington Office of the Governor – Results Washington

What are Washington State’s expectations from its citizens in promoting change and improving service delivery?

So with our previous administration, we tried to really focus on what is it that we can control at the government, and recognizing that most of the time citizens aren’t that interested in just the small pieces that we control. They’re interested in the bigger things like education and like business vitality. And so what we’ve been specific about with this administration is thinking of broad goals that we alone cannot do, that we have to partner with the community stakeholders and citizens in this work. And so when we rolled out this program in Fall of last year, we asked citizens to help contribute. Is this the most important thing that you expect government to provide? Where is the value that you’re looking at in terms of what we will provide and ask for your support in helping us with that? So we work with stakeholder groups and citizens through tools like crowdsourcing and Twitter events, and sort of the fireside chat mentality, and brought people in and had the conversations, is this what you most value that we should be focusing on, and then are these the right ways to measure it, and are these targets appropriate, would you be expecting something more? So we’re really looking at citizens to participate in that process.
Being candid, we have created sort of a push system and we are trying to pull them in, and so some of the technology that we're going to be incorporating, like using the data from the driver's license stations across Washington State, citizens could go online and look to see what the permit waiting times might be and decide, oh, I'm going to go to that driver's license station because it was less waiting time, and so making it more interactive for them, we're trying to think of ways where they're actually going to pull the information from us. But when you're talking about things like cleaning up the Puget Sound, you know, a government can't do it by itself, it's everybody in the State of Washington to help do that work, so we're really relying on them for feedback, ideas and ways to help support.

Dan Villa, Budget Director, State of Montana

Can any of the lessons learned through this program be applied elsewhere to enhance public service delivery?

I think what we identified in this process is that innovative thinking and transformational thinking can and should be embraced. There has to be a learning process by both stakeholders – those being citizens and taxpayers – as well as those who are engaged in implementing the new strategies to help reduce cost and improve services.

The government of the future will not be the same size, it will have vastly different roles, so the more that innovative and transformational leaders like those in Montana can permeate ideas like this throughout all sectors of government, be it transportation and innovative contracting practices, or healthcare delivery such as that which we did, all taxpayers will benefit.

What are some of the leadership challenges and/or opportunities for improving public service for the future within government?

There will be substantial challenges facing the leaders of tomorrow. We are seeing increased costs for the public safety issues that face our nation and our individual states and municipalities, be it more severe climate reactions, or increased correctional populations, what have you. What the leaders of tomorrow will need to understand, at least in my humble opinion, is how to contain those costs and ensure that the customer, the taxpayer, continues to be the focus of our work. We can bridge the legitimacy gap which so many governments find themselves in today, the difference between public sector perception and what our private sector counterparts are doing. We can be innovative, we must be innovative, and if a leader of the future is going to be successful they're going to have to find a way to bridge that gap.