

We spent three and a half weeks in May with the city of Phoenix under the Bureau of Administration's Management Immersion Program. The program, funded through a grant from the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, seeks to bring new ideas to the Department of State by sending selected officers to explore management practices in well-managed companies and municipalities.

In Phoenix, widely seen as one of the nation's best-managed cities, we met with 12 city departments and more than 100 Phoenix employees, from the city manager to rank-and-file staff. We also attended a city council meeting and the mayor's annual "state of the city" address and received hands-on experience in some city functions, including Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

We wanted to determine, among other things, how Phoenix earned and maintains its good reputation, how it fosters and grows its culture of high employee morale, which quality management and continual improvement programs work, and which of these ideas could be applied in the Department.

What makes Phoenix one of the best-managed U.S. cities? We identified five factors:

- A corporate culture reinforced by a published "vision and values" statement that is in the employee handbook, on posters in virtually every office, on communications from the city manager and even on the back of many employees' business cards.

- Support for change and continual efforts to improve management processes through such actions as managed competition, issuing a balanced scorecard and using process mapping and ISO-9001 certification.
- A focus on training at every level that reiterates the city's values.
- A culture of customer service, collaboration and a sense of ownership and empowerment in which decisionmaking is done by those who carry out the function, and full participation is rewarded.
- A relationship with city constituencies—citizens, community groups, business and employee organizations—that brings them into decisionmaking, reducing conflict and gaining support for government, including for funding increases.

We briefed the leadership of the A Bureau and Bureau of Management officials on our findings and provided the city with ideas for improvement in areas where the Department is more developed, including the purchase card program, electronic funds transfers and computer-aided job evaluation. In this way, the Management Immersion Program was mutually beneficial. ■

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Management Immersion Program

PROGRAM HELPS OFFICERS LEARN FROM CITY
BY ELIZABETH MOORE AND ANDREW SIEGEL

The sun sets on Phoenix, where good city management never sleeps—as two Department employees who worked with Phoenix city government under the Management Immersion program discovered.

