SAFEbuilt®

Department Assessment Worksheet

Your Guide to Understanding Municipal Operations

Congratulations on your new leadership role! As you settle in, you're probably wondering how each department really operates. This worksheet is your friendly guide to cut through the complexity and get a clear picture of what's working—and what needs your attention.

How To Use This Worksheet

Think of this as your conversation starter with each department:

- Department Structure Analysis: Evaluate organizational structure and staffing patterns
- Process & Workflow Assessment: Identify service delivery efficiency and improvement areas
- Resource Allocation Review: Examine budget utilization and resource optimization options
- Performance Measurement: Understand how department success is tracked and measured
- Stakeholder Engagement: Assess community connection and partnership effectiveness
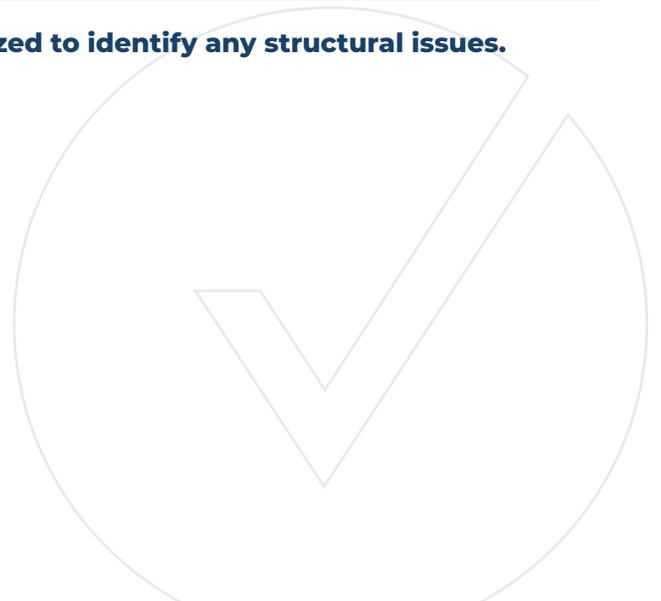
Don't feel pressure to fill in every blank—just note areas where you want to dig deeper later.

DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Review how the department is staffed and organized to identify any structural issues.

Department:

- ☐ Building Safety
- ☐ Public Works
- ☐ Planning & Zoning
- ☐ Parks & Recreation
- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Other: _____

Key Structure Indicators:

- ☐ Department org chart updated within last 12 months
- ☐ No key positions vacant for over 90 days
- ☐ Clear accountability structure for all staff
- ☐ Appropriate span of control (5-8 direct reports per manager)

Structure follow-up priorities:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quick Tip: Request an in-person walk-through of the department's operations with the department head to quickly identify any disconnects between the organizational chart and actual workflow.

PROCESS & WORKFLOW ASSESSMENT

Determine how efficiently services are delivered to your community.

Service Metrics	
Average permit/application processing time	Days
Average response time for resident inquiries	Days
Percentage of services available online	%

Digital Transformation Status:

- ☐ Paper-based processes
- ☐ Some digital processes
- ☐ Mostly digital
- ☐ Fully digital

Structure follow-up priorities:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCE ALLOCATION REVIEW

Assess how effectively budget and staff resources are being utilized.

Resource Metrics		
Total staff positions		
Vacant positions		%
Annual overtime hours		
Department budget	$	
Cost per capita	$	
Last year's budget variance		%
Technology investment (% of budget)		%

Partnership opportunities or alternative service approaches:

_____

_____

_____

_____

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Examine how department success is defined, tracked, and communicated to stakeholders.

Performance Tracking:

☐ Comprehensive metrics system

☐ Basic metrics only

☐ No formal measurement

Review Frequency:

☐ Monthly

☐ Quarterly

☐ Annually

☐ Not regularly reviewed

Public Accessibility:

☐ Fully accessible to public

☐ Limited public access

☐ Not shared publicly

Resident-focused success indicators:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quick Tip: Ask residents and business owners what would make them feel the department is performing well. Their answers often reveal metrics that matter more than traditional internal measures.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Evaluate how the department connects with residents and partners.

Communication Approach:

☐ Proactive outreach

☐ Reactive responses

☐ Minimal communication

Community Input Methods:

☐ Resident surveys

☐ Public meetings

☐ Advisory boards

☐ Digital platforms

☐ Social media

☐ Other: _____

Interdepartmental Collaboration:

☐ Strong collaboration

☐ Limited collaboration

☐ Minimal interaction

Key relationship improvement opportunities:

_____

_____

_____

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Based on your assessment, identify your top opportunities for making an impact.

Top 3 Department Opportunities:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Next Steps:

☐ Schedule follow-up with department head

☐ Share findings with relevant committee

☐ Incorporate into strategic planning

☐ Request additional data or clarification

Let's Make Your Department Shine

The assessment you just completed often reveals the exact opportunities that can make your first months in office successful and impactful.

At SAFEbuilt, we partner with municipal leaders like you every day. We understand the challenges you're facing and can help transform department performance with proven solutions that residents will notice and appreciate.

Want to chat about what you discovered? We'd love to share how our community development services have helped other newly elected officials make a real difference.

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