

## Eight cities cited in data program from ex-NYC mayor Bloomberg

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Jackson, Mississippi, and Mesa, Arizona, aim to make troves of data about city operations available online for the first time. Tulsa, Oklahoma, plans to make its data releases more useful for the public. Seattle wants to use contract data to help ensure vendors deliver on their promises.

They're among the first eight winners, announced Wednesday, in a \$42 million, 100-city data-use program sponsored by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's foundation. Winners so far also include Chattanooga, Tennessee; Kansas City, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; and New Orleans.

Winners of the "What Works Cities" competition get expert help to make data publicly accessible, incorporate it better into decision-making and evaluate programs.

"Making better use of data is one of the best opportunities cities have to solve problems and deliver better results for their citizens," Bloomberg said in a statement.

Unveiled in April, "What Works Cities" is the latest in a series of Bloomberg Philanthropies competitions and initiatives promoting innovation in city government. It's open to U.S. cities of 100,000 to 1 million people. Over 110 have applied so far, and applications are still being taken. More winners will be chosen through 2017.

The New York-based foundation said it doesn't break down what percentage of the \$42 million total goes to each city.

The expert advice can help Jackson realize "transparent, data-driven governance—empowering us to make decisions necessary for our city's future based on the facts instead of just our feelings," Mayor Tony Yarber said in a statement. Tulsa anticipates making more information available and using data "to ensure resources are being allocated in line with citizen priorities," Mayor Dewey Bartlett said in a statement.

After building a computerized financial-data service into the multibillion-dollar company that bears his name, Bloomberg brought his enthusiasm for data to City Hall.

The city launched an online portal with more than 1,100 data sets ranging from building complaints to restaurant inspections, among other digital-information initiatives during his three-term administration, though not all its tech efforts went smoothly. A fraud-ridden payroll-technology project resulted in several criminal convictions.

Bloomberg left office in 2013.

His foundation distributed \$462 million last year to arts, education, environmental, public health and government-innovation initiatives.

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