

# STABILITY TEST

## Part 1 – Financial Stability

Does your city have enough money to operate? (circle the number that best fits your city)

10. Yes, we have a written policy that requires at least 20% of the general fund as a reserve and fully fund the reserve.
5. We don't have a written policy but maintain more than 10% of the general fund as a reserve.
1. We are lucky to make payroll and regularly are concerned about it.

## Part 2 – Governing Body Stability

How stable is your governing body? (circle the number that best fits your city)

10. We have great, well informed and engaged elected officials; when we have had elections in recent years, most candidates have been well qualified.
5. The majority is good, but the bad ones are very bad.
1. I wish we could get a completely new group, as I don't think any of them are qualified to make decisions for the City.

## Part 3 - Meetings

How good are your meetings? (circle the number that best fits your city)

10. Professional, business like and a joy to attend – I hate to miss one because we all enjoy the work we do for the City.
5. Boring, not much accomplished, but nothing bad happens.
1. Our meetings are miserable; arguing, staff at odds with the elected officials, out of control public – I wish I never had to attend another one.

## Part 4 - Employees

How good is your workforce? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1)

10. Our employees work very hard, care about the city, enjoy their work, and are proud they work for the city.
5. Our employees mean well, may not work as hard as the private sector, don't get paid enough, but get by.
1. Most of our employees do not like their job, we have lots of turnover, get many claims (workers comp, discrimination, etc.), and we have a difficult time attracting good employees.

## Part 5 – What does the public think of your city?

What does the public think about your city? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1)

10. We have very little public input at meetings as the public seems to trust our elected officials to make good decisions; we seldom have a disgruntled citizen appear at a meeting, and when we do, the discussion is civil and respectful. The City has a good reputation and is seen as a leader in the region.

5. The public doesn't seem to care what we do and does not pay much attention to what we are doing.

1. There seems to be little or no public confidence in the decisions made by the city; we continually have disgruntled citizens appearing at meetings and criticizing how we do business.

## **Part 6 – How well do you handle a crisis?**

What well does your city handle a crisis? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1, with 10 being the best possible)

10. We come together as a team, we work very hard, we are not afraid to ask for help and we have other entities offer to help us; after the crisis is over, we evaluate how well we handled the event and strive to do better next time. We never engage in the blame game.

5. We stumble through.

1. We live in crisis, are always dealing with everyone trying to blame everyone else, and can't manage or plan for anything.

## **Part 7 – Economic Development**

How active are you with economic development? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1, with 10 being the best)

10. We are continually working on economic development projects, are very optimistic that better times are ahead, that we can complete a good project, and are always trying to get economic growth.

5. If something comes along, we try to help.

1. We have not pursued an economic development project in years, have not had any growth, and are simply trying to hold on to what we've got – it is difficult to have hope for the future.

## **Part 8 – Planning and Goal Setting**

How well do you plan and set goals for city projects? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1, with 10 being the best)

10. The elected officials, administration and all staff work well to create well defined goals of the city that we all work to accomplish.

5. Every once in a while, we get around to talking about a project we want to accomplish; we even follow through on some of them.

1. We're lucky to get our jobs done day to day; we have no plan for next week, much less next year; everyone just does their own thing.

## **Part 9 – Administration**

How stable has your upper management been? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1, with 10 being the best)

10. Management has been stable for a long time; we have found a way to work together, to set goals, to communicate well, and it has ensured continuity in management. If we do have turnover, we attract good candidates because the city is a good place to work for its administrator.

5. Our leadership changes regularly and we readjust and take a new direction to how we approach city business; sometimes it improves and sometimes it doesn't.

1. The administrative leadership of the city is constantly changing, whether it needs to or not; administrators have not been treated well in the past, are underpaid, and really don't want to work in my city.

## **Part 10 - Communication**

How well do you communicate with each other? (apply a rating from between 10 and 1, with 10 being the best)

10. Everyone, from elected officials to the lowest staff, is well informed about the major activities of the city; we all are able to speak our mind, and there are no secrets amongst the elected officials and staff, as all feel free to express their opinion without fear of retribution.

5. We get random information, hit and miss, with no continuity.

1. We have no idea what is going on with the city; the elected officials and administration only meet when required; staff many times has no idea about what is going on with major projects.

**Score Sheet (Rate each 1-10, with 10 being the best or most stable score)**

- 1. Financial Stability \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Governing Body Stability \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Meetings \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Employees \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Public Image \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Crisis Management \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Economic Development \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Planning and Goal Setting \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Administration \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Communication \_\_\_\_\_
- TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW STABLE IS YOUR CITY?

How to improve your scores:

### 1. FINANCIAL STABILITY

- a. Create a written policy that establishes financial goals for the city, approved by council resolution that gives clear direction to staff
- b. Determine an appropriate reserve policy with realistic goals
- c. Clear, simple monthly reports to elected officials

### 2. GOVERNING BODY STABILITY

- a. Annual training, including training to staff and the elected officials about meeting protocol.
- b. Create an elected official handbook
- c. Regular meetings with staff to ensure that all are working on the projects that are important
- d. Code of ethics for the elected officials
- e. Best Practices resolution for oversight
- f. Professionalism will attract professionals
- g. Does your Mayor know the role the Mayor should have in your form of government?
- h. Develop a transition training program for newly elected officials that is consistent and complete.

### 3. MEETINGS

- a. Respect for fellow elected officials
- b. Business meetings
- c. Clear meeting rules
- d. A good balance of public input limited to agenda topics

### 4. EMPLOYEES

- a. How do you instill pride in their work?
- b. Improve uniforms/appearance with employee input.
- c. Good salary and benefits
- d. A sense of being a part of a team that works toward a common goal
- e. Do you show appreciation to your employees?

## **5. PUBLIC IMAGE**

- a. Good meetings
- b. What do your city properties look like
- c. What does your city equipment look like
- d. Do you distribute public information (newsletter; email list) that gets the good news of the city out to the public
- e. Do you show appreciation to your vendors?
- f. Do you pay on time?
- g. Customer Service training
- h. Create a list of what your city does well and get the message out!

## **6. CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

- a. Understand everyone's role
- b. Understand operations before an event
- c. Have elected officials toured emergency management facilities and understand who is in charge during various emergencies?

## **7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- a. Have you set goals for economic development
- b. Does the city own land for development
- c. Does your city have an economic development director or contract

## **8. PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING**

- a. Annual or regular goal setting meetings with written results
- b. Short term and long range planning
- c. Clear communication about goals

## **9. ADMINISTRATION**

- a. Identify strengths and a good working relationship
- b. Communication about expectations
- c. Best Practices for oversight
- d. Build trust and maintain trust between the elected officials and administration.

## **10. COMMUNICATION**

- a. Create a communication system that is agreed to, that may include:

- Weekly reports
  - Annual report
  - City newsletter
  - Employee newsletter
  - Email of important events
- b. Council committees
  - c. Informal time with elected officials for management